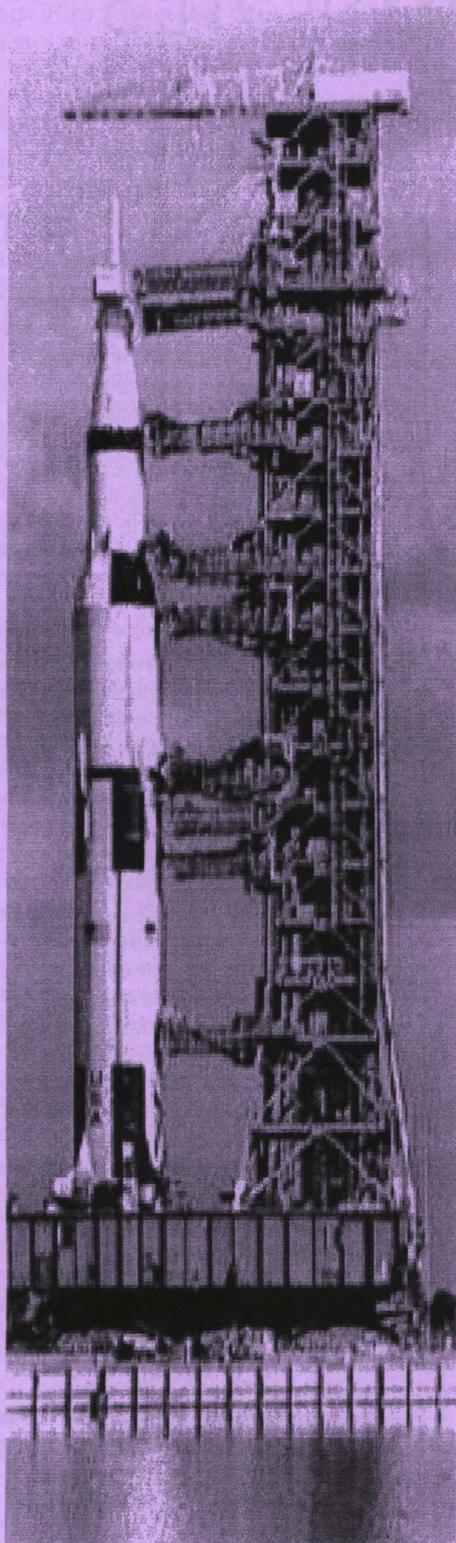


MAGONIA 97

APRIL 2008

CONTEMPORARY VISION AND BELIEF

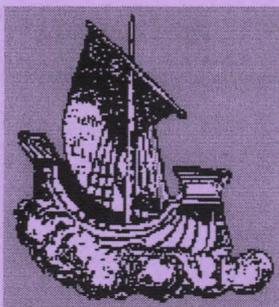


GARETH MEDWAY

stretches our credulity
and asks what
happened to high
strangeness UFO
reports.

CURTIS PEEBLES finds

that the exopolitics
crowd aren't above
stretching the truth,
and we stretch into the
archives for PETER
ROGERSON'S still-
relevant thoughts on
UFO cults



MAGONIA⁹⁷

INCORPORATING MUFOB 142

April 2008

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Eurozone	€5.00
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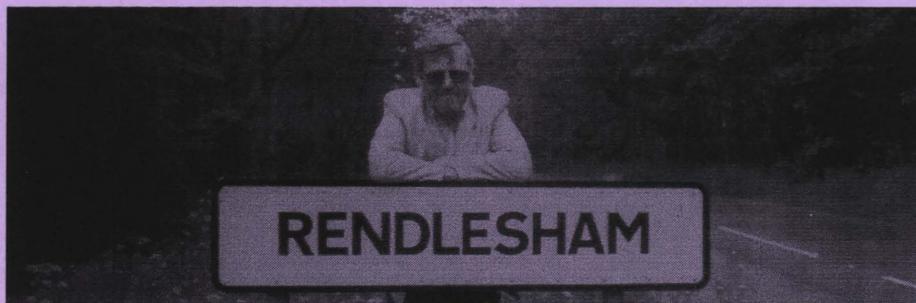
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EDITORIAL NOTES

Since announcing the impending closure of *Magonia* magazine I have received a fair amount of comment, most of it regretting the decision. It's been very encouraging to see just how much people have appreciated what we have published over the years, and how much they feel we have contributed to ufology as a serious study.

And there, of course, is the problem. Just how much is ufology a serious study? Now, there are many serious people studying ufology, and many people studying ufology seriously (not necessarily the same thing, of course!) but this does not mean that ufology itself is a serious subject.

I don't mean to get into endless discussions about a definition of 'ufology', I seem to remember this was a staple of BUFORA magazine in the 1980s. Let's take it as read. I want to ask what does 'studying UFOs' actually mean? Is it explaining particular UFO reports, irrespective of whether the explanation finally offered is mundane or extraordinary? If that is the case, then ufology can certainly be declared a serious subject. The sheer amount of hard work and expertise that has gone into solving some of the most intractable reports is impressive, although it has not always been appreciated by many within the field when the solution conflicted with their own pet theories - and this applies as much to sceptics as it does to proponents of the ETH or paranormal explanations.

But surely 'ufology' if it is to be regarded as a serious subject must be more than this. It must have some sort of overarching narrative. I don't mean the quest for an all-encompassing theory, which has bedevilled much ufological thinking - from both sceptical and pro-UFO viewpoints.

Whenever ufologists start talking about getting mainstream science to 'take the subject seriously' there is a great deal of talk about 'peer review'. True peer-review is difficult enough in conventional science - let's not even get anywhere near the subject of 'climate change' - but the idea of applying the concept to ufology is meaningless. For a start, there are no peers - who would peer-review a Budd Hopkins paper on abductions? Who would

peer-review a Nick Redfern paper on Roswell? Who is Nick Pope's peer - the current occupant of the MoD 'UFO desk'? I rather doubt it!

Ufology is not and cannot be a science, as it is constructed in an entirely different way from a real science. Certainly ufologists use science, and a knowledge of a wide variety of disciplines from meteorology to psychology is essential if you are going to study UFOs seriously, but to demand more than that is rather like claiming angling is a science because you can learn a lot about plant and animal biology by practicing it, and you need a good knowledge of fish and marine life to be successful at it.

In their comments on the closure of *Magonia*, a number of people have expressed surprise that we were going to finish with number 99 rather than 100. A fair point, so I can tell you there *will* be a *Magonia* 100. It will be a special issue reprinting some of the most significant articles that have appeared in MUFOB and *Magonia* since its first incarnation in 1968

A great deal of what has been published in *Magonia* over the years has prefigured later discussion, research and controversy within the subject, to the extent that reading contemporary internet postings on sites such as UFO UpDates, we get a strong sense of *deja-vu* as arguments which were discussed, thrashed-out and settled a decade or so before in *Magonia*, swim round and round like a goldfish with the legendary five-second memory!

As a taster of what you might expect in the soon-to-be-legendary *Magonia* 100 we will be reprising an article from twenty, thirty, or more, years ago in each of the remaining issue, starting with Peter Rogerson's 'Future Shock' which examines the way in which quasi-religious cultism flourishes in ufology. Originally published in 1973, apart from the names of some of the individuals concerned who may be unfamiliar to younger readers, I don't think it needs a word changed to be relevant today.

CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER

Gareth J. Medway

The term 'High Strangeness' refers to those UFO cases where the witnesses do not merely claim to have sighted a mysterious light or unknown object which might have been an alien spacecraft, but also say that a variety of unusual things happened to them afterwards, such as poltergeist outbreaks in their homes, strange telephone calls, and visits from the 'Men In Black'. You won't find much about this in mainstream UFO books, but there is plenty of detail in the works of such writers as John Keel and Jacques Vallee. The question which is not often addressed is, are these cases aberrations, or typical?

If high strangeness cases are exceptional, it would have to be asked, why do this particular minority of witnesses choose to report their experiences to one of just a few investigators, such as John Keel? Surely it is more likely that, since most witness reports reach us at second hand by way of the investigators, most of the latter tend to edit out unwelcome details like MIBs as detracting from the credibility of the story. If so, then we ought to be able to find some evidence for this censorship. In the first place, there is no reason to think that the above authors deliberately select the oddest cases for publication. On the contrary, in an interview during the October 1973 wave, Keel remarked: "A few years ago I talked with two young men who had seen an object in a field that resembled exactly one of our space modules and had "US Air Force" printed on the sides. But, of course, one of our space modules isn't going to be hovering over a field in New Jersey. I never wrote it up because even the UFO buffs wouldn't believe it." Imbrogno and Horrigan's *Contact of the Fifth Kind*, which is about high strangeness in the Hudson Valley, mentions that in an earlier book that Imbrogno had co-authored with Allen Hynek, they had avoided mention of abductions: "Only to a handful of people did we admit that there were abduction cases, and plenty of them ... Dr. Hynek felt that UFO reports are hard enough to believe without adding the subject of abductions to the discussion."

Whilst driving home in the early hours of 8 March 1997 journalist Sarah Hall, of the *Folkestone Herald*, saw a mysterious flying triangle. This event gained some national publicity simply because it occurred near to the home of Tory politician Michael Howard. It later the subject of a long article by Stuart



Miller and Chris Rolfe in the penultimate issue of the now defunct [British] *UFO Magazine*. Among the illustrations was a reproduction of Hall's original 'Witness Statement', which says that, for about fifteen minutes before the sighting: "I was coming down the road and I felt, I said afterwards to other people since, that I felt really weird. I was really looking over my shoulder on the way home. I was a bit scared, a weird feeling anyway."

Yet this detail is nowhere mentioned in the article itself. The authors' hypothesis, the reasoning behind which I am unable to follow, was that what she saw was of terrestrial manufacture, though based upon 'back-engineered' alien technology of unspecified origin. Now, there is no reason why someone who happens to see a secret experimental aeroplane should feel 'really weird' before the sighting. One suspects that they ignored this precisely because it did not fit with their hypothesis. Had not her statement been incidentally included in the layout by a subeditor, we would never have known of it, and remember, in the vast majority of UFO cases we do not get the witness's own words, only the interpretations of investigators.

According to Richard Thompson: "...after the Hills' close encounter on a lonely New Hampshire road, they began to experience poltergeist phenomena in their home. Betty would find her coats unaccountably dumped on the living room floor, even though she had left them in the closet. Clocks would stop and start mysteriously, or their time settings would change. Water faucets would turn on when nobody was there, and electrical appliances would break down and then work perfectly without repair. On a more prosaic level, Betty Hill also reported that after her UFO experience she was repeatedly followed, her apartment was broken into, and her phone was tapped."

Of course, nothing is said about these things in Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey*, nor in any of the other innumerable discussions of the case that I have seen. Even sceptical writers pass over them - I suppose that, if you are going to maintain that everything that happened to the Hills had a straightforward mundane explanation, you are only making it difficult for yourself if you introduce things like poltergeists.

In April 1952 Albert K. Bender of Bridgeport, Connecticut, set up the International Flying Saucer Bureau. This grandiose title proved to be justified, as they soon had representatives not only in more than a dozen states of the Union, but also Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand. Yet after just eighteen months Bender shut the organisation down, stating in the final issue of the quarterly newsletter *Space Review* that "The mystery of the flying saucers is no longer a mystery. The source is already known, but any information about this is being withheld by orders from a higher source."

Three years later, Gray Barker revealed in *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*

that Bender had stated that he had been visited by three men in dark suits, from which we derive the now familiar term 'Men In Black'. But, when interviewed by two puzzled colleagues, he said little more, replying to most of their questions only with the words: "I can't answer that". The implication was that he had been silenced because he had discovered 'The Truth'. I suspect that most ufologists assumed that the Truth that Bender had discovered corresponded exactly with their own pet theories. These need not have been too sensational: the story, as told so far, was broadly consistent with the hypothesis that flying saucers were a secret U. S. invention, and that the authorities had requested Bender to keep silent for reasons of national security.

Yet at about the same time, on the other side of the world, the Australian Flying Saucer Bureau was closed down by Edgar Jarrod, who had also had a mysterious visitor. A New Zealand investigator, John Stuart, received a telephone call from a voice who claimed to be 'from another planet', and told him to "stop interfering in matters that do not concern you!" Soon afterwards his house developed the classic signs of haunting, with the sound of footsteps when no-one was there, and objects moving by themselves. Finally, he said later, his secretary was physically assaulted by a giant hairy monster, after which he abandoned UFO research.

In 1962 Bender broke his silence with a book, *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*, of which it is fairly safe to say that it can have matched no-one's pet theory. He wrote that he had begun to experience poltergeist activity in his home, such as a radio switching itself on, accompanied by an odour of burning sulphur. Then, on 15 March 1953, he attempted to contact the 'occupants of interplanetary craft' by telepathy. The result was not the "We come in peace" message he perhaps expected; instead, a voice said "Please be advised to discontinue delving into the mysteries of the universe. We will make an appearance if you disobey." He wrote this experience up at the time, but his report mysteriously vanished from the box in which he had locked it.

In July he had the first of a series of visits from the three men, who "looked like clergymen" except that their eyes glowed "like flashlight bulbs", and who materialised in his bedroom, making it clear that they were not from the government, but aliens themselves. Though they had taken on human bodies so that they could pass among us unnoticed (apart from the glowing eyes!), their real forms were hideous monsters. On several occasions they teleported him to a secret underground base in Antarctica, where they told him that came from a planet many light years away. They were visiting earth for the purpose of extracting a certain chemical from our seawater, and did not wish to be interfered with, but after they had left he would be free to reveal the truth to the world. Indeed, to ensure that he remained in good health, on his last visit to the base he was given a special all-over

body massage by three beautiful women, who were presumably in reality hideous monsters.

