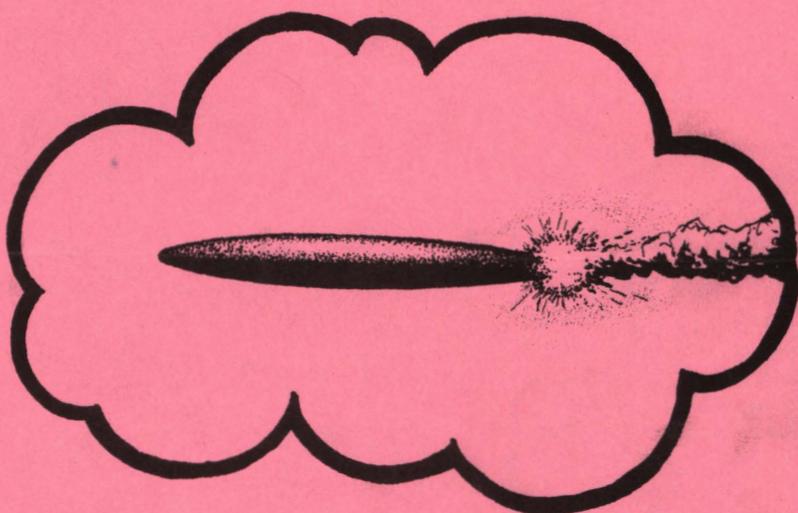


Edited by John Harney and John Rimmer

September/October 1971

## Psychological theories: a defence by Peter Rogerson.



E D I T O R I A L

Has the "New Ufology" gone too far?

In view of the lack of physical evidence to support the ETH, it seems reasonable to look for a new approach to the subject in the hope of finding a more promising theory.

Up to a point the school of thought generically termed the "new ufology" has stimulated serious research and discussion. It has at last come to be generally realized that no UFO report should be ignored simply because it appears to be absurd, or does not fit in with the more generally acceptable versions of the ETH.

It is certainly a good idea to compare some of the more bizarre modern reports with earlier tales of demons, fairies and the like. But, would it be too much to ask that these stories be treated in a manner more appropriate to the twentieth century than to the middle ages?

Present day attitudes to ghosts, fairies and the purported landings of exotic beings in flying saucers may seem too coldly rationalistic to some of the more romantically-inclined ufologists, but they have been painstakingly evolved over the past few centuries as the progress of science has gradually dispelled the clouds of medieval ignorance and superstition.

Again and again psychologists have demonstrated the unreliability of human perception and memory and the startling effects of prejudice--conscious or unconscious--on what we think we see and hear. Yet there are many ufologists today who reject these findings in order to wallow in their own fantasy world. And a strange, paranoid world it is, too--a sort of mixture of H.P. Lovecraft and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Alan Sharp, our Science Editor, is preparing an article criticizing the new ufology and we hope to publish it in our next issue. We hope it may serve to guide some of the new ufologists back to reality.

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L E T T E R   T O   T H E   E D I T O R

From Mr PETER ROGERSON

Dear John,

I would just like to mention three points:

(i) My thanks to Janet Gregory for her kind words about "Sun Maiden". Janet's letter confirms my point that UFO experiences occur in precisely the conditions in which hallucinations are predicted.

(ii) There were a number of omissions and inaccuracies in my contributions to MUF0B 4:3.

The references to my article were omitted. They are:

Dr Vessey's article...Journal of the S.P.R. Vol. 45 No. 742, Dec. 1969, pp 161-165.

Mr Sheargold's letter, J.S.P.R., Vol. 45 No. 744, June 1970, pp 313-320.

Information about the S.P.R. and its journal may be obtained from:

The Secretary, 1 Adam & Eve Mews, London, W8 6UQ

In my review of "Mysterious Worlds" the words "...has often been quoted in the UFO literature" should read "...is similar to cases that have been quoted in the UFO literature".

In "Official Guide" the reference to the Warminster flap should read the "Wanaque Reservoir flap". My apologies for inconvenience caused.

