

There is a great deal about this book to recommend it highly. If Pflock has allowed his enthusiasm for his point of view to bias his take on the case, it is just a minor annoyance and certainly understandable. He has provided one of the few books that is necessary in understanding Roswell, regardless of the point of view of the reader. Read with an objective eye, Pflock's work helps us all understand Roswell and that is the real value here.

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The Anomalist No. 8, "Special UFO Issue," Spring 2000, 190 pages. (Edited and published by Patrick Huyghe and Dennis Stacy. \$9.95 plus \$2.00 postage for U.S. and Canada or \$5.00 for overseas air mail. Patrick Huyghe, P.O. Box 577, Jefferson Valley, NY 10535.)

The Anomalist is an attractively packaged, literate, biannual journal that "explores the mysteries of science, history, and nature" somewhat in the tradition of Charles Fort, but perhaps with a slightly more "psychosocial" slant. Judging by this special issue on UFOs it is not doctrinaire, embracing as it does some thought-provoking and eccentric viewpoints from people who are not exactly "household names" in UFO research.

Although containing some conventional material about UFO sightings, the main thrust of the issue seems to be philosophical interpretations of what it all might mean. What is "reality" and how do we determine "truth"? Thus, epistemology is a main focus. The gist of each contributor's presentation will be presented in order of appearance.

Charles Miller opens with a somewhat derogatory portrayal of "UFO enthusiasts," who in his view leap from observing a UFO to concluding an ET origin. He, on the other hand, expresses the view that truly unexplainable UFO reports may be "ultra-mundane apparitions" that probably originate here on earth (which seems somewhat oxymoronic to this reviewer but still an interesting perspective). Miller advocates having more psychologists and philosophers, and fewer "hard scientists," involved in UFO studies. His take is that UFOs represent some Earth-bound beings who evolved here and co-exist with us, and he raises some interesting philosophical questions in the process.

Next is Jerome Clark, who is a household name in ufology, and a prodigious researcher with an encyclopedic knowledge of all aspects of the subject, be they reported facts, strange personalities, folklore, or anything else. He begins by discussing 18th and 19th century reports of mermaids in comparison to modern accounts of allegedly alien beings. Contemporary scientists and reporters, he notes, were willing to discuss the mermaid reports seriously even though they appeared to be on the face of it "zoological absurdities."

He argues that the mermaid reports are very puzzling and appear to be based on something more than mere “superstition,” while not actually claiming that mermaids exist in conventional “reality.” Instead, he uses the mermaid reports to illustrate that previous eras have grappled with their own intractable mysteries, and strongly advocates a more agnostic position whereby more people would be willing to say about such things, “I don’t know,” rather than feeling obliged to take one or another extreme position.

As a bonus, Clark goes into the historical origins of reports of “little grey aliens” as alleged abductors of human beings, recounting some early history of UFO sightings. He finds several cases suggestive of abductions and a few with some strong similarities to modern reports. Overall, he reports, there is only sparse contemporary evidence of abductions prior to the 1960s. His concluding philosophical ruminations alone are worth the price of admission.

Next comes Peter Brooksmith whose interests tend strongly toward myth and folklore. He analyzes the 1991 Roper Poll that sought to determine how many Americans, judging by their perceptions, may have been “abducted by aliens.” Brooksmith charges that the primary people involved in constructing and interpreting the poll (Hopkins, Jacobs, Westrum) changed the ground rules in midstream when the poll showed only 18 people who answered all five of the discriminating questions positively. He then attributes interpretations of the poll showing that very large numbers of Americans may have experienced abduction to “the ufological rumor mill and general folklore...”

A repeat of the survey in 1998, he says, yielded very different statistics that cast doubt on the validity of the entire process. At the same time, he notably fails to specifically cite (only briefly alluding to it) the highly critical analysis of the Roper Poll by three PhD behavioral scientists, Robert L. Hall, Mark Rodeghier, and Don Johnson, “mainline ufologists” all.

Novelist Colin Bennett contributes a long analysis of George Adamski (1950s “contactee”) as a sociocultural phenomenon, based primarily on the high-level attention Adamski received during his 1959 world tour at the height of his fame (or notoriety). Bennett seems oddly ambivalent about his subject. His depiction of the tour is humorous, contains many interesting tidbits of information, and is occasionally insightful.

“Adamski’s space-folk,” he says (p. 41), “are pure Disney-schlock, and their conversations have the mental content of a wrecked supermarket trolley.” Yet he argues that Adamski represents something other than a standard con-man, something that he seems to feel has profound significance concerning the fundamental nature of reality.