Though Bender stated that he was able to speak because the saucerians had departed in 1960, UFOs did not cease to be sighted. It was probably not for this reason, however, that his book was almost totally ignored, but because it did not tell anyone what they wanted to hear. Typical of those who noticed it at all was Rex Dutta, who said that it was "often attributed to the hush-hush bag", i.e. it was itself a part of the continuing cover-up, and that "Not many took the trouble to notice that the book was obviously 'ghost-written' - its style was totally unlike that of Bender's own phraseology in his magazine."

He had a series of visits from the three men, who "looked like clergymen" except that their eyes glowed "like flashlight bulbs",



Where the story is cited at all, it is usually in the more credible version of Barker, for instance in 1974 Brinsley Le Poer Trench argued in *Secret of the Ages* that the earth is hollow, and that UFOs come from the inside; he suggested that what Bender had discovered is that the earth is hollow, and that UFOs come from the inside.

Reports of the Men In Black, often known as MIBs, became more common, and provoked the interest of the Pentagon, since some of them were said to have falsely claimed to be Air Force officers, which is a federal offence. Yet no prosecution has ever resulted. It might be possible to explain at least some of these cases as being the result of acute paranoia, but it is easier just to pass over them in silence.

A young woman named Maria spoke at BUFORA a couple of times in the early 1990s.

I have lost my notes on what she said, but from memory, she had attended a convent boarding school in the Midlands. One night, she woke up in the small hours and looked out of the window to see a glowing object next to the tennis courts. Various other things happened to her in the following days which seemed to be acausally linked to the first: she had a dream, so vivid that it could not be distinguished from reality, that she was on board a spaceship; one lunchtime she stirred a cup of coffee with a metal spoon which, when she took it out, had bent in Uri Geller fashion; she spontaneously levitated into the air in front of a group of other girls; on a country walk she passed a dead and mutilated body of a deer; finally, of course, she was visited by two men dressed in black, who said that they had been sent by her psychiatrist, whose name, coincidentally, was Mrs. Black. After interviewing her for an hour, they departed in a mysterious black car which made no sound as it crossed the gravel forecourt. Maria spoke twice to BUFORA, and as I believe interviewed by several people, yet so far as I can discover her tale has never appeared in print anywhere.

One Man In Black report that has been printed a few times, e.g. in *The Unexplained*, is that of Dr. Herbert Hopkins, who in 1976 hypnotised a UFO witness to help him recall his experience. He was then visited by a hairless (not even eyebrows) man in a black suit claiming to be from the New Jersey UFO Research Organisation (there was no such institution), who made a coin disappear, asked him pointedly if he had heard of a local UFO witness who had recently died, and demanded that he destroy the tapes of the sessions. Perhaps fearing that if he did not he would go the way of the coin, Hopkins complied.

Not so many authors relate the encounter which Hopkins had been investigating. The witness was David Stephens of Norway, Maine, who with a friend named Glen Gray went for a drive at three a.m. one morning in October 1975. After a mile Gray, who was driving, lost control of the car, which went down a rough trackway, but, incredibly, at unbelievable speed, so that they travelled five miles in two minutes. It came to rest in a field, where they saw a hovering cylindrical object with bright lights on it. Gray now regained control of the car and hastily drove off, but the object followed them, and soon they fell unconscious, reawakening a mile further down the road. Unable to start the engine, they sat and watched as further glowing objects flew about. From a nearby pond, which seemed to have 'grown to the size of an ocean', a thick fog arose and engulfed the car. Then, surprisingly, the motor restarted, and the two men were able to leave.

A few days later, when two local ufologists spoke to them: "Stephen and Gray reported that several peculiar incidents had happened since their encounter: someone (or something) had walked across the roof of their trailer home; both men had suffered sudden

bouts of extreme tiredness; both had seen snowflakes and black cubes and spheres flying from the sky and through a wall; 'golden wires' appeared in the air above their TV set; and a disembodied voice, audible only to Gray, had intoned the letters 'U-F-O'."

Mike Dash, one author who was prepared to relate this story, noted that "the case is not often discussed, even in ufological circles, and is certainly too strange to be included among the handful of 'classic cases' that most researchers would cite as evidence of UFOs. Yet this one incident includes almost all of the key elements that distinguish such classics from run-of-the-mill reports." In other words, though seeming highly bizarre to the average person, once one has been studying the matter for years, it "may be considered fairly representative of the more detailed hard core of UFO reports."

I should like to repeat a matter I raised some years ago, that, as was pointed out in Helmut and Marion Lammer's *MILABS: Military Mind Control and Alien Abduction*, which has the kind of content that you would expect of that title, most books by abductees who have written their own books state that they were followed and watched by unmarked black helicopters, whereas in Thomas Bullard's study of 270 abductions, black helicopters only feature in four cases. The reason is surely that Bullard's data was derived from abduction researchers rather than the abductees themselves, and that black helicopters seem important to the latter but not to the former.

An exception is David Jacobs, who does mention them briefly in *The Threat*, stating that most are ordinary helicopters that happen to circle abductees' houses by chance, but that a few are piloted by hybrids (human-alien cross-breeds), and others are screen memories for UFOs. Budd Hopkins, though thinking it normal for people to be picked up by aliens and genetically experimented upon, evidently felt black helicopters to be a little too outré, and omitted them in *Intruders*, his account of the misadventures of 'Kathie Davis' (Debbie Jordan), yet Jordan herself said that they were, at one time, "almost daily around our houses". Even so, he did include a few high strangeness events, such as a visit from three mystery men (though dressed in blue), and that when Debbie was pregnant with her second child, she would get a telephone call from an incomprehensible alien voice every Wednesday afternoon. Sometimes, but not always, these choppers are said to make no sound, for which reason they are known as phantom helicopters. Beckley reproduces a photograph of one that was taken by Betty Andreasson's husband, though it is obviously impossible to tell from a picture whether it was silent or noisy, or indeed to distinguish it in any way from a real helicopter.

John Keel often refers to mysterious beeping. Usually these occur over the telephone, which is not odd in itself, since beeping is the standard 'engaged' tone, though

something has clearly gone wrong when the phone rings and you answer it to hear only beeps. (I had two calls of this sort myself one Wednesday afternoon - presumably it was coincidence that at the time I was transcribing a tape of an interview with a UFO witness.) But a fault in the phone network cannot explain the case of the woman who, after seeing a strange object fly overhead, "suddenly heard a loud radio signal ... a series of dots and dashes" which however was inaudible to her sister and brother in law. When Phil Klass interviewed Lonnie Zamora, the police officer in the Socorro, New Mexico case, he told him that the object's sound was a "Beep ... beep ... beep ... beep", though a couple who lived nearby heard nothing. Klass mentioned this in his first book (in which he maintained that UFOs were a rare natural phenomenon, and was written before he had reached the conclusion that this affair was a hoax), but so far as I can discover no-one else ever has, not even Ray Stanford in his book on the sighting.

Sometimes high strangeness occurs when there has not been a UFO incident as such, for instance in a case cited by Alex Constantine, conspiracy theorist author of *Psychic Dictatorship in the U.S.A.*, who considers all unexplained phenomena to be the by-product of CIA mind-control experimentation. In 1994 a California journalist named Dave Gardetta interviewed Richard Ofshe, a psychologist who maintained that so-called recovered memories are actually false memories, and that this was the real cause of supposed alien abduction.

A few days later, however, Gardetta awoke to find a triangular rash on the palm of his hand. This is commonly thought to be a symptom of abduction (though it also happened to Michelle Smith, the classic Satanic Child Abuse victim, and was explained by her psychiatrist and future husband Lawrence Pazder as a 'body memory' of her ordeal: "...whenever she relived the moments when Satan had his burning tail wrapped around her neck, a sharply defined rash appeared in the shape of the spade-like tip of his tail.") Gardetta wrote: "It didn't surprise me. Things around the house - which sits on a hilltop in a semi-rural area - had been getting weird. A jet-wash noise buzzed some afternoons around the house, its origin impossible to discern. Lights were turning themselves on, and the alarm system's motion sensor was tripping itself every morning between five and six. One early evening, small footsteps crossed the roof. I ran outside to find the electrical wires leading to a nearby telephone pole swaying in the windless dusk." I am not sure what conclusion he drew from this. (Constantine, of course, blamed CIA mind-control experimentation.)

At the end of 1966, *True* magazine commissioned a set of illustrations for a forthcoming article, by John Keel, on unidentified flying objects. The artist drew a number of odd shaped craft purely from his own imagination. One was spherical,

featureless except for a single porthole and, underneath, four legs and a propeller. Though no such thing had ever been reported, what one might term 'the Looking Glass effect' apparently kicked in. On 19 January 1967, an appliance store manager named Tad Jones was driving to work near Charleston, West Virginia, when he was obliged to stop because the road was blocked by a sphere exactly matching the above description. He watched it for two minutes, after which it rose up into the sky and disappeared. He reported what had happened to the police, and it got written up in local papers.

In the following days, two threatening notes were slipped under Jones's door warning him to 'keep your mouth shut'. A local UFO authority, Ralph Jarrett, received one of those 'beep beep' phone calls immediately before opening his copy of *The Charleston Gazette*, where he first learnt of the sighting. Jarrett conducted his own investigation, and learned that the object had been hovering directly over a major gas line. When Keel himself visited the spot, he found a number of strange footprints in the mud beside the road. One set resembled huge dog tracks, but Jones took plaster casts, and no local zoologist could identify them. There were also some prints made by ripple soled shoes with a ridge around the edge. Keel noted that prints of just this type had frequently turned up at UFO sites around the country. Years later came another 'Looking Glass' sequel: when the first astronauts walked on the moon, they wore boots which made identical ripple prints in the lunar dust.

This story, at least as it is narrated in *The Mothman Prophecies*, appears totally inexplicable. But that did not daunt Stuart Campbell when he wrote *The UFO Mystery Solved*, which argued that UFO reports are caused by mirages of stars. Weirdly, he even claimed that mirages of stars explained daytime sightings, though most people would suppose that it would be impossible to see a mirage, which is simply a reflection, of a light source that was itself invisible. Anyway, he explained the Tad Jones sighting as having been a mirage of Venus, failing also to explain how a mirage, which necessarily must be near the horizon, could appear to rise up into the sky. Of the threatening notes, the mysterious footprints, and the resemblance of the 'mirage' to a piece of imaginative artwork, he had not a word to say.

David Haisell's *The Missing Seven Hours* is not (as one would expect from the title) another of those tedious abduction tales, but concerns a British family settled in Canada, who not only claimed to have experienced UFO sightings in both the old and new worlds, but also poltergeists in their home, disembodied voices, inexplicable beeping sounds, low flying unmarked black helicopters, psychic healing, appearances of doppelgangers, enigmatic telephone calls, automatic writing, and that Fortean rarity, a mysterious Woman In Black.

in the above instances. But they are of no value to someone who wishes to prove the existence of spacecraft from Andromeda.

Enthusiasts of 'Ancient Astronauts' likewise make surreptitious alterations in their source materials. Erich von Daniken referred to this South American legend: "It tells of a golden space-ship that came from the stars; in it came a woman, whose name was Oryana, to fulfil the task of becoming the Great Mother of the earth. Oryana had only four fingers, which were webbed. Great Mother Oryana gave birth to seventy earth children, then she returned to the stars." Von Daniken's source was certainly Robert Charroux's *One Thousand Years of Man's Unknown History*, since the story was one that Charroux had collected orally: it specified that Orejona gave birth to the human race by mating with a tapir. This story has been suspected of being a modern invention, but in fact it is probably genuine, since surely no twentieth century author would have had a woman interbreed with an animal. Be that as it may, Von Daniken omitted the tapir, also the statement that Orejona came from Venus (as opposed to the stars), since this too was no longer believable by the 1960s.

The vision of Ezekiel has been widely discussed in UFO literature. It is unclearly written, but the gist is to the effect that, sitting by the river Chebar in the land of the Chaldeans (modern Iraq) some time in the sixth century BC, he saw a glowing whirlwind in the north, out of which came creatures with four wings and four faces, those of a man, bull, lion and eagle. (Statues of composite creatures of this sort were common in Chaldean temples.) Then he saw four flying wheels "full of eyes round about them". Above them was "the likeness of a throne", on which sat "the appearance of a man", whom Ezekiel took to be God. He then heard a voice which gave him a lengthy lecture upon the sins of the children of Israel.

As early as the time of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the four wheels had been interpreted as belonging to a celestial chariot which bore aloft the throne of the Lord, somewhat in the manner of the wagons which were used by Pagans to transport the images of their Gods in procession. Though this is not implicit in the text, in the Middle Ages a great deal of Jewish mystical literature was devoted to "the work of the chariot". This 'chariot of Ezekiel' came to be illustrated in a number of Renaissance engravings.

The first modern UFO author to draw attention to the passage was Dr. Donald Menzel, who wrote: "Occasionally a sundog makes a complete circle of light surrounding the sun with four bright patches, one above, one below, and one on either side. Sometimes two circles will appear, one within the other, surmounted by an inverted arc and traversed by a cross, like the spokes of a wheel whose centre is the sun. The complicated structure of a fully developed mock sun - which is extremely rare - can suggest to the imaginative an enormous chariot in the sky and can terrify

the superstitious. There is little doubt that this phenomenon inspired the two visions of Ezekiel described in the Bible." It will be observed that Dr. Menzel omits to mention the glowing whirlwind, the four creatures, the throne, the figure seated on the throne, and the voice explaining what was wrong with the nation of Israel: no doubt because none of these things can readily be explained as a sundog.