(iii) I am in the process of constructing a supplementary catalogue of landing and Type I (Vallee) reports. The catalogue has at present 500+ items. I would be grateful for details of unpublished reports. These should contain

precise date, exact location, witnesses' names, etc. and essential description of events. I would be interested in corresponding with anyone engaged in a similar project.

Yours etc., Peter Rogerson, 8 Braddon Avenue, Urmston, MANCHESTER,  
M31 1UE

DISENCHANTMENT . . . . . by John Harney

It has always been a tacitly agreed policy of this Bulletin to try to keep in touch with developments at Warminster. We occasionally visit the place, time and funds permitting.

The latest visit took place on October 9th, when your Editor and his companion, Mr Brian J. Hall, arrived by train in the afternoon. Mr Hall had never visited Warminster before, so a conducted tour was undertaken. Our first visit was to Cradle Hill. There was nothing doing up there that Saturday afternoon, apart from some desultory Army activity. Someone had provided a litter bin which was placed by the hallowed gates. On it were painted the following embarrassing legends: "LITTER. We leave no sign we've been here, why must you?", "Space junk only", and "This bin was donated to commemorate (sic) the invention of time travel, 2026 AD".

A litter bin, obviously unofficial, but surely the first sign that the UFO aspect of Warminster is becoming popular? By this I mean that holiday visitors to the Lions of Longleat will soon be fitting Cradle Hill into their itineraries as a matter of course.

You see, the Warminster "Thing" is now history. Arthur Shuttlewood has completed his trilogy with the publication of UFOs-- Key to the New Age and has retired from active participation in local ufological activities.

That evening, suitably fortified, we ascended Cradle Hill again in order to witness the traditional Saturday night skywatch. There was nobody there when we arrived at about 2150. A few minutes later a convoy of cars arrived. Arthur Shuttlewood was conspicuous by his absence. However, the watchers did their best. They seemed hesitant at first and just sat in their cars, or loitered by the gates. We decided to set an example. We scrambled over the gate and strolled up to the Field Barn copse. On the way back we found that the other watchers were emulating our example to such an extent that when we got back to the gate we found ourselves alone.

Eventually we were asked had we noticed a light over there in the sky. Yes, we had. We pointed out to the enthusiasts that if they continued to look in the same direction they would see similar lights again and again in exactly the same position. This was because they were not UFOs, but simply car headlights on a distant hill which was itself invisible in the haze and darkness. This evaluation of the sighting was rapidly confirmed: the watchers were plainly disappointed.

However, they were still working on it--still trying to conjure up the old Shuttlewood magic. Back at the gates, looking at the altocumulus clouds illuminated by the moon, one ufologist declared: "It's just like the Northern Lights, only the other way round", (whatever that means). "I know about the Northern Lights", he added, "I've been to Alaska". This not being strong enough meat for the enthusiasts, there followed talk about the clouds "revolving about a central point", (they were plainly not) and all the usual nonsense was talked.

It was a good try, but it did not come off. It can never be the same again at Warminster. Shuttlewood has published his findings and wrapped it all up. Sightings still occur and are now being faithfully recorded by Ken Rogers in his Warminster UFO Newsletter. But to no avail. Most copies are sold to the tourists--just another souvenir.

Nothing can bring back the old magic. There are changes every time we visit Warminster and never for the better. It is becoming a town for tourists. Remember the "Farnor Giles Guest House", for example? In the good old days it catered for lorry drivers and filled up with ufologists at £1 a night. On our last visit it had been tarted up, and so had its prices. And this time it was even more tarted up and calls itself "The Farmers' Hotel".

On Sunday morning we went for a walk down to Boreham and passed the

famous telephone box in Boreham Field. It was occupied by an ordinary earthman. Either that or the Aenstrians are well-disguised these days.