At one point (p. 43) he makes the startling assertion that, “Much of Adamski’s filmed work has survived stringent authenticity tests to this day...” That will come as a great surprise to any serious researcher who knows Adamski’s history. Yet, the author cites only one hearsay reference to justify his statement.

Occasionally Bennett goes into flights of hyperbole that are rather mystifying. For example, he describes in interesting detail Adamski's reception by Queen Juliana of the Netherlands and her court, including prominent scientists and public figures. Then he says that he sees the dynamics of the reception "as a rich semiotic nutrient ... the kind of culture dish in which many things were later to form.... [The session] became that microcosm from which our present society was formed."

My reaction to this is a resounding "Huh?" I suspect that he had some such thing in mind as was expounded by the next contributor, suggesting that "reality" is somehow not what it seems to be. But having experienced Adamski firsthand, I find no requirement for obscure metaphysical constructs to explain him, and Bennett's notions would not pass the cut of Ockham's razor.

Historian and librarian T. Peter Park describes various "coincidences" (of names and sequences) that have been involved in anomalous occurrences, strange similarities in otherwise disparate events. One main illustration is of three people named Watson whose independent activities paralleled each other in an oddly coincidental way. Park feels that when we are faced with anomalies, we tend to practice a form of scientific fundamentalism which he characterizes as "cozily familiarizing the strange." By this he means force-fitting anomalies into a scientific mold. Might there be some epistemological problem here, he wonders.

His alternative: Our physical world may be "penetrated and manipulated by agencies mindful of historical, cultural, and psychological symbolisms and symmetries" (p. 86). In other words, we may find the meaning of anomalous events to be stranger than mere odds and ends of previously unknown physical objects and forces, as the "scientific fundamentalists" would have it. Instead, something "linked in obscure ways to our own psyches, hopes, fears, and conflicts, playing odd but perhaps not wholly irrational symbolic games with us" (p. 87).

Cases from the UFO literature are cited as examples, and the discussion goes into "synchronicity," Vallee's postulated "control system," and notions of a "collective unconscious" generating images or "thought-forms." His point is that cases such as those described are not only strange in themselves, but also "curiously symbolic or coincidental in their location, timing, or protagonists." This, he suggests, undermines a basic premise of mainstream Western science and philosophy, which he characterizes as nature "blindly following mechanized physical laws..." (p. 98). To him, this approach fails to account for the type of information he is reporting.

Co-editor Patrick Huyghe reprises the April 24, 1964, Socorro, New Mexico, landing case in a thorough account, and compares it to the Gary Wilcox case in New York State earlier the same day. Both had a shiny metallic craft and two small occupants. Many interesting tidbits of information are included, and he includes an apt portrayal of Ray Stanford's book on the case which alleged a government cover-up of significant data from an analysis of a metallic-appearing substance found at the Socorro landing site.

Karl Pflock provides a detailed report on the 1949 Aztec, New Mexico, “crashed saucer” hoax, reconstructing the circumstances and personalities involved. He includes some new information provided by a confidential source taken from a journal allegedly kept by the hoaxer, Silas Newton.

The anchor man is Martin S. Kottmeyer, who contributes an interesting article on apocalyptic visions of the future among UFO researchers. He examines the attitudes and beliefs of David Jacobs, whose pessimistic view of the future is grounded in his abduction research, in comparison to the more life-affirming outlooks of prominent skeptics such as Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, James Oberg, and Donald Menzel. Kottmeyer contends that many prominent UFO proponents have conveyed “world destruction fantasies” in their writings. He presents an admiring view of the skeptics.

This eclectic collection provides both useful factual information and food for thought. And is it “coincidence” that several contributors allude to “forces” behind UFOs that would appear to be far more mysterious than mere extraterrestrial visitors?

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ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Schilling, G. (2001). Radical Theory Takes a Test. *Science*, 291, 579. (Part of a report of the 197th Meeting of the American Astronomical Society).

Margaret Burbidge of UC San Diego and past president of American Association for the Advancement of Science “presented evidence supporting a theory that, if correct, would turn cosmology inside out.” The redshift on a pair of quasars flanking Galaxy Arp 220 (250 million light years away) indicates a distance of 6 billion light years. “The evidence is accumulating,” she says, “that redshift is a shaky measuring rod.” James Moran of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics plans a test, with results expected in late 2001.

Arp, H.C., Burbidge, E.M., Chu, Y., & Zhu, X. (2001). X-Ray-emitting QSOs Ejected from Arp 220. *Astrophysical Journal Letters*, 553, L11–L13.

This is the paper given at the AAS Meeting above. It is proposed that the intrinsic redshift may be characteristic of newly created matter. Arp thinks the quasars originated inside the galaxy and that matter is being created in the cores of active galaxies. If