Others, needless to say, think that Ezekiel was the witness to an extraterrestrial visitation, and a vaguely plausible case can be made out for it. Pleiadians, for all we know, may have four wings and four faces, whilst wheels with 'eyes' around them could be flying saucers with portholes. Though the 'voice' did not proceed to a technical exposition of UFO propulsion systems, but complained about the Israelites worshipping idols, it is conceivable that aliens might be as obsessive about this point as many human religious bigots are.

The figure of God is difficult to fit in, however, which explains why Von Daniken ignores it, and Josef Blumrich described him



as 'the pilot'. Alan Cole commented: "...the few details ... that might fit a hypothetical spacecraft, are not the whole of the description: it culminates, not in wheels or in chariot, but in a great throne set above the chariot (Ezek. 1:26), and God, in human form enthroned there. If we take the chariot literally, then all of this, too, must be taken literally." The Rev. Cole goes on to use the word 'chariot' seven times in all, having failed to notice that it is nowhere found in the text itself, but only in commentaries written many centuries later. Nevertheless, his argument is perfectly sound: an interpretation based upon only those facts that happen to fit it is likely to be worthless.

To Ezekiel, and no doubt to his contemporaries, the creatures and the wheels were not so important as the divine prophecy which followed them, and quite likely he only mentioned the former in order to lend credibility to the latter. The same was true of two flying disc reports from the mid seventeenth century: in 1646, in Gravenhage, Holland, a flying round plate was seen "about the bigness of a table-board, like gray paper", followed by visions supposed to be prophetic.

Similarly, in 1651, a Mrs Holt of Cheshire was sitting in her doorway when she

"perceived the Sun to shine exceeding red, and casting her eyes upwards, she beheld a dark body over the sun, about the bigness of a half moon, and in a short space, the said body divided into several parts, seeming numberless other view, about the bigness of small Pewter dishes, which came swiftly towards her ..."

This was followed by visions of fighting men and horses in the air, and mysterious birds. In those unsettled times, people looked for signs and wonders in the sky which might presage the future, but flying dishes in themselves were not news and would quite likely have been ignored but for the subsequent visions.

It might be thought that modern UFO reports do not include prophetic visions, but in fact a few of them do, e.g. in 1973, it is said, three people "watched a flying craft cavort through the sky, and then it transformed into a giant image of a bearded man dressed in a long, belted, robe, with his arms outstretched." Similarly, at Cradle Hill outside Warminster in the 1960s: "there was the time when a Saucer, coming into the copse from the south-west, produced a perfect arch of brilliant silvery light, in the midst of which appeared two giant forms: silhouetted figures, long hair waving as though in the wind, with no visible features, but with fingers and robes well defined." Once again, I suspect that there is bias in reporting, and that such sightings are quite common, but seldom published.

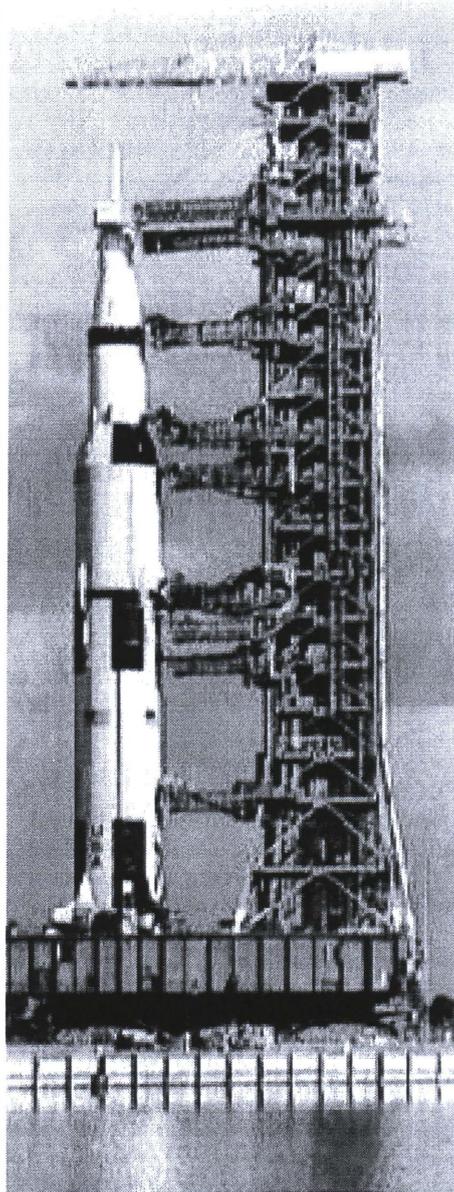
We should remind ourselves that what may be 'extraordinary' to most of us may be quite normal to others. For example, to some people it is an everyday thing to communicate with the dead. A spiritualist friend of mine, a semi-disabled lady who lives alone except for two cats, has told me how her son will help her fix things that are broken in her home, anything from a jammed kitchen drawer to a malfunctioning computer. This would not be remarkable in itself, but her son has been deceased for some years. Significantly, she has mentioned these incidents in the course of informing me about otherwise mundane matters concerning her domestic problems, without any change in the tone of her voice.

This, however, is slightly different from UFO witnesses such as the Armstrongs, who 'do' consider their experiences unusual: the point is that they regard them as a totality, the poltergeist activity and strange phone calls being as important to them as their sightings of mysterious craft. On the other hand, there may be high strangeness UFO cases which have never been reported to anyone, because the experiencers have not thought them in any way out of the ordinary.

To evaluate facts, you have to know what they are. Though people have often accused the government or the Air Force of concealing the truth about UFOs, I think the ufologists themselves have been partially suppressing it. I do not propose to try and explain the causes behind poltergeists or beeping telephone calls from the Men In Black, only to observe that they can hardly have an easily comprehensible explanation in terms of spaceships from Orion.

Apollo 20: A Space Absurdity

Exopolitics Goes on a Flight to the Moon / Curtis Peebles



Beginning in April of 2007, an individual with the user name "retiredafb" began posting a series of video clips on YouTube. These were described as from "Apollo 20," a secret joint U.S./Soviet space mission in 1976 to examine a crashed UFO near the crater Izsak on the far side of the Moon. The Apollo 20 story offers a chance to examine the methodology and mindset of exopolitics advocates regarding evidence and its use in reaching conclusions.

The postings drew the attention of Italian journalist Lusa Scantamburlo, who conducted an on-line correspondence with retiredafb over the spring and summer. Retiredafb said his real name was William Rutledge, and that he had been born in Belgium in 1930, emigrated to the U.S., and worked for the aircraft manufacturers Avro and Chance Vought. He later worked for Bell Laboratories and the U.S. Air Force. Rutledge said that he had studied Soviet technology, such as the N 1 Moon rocket, the "AJAX plane project," and the "Mig Foxbat 25." He said that he was skilled in computer navigation and had volunteered to be an astronaut for the Air Force's Manned Orbiting Laboratory. This was a space station for reconnaissance missions, cancelled in 1969, and never flown. He was not selected and worked on the KH-11 reconnaissance satellite before retiring.

The Apollo 15 mission, according to Rutledge, photographed a crashed alien mothership on the far side of the Moon, which was never visible from Earth. The following year, the Apollo 17 mission also photographed the alien ship. Plans were made for two secret NASA/U.S. Air Force Space Command Apollo missions to examine it. These were

Apollo 19 and 20, which were launched from Vandenberg AFB in California, rather than the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. (The Apollo 18 mission was the American half of the joint U.S./Soviet Apollo Soyuz Test Project (ASTP) flown in 1975.)

The Apollo 19 mission was to explore the roof of the spindle-shaped mothership by climbing the "Monaco hill." Rutledge gave few details of the mission. He did not give a launch date, or the full crew list. Rutledge did say the name of the Apollo 19 Command Module (CM) was "Endymion," while the LM

was called "Artemis." He also said that one of the crew was "Stephanie Eilis," the first U.S. black woman in space. According to his account, Eilis was born in 1946 in the Ivory Coast and arrived in the U.S. at the age of seven months. She worked at Grumman on the Apollo Lunar Module (LM) navigation system. Rutledge also said that she was his girlfriend. [1]

The Apollo 19 mission ended in tragedy. Rutledge said that telemetry was lost at the end of the engine burn to send the spacecraft to the Moon. The reason was not understood at the time, but Rutledge believed it was due to a collision with a "quasi-satellite" or a meteor. [2]

Despite the loss of the first mission, plans went ahead for Apollo 20. Rutledge was the mission commander; Lena Snyder, also from Bell Labs, was the CM pilot; while Alexei Leonov was the LM pilot. A Soviet cosmonaut, he was the first man to walk in space, and the commander of the Soyuz which docked with Apollo 18 during the ASTP mission. The Apollo 20 CSM was named "Constellation," while the LM was "Phoenix." The mission control was at Vandenberg rather than Houston. The call sign "Vandenberg" was used in the audio posted on YouTube videos. Three hundred people were involved with preparing the Saturn V at Vandenberg. Why Rutledge, Snyder, and Eilis were selected for the Apollo 19 and 20 crews was not made clear. Rutledge said only that he had been picked because he did not believe in God.

The Apollo 20 launch was made from Vandenberg AFB on August 16, 1976. The launch was seen, but people did not know it

was a Saturn V booster. The YouTube videos included shots of Snyder entering the capsule (with his back to the camera), the launch itself, video from the LM as it prepared to land, photos of the mothership from orbit, and surface photos of a city on the Moon. This was described by Rutledge as only debris, except for one building.

Rutledge and Leonov entered the alien ship and found "...many signs of biology...vegetation in the 'motor' section, special triangular rocks which emitted 'tears' of a yellow liquid which has some special medical properties, and of course signs of extra solar creatures." Two alien bodies were still in the mothership – one was in very poor condition, while the other was an intact female body. Dubbed "Mona Lisa," she was 1.65 meters tall. Unlike her earthly namesake, Rutledge said she had six fingers on her hands. "Piloting devices" were attached to both her fingers and eyes, while two cables were on her nostrils. Rather than clothes, she was covered in a thin transparent protective layer. Rutledge commented that the body "seemed not dead not alive." He and Leonov attached their biomedical sensors to her body, and telemetry was received by mission control.

In all, Rutledge said he and Leonov spent seven days on the Moon exploring the alien ship. This was about twice as long as the Apollo 15, 16, and 17 crews had each spent on the surface. Rutledge said that since 1990, he had lived in Rwanda under a false identity, and had not spoken English during that time, only Kinyarwanda and French.

Rutledge gave little explanation as to why he released the videos, saying only that it was because of "The wonder of it all," and "2012 is coming soon." As for the secrecy of the two Apollo missions, he claimed the reason was "not a problem of panic, but simply a problem of economy." Rutledge said that all currencies on Earth are based on the value of gold, but exploding stars spread large amounts of gold in young star systems. "This means that it is the most common substance in the universe, no more value than a piece of plastic." [3]

Acceptance, Doubt, and Excuses

Scantamburlo was impressed by Rutledge's videos and information, calling them "coherent and plausible, and it shows a detailed knowledge of Aerospace history, of Geology, Chemistry and of Space exploration history..." He continued, "Waiting for the rest of Rutledge's testimony, we should prepare ourselves for the wait and new Copernican revolution: we are not alone in the Universe and, at last, historical and technical evidences are supporting it beyond any doubt." [4]

In attempting to support the claim that secret Apollo launches were made from Vandenberg AFB, Scantamburlo wrote that the Saturn V booster was listed in an April 19, 2006 Air Force report, and claimed that documents from the 1960s indicated Air Force interest in using the Saturn V booster. From

this, he argued, "The fact that the Apollo 20 would have been launched from Vandenberg AFB, according to Rutledge's testimony, is now supported by strong circumstantial evidence." [5]

Despite his comments, Scantamburlo did note a problem with the YouTube video of the Apollo 20 liftoff. This clip had an opening frame listing it as film of the Apollo 11 launch, made in July of 1969. Rutledge explained that he was no longer in Africa, and that the videos were being converted from analog to digital by friends in Rwanda for uploading to YouTube. They apparently made a mistake. [6]

Dr. Michael E. Salla, a leading figure in the exopolitics faction of ufology, wrote a commentary about the Apollo 20 videos on June 24, 2007. Dr. Salla was impressed by Scantamburlo's work, saying his report "...demonstrates a sincere effort to verify a number of the details provided by Rutledge..."

Salla also found inconsistencies in Rutledge's account. One of these dealt with the Apollo 20 mission patch. Salla noted, "...the Apollo 20 insignia that is shown in a number of his films shows only the names of the three astronauts (Rutledge, Snyder [sic] and Leonov) and the name of the Apollo mission. This is inconsistent with the 1975 insignia of the joint Apollo-Soyuz mission which had both the 'Apollo' and 'Soyuz', and the names of the three [sic] astronauts/cosmonauts on them."

The second inconsistency was Ingo Swann's account of his remote viewing of artifacts and aliens on the far side of the Moon for a "covert intelligence agency" in 1975. Salla wrote that, "Swann deduced from what he had been told that there was a concerted effort to gather intelligence using remote viewing since physical access to the moon had been curtailed." According to Swann, this was probably because the aliens had decided no further landings would be permitted. Salla continued that other whistleblowers had also indicated that this "...is the real reason why the Apollo moon landings were quietly terminated after the 1971, [sic] Apollo 17 mission."

Salla noted that if Swann's statements and conclusions were true, they would be inconsistent with a secret Apollo 20 landing on the Moon. This, combined with the Apollo 20 patch error, "...could lead to the conclusion that Rutledge's testimony and videos are a sophisticated hoax to deceive the public."

