



ELSEVIER

Religion 34 (2004) 163–189

---

---

RELIGION

---

---

[www.elsevier.com/locate/religion](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/religion)

# Alien demonology: the Christian roots of the malevolent extraterrestrial in UFO religions and abduction spiritualities

Christopher Partridge

*Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University College Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, UK*

---

## Abstract

Initially, the sacralisation of the extraterrestrial led to an understanding of the alien as a fundamentally benevolent, messianic figure—a ‘technological angel’. This was largely because of the Cold War environment in which much UFO religion arose. Those attracted to the myth looked beyond a politically and militarily unstable planet to extraterrestrial saviours. Furthermore, because UFO religions have their roots in the Theosophical tradition, the religious understanding of the extraterrestrial tended to be fundamentally indebted to the concept of the wise and benevolent ascended master. The aim of this article is to examine the technological angel’s foil. The central thesis is that, in their construction of the malevolent alien, UFO religionists and abductees turn not to Theosophy and Eastern religious traditions but to the myths and symbols of Christian demonology. Moreover, in exploring the origins and nature of the demonologies of contemporary UFO religions and abduction spiritualities, the article also draws attention to the importance of popular culture in the West, which, itself influenced by the Christian tradition, contributes to the formation of both popular demonology and also UFO mythology, which are in turn synthesised in UFO demonologies. © 2004 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

---

## Introduction

The contemporary interest in UFOs can be traced back to 24 June 1947, when Kenneth Arnold, a businessman from Boise, Idaho, reported sighting ten shining discs flying over the Cascade Mountains when flying his private plane near Mount Rainier in Western Washington. According to Arnold, ‘they flew like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water’. Misquoted, the sighting was reported as Arnold’s encounter with ‘flying saucers’. While there had been previous modern sightings of, for example, ‘balls of fire’ accompanying planes during the Second World War (nicknamed ‘foo fighters’) or cigar- and disc-shaped objects in the sky such as the wave of Scandinavian ‘ghost rocket’ sightings in 1946, these earlier sightings tended to be sporadic and vague. Moreover, as Robert

---

*E-mail address:* [c.partridge@chester.ac.uk](mailto:c.partridge@chester.ac.uk)

Bartholomew and George Howard have shown, before 1947 ‘there is not a single recorded episode involving mass sightings of saucer-like objects’ (Bartholomew and Howard, 1998, pp. 189). It was Arnold’s ‘flying saucers’ that both began the modern wave of sightings and also ushered UFOs into the popular consciousness. The interest in Arnold’s story was immediate and massive. ‘A Gallup pole taken on 19 August 1947, revealed that while one out of two Americans had heard of the Marshall Plan, nine out of ten had heard about the saucers’ (Lagrange, 2000, p. 34). By the end of that year 850 UFO sightings had been reported in America alone.

As to *why* the interest in UFOs has been particularly prevalent since the 1950s, several theories might be suggested. First, the enormous media interest in UFO sightings was certainly a factor. Second, it is difficult to underestimate the significance of the tension and sense of insecurity engendered by the Cold War and the threat of an East–West nuclear conflict. Whether or not one agrees with C.G. Jung’s particular psychological thesis (see Segal, 2003), his identification of this context as important in understanding why people might look beyond the planet for help is surely correct (see Jung, 1969, pp. 25f.). UFO groups and contactees of the 1950s claimed to have received messages from highly spiritually evolved, morally superior, technologically advanced, benevolent beings with a deep salvific concern for a humanity bent on nuclear destruction (see Partridge, 2003, p. 12; Helland, 2003; Festinger et al., 1964, pp. 46–47; Grünschloß, 2000; Grünschloß, 2003). Third, this period was one both of enormous technological advance and of religious decline. Therefore on the one hand, salvation was less likely to be conceived in traditionally religious terms and on the other hand, as Jung argued, this was the genesis of the space age, when people were beginning to seriously imagine life beyond the confines of their terrestrial home—the corollary of such speculation being the inhabitants of other worlds thinking similar thoughts and visiting us (see Segal, 2003, p. 317). It is therefore of little surprise that the political and cultural environment of the late 1940s and 1950s engendered a fascination with UFOs and alien visitation.

