

The Heaven's Gate people - some corrections and conjecture

From: **AE Stewart**
Date: Fri, 28 Mar 1997 22:10:52 -0800
Subject: The Heaven's Gate people - some corrections and conjecture

Knowing what media saturation is in the U.S. my first message will have been totally outdated by the time you all get it; not only that, but you'll understand exactly what did conspire involving this group.

To recapitulate: Leader named Do' or something like that (I seriously could not be bothered reading everything at their site or appraising it). Former mental patient. Been preaching a mix of Christianity, alien abduction, resurrection, and apocalypse... Fairly standard stuff unless you note the shift that occurred: early on in his messianic phase Do' didn't use the collective iconography of UFO's. Once again - the URL for their site is:

<http://mirage.hotwired.com/heavensgate>

I wouldn't be surprised if it goes down soon.

My eye watching TV absorbs following detail: the cult members wore specially designed clothing to invoke the imagery of crew members on a starship - they appropriated science fictional detail wholeheartedly into their psychoopathic fantasy (I'm terming them psychopathic, because they enacted violent means to pursue their fantasies and ensure their reality) in the crudest and most illogical manner... The black collarless shirts with the patch on the sleeve, the androgynous haircut, even the Nikes (if there's a more futuristic shoe, I've never heard of it); all this looks like cheaply designed costumes for a failed pilot for a bad science fiction show which you only see on the vaguest of cable channels late at night. We know they were net literate. I wouldn't be surprised if they had visited Glenn's site at one time or another. One thing I find disturbing is how little of their UFO literature is obsessed with conspiracy and the classic elements of the story: Roswell, abductions, etc. In essence, they reject the components of the myth that disagree with their new age vision - and turn it into a far more defeatist and benevolent belief... Willing to use the raw materials they need to replace some vacuous emptiness in themselves.

What I'd like to correct in my original post is how I expressed an interest in how they incorporated UFO folklore in their mythology, a general signifier of new religious beliefs to come - but now I stand corrected. The news media are spinning this story like a top 40 platter not only because of the numerical tragedy (greatest mass suicide in American history) but because of the sensational aspects of their UFO belief.

Now, I see this as not being important. Watching the videos of various members explaining their beliefs cross cut with the Sherrif's coroners exploration of the house and Do's preaching monologue (shot so badly on VHS he looks like he's computer generated) I saw it, insensitively enough, as just another cult conforming to psychologists' explanation of one, except cloaked in science fictional iconography. The real fear, for me, sn't that the folklore is becoming religion - it's that critical faculties are willing to simply absorb the imagery to fit into their desperate need, without appraising what the facts might be. Like many things considered for years to be alternative culturally, supernatural phenomena, like grunge rock and independent filmmaking, is now being mainlined. This was not a fully blown "new religion". Like many other extremist visions of the UFO pheneomena, this one was the old ones, sheathed in new clothing.

As the news wrapped up a little "human interest" story speeded by. Phillipinese Catholics were nailing themselves to the Cross to celebrate (wrong word ?) Good Friday.

Different kicks for different tricks...

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The Republic of Wireland

<http://www.halcyon.com/jstewart/at1/index.htm>

"Dial 888... The desire to watch television no matter what's on"

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