Yet having said this, Salla continued, "...Rutledge's video evidence and testimony may be the final straw that breaks the camel's back concerning UFO secrecy." If Rutledge's claims were proved to be true, and the inconsistencies were successfully explained, Salla predicted that, "...this will lead to an escalation of public disclosures. More officials will recognize that the secrecy system is imploding and will wish to be on the winning side of history as that part of the government

that played a proactive role in preparing the public for disclosure of the extraterrestrial presence."

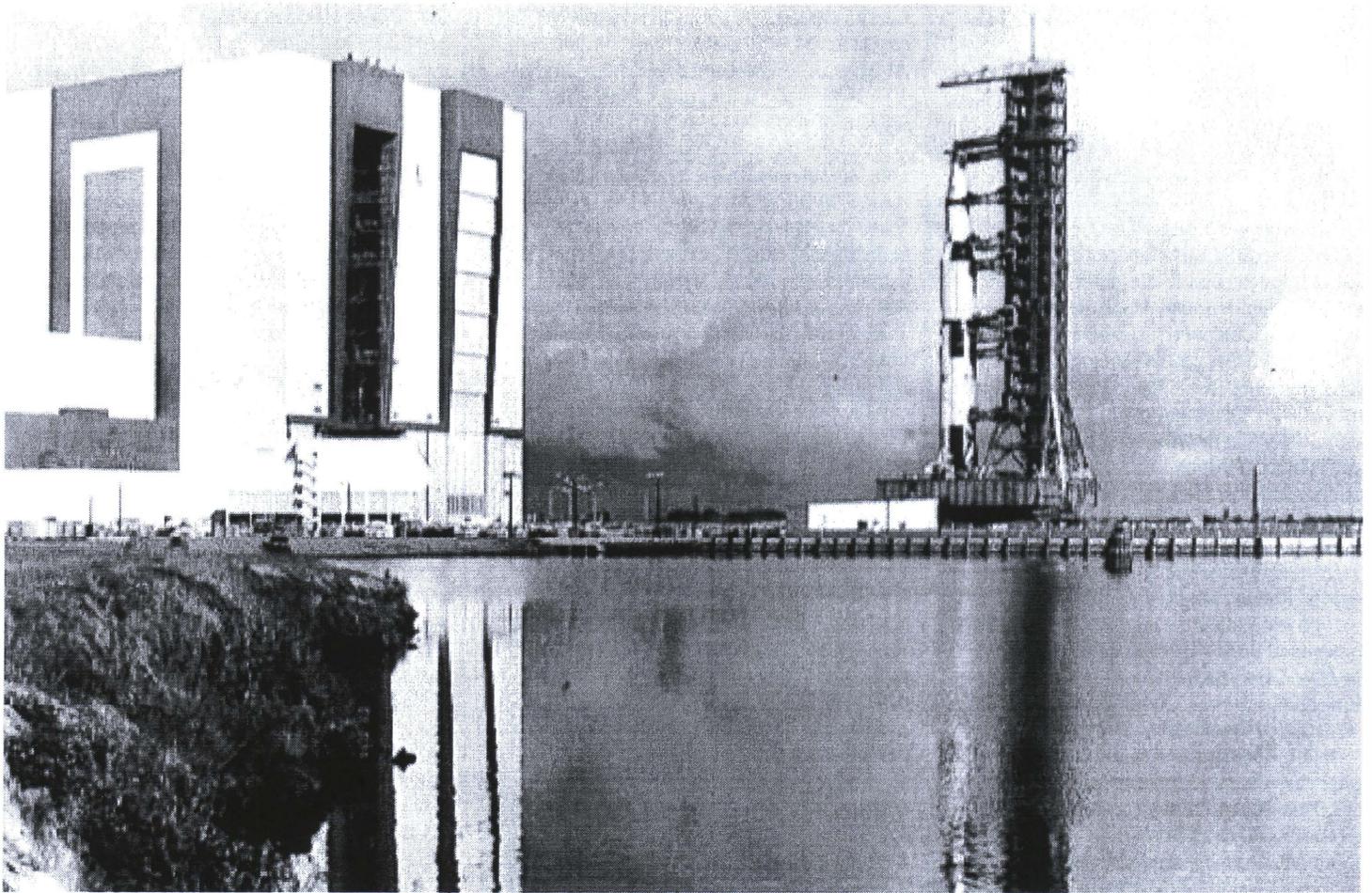
The same was also true, Salla wrote, if the Apollo 20 story proved to be a hoax, as it may be "...an attempt to raise the public's awareness of extraterrestrial life through partially valid information." Salla concluded his commentary by writing: "I recommend considering Scantamburlo's report due to the possibility that this is a genuine disclosure of a secret mission to investigate an ancient extraterrestrial mothership..." [7]

Only four days later, Salla posted an update of the Apollo 20 commentary. Salla noted that the video of the ancient Moon city used a sound clip from the Apollo 15 mission. He initially wrote that this suggests that Rutledge's story and videos were nothing more than an elaborate hoax, and that "...this discovery will suffice to dismiss the whole affair." But he added, "However, this does raise the question of what the underlying agenda of Rutledge is in performing such an elaborate deception? Is it merely to disinform the public or to direct the public's attention to something important?"

Salla preferred the second option, noting that "...the natural starting point is the...Apollo 15 photo....That is a genuine photo and may depict an extraterrestrial artifact as Rutledge claims." He also noted "...that a joint mission insignia was not correctly depicted in Rutledge's Apollo 20 videos." Salla suggested that Rutledge was "...suggesting that there may have been [a] joint secret mission to discover more about the artifact depicted in the Apollo 15 photo, but that its actual name was not Apollo 20 which would have signified solely a US space mission." [8]

Scantamburlo also acknowledged the falsehoods in Rutledge's account in an August 22, 2007 paper. He noted a YouTube user had identified the city on the Moon photo as being a composite of images from the Apollo 17 mission with the fake ruins added. Scantamburlo, like Salla, offered a mixed analysis of the Apollo 20 case. On one hand, he wrote: "...there is the slight possibility that the fake was fabricated on purpose to provide us with a clue in investigating a lunar anomaly." Yet Scantamburlo added: "However I am aware that now the contradictions of the Apollo 20 case are too many to be simply mistakes made by inexperienced helpers who would live in Rwanda..."

But Scantamburlo then asked, "Is it possible that behind the William Rutledge's identity [sic] there is an agent of some Secret service of a European country who is trying to push (or to drive) the US government to reveal what it knows about the possible extraterrestrial in the Solar System? Or is he a person in control of some shadow Government scheme to subject the public to a psychological and sociological test in the context of the unofficial and rumoured 'Public accommodation program.'" [9]



Eine Kleine Rocket Science

To assess controversial issues, modern society draws upon the heritage of the Greeks, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Scientific Revolution. These include rules of evidence, procedures to test a hypothesis, and methods of limiting biases and errors. These are applied on a daily basis to settle scientific, historical, journalistic, and legal questions.

The process has three basic steps. The first is to determine what is required for the claim to be valid or false. The second is to determine what evidence is available regarding the claim. The third is to analyze the collected evidence, and decide what conclusions can be drawn regarding the claim's validity or falsehood.

If Rutledge's basic claim is true, the Apollo 20 mission should follow the patterns of the known Apollo flights. This would include the hardware, ground support facilities, and mission profile. Another requirement is that the use of Vandenberg as the launch site would keep the missions secret. If he is a hoaxer, the Apollo 20 mission profile would not match that of earlier flights, and his evidence would have inconsistencies, falsehoods, and errors. To see which best fits the available evidence, we need a little rocket science.

Launching a Saturn V from Vandenberg would require the existence of support facilities for the booster like those at the

Kennedy Space Center. The Saturn V was the largest U.S. booster ever built. It stood 364 feet tall, consisted of three stages, and produced 7.5 million pounds of thrust at liftoff. The Saturn V was assembled inside the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB). When the VAB was built in the mid-1960s, it was the largest enclosed space on Earth. Once the Saturn V was assembled, it was moved from the VAB to the launch pad on the crawler-transporter. This vehicle is the size of a baseball infield and moves on eight caterpillar tracks. The launch pad is a large concrete mound rising above the Florida swampland. A large launch control center would be needed, and there would be supplies of liquid oxygen, kerosene, and liquid hydrogen to fuel the booster.

A possible option was that an existing launch pad, used for another large Air Force booster, was modified to support a Saturn V. The Titan IIID was the largest rocket being launched from Vandenberg in 1976. This consisted of a modified Titan II ballistic missile "core stage" with two solid fuel strap-on rockets. (These were called "Stage 0" and were on each side of the core stage.) The two strap-on boosters were ignited at lift-off and produced a total of 2.36 million pounds of thrust. After the stage 0 rockets burned out, the first stage engines ignited in flight. The rocket stood 155 feet tall. The core stage and the

strap-on boosters were each ten feet in diameter.

The question then becomes what evidence is available that Saturn V support facilities existed at Vandenberg in the mid-1970s? The Saturn V and the Titan IIID had different configurations. The Saturn V had over three times the Titan IIID's thrust and was more than twice as tall. The Saturn V's first stage was also circular, was 33 feet in diameter, and had five F-1 engines. Four of the engines were arranged in a square, with the fifth in the center. All five engines ignited on lift-off. With the Titan IIID, only the two solid boosters are ignited at lift off. Because of the difference in thrust, engine arrangement, size, and other factors, the existing Titan IIID pad would have to have been completely rebuilt for use by a Saturn V booster. [10]

No evidence exists that any facilities ever existed at Vandenberg that could have been used to launch a Saturn V. Such facilities would be distinctive, and their use would be apparent. They would take years to build and check out, and involve a large number of people.

Rutledge also claimed that while the Apollo 19 and 20 launches were seen, witnesses did not realize the boosters were Saturn Vs. For his claim to be valid, there could be no public or press access to Vandenberg, and the site would have needed a

sufficient buffer zone so that the facilities, preparations, and launches would be hidden from public view. As a result, while outsiders were aware the launches occurred, they did not understand they were secret Apollo missions, and not regular satellite or ballistic missile test firings.

The evidence is that Vandenberg does not meet the security requirements for the claim to be valid. A public road runs by Vandenberg's main gate, and the city of Lompoc is nearby. Even in the 1970s, reporters were allowed on the base to cover civilian satellite launches. Finally, a railroad line runs through the base itself and past many of the launch pads. On September 20, 1959, a passenger train carrying Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev passed through Vandenberg during his state visit to the U.S. The three nuclear-armed Atlas ballistic missiles at the base were clearly visible from the train. Given the access to the base, hiding a VAB, launch pad, and Saturn V booster would not have been possible.

Nor is it possible to "hide" a Saturn V launch from Vandenberg. It would have been visible not only from Lompoc and other nearby cities, but throughout central and southern California. The sound of Saturn V launch, which was only exceeded by a nuclear explosion, would have caused Lompoc residents to realize this was not a Titan IIID or ballistic missile launch. [11]

Another requirement for Rutledge's claim to be true would be that the Apollo 20 mission would meet the same requirements and limitations as the earlier flights, and share the same limitations as to hardware, duration, mission plans, and timing of events. The Apollo program completed six successful Moon landings between 1969 and 1972. The Command Module and Lunar Module were proven spacecraft, and there would be little time or need to make major modifications to the booster and spacecraft hardware, or to the Apollo mission profile, for the secret lunar missions.

There is ample evidence available that the Apollo 19 and 20 flights would have required fundamental changes in all aspects of their mission plans, compared to the other Apollo landing missions. The most basic difference is launch direction. The Apollo launches from Florida were to the east, so the rocket could take advantage of the Earth's rotation to increase its payload. Also, both expended stages and malfunctioning rockets would fall into the Atlantic Ocean.

If an easterly launch from Vandenberg was made, the Saturn V would fly over the continental United States. The Saturn V's first stage, called the "S-1C" was 138 feet long, 33 feet in diameter, and had an empty weight of 370,000 pounds. After separating, it would break up during the reentry and debris would impact about 355 nautical miles down range. This would be along the Colorado River, on the border between California and Arizona. The falling S-1C debris had the potential for causing deaths and injuries. Additionally, the

reentry would be visible from the ground. The S-II second stage would impact off the U.S. east coast. Should a launch abort occur during the ascent, debris could potentially fall on cities and towns anywhere along this flight path. [12]

To avoid such possibilities, launches from Vandenberg are made at azimuths between 158 degrees and 201 degrees (an arc from the south south west to the south west). This avoids passing over land, and results in the satellite entering a polar orbit. (A launch to the north would head toward the USSR.)

While these range limits avoid dropping debris on the American southwest, polar orbits have a payload penalty. The rocket cannot take advantage of the Earth's easterly rotation. For a Saturn V polar orbit launch from Vandenberg, the maximum payload was calculated to be 40 metric tons. The smallest payload for the early Apollo Moon landings was 44 metric tons. This would rule out a Vandenberg launch. If the Saturn V had been launched due west, an azimuth of 270 degrees (which is outside the range limits), the payload penalty would be 13 metric tons, as the rocket would be going the opposite direction to the Earth's rotation. [13]

A little rocket science also allowed the landing time of the Apollo 20 LM on the Moon to be calculated. Apollo landings took place soon after sunrise. The low sun angle allowed the crew to spot the long shadows cast by obstacles. Therefore, the timing of all the mission events, from launch to the actual touchdown, was determined by the time the Sun was at the proper elevation at the landing site.

The video of the Apollo 20 launch on August 16, 1976 showed that it took place in daylight. Sunset at Vandenberg AFB on that date occurred at 7:49 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (2:49 a.m. GMT on August 17). The Apollo 12 mission took 110 hours and 32 minutes from liftoff to the landing on the Moon. Using this as the maximum, the Apollo 20 landing at the alien mothership at the Izsak crater would have occurred no later than 5:22 p.m. GMT on August 21, 1976.