"Great Truths forming in the Void?" was the title of one of Arthur Shuttlewood's last articles submitted to the UFO magazines. Well, the "truths" have been presented to us. Take them or leave them. UFO sightings continue at Warminster, but they are no longer vested with the old significance. Cradle Hill is now a national monument, just another stop on a conducted tour. Unlike the Longleat Lions, there is no charge for a visit. But for how long?

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## POLITICS AND CULTISM

by John A. Rimmer

In the last issue of this Bulletin Peter Rogerson commented on the activities of some so-called ufologists in the field of extremist politics, and called for more moderate people to resist the propagation of racist, anti-semitic and crypto-fascist views through UFO magazines. However there seems to be evidence that such views may be an integral part of the fringe of ufology, and their suppression would involve more than merely avoiding the more extreme publications.

As Peter Rogerson points out, twentieth century fascism was a reaction against rational materialism in the nineteenth century. It is basic to fascism that the great majority of mankind is incapable of properly controlling its own affairs, and requires the dictatorial control of a god-like Ubermensch, or the example, benevolent or otherwise, of some master race. Nietchz's 'Also Sprach Zarathustra', a highly romantic philosophic tract first crystallised the idea in a coherent form. The disillusionment with a broadly liberal and humanistic view of society that followed the devastation of the first world war produced a violently emotional and irrational over-reaction ranging from the brutality of German Nazism to the vague extremists of the British fascist movements. Alongside this descent into political irrationality ran a strange current of quasi-mystical pseudo-science. This encompassed such bizarre ideas as testing 'racial purity' by detailed physiological measurement. Hitler was a devotee of a wide variety of curious pseudo-scientific ideas, and many of these have been chronicled in the UFO literature.

In its reaction to the realities of an often unattractive materialist world, fascism holds out a Golden Age. The model for this is drawn from the historical imagery of the culture in which it flourishes. Thus the German dream-world was a curious amalgam of Teutonic heroic myth and medieval bourgeois society, and Mussolini regarded ancient Rome as his ideal order. In Britain fascist movements have drawn on Arthurian, Saxon and Elizabethan imagery. Sir Oswald Moseley, in his belief that the British people will call him from exile in France to lead the country in its hour of need, re-echoes the old legend of King Arthur lying asleep, ready to be roused when England is in peril.

This imagery is recalled by many of the UFO cultists, which often foresee a golden age, and parallels some of the more idealistic concepts of 'romantic' fascism. The cultist suffers from the same despair as the fascist. He sees the sad spectacle of what surrounds him, and concludes that man's ultimate destiny is chaos, futility and destruction. The only way he can see of avoiding this is the intercession of some superior person or race. He may see himself as the medium for this salvation, having been given the essential knowledge through a 'contact' experience. Or he may see the intervention of an alien 'master-race'. In either case the assumption is made that mankind is incapable of improving its condition without outside help. This is the direct opposite to a humanist and socialist viewpoint, which looks forward to an improvement in the condition by its own unaided efforts. This school of

thought reaches its apotheosis in Marxist Historicism, which postulates events which must happen--the defeat of capitalism, world revolution--as part of an unavoidable destiny.

As the fascist ideal is a reversion to earlier, inaccurately perceived cultural forms, so is the imagery of the UFO cultist. Many British cultists are fascinated by the Arthurian legend. A whole ufological cottage industry has grown up, relating Celtic and Saxon remains, often confusing the two, leys, megaliths and other antiquities. It is ironic that the neo-romantic drug culture, with its attendant magical-ufological offshoot, apparently devoted to the ideal of complete personal freedom, should line up with racist and fascist oriented elements in their devotion to a non-existent and historically confused social order. Closer examination of the aims and methods of both groups will however reveal fewer differences than might at first be supposed. The details of UFO contact and vision experiences often reflect some of the essentials of fascist mythology. The physical description of the aliens by such contactees as Adamski, by whom they are seen as tall, fair haired gods in flowing robes of gold and white, is almost the same as the images of Teutonic gods and goddesses in the 'culturally pure' paintings of Hitler's Germany. Whether the contactee experience is genuine or not is irrelevant--the imagery was strong enough to produce these descriptions even in a hoax. The messages which contactees receive usually lack the intellectualising influence of the more consciously political messages of the fascist visionaries. However the new order they propound has strong links with the more abstract imaginings of the extreme right. The 'space-brothers' usually intimate a strongly hierarchical system which would help to provide a secure position for an insecure personality. Although sometimes the system is ostensibly socialistic or communistic, often with a pastoral or agricultural basis, there is invariably a guardian class, represented by a 'galactic council' or some such manifestation of the alien master race.