It is also worth noting at this stage that the Theosophical tradition<sup>1</sup> has proved to be enormously significant in the history of UFO religion. The reason can be found in Theosophical

---

<sup>1</sup> Arguably, ‘Theosophy’ can be traced back through Plotinus, Ammonius Saccas, and Plato to Pythagorean Greece. It has since surfaced periodically in Western esotericism, being, as Emily Seddon and Renée Weber point out, ‘most legitimately associated with figures such as Meister Eckhart, Giordano Bruno, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Jacob Boehme’ (Sellon and Weber, 1992, p. 311). Following a period of obscurity, it was then revived at the end of the nineteenth century by the Russian occultist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and an American, Henry Steel Olcott, who in 1875 founded the Theosophical Society in New York. Most contemporary Theosophists will identify Blavatsky as the source of the modern Theosophical tradition. She published two major works, *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), and several more accessible volumes, all of which have sold widely and remain in print. The influence of the Theosophical Society has been wide and significant, it being one of the principal organisations responsible for popularising both Western esotericism and the core teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism in the West. Although there were many disputes about Theosophical doctrines and subsequent secessions, significant thinkers within the alternative tradition, such as Alice Bailey, Annie Besant, Christmas Humphries, Rudolf Steiner, Krishnamurti, Guy and Edna Ballard, as well as many contemporary ‘New Age’ spiritual leaders, such as Elizabeth Clare Prophet of the Church Universal and Triumphant, are fundamentally indebted to Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society (see Tingay, 2000). As to the basic doctrines, these are summed up well by Kevin Tingay: ‘a scheme of spiritual evolution that underlies physical evolution. Human beings seen as the embodiments of sparks of the Divine, which journey back to their origin through a series of incarnations. The law of karma is the mechanism that controls the circumstances of each successive life. Among those who reach a high stage of moral and spiritual development are those [ascended] masters who attempt to assist their “younger brethren” through the work of the Theosophical Society and other movements’ (Tingay, 2004, p. 321).

speculation about other worlds and extraterrestrial civilizations. H.P. Blavatsky, the founder of modern Theosophy, had speculated about the Venusian ‘Lords of the Flame’, which, according to Charles Leadbeater’s interpretation of the concept (Leadbeater, 1912), were of the highest rank in the hierarchy of ascended masters. Subsequent leaders within the tradition such as Guy Ballard, the founder of the I AM Religious Activity, claimed, under the pseudonym Godfre Ray King, to have met twelve Venusians who revealed Venus to be home to a race of technologically and spiritually advanced beings (see King, 1935). Hence it is unsurprising that UFO religion has been dominated by those from within the Theosophical tradition. Theosophists include both George Adamski, the first and arguably the most influential contactee (see Adamski, 1949), and George King, the founder (in 1954) of one of the oldest UFO religions, the Aetherius Society (see Smith, 2003; Wallis, 1974).

The political, cultural and religious factors ensured that the process of the sacralisation of the extraterrestrial produced, in the early period, an understanding of the alien as a fundamentally benevolent, messianic figure. The extraterrestrial emerged as a spiritually and intellectually advanced being seeking to intervene salvifically in the affairs of a morally and spiritually inferior, if not bankrupt, race bent on the destruction of its planet. Indeed, just as UFO religion has its origins in Theosophy, so the extraterrestrial in much UFO spirituality is fundamentally indebted to the concept of the ascended master developed within that tradition, particularly the I AM movement (see Partridge, 2003, pp. 7–21; Stuppel, 1984). It is therefore not surprising that until recently, there has been comparatively little reference to the extraterrestrial as an essentially malevolent being. Although the demonised extraterrestrial has not been entirely absent, the emphasis has been on the alien as a space saviour, or, to use Jung’s term, a ‘technological angel’ (Jung, 1969). However, in recent years a shift has taken place in some religious (and also conspiratorial) discourse. A demonology has begun to evolve in order to take account of moral evil, suffering, frustrated religious expectations, perceived temptation and the general unsatisfactoriness of life. This article is an analysis of these demonologies. However, we need to begin with some discussion of Western demonology per se, for, as I will argue, this is the soil in which these contemporary demonologies have their roots.