Sunrise at Izsak crater was calculated to have occurred at about 2:00 p.m. GMT on August 22; nearly a day *after* the maximum flight time. [14] This is extremely poor mission planning. Rutledge and Leonov would have had to make a night landing on the Moon, with only starlight to illuminate the surface. (As the landing site was on the far side of the Moon, there would have been no earthlight to provide illumination.)

If a morning landing was made, the crew would have had to spend a day or more waiting in orbit. This required additional hydrogen and oxygen for the fuel cells to generate electrical power, as well as food and other consumables. The claim that Rutledge and Leonov spent seven days on the lunar surface also required an additional 1,500 pounds of payload for the LM. A Saturn V launched into a polar orbit lacked the payload

for even a normal landing mission. [15]

The second hypothesis is that the Apollo 20 story is a hoax. For this to be valid, evidence would have to be found that the claims were false beyond that which could be explained by Rutledge's age, faulty memory, and simple mistakes. Scantamburlo and Salla both noted various problems with the YouTube videos and images. The Saturn V launch video, for example, was from the Apollo 11 mission, but had been edited so it started with the rocket in flight, rather than lifting off the pad. This hid the views of the Florida swamps. Vandenberg has hilly terrain with brush and grasslands. An audio clip from the Apollo 15 mission was also used. Other video and photos were either faked outright or were altered. This includes the "flyover" video and the Moon "city" photo. The "alien mothership" itself appears to be a natural geological feature, such as a landslide.

Ironically, Salla's two objections to Rutledge's claims were flawed. Salla believed the Apollo 20 patch should have read "Apollo Soyuz," to signify a joint mission. ("Soyuz" was the name of the Soviet spacecraft that the U.S. Apollo 18 docked with on the ASTP mission.) But since Apollo 20 did not involve a Soyuz spacecraft, the word "Soyuz" would not have appeared on the patch. His other objection, that the aliens had forbidden landings on the Moon, has several problems. Using an unproven phenomenon, like remote viewing, as evidence about the reality of a disputed event is not valid.

Apollo 20, Exopolitics, Evidence, and the Question of Belief

In reaching a conclusion as to which of the two hypotheses is valid, one must rely on the available evidence. There is *no evidence* to support the Apollo 19 and 20 missions as real events. Without Saturn V facilities at Vandenberg, the booster could not be assembled, checked out, fueled, or launched. Without the ability to launch the booster, the whole Apollo 20 story is false on its face. There are also the issues of range safety, lost of payload capability, the landing time vs. sunrise time on the Moon and the added consumables the mission plan entailed. These indicate the claim is false in its details.

In contrast, the hoax hypothesis is supported by the evidence which Rutledge himself offered. The videos and stills were altered or outright forgeries. Assessing the accuracy or falsehood of a controversial theory is based on evidence that can withstand critical examination. In this case, the claims by Rutledge fail the test on numerous levels. This has implications beyond Apollo 20. Ufologists frequently complain that the scientific community is blindly refusing to accept their evidence. The Apollo 20 story implies the problem is not with the scientific community's outlook, but rather that the UFO evidence lacks sufficient merit to be accepted.

Scantamburlo and Salla made only limited

and informal analyses of Rutledge's claims and evidence. Scantamburlo, for example, pointed to 1960s documents about Air Force interest in the Saturn V as representing "strong circumstantial evidence" that the story was true. These documents are not provided or quoted, nor do they indicate a Saturn V launch capability ever existed at Vandenberg.

The approach taken by both Scantamburlo and Salla in analyzing the Apollo 20 story does not reflect the procedures used by scholars to analyze controversial theories. They accepted the story immediately. In Salla's case, this was based on his assessment of Scantamburlo's work. He wrote that it "...demonstrates a sincere effort" to check out the story. Sincerity is not evidence. Both individuals made grandiose predictions that the Apollo 20 story would soon bring about "disclosure." Very soon, however, they had to backtrack when the flaws, inconsistencies and falsehoods became clear.

Both Scantamburlo and Salla papered over these flaws by claiming they were deliberate falsehoods added to a true story. In short, they claim that obvious falsehoods prove the story is true, rather than a crude hoax. At best, this is wishful thinking. At worse, it is a rejection of the basic tenets of scholarship.

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7. Dr. Michael E. Salla, "Did the USA/USSR fly a Secret Joint Mission to the Moon in 1976 to investigate a crashed extraterrestrial mothership?" <http://www.exopolitics.org/ExoComment-51.htm> Snyder's name was misspelled, and the ASTP mission involved three U.S. astronauts and two Soviet cosmonauts. The Apollo 17 mission was in December 1972, not during 1971.
8. *ibid*, "Update: June 28, 2007."
9. Scantamburlo, "The Apollo 20 Case: Debunking Or A Trojan Horse For The Truth?" The wording is that used in the original posting.
10. Charles D. Benson, William Bamaby Faherty, *Moonport A History of Apollo Launch Facilities and Operations* (Washington, D.C.: NASA SP-4204, 1978), and Kenneth Gatland, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Space Technology Second Edition* (London: Salamander Books, 1989), p. 305.

11. In April of 1981, I was at the Kennedy Space Center for the STS-1 shuttle launch, and saw the VAB, Pad 39A, and the crawler-transporter. I was at Vandenberg AFB in June and December of 1996 and saw a number of abandoned launch sites. I also watched the launch of a NRO reconnaissance satellite from the press site on December 20, 1996.
12. *Apollo Spacecraft News Reference*, North American Aviation ca. 1966 (Apogee Books reprint, 2006) p. 9, and ApolloHoax.net, <http://apollohoax.proboards21.com/index.cgi?action=>

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The specific posting was: Reply #44 May 23, 2007; "Count Zero"
13. ApolloHoax.net, "Bob B." Reply #45 May 23, 2007, Reply #47 May 25, 2007, and "Count Zero" Reply# 51 May 26, 2007.
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25 YEARS AGO

Magonia 12, our fifteenth anniversary issue, led with an important article by American ufologist Jerome Clark. *Confessions of a Fortean Sceptic* put forward the sceptics' case far better than many of the 'sceptical establishment' have been able to do.

He began with an admission that for some time he was convinced by the Cottingley Fairy photographs. After reading Katharine Briggs' account of the case, he "cast all caution to the wind. I was at least wise enough to concede that the Cottingley fairies didn't 'look' real but dismissed that as a subjective consideration. To me the absence of convincing negative evidence, coupled with the presence of positive evidence (however thin) added up to the conclusion that these might be authentic 'thoughtographs' like those Ted Serios is said to produce... To this day I can't believe how stupid and credulous I was".

With this valuable lesson behind him, he was prepared when he began hearing stories of sensational secrets from a US Army Reserve officer. When Clark asked him about crashed saucers "he immediately assumed a stern official-looking expression and declared that there was something he couldn't talk about ... On two or three subsequent occasions he brought up the subject and let it be known that if I pressed him he would tell me the whole story. For obvious reasons, I never bothered".

Clark points out that this individual was a military officer, did have a high-security clearance and was a research scientist at a major university - "And he is also, it is clear, a spinner of yarns". He continues, point out something which should be noted by the present generation of Roswell and Rendlesham enthusiasts: "...it's not unreasonable to theorise that for many people the most important period in their lives was the time they spent in the military, when in fact some may well have been privy to secret information. All human institutions, including intelligence agencies, have rumour mills through which stories may circulate. The environment in which such fantasies are related may give them a false authority. Those individuals who pass into civilian life may repeat the rumours in good faith ... (or) ... may simply place themselves inside the rumours to impress girlfriends, wives and acquaintances".

Elsewhere in *Magonia* 12 we find the subject which brought the final break in the link between MUFOB/Magonia and FSR, which had lasted since the 1960s. Remarking on the official change of editorship from Charles Bowen to Gordon Creighton I was concerned that the reputation of the magazine would suffer (as indeed it did, drastically) on Creighton's watch. I drew readers attention to some of the remarkable claims and dubious reports he had promoted over the years.

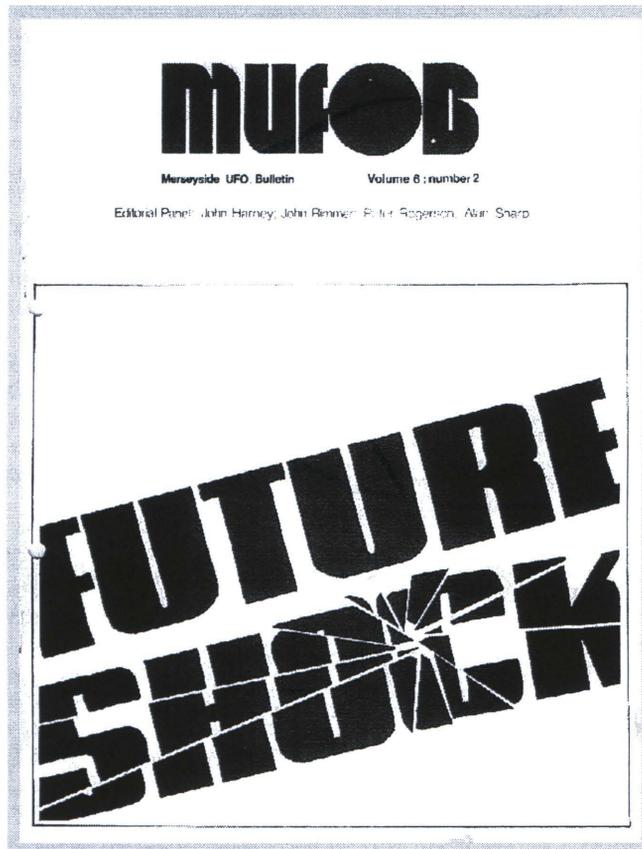
The one claim that really got my goat was his bizarre allegation that "currents of public thinking are being manipulated ... see what is happening to the books about UFOs on the shelves of your local public libraries ... and let me have written reports. I have watched this situation for a considerable time past, with significant conclusions." Of course, as I was working as a librarian at the time (and not receiving secret instructions - or, more importantly, payments - from MI6) my significant conclusion was that Gordon Creighton was talking nonsense. Unfortunately, on pointing this out our long-standing exchange arrangements with FRS came to an unannounced end. We managed to survive.

JR

From Merseyside UFO Bulletin, Volume 6, Number 2, August 1973

"FUTURE SHOCK" AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUASI-RELIGIOUS UFO CULTS

Peter Rogerson



Recently I read, from the Manchester Library, a copy of Arthur C. Clarke's *Report on Planet Three*. At the end of a somewhat critical article on flying saucers, someone had scribbled the following message: **THIS PROVES ARTHUR C CLARK (sic) DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT. FLYING SAUCERS ARE REAL. THE DAY WILL COME WHEN THE IRRELEVANCE OF HIS IDIOTIC STATEMENTS WILL BE SHOWN.**

This printed rendering cannot carry the impression of frenzy conveyed in the original. The words "FLYING SAUCERS ARE REAL" are in giant screaming capitals which give a disturbing impression of insane fury. Nor is this the only specimen of this UFO cultist's views. Others include: **The Star of Bethlehem was a flying saucer. and: THAT IS NOT TRUE. WHAT ABOUT PRECOGNITION WHITCH (sic) IS A FACT.**

These pieces of graffiti are evidence of the deep emotional impact that the UFO phenomenon and the rumours it generates can have on some people. The impression given was that the writer acted as though his deeply held religious beliefs were under attack.

The view that certain UFO groups can be regarded as religious cults has been put forward by a number of psychologists and sociologists. In general such studies have been rather superficial in their treatment of UFO cults, often being confined to the Aetherius Society and similar bodies. The comments of Nelson and Clews [1] and Evans [2] are typical. Both tend to assume that all "ufologists" are motivated by the same sentiments and that there is a single "UFO cult". (This impression is given to almost all casual observers because of the omnibus

nature of the various UFO groups.)

In fact we can distinguish between three sets of persons associated with "ufology":

UFO Researchers - those who are engaged in active, objective, dispassionate, rational, scientific analysis of the data.

UFO Buffs - those with varying degrees of passive interest in the subject. To these people, who make up the vast majority of the members of UFO groups and readers of UFO journals, the subject is a hobby, similar to model building or stamp collecting.

UFO Cultists - those who see the UFO phenomenon in a religious or mystical light, as a supernatural force intervening in human destiny.

It is a mistake to assume that the last category comprises a single unified "UFO cult", or that their beliefs are to be found only in the context of the UFO legend. The UFO phenomenon has acted as a focus for a variety of cults. There are the Contactees, Extra-

terrestrial euhemerists (the von Daniken supporters), Neo-Gnostics, Celtophiles, Theo-sophists, and devotees of various "mystical arts". Each of these tendencies has its own peculiar doctrines though, of course, some common themes can be detected.

Many "ufologists" argue vehemently that this religious motivation does not exist. Toft [3] positively rages at the idea. Yet Toft himself seems to regard Arthur Shuttlewood as a kind of prophet, [4] and any careful examination of the literature demonstrates the falsity of this position. The very vocabulary used in much of the literature is that of a religious movement 'conversion', 'belief', 'sceptic', 'cynic', 'seeing the light', 'eternal verities', 'great truths', 'movement', etc. It is obvious that for

many the UFO phenomenon is a 'faith to be fought for' rather than the object of a dispassionate, scientific enquiry. As an illustration, take this extract from an article by Michael Holt:

"... We ufologists are not certain whether to rejoice at the public's 'conversion' or to despair at the continuing frustrating attitude of authority.

"In these days when the views of those in government seem to be at variance with public opinion (Common Market, hanging, decimalisation, etc.), the ufologist can afford to give himself a pat on the back. He has succeeded in convincing a large section of the population that there is life on other celestial bodies ... and that people from other worlds are visiting our earth ...