The politics of ufology often depart radically from the conventional left-right confrontation that I have dealt with hereto. However the basic quality of political involvement in ufology is unchanged--total confusion. Peter Rogerson has touched on some of these. Many UFO magazines seem to devote a great deal of space to curious economic theories. There are American journals which see the Federal Reserve system virtually as the Beast of the Apocalypse. Others rant against the 'International Bankers'. It is easy to see these as symptoms of chronic insecurity. Many of these cultist magazines contain never ending attacks on the apparatus of government, and seem devoted to the cause of personal freedom. In American journals this is seen in terms of the Frontiersman, the tough, rugged pioneer--again a reversion to archaic forms. If this was taken at its face value it would seem to be a healthy sign, a championing of individual values. However, closer examination reveals that the object of the attack is not the authoritarian, centralised state, but the minor bureaucracies and inefficiencies that surround it. Whilst this is no bad thing in itself, it is usually implied that direct and arbitrary rule from the top would cut out all these minor irritations that surround the freedom loving individual in the democratic state. There is a kind of implied feeling that Federal Income Tax is a greater threat to mankind than the gas chamber. In ufology it is often felt that while the 'man at the top' is a believer he is held back from expressing his views by the plethora of minor officials and place seekers. These may be the military, hiding the truth about the space brothers to shore up their own power structure, or a looser confederation of people--the Illuminati, Zionists, Masons, anybody, what their name or apparent objects are is irrelevant--who have infiltrated the government for their own ends. Upholders of this view easily turn any event into a conspiracy. The Kennedy assassinations are a prime example of conspiracy mongering.

There are some aspects of ufological politics which seem to fall outside the usual political spectrum. A British UFO journal has recently announced the formation of a new political party. Its policy is harmless in its unreality, but exhibits a few of the characteristics of other minority, extremist movements. First there is the peculiar arrogance that would cause a person to attempt to form such a party, without any sort of power base. To do this a person must hold the belief that he has been given some sort of preter-human power. Obviously a person who seeks guidance, even indirectly, from an extraterrestrial civilisation would be more likely to believe that he has the answer to the world's problems than one schooled in a more conventional political environment. The programme of this party contains a typical mixture of the incredibly grandiose and the almost laughably specific. It calls on the one hand for the complete overthrow of the economic system and replacing it with a system of 'credits' (of course), and on the other for the construction of circular, three-storey blocks of flats with gardens in the middle. In this harping on the obsessive insignificance in the midst of world shattering proposals one is reminded of Hitler's law prohibiting the use of mutes on trumpets.

If, as I have attempted to show, there is a broad common band between the cultist aspect of ufology and some of the manifestations of political extremism, one may expect this to show in the wider aspects of ufology. It is certainly true that the machinations of UFO organisations often resemble some of the more spectacular Hitlerian or Stalinist purges, but it may perhaps be dangerous to build a general behavioural theory on the antics of individual ufologists!