## Demonology in the West

Personifications of evil in the form of demons, devils, spirits and malign entities can be found across the religious spectrum. While the term ‘demon’ has acquired a specifically evil connotation, the classical Greek *daimōn* (meaning ‘spirit’), from which it is derived through late medieval Latin, was used of any malevolent or benevolent spirit (*agathos daimōn*), deified hero, demigod and ancestor spirit that mediated between the transcendent and the temporal realms (see Bolt, 1996; Russell, 1977, pp. 142–144). Over time these demons gradually came to be seen as malevolent. By the late Greco-Roman period the term *daimōnia* was applied specifically to evil spirits, the main work of which was to frustrate, to harm and particularly to tempt humans into sin (see Russell, 1977, pp. 34, 142; Forsyth, 1987, p. 293). Indeed, the Stoic systematisation of late Platonic demonology, which understood the *daimonia* to exist at a level between gods and humanity, is reflected in 1 Enoch 15 and 2 Enoch 29:5, where fallen angels are described as hovering in the lower air (see Galloway, 1951, p. 25; Russell, 1977, pp. 191ff.; Forsyth, 1987, pp. 160–181). It was

this understanding of the term *daimonium* that was adopted in the Septuagint, the New Testament and the early Church.

Although reference to demons can be found in the Hebrew Bible—for example, *Aza'zel* (Lev. 16:8–10; see Russell, 1977, pp. 176, 191, 206; Forsyth, 1987, p. 178), *lilîth* (Isa. 34:14; see Trachtenberg, 1970, pp. 28, 36–37; Russell, 1977, p. 215; Lurker, 1987, p. 207), the *shédîm*, to whom people sacrificed their sons and their daughters (Ps. 106:37; see Trachtenberg, 1970, p. 27), and, of course, the Satan figure (1 Chron. 21; Job 1, 2; 1 Zech. 3.1; see Nielsen, 1998; Forsyth, 1987, pp. 107–123)—and while some of the basic characteristics of a good–evil dualism can be traced back to Iranian Zoroastrianism (see Russell, 1977, pp. 98–121, 217–220; Boyce's, 1985, pp. 177–187), it is not until the second and first centuries BCE, during the apocalyptic period, that a sophisticated demonology began to evolve within Jewish theology. As Jewish apocalyptic demonology developed, demons were increasingly understood to interfere spiritually with humans, tempting them into sin and thereby disrupting their relationship with God (see Russell, 1977, pp. 191ff.). The *daimōnia* sought to deceive humans with false revelations, to pervert true divine revelation and to confuse. More significantly, there evolved the notion of a unitary concept of evil. There was a 'movement of thought away from the explanation of evil in terms of numerous capricious spirits operating at random, towards an explanation in terms of a hierarchy or unified body of evil [which] reaches its climax in the New Testament' (Ling, 1961, p. 9). Jeffrey Burton Russell has even argued that Satan is 'the malignant, destructive aspect of Yahweh ... subtracted from him and ascribed to a different spiritual power' (Russell, 1977, p. 183). Apocalyptic writers developed the idea of the Devil as 'a spiritual being personifying the origin and essence of evil' and as the leader of the demonised 'Watcher angels' (Russell, 1977, p. 188).