"... It is no longer necessary to be an evangelical movement ... preaching the truth about UFOs." [5]

Sometimes these ideas are expressed in a more extreme fashion. When John Cleary-Baker of BUFORA expressed some doubts about the ETH, Richard Beet of SIGAP gave vent to a passionate appeal: "... do not reject but continue to accept ..." [6]

This reaction is clearly that of the disciple lamenting the defection of a religious or ideological leader (with the further implication that the ETH is an article of religious faith).

Associated with this outlook is the belief held by a number of ufologists that having a UFO experience is a kind of mystical revelation. This can be found in the works of Shuttlewood, for example, where one encounters the view that only those who have undergone this experience are competent to discuss the phenomenon. Those holding this outlook often further argue that the UFO phenomenon can never be rationally interpreted, that the solution to the problem can be discovered only by a process of mystical intuition. This rapidly leads to the temptation of the Emperor's Clothes' type of argument, where any nonsense can be got away with by saying that it will be meaningful to those who have reached the correct level of 'spiritual development'.

Those involved with such cults tend to ascribe to themselves a mythological, almost messianic, status. They present themselves as the martyrs for some new occult truth, comparing themselves with Copernicus, Galileo, or even Jesus Christ. [7] They claim the possession of occult secrets and mystical insights denied to ordinary men, and to be battling single-handedly against supernatural powers of cosmic evil, or to receive messages from celestial beings. In fact, these cults belong in the general stream of messianic cults that have existed since the beginning of human culture.

Is it possible to throw any light on the causation of the cults? The answer is probably in the affirmative. The evidence we possess on the genesis of the messianic cults of medieval Europe, [8] the revival in Wales and England in 1904-5, [9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14] and several of the modern cults, points to the view that these cults are generated by the tensions of rapid, unprecedented social change. Thus, with the collapse of the feudal order in Europe numerous messianic, apocalyptic cults flourished, associated with beliefs similar to those of the present-day UFO mythology. Strange appearances were seen in the sky; prophetic leaders claimed inspiration from supernatural beings; there were rumours of secret knowledge. The chaos of the Civil War in Britain saw the emergence of similar cults (such as the Ranters and the Fifth Monarchy men), and an explosion of other accounts of supernatural phenomena. [15] In 1905 the



The skywatch at Warminster is held on Cradle Hill, echoing the belief in most cultures that spiritual revelations may be found on the tops of hills and mountains, and by climbing one is approaching the sky, the abode of the gods.

traditional values were under assault from the modern world. The experience of the revival permitted at least for a short time a confirmation and strengthening of those values.

Today the developed, Western world is in the grip of massive change. The impact of technology is producing unparalleled revolutionary changes in all aspects of life. The crisis generated by this impact has been analysed by Alvin Toffler in his important book *Future Shock*. [16]

Toffler argues that vast numbers of people are unable to adapt to massive revolutionary change; faced with a baffling, frightening world, they retreat into fantasy worlds. They try to deny that this change is final; they try to return to older, simpler worlds where their values are undisturbed. Toffler holds that this retreat from change is the stimulus behind the numerous magical and escapist cults (from astrology to surfing) which are being generated at an ever increasing rate.

In a highly mobile and impersonal world where social bonds are often very temporary, and from which numerous people feel alienated, these cults provide a sense of community. Within some of the flap areas, the UFO percipients form a kind of 'community within a community', possessing a hidden bond of shared experience. It is perhaps this need for 'community' which is the motive power behind sky watches and the open-air pop concerts. At a deeper level both serve as a species of religious ceremony. Some writers are very explicit about this. The late Dan Butcher regarded a skywatch as: "... in the

nature of a séance, a circle composed of some mediumistic people ... in which anything can happen ..." [17]

The tendency to hold skywatches on anniversary dates (such as 24 June) gives some indication that such a motive is present. As can be seen from the above quotation, there are those who see the skywatch as a 'communion with the gods'. The visits to Warminster are therefore in the nature of pilgrimages to a holy place, where the pilgrim hopes to undergo a mystical experience. The skywatch at

Warminster is held on Cradle Hill, echoing the belief in most cultures that spiritual revelations may be found on the tops of hills and mountains. (By climbing one is approaching the sky, the abode of the gods.) The name, too, Cradle Hill, may be instrumental in the development of the myth.

The UFO cultists seek to escape the modern world by renouncing it, by seeking a magical revival, [18] which sees the UFO as the Holy Grail. [19] These beliefs were shared by the Romantics of the 19th century, [20] who despised science and reason, and who championed 'blood and emotion' in their place. Several of the writers in this field practically admit that they are seeking to be liberated from the restraints of rational thought.

The notion that epoch-making events and major changes in society occur almost by chance, or through the operation of diverse, little understood, psychological, sociological, economic, political, cultural and technological factors is very disturbing to many people. Such people seek simplified reasons for events, or methods of divination whereby the terrible unpredictability of future events can be reduced. In such conditions it amounts to a comfort to believe that disturbing social trends are produced by malignant extraterrestrial or supernatural forces.

"... there are elements in the social phenomena of today which seem to point directly to outside, alien influences ... at work in our society. Youth, in particular, appears to be a target for all sorts of forces and influences, often obscure and probably not all terrestrial in origin." [21]

Cleary-Baker (who wrote that piece), is a neo-Manichean, and the context of the quotation shows that he sees a meaning in history, as a product of the opposing forces of good and evil. By in effect arguing that unwelcome change is the result of Satanic influence, those who hold this view are freed from the necessity of facing social crisis, accepting change, or seeking rational solutions to the world's problems. If disturbing social trends are from the Devil, they need not be understood, only combated.

It is a short trip from this to the fully fledged neo-Gnostic beliefs of Creighton,

Lloyd [22] and Keel, [23] in which the world is seen to be in the total grip of the forces of evil, that all existing philosophy, religion and ideology emanates from the forces of evil, from which man can be liberated only by mystical revelation. Such beliefs have always been associated with times of extreme crisis, and appeal to those who find themselves incapable of facing the world.

At a deeper, personal level, such myths allow the holders to escape blame for their own failings. They are 'illuminated', possessed of superhuman perception, and are persecuted because of this. Thus every failure, every mishap, becomes a significant part of a cosmic drama in which they are major participants: they fall and break a leg, members of their families are mugged, their views are jeered at, the libraries do not stock the books they like, industrial disputes hamper their work. All these unrelated and impersonal events become part of the global conspiracy. Now they are in Magonia, free from the responsibilities of sanity.

Those who see the world in such 'black-and-white' terms require swift solutions, and seek supernatural intervention to end an intolerable situation. This intervention may be seen in the rumours of benevolent space people who have come to save humanity from itself. [24] Several of these accounts are clearly expressions of the contactees' own anguish in the face of world and personal tragedy [for example, 25]. A second, deeper and darker response, is the hope for apocalyptic overthrow of the world order. [26]

One of the primary functions of myth is to act as a bond binding the community together, and with the disintegrative effect of technological change on the community today, the need for myth is greater than ever. It is clear that the conventional religious, political, cultural and scientific myths do not meet important needs. Most importantly they do not provide for the magical relief of immediate needs. Hence the revival of magical ways of thought. In times of crisis such beliefs are used to seek to penetrate the veil of the future. The growth of astrology is a clear indicator of the fear which is held about the future.

Throughout the UFO literature such fears for the future are frequently expressed, associated with the fear that civilisation is on the decline. This fear in the face of a baffling present and unpredictable future provokes a backward-looking attitude within the magical cults, which continually project Magonia into an idealised past, the home of harmonious, peaceful super-civilisations. Despite the radical, forward-looking gloss, as exemplified by the attacks on 'cosmic provincialism', the UFO cults are fundamentally conservative, seeking to reduce the universe to manageable proportions of time and space. Hence the curious desire of some 'ufologists' to prove that the universe is smaller than is generally supposed. The universe of the cultist is geocentric and anthropomorphic. The support given to catastrophism, anti-Darwinism and

Bible fundamentalism is illustrative of this.

In addition to these social pressures, the UFO phenomena themselves, as are those studies by parapsychology, are deeply disturbing. They challenge the current world view and threaten unimaginable possibilities, in which 'anything can happen'. The appearance of strange lights in the sky, and stranger objects and beings on the ground, coupled with the silence, or confused, absurd 'explanations' from official sources, has led to the development of fantastic rumours and myths. Faced with new phenomena which seem to emerge from regions outside rational control, threatening our nice safe little world, there seem to be two general reactions; either to pretend that they do not exist (as my colleague Alan Sharp does so remarkably well), or to create a religion around them.

If the UFO phenomena are indeed generated by an extraterrestrial civilisation, then it threatens a catastrophic acceleration of change; i.e. contact with a 'superior' external mentality would have precisely the same effect as a catastrophic 'invasion' from our own future. The cultural shock which would follow such a contact is precisely the same thing as the 'future shock' discussed by Toffler.

These anxiety-generating events can be 'defused' by a myth which reduces them to acceptable proportions. The 'space brother' myth excellently fills this role; no need to worry, the strange, awesome UFOs are just the metallic, electromagnetic spaceships of the beautiful people from Venus who love us all. This serves not only to remove the awe from the UFO experience, but also suggests that our own future may not be totally remote from our experience, thus defusing fears about the future. The relief thus generated goes a long way to explain the power of the 'space brother' myth over rational thought. I received a practical demonstration of this power when once I was rash enough to remark at a UFO group meeting that if UFOs did come from an ET source, then that source would be unimaginably different from us. The reaction was one of fury, the ideas that ETs would be more than slightly more advanced human beings was literally unthinkable.

Similar mechanisms are the stimuli for the rash of seemingly absurd 'explanations' from government departments. These are not scientific descriptions but palliatives put out to reduce public anxiety, and the spreading of fantastic rumours. As noted above, they have had precisely the opposite effect.

As in past times of crisis and social change, the appearance of fantastic lights in the sky is seen as an omen of coming changes. One well-circulated petition on the subject asks as one of its questions " ... are they omens?" [27] Such visions become the basis for new myths and religions, and confirm causes with supernatural authority. As this article was being written, it was announced that General Idi Amin of Uganda had seen a strange object land on Lake Victoria, then ascend; this was immediately regarded as a

sign of 'good luck for the future'. The UFO myth has now clearly entered the arena of public events and political decision. What course it will take now is impossible to foresee.

The world is changing rapidly, soon out of recognition; the UFO legends are one response to this. Alone, man faces the future and cries out for help. As Vallée puts it: [28]

"My only guide has been the persistent feeling that science had offered no answer to some basic needs in our hearts, and that perhaps the present loneliness of man, echoed in the great miseries of times past, had provided most of the emotional power, most of the intellectual quality, mobilised in that unreachable goal: Magonia - a place where gentle folks and graceful fairies dance, and lament the coarse world below."

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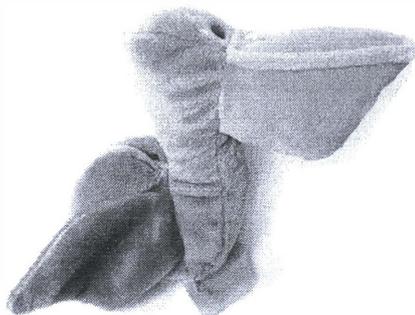
One of the main reasons why many highly unlikely UFO stories achieve prominence, apart from their entertainment value when presented on TV chat shows and at "scientific" UFO conferences, is that most active ufologists lack a sense of the ridiculous. Some of them produce books which are reviewed by people who are also incapable of noticing the sheer absurdity of what they are reading. All but a few UFO conferences are excellent examples of theatre of the absurd, although they are attended mainly by people who view the proceedings as being sensible and informative.

Some good examples of ufologists falling prey to and wasting their time on absurdities are provided by the accounts of their futile investigations based on what is obviously - to The Pelican, anyway - disinformation. MJ-12 and its apparently endless ramifications, is perhaps the most notorious.

Some people think that disinformation is supplied by unscrupulous ufologists, seeking money or notoriety, or both, but there are reasons for believing that some of it comes from official sources. For example, Brad Sparks and Barry Greenwood have produced a closely argued case for the notorious Richard Doty working with certain ufologists and being told of their discoveries. (1) Then he would produce official-looking documents which seemed to confirm their findings. It was only later that some people began to realise that Doty was merely repeating what the ufologists had told him and not producing any new information, or nothing that could be independently authenticated.

Most sceptical writers on the subject have concentrated on the details in order to show that they could not be true, for various reasons. But, so far as The Pelican is concerned, the real question is: Why did well-educated and intelligent people ever take any of this nonsense seriously? Disinformation, whether from individuals or from government agencies, or a combination of both - as in the case of the MJ-12 cottage industry - would be quite ineffective if noone took much notice of it.

Indeed, The Pelican suspects that if he placed an advertisement in a UFO journal or on a UFO web site, inviting Ufologists to send him their savings, promising to double their money in six months, some of them would actually send it to him. He could also announce to ufologists planning to visit London that he has a few



THE PELICAN WRITES

El Pelicano es fuerte en sus apreciaciones, pero muy razonable.

nice bridges for sale.

The Pelican is not the only one who is concerned about the state of ufology and the mental health of ufologists. A Canadian ufologist, TV and film producer and writer Paul Kimball, asserts: "Modern ufology mirrors the current American political scene in many respects. It is divided into various partisan camps, with people who hold on to their belief systems not because they are right, but because it is what they have known for so long that they cannot imagine another way of doing things." (2)

Ufology is "largely devoid of 'new faces'. It is a club that is composed primarily of ageing white men, most of whom seem to be devoid of whatever sense of 'gee whiz' wonderment at the UFO subject that one presumes got them interested in it in the first place."