There is however one aspect which is common to many ufologists and many on the political fringe. There is in many people a psychotic desire to be in a minority. This may be a form of masochism, and is often hard to distinguish from a genuine conviction, or it may be a desire to be part of an elite, disassociated from the majority--a distinct right-wing reaction. In most democratic societies it is fairly safe to be part of a minority, and members of political minorities are free to pursue their persecution fantasies. UFO cultists often seem to relish the disdain in which they are held by the majority, and use their critics to help build up an elaborate system of persecution. We have all read the paranoid ramblings of ufologists who claim that every move of the majority ('the enemy') is directed at them, that no commentator can be indifferent to them, and any remark, however dispassionate, is another part of the conspiracy. Similarly, minority political movements are able to construct vast dossiers of intimidation, infiltration, police brutality, and other persecutions. In both instances the motive is basically a form of extreme egotism. It is encouraging for an insecure person to feel that he is such a threat to established society that security forces have to work full time to eliminate him. This however can only work in a liberal and tolerant society. When any real repression starts such minorities are the first to fold up, thus distinguishing them from the genuine zealots. In a repressive society the paranoid minorities are able to find their security within the rigid discipline of the state.

In this essay I have attempted to draw some parallels on the activities of ufological and political extremists, and demonstrate how the ideas and fantasies of political extremists have found an outlet in the confused credo of UFO cultism. I suspect that Peter Rogerson's desire to isolate unsavoury elements of the UFO fringe may be unrealistic and that these unpleasant political manifestations may be part of the phenomenon that more moderate ufologists are attempting to study. It should be possible for a well-adjusted person to study political and ufological extremes rationally without being emotionally influenced by the views that he is studying. There is however in ufology a regrettable, but apparently very deep-seated tendency for the majority of researchers to identify, to a greater or

lesser degree, with the subject they are supposed to be studying from without.

FURTHER READING: Two excellent and entertaining books on minority and extremist politics, both Right and Left are 'The British Political Fringe' and 'The Farther Shores of Politics: the American Political Fringe', both by George Thayer. The chapter on the American Black Muslim movement will be of particular interest to students of UFO cultism.

#### PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF UFO S

by Peter Rogerson

During the past 2-3 years there has been a growing interest in, and discussion of, possible psychological interpretations of UFO phenomena, this being provoked by the growing 'strangeness' of the ever accumulating body of evidence. It is only natural that this departure should have provoked strong criticism, not to say scepticism, in some quarters.

The most serious critique of psychological theories advanced to date is the series of three articles by Carl Grove in BUFCRA Journal: "UFOs-Psychological Theories and their Defects", (hereafter PT) (1); "Hoax and Hallucination--the Evidence", (HH) (2); and "Jung and the UFOs", (JU) (3). In these articles Grove raises a number of specific criticisms of the psychological theories that have been advanced to date, and also any that may be advanced in the future. It is hoped in this article to answer each point specifically.

Grove is quite right in rejecting pseudo-psychological hypotheses which regard UFO phenomena as journalistic sensations, and percipients as alcoholics. Such ideas are not however those that serious proponents of psychological theories are talking about. We can limit discussion in the main to the possibility of hallucination as a cause of UFO experiences. This can be done under two heads-- (a) Can hallucination take place under the conditions under which UFO percipience allegedly takes place, and can psychologically normal people be hallucinated? (b) Is there anything in the accounts of UFO percipience that would automatically eliminate hallucination?

With regard to (a) Grove tends to suggest the answer is 'no', on the grounds that hallucinations are uncommon, and occur in definite psychological states--sensory restriction, sleep deprivation, psychotic and neurophysiological abnormality, drug intake and deep hypnotic trance. (PT) These views are only partly correct. In fact hallucination of a simple and undramatic kind probably occurs at least once in everyone's lifetime. With some people hallucinations may occur several times, and with a small proportion of the population hallucinations are more or less frequent--ostensible clairvoyants and trance mediums, for example. Here, of course, we are approaching the boundaries of psychosis. The evidence collected by psychologists suggests that about 15% of the population tend to be hallucinators. It would be interesting to know if high hallucinator subjects are also deep trance hypnotics.