Certainly, in the Hebrew Bible Satan is not the demonic figure that he becomes in apocalyptic literature (see Kluger, 1967). Indeed, Satan is one of the 'members of the court of heaven', one of the *benē'elōhîm*, a 'son of God' (Job 1:6). The Book of Job in particular describes Satan as a being who works closely with Yahweh as his agent in the testing of Job (see Nielson, 1998, pp. 59–105). According to Russell, Satan as a son of God has his origins in Canaanite religion:

In Canaan these 'sons' are gods, manifestations of the divine principle. Clearly, the original idea in Hebrew religion was that Yahweh was surrounded by a pantheon comparable to that of Zeus or Wotan. The idea of a pantheon was displeasing to strict monotheism, and the *banim* (*bene ha'elohim*) became shadowy figures. Yet they retained an important function of separating the evil aspect of the divine nature from the good. (Russell, 1977, p. 184)

Kirsten Nielsen explains the relationship between God and Satan more literally in terms of father and son:

At the beginning father and son are together, but at a certain time their paths separate. Satan in the book of Job [is] the son of God who for some time roamed the earth. He lived among the other sons of God, close to his father. There is nothing to indicate that he was denied this position after he had tested Job, neither was there a revolt against his father or any fall from the heavenly to the earthly. (Nielsen, 1998, p. 156)

Only in later Jewish legend do we find Satan banished from heaven.

Of particular interest to later apocalyptic writers as well as to contemporary UFO religionists is Genesis 6:1–4, which describes the *benē'elōhīm* descending to earth and having sexual relations with human women, the progeny of which was a race of giants known as the *nephilīm*:

When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose. Then the Lord said, 'My spirit shall not abide in man for ever, for he is flesh, but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.' The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown. The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen. 6:1–4)

Tracing this story back to Canaanite mythology, Claus Westermann argues that it belongs to a distinct cycle of relatively common narratives that deal with the sexual union of deities and humans (see Westermann, 1994, p. 369). While there is much scholarly debate as to the meaning of 'sons of God' in Genesis 6 (see Clines, 1996; Nielsen, 1998, pp. 156–183; Russell, 1977, pp. 174 ff.; Westermann, 1994, pp. 371–372), the oldest and most common interpretation within the Christian tradition is, perhaps not surprisingly, angels. Because of the particular baggage that that term carries, Gordon Wenham prefers the more ambiguous term 'spirit', recognising that such 'sons of the gods' may be benevolent or malevolent (Wenham, 1987, p. 140). Less convincing are the arguments of those like Umberto Cassuto, who insists that the term should be interpreted as 'angels of a degraded type' (Westermann, 1994, p. 372). This understanding simply reflects post-apocalyptic Christian interpretations. Justin Martyr, for example, is very clear that they were in fact 'fallen angels' and that demons are the product of their unnatural union with human women (see Kelly, 1977, p. 167). Martin Luther reiterates the early Christian belief that the 'sons of the gods' are fallen angels and the *nephilīm* demons (see Luther, 1955, pp. 10–12). These views are clearly influenced by apocalyptic speculation.

One of the most influential early apocalyptic accounts of the fall of the *benē'elōhīm* and their *nephilīm* progeny appears in 1 Enoch. Where in Genesis it is not clear that these beings are particularly evil, in the apocalyptic literature they reveal their evil nature in their lust for human women. Referred to as 'the Watcher angels', 1 Enoch also identifies their leader, Semyaz (1 En.6:3):

The decision takes the form of a conspiracy, in which they enter into a mutual obligation under the leadership of Semyaz. Their leader is well aware that their plan is contrary to God's will. He therefore wishes them to undertake a mutual obligation, so that the others do not suddenly abandon the plan and leave him on his own, and 'I alone will become responsible for this great sin'. Then all 200 angels take an oath to stand together as concerns responsibility, and they descend to the summit of Mount Hermon, divided into units of ten, each with its leader, as if they were about to embark on a campaign of war. (Nielsen, 1998, p. 161)