Kimball thus wants a new "front person" for ufology, "the voice that is heard most often". Readers will no doubt be agog to learn the identities of the favoured ones. The two principal ones suggested by Kimball are - wait for it - Nick Pope and Mac Tonnies! No, don't laugh, this is Serious Ufology. Pause while The Pelican recovers his composure. (Have you ever seen a pelican

having a fit of the giggles?)

Kimball goes on to admit that "none of these people will galvanise the scientific community into action". However, he argues that such persons will get people more interested and involved. Such interest will generate money, and science "will follow the money". Ufology will then make progress as adequately funded scientists get to work.

But what will the scientists actually do that they are not already doing? There have been investigations by physical scientists who have not found any evidence to support the popular theories concerning UFOs. There have also been studies by psychologists, sociologists and folklorists, which invariably provoke rage in American ETH circles (Kimball's "ageing white men").

In 1997 an organisation called the Society for Scientific Exploration held a symposium led by Dr Peter Sturrock at which ETH believer ufologists presented evidence to a panel of scientists. The panel concluded that it was "not convinced that any of the evidence involved currently unknown physical processes or pointed to the involvement of an extraterrestrial intelligence".

The real reason why ufology is so chaotic and never produces results of any great scientific significance is, as The Pelican has previously stated, that ufology is a spurious subject. It is a merely a branch of modern folklore, of interest to students of popular delusions and misperceptions.

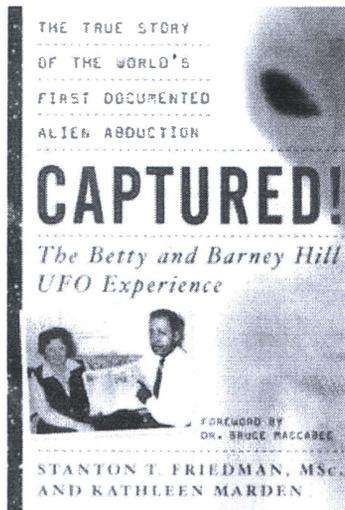
Kimball's problem with ufology is that he seems to think that there is some real object, at present called a UFO, which can, if sufficient scientific expertise is applied, can be identified and studied. This supposes that most unexplained reports have the same explanation, the "True UFO" so beloved of North American ufologists. But, in reality, the physical aspects of UFO cases differ from one to another. The UFO has no existence outside the minds of ufologists and UFO percipients.

So let us recognise this evident fact and let The Pelican say it again: Make Ufology History.

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BOOKREVIEWS



Stanton T. Friedman and Kathleen Marden.
Captured: the Betty and Barney Hill UFO

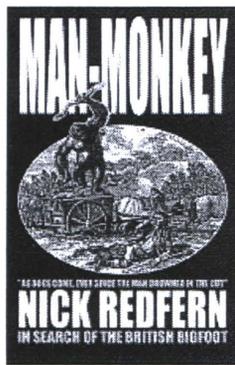
experience, the true story of the world's first documented alien abduction. New Page Books, 2007. £11.99

This is something of an official biography of the Hills, by Betty's niece with the support of one-time nuclear engineer and long time at least semi-professional UFO lecturer Stanton T. Friedman. As might be expected it presents the classical Friedmanesque style of fundamentalist ufology, with Betty and Barney being kidnapped by real live Zeta Reticullans in a nuts and bolts spaceship. This it is not always as insightful as the studies of the Pflock and Brooksmith volume, nevertheless it is not without interest.

The most important sections are those which show how Betty in particular was dragged into the realm of contactee cultism by the more than semi-mysterious Robert Hohmann and C. D. Jackson. Curiously Friedman (or is it Marden) seems surprisingly warm towards their 'brave scientific experiments' in trying to get Betty to telepathically contact the space people. During these experiments a number of rather odd things are said to have happened, but no convincing evidence of anything was ever forthcoming. Though the authors are too polite to say so, there seems little doubt that these two came close to driving Betty totally over the edge, especially after the death of Barney. It was in those years that Betty and her skywatching friends began seeing flying saucers all over the place and having all sorts of other strange experiences. Betty does seem to have been one of those charismatic personalities to whom people reported stories of their strange experiences, which they interpreted in terms of their own beliefs and culture. These 'wondrous experiences' including one very odd one during Betty's last illness, have more than echoes of the tales told about Catholic saints or spiritualist mediums.

Reviews by Peter Rogerson, except where stated

I think this book just reinforces my suspicion that we would know a lot more about the Betty and Barney Hill story and its origins if we knew a lot more about Messes Hohlman and Jackson, and whether they were just a couple of typical cultic milieu saucerarians of the sort that you could have found in any British provincial flying saucer club, or something more sinister. The Hills were political radicals, deeply involved in the civil rights movements, perhaps with significant political careers ahead of them, and who maintained friendships with people on a nearby military base. Just the sort of people you might think to whom J. Edgar Hoover would take a special animus, in their case perhaps pushing them deeper and deeper into the bottomless mire of ufology replaced the more usual drink, sex and financial indiscretions as the means to neutralise them.



Nick Redfern.
Man-Monkey: in search of the British Bigfoot.
CFZ Press, 2007.
£9.99

Ken Gerhard.
Big Bird! modern sightings of flying monsters.
CFZ Press, 2007. £7.99
In a book of old Staffordshire

folklore by Charlotte Burne she records a story from January 1879, of how a man crossing a bridge across the Birmingham-Liverpool canal was terrified when a "strange black creature with great white eyes" sprang onto the back of his horse. He attacked it with his whip, but the whip went straight through it. A classic road ghost tale, variations of which can be found through the world, in which a ghost leaps onto the back of a horseman, an ancestor of modern tales of phantom hitchhikers. This ghost appears to have been given a name by a local



policeman, the Man-Monkey.

As the story of the Man-Monkey cycled through local folklore, it appears to have modernised. Today there are "eyewitnesses" to the Man-Monkey, now reconstructed as a typical hairy hominid. Many of these come forward as a result of Nick Redfern's articles in the local press, and several seem to be rather strange characters, such as one used to meet on the fringes of UFO meetings, others seem like your archetypal 'sober citizens', but their stories are equally incredible.

Redfern investigates these stories by eh, listening to them. He seems to make no effort to find out whether such stories were in print before his own articles, or to search the local newspapers for January 1879 for further details of the 1879 incident.

In some ways stories like these concentrate the mind, for of course there are no 'relict hominids' in Britain, something which Redfern realises, and therefore we are left either with 'supernatural' explanations, such as shape shifting bogbarts, which is what Redfern appears to favour or psycho-social ones. The latter would explore these stories in terms of suggestion, road hallucinations probably associated with micro REM, altered memories, the remembering of heard stories as personal experiences, and band wagon jumping.

In some ways the same applies to the American reports of giant birds and wannabe pterodactyls reported by Ken Gerhard. Though the possibility of simple misperception and misidentification is quite a bit higher here, there is the same bizarre quality about many of these tales. The big birds are clearly not just regarded as paws and pelts (or feathers) animals, but as 'birds of ill omen', perhaps something in the region of harpies, or the 'wicked birds of prey picking on bread crumb sins' out of Dylan's *Gates of Eden*.

Thomas J. Carey and Donald R. Schmitt,
Witness to Roswell: Unmasking the 60-year cover-up,
New Page Books, Franklin Lakes, NJ, 2007. \$14.99 £10.99

This is yet another Roswell book written to strengthen the faith of the believers. The testimony looks impressive to the casual and rather credulous reader, and, apparently, to a number of reviewers who really ought to know better.

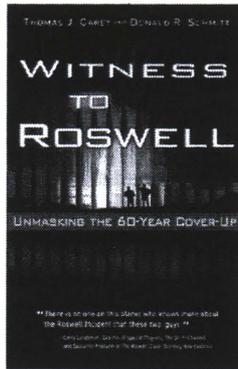
It is, of course, the usual story of witnesses, or alleged witnesses, being repeatedly asked leading questions by ETH believers and constantly embellishing their stories. The authors have many stories and witness statements which they use to build a reasonably coherent account of the alleged saucer crash, by the simple process of discarding those tales which don't fit their preferred version.

In an attempt to give some credibility to their findings, they reject the stories of a few witnesses because they have been discredited even by firm believers in the crashed alien spacecraft. For example, the authors admit that Glenn Dennis, who in 1947 was an embalmer at the Ballard Funeral Home in Roswell, "...was found to have knowingly provided false information to investigators ...". Dennis's story was mainly concerned with alleged attempts to carry out autopsies on the decomposing bodies of aliens at the Roswell RAAF base hospital.

However, it seems that the story of aliens being seen at the base was too good to pass up so, having reluctantly disposed of Dennis as a credible witness, the intrepid duo triumphantly produce another witness. "Another man who *did* see the bodies was Elias 'Eli' Benjamin." They tell us how they eventually got a detailed account from him. Readers who are inclined to be convinced by this story of the reality of the Roswell aliens, should be warned that, since this book was published, Roswell expert Kevin Randle has discovered that Carey and Schmitt somehow "forgot" to mention that the name Eli Benjamin is a pseudonym, which perhaps makes it rather difficult for more objective investigators to attempt to establish the truth or falsity of this story.

There are problems with the witnesses, because they are now very old. Also, a few of them are dishonest and have been proven to be, whereas others are merely confused, or have developed false memories, caused by their constant exposure to tales about the Roswell incident.

There is also the problem of the credibility of the authors. Schmitt used to work with Kevin Randle, until questions started to be asked about Schmitt's background. There was nothing wrong with his background, though, except that he persisted in lying about it. He falsely claimed to have impressive academic qualifications and he strenuously denied the fact that he worked as a postman at Hartford, Wisconsin. Also his UFO research was shown to be seriously flawed. This caused the breakup of the Randle-Schmitt team, and



Schmitt now works with Carey, who is referred to by Pflock, and others, as Schmitt's "sidekick". If you are interested in the Roswell case, it is no use reading this book on its own or you will be seriously misled. It should be read in conjunction with the late Karl Pflock's *Roswell: Inconvenient Facts and the Will to Believe* (Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York, 2001). The authors are very eager to believe witnesses who tell them

what they want to hear, or even to believe those who claim to have been told about the crashed UFO and aliens by others. But those who claim to have seen nothing unusual, or who do not want to be constantly interviewed by an apparently endless succession of credulous - or venal - ufologists, are said to have been "silenced" or "traumatised".

In common with the authors of most other Roswell books, Carey and Schmitt tell us that the "UFO" wreckage could not have been a Mogul balloon rig because of its amazing physical properties, particularly its great strength which resisted all efforts to break, burn or melt it. How strange, then, that it had obviously broken into many small pieces when it hit the ground!

There is also the problem that no witnesses have been able to provide samples of the material, even though many people travelled up to 75 miles (according to the authors) to collect bits of wreckage, which some of them then passed on to others. Nevertheless, the US Army Air Force, apparently having god-like powers, managed to retrieve every last scrap of the material. In their efforts to persuade readers that this is so, Smith and Carey descend from implausibility into farce.

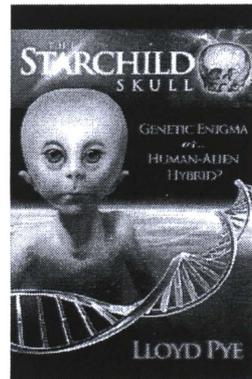
However, in order to preserve the myth, nothing must be regarded as impossible when it comes to providing explanations for the absence of compelling physical evidence of alien visitations. Much is at stake: lecture tours, TV appearances, books, the applause of the credulous at those crazy UFO conferences.

We are told: "Now the military was fully aware of all the civilian curiosity. They had to account for each piece, and they suspected everyone--*including children!* Ranchers were forced to inform on one another. Ranch houses were also ransacked. The wooden floors of livestock sheds were pried loose plank by plank and underground cold storage fruit cellars were emptied of all their contents. Glass jars were scattered, broken on the ground."

This information was obtained from a witness between 2005 and 2006, yet the alleged events happened in 1947! Also, we are not told if the person was an actual witness or had been told the story by someone else. There is also the question of the practicality of treating in this way large numbers of people, many of whom were no doubt aware of their constitutional rights. That some people would

have been too timid to complain is quite likely, but that all of them would have kept quiet for over 30 years until Stanton Friedman and other ufologists started grilling them seems most unlikely.

The discerning reader will also note the authors' vivid reconstructions of various incidents and conversations, mostly based on little more than vague and fragmentary recollections of witnesses, or persons claiming to have been witnesses. This is not a book for those seriously interested in what might or might not have crashed in New Mexico in 1947. Karl Pflock's book is probably the best starting point for such readers. For a more detailed review, by Tim Printy, of *Witness to Roswell*, see <http://members.aol.com/TPrinty/UFO.html> John Harney



Lloyd Pye. *The Starchild Skull: genetic enigma or human-alien hybrid?* Bell Lap Books, 2007. £11.00.

This unusual skull surfaced in 1998 in the hands of a couple of members of MUFON, with a most dubious provenance which we shall come to later. It then passed into the hands of Lloyd Pye, who turns out to be a dedicated Sitchinist. First its original owners, then Pye and his friends have hawked it round various 'experts' who have come to varying conclusions. It is clear that Pye and company are not genuinely interested in the opinions of these people, what they are looking for is some 'expert' who will validate their predetermined conclusion that this is an alien-human hybrid. We, of course, only have Pye's version of what these various people say.

From the photographs reproduced here the skull certainly looks unusual, and their is apparent disagreement among various 'experts' as to whether or not it is the skull of a hydrocephalic child, whose skull has been further distorted by the process of head-boarding, a technique used by some native American cultures to support a baby's head while carried on its mother's back. Perhaps if the child was severely disabled it may have been carried and hence head-boarded by the mother for a longer than USUAL period of time.