The hallucinations that 'normal' people experience tend to be fleeting affairs, they do not have the complexity and behavioural changes that are associated with psychotic conditions. The closest comparison between UFO percipience and acknowledged hallucinations occurs in the field of apparitions, which are generally reported by psychologically 'normal' people in the course of everyday activity. The evidence collected by parapsychologists discounts the view that hallucinations are confined to extreme psychological conditions. But even if this were not the case, the criteria suggested by Grove are capable of a far more liberal interpretation than may be envisaged

at first glance. Sensory restriction hallucinations are by no means confined to 'black room' restriction (such as that used in astronaut training) though hallucinations in total sensory restriction are extremely vivid and complex. Motorists driving through monotonous scenery or at night often experience very vivid hallucinations; indeed they may enter completely trancelike states, a fact which is recognised as a significant cause of major accidents. Such a condition, especially in a deep trance subject, may be the cause of many of the dramatic UFO reports involving night drivers.

Hallucinations can be produced by a variety of chemical substances. Carbon monoxide, in trace amounts, if inhaled over a long period can produce hallucinations and psychotic reactions; reduction in oxygen supply can produce similar results. It is also true that no definite opinion on the cause of schizophrenia exists. There seems to be as much evidence that it is caused by chemical changes in the body as by emotional causes. It may thus be that pollution is as significant a cause of the rapid growth of mental illness as is the 'pace of modern living'. It may be that some flaps in agricultural areas are the results of some very unpleasant side effects of some modern insect sprays.

There can be little doubt that the 'silent contactees' described by Keel and others are psychotic subjects. The symptoms described are classic symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia. Keel has claimed that the majority of Type I percipients he has interviewed are suffering from these after effects. If this claim can be substantiated it would indicate that either the percipients have experienced a traumatic event which has caused a psychotic reaction, or that Type I percipience may be a preliminary sign of psychosis.

Therefore we would be justified in concluding that hallucination can take place under conditions described by UFO percipients.

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Specific objections to the psychological hypothesis:

++ That collective percipience rules out hallucination, as collective hallucination is impossible (PT).

While the evidence for mass hallucination is not conclusive, it is by no means negligible. The Fatima case is a striking example. It would be almost impossible to envisage any objective 'thing' which would be visible to only a certain number of a contiguous group. Cases of collectively perceived apparitions are by no means a complete rarity. Tyrrell (4) counted 130 such cases and gave a number of examples. He and most other parapsychologists have regarded such cases as hallucinations generated by parapsychological interaction. Alternatives to such a viewpoint have never had much success, and were often little more than meaningless phrases. The notion of parapsychological interaction has a wide measure of acceptance in psychological circles, and has far more evidential backing than the claims of ETH ufology.

++ That physical traces, photos, radar tracks etc., rule out hallucinations (PT, HH).

Despite Groves' statement that such traces occur in a significant number of cases, they are in fact quite rare. Alan Sharp has given convincing alternative explanations for several crater reports. In view of this, ground effects unaccompanied by visual reports can be automatically discarded. In the case of visual/ground effect reports a general sequence takes place. The witness ostensibly perceives an object; later he finds curious marks at the spot. It is a natural reaction to suggest that the 'object' caused the marks, but there is often no convincing evidence for this. It is equally likely that the ground markings were already there, subconsciously noted, and later woven into a hallucinatory experience.

Of the 2000 plus photographs probably less than twenty are

of any interest at all. 'Totally convincing' UFO photographs have been convincingly explained as fakes, at such a rate as to make us wonder if any photographs are of evidential value. Even the McMinnville photographs have had serious doubts cast on their authenticity. My only conclusion is that unless photographs are taken under the most stringent and well documented conditions, such as have not, to my knowledge, yet been met, such evidence can not be regarded as worthy of serious consideration. Radar tracks are of a similar nature, they are few in number, but puzzling. There seems little reason to believe that they must represent the same phenomenon as, say, landings. It does not seem totally unreasonable to suggest that curious radar tracks may themselves be the result of hallucination.

++ That UFO reports predominate in rural areas, whereas it would be expected that psychological stimuli would predominate in urban areas (HH).

