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# Flying saucers and other cracked crocks

**W**ell yes, Horatio, maybe there really are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. But surely not a tenth as many as are dreamed of by the ever-increasing band of New Age gurus, UFO "experts", mystics, arcane code-crackers, Grail-seekers and ancient astronaut addicts.

All of whom, at some time or another, write a book about their discoveries, their revelations, their obsessions.

The awful fact is that 99 per cent of these offerings, from the ludicrous God-was-a-spaceman claims of von Daniken to the discovery that Christ's descendants are with us today, are worthless rubbish believed only by open-mouthed obsessives.

The genre is perfectly encapsulated in *Alien Agenda* by Jim Marrs, which promises the *Untold Story of the Extraterrestrials Among Us*. Mr Marrs has never met an extra-terrestrial. But, yes, he knows a man who has. Or rather, he's read about men and women who have and accepts without doubt every odd tale told.

We are on familiar ground - or rather space - here. Old speculation is trotted out as fact, premise is

## review

### Dan O'Neill

*Allen Agenda*  
Jim Marrs  
Harper Collins, £16.99

*The Roswell File*  
Tim Shawcross  
Bloomsbury, £16.99

*The Bible Code*  
Michael Drosnin  
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £20

turned to reality, wild and unsubstantiated claims of meetings with and abductions by aliens are accepted without question.

It is perfectly conceivable that the moon could be an artificial satellite much older than the earth. Maybe Lot's wife was the unfortunate victim of a nuclear explosion. Perhaps there are "star children" among us while characters trained in "remote viewing" march around Mercury without benefit of spaceship or suit.

But when one of the witnesses offering proof of alien life is "Tibetan Llama, Lobsang Rampa" it simply reinforces the view that a "UFO expert" is a man who has read 100 books about UFOs before writing the 101st book about UFOs.

Lobsang Rampa was an amiable con-man who never went near Tibet. He was actually a clerk named Cyril Henry Hoskins from Plympton.

But this wide-eyed acceptance of Lobsang and every other bizarre claim that might bolster his case is typical of the genre.

Marrs is a persuasive advocate but deals in hearsay and the end result is a book that might have been rejected by Marvel Comics - on the grounds that they've used all the plots before.

Then there is the oldest UFO "conspiracy" tale of all. Does anyone now doubt that exactly 50 years ago a flying disc crashed into the New Mexico desert and that five small humanoid creatures were taken from the wreckage? Well yes, actually.

Most people not living down the UFOlogists' rabbit hole are prepared to accept that what crashed in the desert was some sort of top secret observation device used to peer down at the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Which is why the US government was so cagey about it all. We have even been shown an autopsy on one of the "aliens" which was later dismissed as a hoax. But this is only

added proof of conspiracy for the True Believers.

You will find plenty of them in *The Roswell File* by Tim Shawcross. But, although described as "the most thorough investigation yet of the biggest alien story ever," there is again a feeling of *deja vu*, we have been here so many times before. Once more speculation and rumour become fact while logic and reason are brushed aside as being part of the inevitable conspiracy.

About as persuasive as *Independence Day* - a movie which used the Roswell myth for part of its plot.

For sheer nuttiness, though, *The Bible Code* by Michael Drosnin takes gold. This ludicrous money-spinner (Barnum was right) claims that a code "hidden in the Bible for 3,000 years" has now been deciphered with the aid of computers.

Easy, though, to tell us how the Bible had predicted events - after they've happened. The real test is to tell us what's *going to happen*.

According to *The Bible Code*, Israel should have been obliterated in an atomic holocaust last September. It wasn't.

And that single fact puts the rest of this tripe into perspective. At least Old Moore, for a 10th the price, offers his tip for the Derby.