In cases like this one should adopt the Sherlock Holmes position of 'when you have eliminated the impossible, what remains, however improbable, must be the truth'. Being totally open minded, and assuming for the moment that this is a genuine unretouched skull here are the possibilities

(1) It is indeed an alien-human hybrid. (2) It is an alien skull. (3) It is the skull of some new quasi-human terrestrial primate. (4) It is

the skull of a human-(3) hybrid. (5) It is an unusual human skull

Option 1 we can eliminate straight away as biological nonsense, a genuine alien human hybrid makes as much sense as a bicycle-human hybrid. The skull is now conceded to have ordinary Native American mitochondrial DNA, so that's 2 and 3 down the drain.

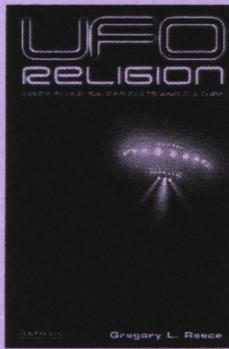
We are left with 4 and 5, but as there is no separate evidence for the existence of any other human line having characteristics similar to this skull anywhere, or any non-*homo sapiens* human lineage of any kind in the Americas, we should rule out 3 as massively improbable. Which leaves us with 5, it is just an unusual human skull. It is made of human bone, has human mtDNA, and everything else is superficial.

If this was a well-provenanced skull we could probably conclude that is likely to be the that of a hydrocephalic child, possibly with other genetic and developmental problems. But the provenance here is very dodgy, it is allegedly found by a Mexican-American woman 70 years ago, along with other bones which have conveniently been lost. She revealed the truth when dying, but did not allow her name to be used, because her husband worked for the US government. She passed this skull and another said to have been found with it (but which turns out to be unrelated) to another couple, who guess what, will not allow their names to be used, because, you've guessed it, the husband works for the US government.

Dodgy provenance suggests something dodgy, something to hide. Maybe it is just that this is skull from a looted grave, or maybe it suggests that something is not quite right at all with this skull. Could some of the various oddities with the skull mean it has been subject to some form of post mortem treatment and sculpting? Could it be even be an artefact made out of human bone? Only one of the experts suggests a hoax, and withdraws that suggestion, but would they necessarily be looking?

Of course, if it is a hoax it must be a really sophisticated one, streets ahead of the average UFO hoax, up to the UMMO level at least. One requiring money, time and expertise. I will make a guess that if this is a hoax then maybe the people behind it are the same as those behind the Australian alien hair episode. If you ask who has the time, money, possible expertise and ideological commitment, then it boils down to a short list of two, the Sitchinists or the Raelians. We all know that according to Lynne Picknett, there are some pretty big guns behind the former, but her views are controversial to say the least, and I am not quite convinced that they are organised enough for this. That leaves the Raelians.

So that leaves two answers, either this is an unretouched skull of a deformed human child, a sophisticated hoax, most probably by the Raelians, but possibly by the Sitchinists. Only much more detailed analysis by non-ufologists will resolve the matter further.



Gregory L. Reece. *UFO Religion: inside UFO cults and culture.* I B Tauris, 2007.

The title of this book may be a little misleading, for this is not yet another scholarly study of the classic UFO religions such as Aetherius or the

Raelians, though these do get a mention. Rather it is an impressionistic journey though the realm of ufology, from primitive sightings to elaborate theologies. On the way the classic realms of UFO crashes, conspiracy theories, abductions and contactees all get a look in.

There is much here that Magonians would agree with: the common sense look at Roswell, clearly showing that in 1947 this was not a story about a crashed alien spaceship, but of some decidedly low tech and quite terrestrial instrument. Reece also clearly grasps what the likes of Hopkins and Jacobs are really about, and remarks that the fear that this induces has nothing to do with aliens, but what human beings can do to one another, not so much scaring as sickening.

The world of the UFO sub culture can look strange to an outsider, but is it a religion. Part of the problem with that question is that there is no agreed definition of religion; one definition might go something like 'the set of over arching beliefs, traditions, rituals, practices and customs which bind a community together and separate it from its neighbours'. Another might go like 'the set of beliefs, practices, rituals etc. which have to do with the transhuman realm and humanity's relationship with it'. Reece takes a view which is perhaps more primitive, for he sees it connected with the idea of 'primal awe' in the face of the unknown.

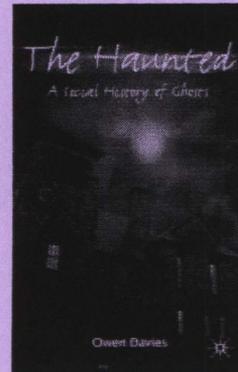
The example he gives of this is his own childhood vision of the aurora borealis, the red and gold in the north-west sky evoking visions of distant sandstorms, atomic fire, Jesus on the clouds of glory, alien invasion, the end of the world, none of them boding good, and all capable of sweeping his fragile little world away.

In this sense ufology is indeed a religion, it is one concerned with marshaling evidence for an existence of a transhuman realm, and of humanity's relationship with it. The primal awe at the sight of the infinite vastness of the night sky, at the remoteness of the past and its mysterious and 'alien' cultures, of the deepest hopes and fears. Ufology offered the awe and wonder of the space age, and the allure of the future. The UFOs endorsed our own beliefs in the power of technological wonder and the infinite possibilities of our own future.

Reece sees the contactees of the 1950s as the embodiment of that optimism, if only war could be abolished, hate turned to love, that we can be better, that the new technology can

save as well as destroy. But these new gods of the empirical world are growing old, and dark and savage like the gods of old, demanding obedience and abandonment of the human.

Now we have the dark conspiracies which speak of our fear of ourselves, and of the abductees which speak of primal fears that no peace dividend can ease, of the dark and the universal predators which sniff around in it. of loneliness and loss, of the darkness in the human heart, and of terrors from which no talisman, no holy water, no scientific formulae nor walls of steel and marble, no missile defence system can protect us.



Owen Davies. *The Haunted: a social history of ghosts.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. £18.99

Ghosts have haunted our imagination from time immemorial, and here social historian Owen Davies tracks them through the early

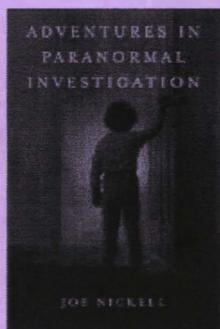
modern period, from the Reformation to modern times. Eschewing the usual chronological arrangement he tracks down the various manifestations ascribed to ghosts, the varying traditions of belief and disbelief, and the role of ghosts in popular entertainment and culture. What emerges from his treatment is a greater sense of unity across the generations, it is perhaps in the rhetoric of the learned that the ghost has changed the most, the elite concentrating initially on ghosts which gave the right theological message, and later on the approved SPR type of apparition which, like children and servants, was to be seen and not heard.

Owen deliberately sets out not to retell the stories of the upper middle class as recounted by the SPR or ghost collectors like Charles Harper and Lord Halifax, and rather tells the stories of the people's ghosts as recounted in broadsides and newspapers, along with regional folklore studies. These were the classic ghosts which once haunted liminal places in the countryside, with vague and indeterminate apparitions, or rattled the pots and pans in old houses. These became successfully urbanised, and became attached to places like deserted houses. Twenty-first century readers brought up with an idea of Victorian propriety may be astounded to learn how much ghost hunting was once a popular activity, with gangs of youths assembling outside 'haunted houses' calling on the ghost to appear. Teenagers were always teenagers and there are several stories of young girls faking poltergeist effects to get back at parents who wouldn't let them go out on the town with 'rough company'.

Unlike other supernatural beliefs, such as those in witchcraft, fairies or the devil, the

numbers of people saying they believe in ghosts has steadily grown since the war, from about 10% in 1950 to close to 30% today. Owen sees one possible explanation for this in the decline in the power of established religion and its theological orthodoxies. We can perhaps also see it as an expression of the search for history and identity in a rapidly changing world. Owen notes that from beings of terror they have become tourist attractions. Most of these ghosts are expressions of periods of popular 'romantic' history, Ghost stories were also popular in the Victorian period, another period of rapid social change.

This book's major strength lies in its accumulation of lost detail of the beliefs of past times. Its main weakness lies in the treatment of the modern period, and in the meaning of ghost stories and memorates today. There is for example no discussion of the rise of orbs and other phenomena of modern technology, or the role of Hollywood in the construction of modern ghost lore (notions of portals, energies and the like). At the same time technology has replaced many of the functions of the old fashioned ghost, the mobile phone has replaced the crisis apparition, and perhaps the home video the memorialising apparition, perhaps this is why modern horrors rarely generate ghost stories, or perhaps these events are too raw for stories circulating around them to appear in the public domain. Perhaps ghosts are just echoes of what lies just beyond living memory. If that is the case, what will arise to haunt the imagination when the last few survivors of the Great War finally die, when there are no more holocaust survivors, no one left to recall the second world war. Or will scratchy recordings, morphing from technology to technology be the ghosts to haunt generations to come.



Joe Nickell. Adventures in Paranormal Investigation. University Press of Kentucky, 2007. \$29.95

Secure in the armour of his rationalist faith, Joe Nickell, like some modern day exorcist

goes out to battle against the ghosties and bogbarts and like long leggy beasties, along with sundry "papist superstitions" which inspire our dreams or plague our nightmares. Such are not, in our modern age, pinioned into bottles to be deposited at the bottom of the Red Sea, but or burned away with the fire of reason. Whether it is the ghosts in the haunted house, or the weeping statue in the nearest Catholic church, Joe will dispose of it.

Joe's faith never seems to falter, and he never seems to have doubts. Though he describes himself as an investigator rather than a debunker, the results of his investigations are never, at least publicly, in doubt. In that sense

Alien Worlds, Issue 1, February/March 2008, editor and publisher Stuart Miller. Bimonthly, £3.99 or £22.50 for six issues. The New House, Church Bank, Richmond Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 3NW

The Editor writes: "It is a combination of the three disciplines involved in the search for alien life; UFOs, the SETI organisation (the search for extraterrestrial intelligence), and the science of astrobiology."

Apart from articles on various aspects of these subjects, much space is devoted to Stuart Miller's speciality - interviews with scientists and ufologists. On the subject of SETI, the scientists include Michael Michaud, who has worked for the US government on international co-operation in science and technology, including space technology. He is interviewed about his new book, *Contact with Alien Civilizations: Our Hopes and Fears About Encountering Extraterrestrials* (Springer-Verlag, New York).

Another one is the first of a two-part interview with Ian Morison, Director of Jodrell Bank, in which he discusses the various methods of searching for possible signals from ETs.

Among the less scientific interviews is one with Mac Tonnies who expounds his somewhat incoherent notions about "crypto-terrestrials", which is the word he has been using to describe "a physical flesh and blood race here on Earth". These are not like the beings described by Jacques Vallée or John Keel. When Miller asks him if they are "tangible flesh and blood" he replies: "Yes. They're both and neither. They're an interesting mix. I think there are different kinds." So it seems you can have it both ways. Presumably they are physical beings until you try to catch one. Not only are Tonnies's ideas incoherent, they are also unoriginal, as there would appear to be little difference, apart from differences of style, between his cryptoterrestrials and traditional fairy folk.

Another time-waster interviewed is a man called Bill Ryan, who is obsessed with the Serpo affair which wound up a lot of ufologists a few years ago. It consisted of absurd - and very boring - stories about an alleged entente between the US government and an ET race called the Ebens. A group of Americans is said to have gone to their planet for a few years. This interview takes up six pages, which you should not bother to read, except perhaps as a cure for insomnia.

More mainstream ufological items include an interview with David Clarke and an article by Nick Pope, who gives us "the inside story on Project Condign". Nick Redfern writes about his continuing investigations of allegations that the Roswell stories are a cover for secret experiments carried out on human subjects, involving such things as testing the effects of exposing them to high-altitude conditions, as first described in his controversial book *Body Snatchers in the Desert*.

As this is the first issue, it would be unwise to make any firm judgements about the magazine, except to say that it is plainly superior to most broadly similar journals aimed at a mass readership. However, I hope that the Editor will encourage his graphic designer to adopt a slightly more conventional layout, with less white on black print, which makes my eyes water trying to read it. Also, perhaps his more genteel readers might not be entirely happy with some examples of his earthy sense of humour.

John Harney

he is clearly the mirror image of the true believer in the paranormal, for whom no amount of exposure of fraud can shake their faith.

Of course in many of the cases discussed here, Nickell is probably right to be secure in his faith, yet there is something slightly troubling about his certainty and lack of appreciation of the ambiguities of human experience and psychology. Ultimately professional "skeptics" are just another variety of believer, and like all "believers" tend to inhabit a world in which all the complexities and ambiguities of the real world are neatly ironed out.

David Standish. Hollow Earth: the long and curious history of imagining strange lands, fantastical creatures, advanced civilisations and marvellous machines below the earth's surface.

De Capo Press, 2006. £9.99

A survey of the hollow earth theory in pseudoscience and popular culture from the days of Sir Edmund Halley onwards, featuring the likes of Captain Symmes, Cyrus 'Koresch' Teed and many others. The theme had appeared in a variety of fictional formats in the hands of writers such as Edgar Allen Poe, Jules Verne, Frank Baum and Edgar Rice Burroughs; it helped to spur the race to the poles and provoked much utopian and

dystopian fiction. Standish rarely ventures into the realms of why such an unlikely theme has persisted into a time when even primary school children know that it is nonsense. There is perhaps the double appeal of a safe contained inner paradise, nostalgia for the womb, and age old beliefs in an underground afterlife.

The whole is told in an engaging style and there are some excellent period illustrations.