Grove's prediction is quite incorrect. Hallucinatory conditions are more likely in relaxed rural atmospheres, where there is less sensory stimulation, leading to dreamlike states, than in noisy urban conditions. In this respect the UFO phenomenon is entirely consistent with the hallucination hypothesis.

++ That periodicity, especially the Mars synodic period cycle, is incompatible with the hallucination hypothesis (HH).

D. Knight (5) has shown that Fortean phenomena show a relationship with the Mars cycle. A variety of natural phenomena seem to show similar cyclical variations. Perhaps minute changes in the Earth's electromagnetic field can catalyse hallucinations in certain people. As for other statistical evidence, this writer is not a mathematician, and will forbear comment.

++ That no proven case of hallucination in reliable UFO witnesses exists (HH).

A number of clearly hallucinatory cases exists, though the percipients may not be regarded as reliable by Grove. Both Schönherr (6) and Keel (7) have pointed out evidence suggesting that Type I cases are of a hallucinatory nature. Several of Vallee's cases (8) are not capable of an objective explanation. As such witnesses can always be regarded as unreliable such cases tend to get 'swept under the carpet'.

Vallee now also concludes that entity reports do show regional/temporal variations. (8)

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### Jung and the UFOs

Jung suggested that UFOs are archetypical, symbols in a collective unconscious (9). Grove criticises this (JU) on the grounds that archetypes cannot be inherited genetically. There is little reason to suppose that Jung ever thought that they were, in a literal sense. Jung always regarded the 'collective subconscious' as an immaterial in a dualistic sense. Similarly the importance of archetypes in no way relates to their ultimate origin. However laboratory experiments on rats suggest that under certain conditions learning may be inherited. Tradition handed down from the earliest clan communities of Homo Erectus, until the advent of mass media, may well have modified genetic structure. Jung's hypotheses were not created to 'explain' the UFO phenomenon as was the ETH; thus one could say that the ETH violates Occam's Razor. To say that a hypothesis is 'suspect' because it explains a phenomenon, yet violates common sense, is a curious novelty. It is difficult to see how the theory of relativity, for example, could have emerged under such a principle. A significant number of psychoanalysts still adhere to Jung's ideas. The psychologists however have no such set of accepted views; enormous controversies still surround all psychological theorising.

## Conclusions

Any general interpretation of the UFO phenomenon will have to violate the generally accepted 'laws' of physics, psychology, or both. At the present psychology is much less rigid than physics, therefore novel psychological theories are more plausible than any concept which jolts the laws of physics. The only serious critique of the psychological hypothesis, that of Carl Grove, contains a number of unfounded statements and over generalisations, and thus has not established its case.

## References

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2. \_\_\_\_\_: "Hoax and Hallucination, the evidence", BUFCRA Journal, 2, 12, Summer 1970, pp 3-5.
3. \_\_\_\_\_: "Jung and the UFOs", BUFCRA Journal 3, 2, Winter 1970/71, pp 3-5.
4. TYRRELL, G.N.M: Apparitions, 2nd edition, Duckworth, 1953.
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6. SCHONHERR, Luis: "Question of Reality", FSR 17, 3.
7. KEEL, John A: "Perfect Apparition", FSR, 17, 3.
8. VALLEE, Jacques: Passport to Magonia, Regnery, 1969.
9. JUNG, Carl: Flying Saucers—a Modern Myth of Things seen in the Skies.

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## LOCAL UFO REPORTS

Further to the reports of a mysterious aircraft seen over Merseyside in August (see last issue), the following account appeared in the column, "People and Places", by Peter Prescott, in the September 14, issue of the Journal of Commerce:

"Why do the experts talk like fools when asked about UFOs which thousands of people see and the experts never detect? You could not fool schoolchildren with the stupid "explanations" they put forward for the things (we) see in our night sky which do not conform to known standards.

"When I got back to Prescott Towers the other evening night was falling and I saw an object, taken to be an aeroplane, flying over very fast and—here was the point—without a sound and with very bright beams of headlights all over the front. As it passed overhead, and Madam Prescott joined your columnist, a red light was seen on the port side. No distinct shape could be made out but the brilliantly illuminated front was bow-shaped. It was rather longer than a Boeing 707.

"As it passed away southwards its 'bodywork' obscured the lights, which pointed only in a forward direction. Why headlights? What 'landmarks' or objects were they supposed to illuminate up there?

"Later came a rumbling sound, certainly not the sound of jet engines which would be required to give a conventional aircraft that speed. And with the sound, the local kennels occupants set up a rather eerie howling.

"Then came the experts. 'Jupiter passing through a cloud' they said at the big Manchester radio telescope. The scientists however were far from unanimous. 'Mars', others declared. This writer is somewhat of a star gazer and can identify both of these planets on sight, and the day either of them rumble through the earth's atmosphere from due North to due South should set the 'experts' quaking at the knees.

"The aforesaid schoolboys, who are usually very well informed on these matters, and who, like myself, did see it, must have been as contemptuous of the 'explanation' as I was. It was a very solid, substantial object, intelligently—and I suspect humanly—built and flown. And my guess is that it is a 'defence' device about which the appropriate authorities are preserving a mystery-creating silence"

The following report has been received from Bernard Veale:

On Sunday, September 5, at approximately 8.45 in the evening, a Mr J.

Clarke and five witnesses observed a glowing, yellow-orange disc cross the sky in about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  minutes in a southeast to northwest direction. One of the witnesses, Mr Clarke's brother, observed through a pair of binoculars what appeared to be a bank of lights on one side of the UFO.

So far we have only seen Mr Clarke, as we have experienced some difficulty in trying to find him; however we expect to see the rest of the witnesses shortly. The original report was in the Runcorn Weekly News for September 11, 1971, and the sighting took place in RUNCORN.

Mr Clarke has been a keen astronomer for about 30 years and so is well experienced at observing objects in the sky.

The latest local UFO sighting took place on October 23, at ROCK FERRY. The following report appeared in the Liverpool Echo on October 23:

Two Wirral commuters reported seeing a mysterious object in the sky while travelling along New Chester Road, Rock Ferry, today. The object, said sales manager Mr Peter Seymour-Dixon, of Storeton, was at about 40,000 feet. A colleague, Mr Stephen Lamb, of Prenton, also saw it.

"It then dropped very rapidly with a very large flare out behind to about 2,000 feet," said Mr Seymour-Dixon. "Then it came to an absolute standstill for about a minute before moving off in a horizontal direction."

The incident happened just before 8 o'clock and later Mr Seymour-Dixon checked with Jodrell Bank but they had no reports of the sighting. Air Traffic Control at Liverpool Airport also had no reports.

## NOTES QUOTES & QUERIES

### The problems of communication with extraterrestrial intelligence

We are grateful to Mr Peter Booth, of Cheadle, Cheshire, for sending us a copy of a report which appeared in the October 1, 1971, issue of Nature.

The report concerns the international conference on Communication with Extraterrestrial Intelligence which was held at the Byurakan Observatory in Soviet Armenia from September 5 to 11. It was a joint project of the US and USSR Academies of sciences and was attended by 56 official delegates, including one from the United Kingdom.

There was apparently a remarkably strong feeling among the delegates that the subject is of potentially very great importance, and it seems likely that large sums will be spent on projects aiming to search for signs of alien intelligence in the near future. The general consensus was that search of the radio wavelengths must still be regarded as the most promising line of approach.

### University lecture

On October 19, John Harney delivered a lecture entitled "UFOs--physical or psychological?" to the Manchester University Physical Society. The talk attracted an audience of about 300.

### Change of format

Will all those readers who carefully keep their copies of MUFOB and send them off each year to be richly bound in best quality leather with gold tooled lettering please note that we have decided to change the size of the pages. Beginning with the issue, Volume 5, Number 1, we will be changing from the present foolscap to A4.

## M e r s e y s i d e   U F O   B u l l e t i n

Volume 4 Number 4

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