We are told that, having had sexual intercourse with human women, the 'angels' teach them magic charms and incantations—a point which has not gone unnoticed by those in Christian history who seek to construct a demonology of the witch. We are told that the offspring of the *nephilīm*, who were a race of giants, eat all the food gathered by humans, leaving them to starve,

and eventually to turn on the humans themselves in a cannibalistic rampage. Furthermore, Azazel, one of the Watchers, who is later identified with Satan (see Russell, 1977, p. 206), teaches humans to make weapons of war and introduces them to jewellery, costly gems and dyes, all of which lead to greed, violence and vanity. Eventually, God responds by sending the four archangels—Michael, Uriel, Raphael and Gabriel—to slay the giants, although their malign spirits remain to ‘afflict, oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on earth’ (1 En.15:1). Raphael is also instructed to bind Azazel and to cast him into an outer darkness, where he is to remain until the day of judgment, when he shall be ‘sent into the fire’ (1 En 10:5–7).

It is also in the apocalyptic writings that we see pride ascribed to the Devil. Enoch applies Isaiah’s satirical song about the King of Babylon—the ‘bright morning star’ now ‘fallen from heaven’ (Isa.14:12–15)—to Satan, who has been cast out because of the sin of pride. (Hence he acquired the name Lucifer—meaning ‘light-bearer—a name used of the morning star.) The distance between God and the Devil gradually widens in apocalyptic literature. No longer is Satan God’s agent in the world, accusing and harming humans with divine permission. Apocalyptic developments push towards a dualism in which God is wholly dissociated from evil, which is now exclusively the Devil’s business. ‘The Lord is closely associated with ethical good, and the Devil with ethical evil. The Devil is the personification of sin, and he commands at his right and left hands the spirits of wrath, hatred and lying. He is lord of fornication, war, bloodshed, exile, death, panic and destruction. He tempts humankind into error. He rules over the souls of the wicked’ (Russell, 1977, pp. 209–211).

While in later Jewish thought, as Joshua Trachtenberg comments, the Devil ‘never played a very prominent role as a distinct personality’, being ‘little more than an allegory, whose moral was the prevalence of sin’ (Trachtenberg, 1943, p. 19), in Christianity his role was much greater. The apocalyptic writings provide substantial foundations for the construction of a complex demonology. All the key themes, from the sexual sin of the *benē’elohīm* to the pride of Lucifer, from the imprisonment of demons beneath the earth in the pit (or in the ‘lower atmosphere’) to their continuing interference with humans in order to tempt them away from God, and, finally, to their demise ‘at the end of the world when the Messiah comes’ (Russell, 1977, p. 207; Barrett, 1987, pp. 331–332) are carefully developed in apocalyptic demonology.

Furthermore, apocalyptic demonology is responsible for a shift away from the prophetic insistence on interior human responsibility for one’s own sin to an exterior source *other than God*. Jewish apocalyptic provides a way of explaining human evil which does not require God as its source, and yet, which does not need to explain any ills that befall individuals as the consequence of sin. This becomes a central theme in Christian demonology. As Bernard McGinn’s history the Antichrist shows, although there is an external-internal polarity throughout Christian history, more attention is given to the notion of an external foe (see McGinn, 1994, p. 4). Indeed, although many Christian thinkers, certainly in the modern period, have tended to focus on the interior nature of evil, the perennial human fascination with an objective source of evil still persists. Certainly central to much early and medieval Christian theology was the belief that, although all are responsible for their own sins, they are also continually subject to the advances and corruption of personal demons—all of which operate as the agents of Satan. This view is, again, clear in the theology of Justin, for whom devils and demons were understood to be ‘swarming everywhere [obsessing] men’s souls and bodies, infecting them with vice and corruption’ (Kelly, 1977, p. 167; see Justin, in Stevenson, 1987, p. 60). Likewise the Desert Fathers, whose influence continued throughout the Middle Ages, believed that hordes of malign demons populated the world, taking

every opportunity both to *obsess* human beings—to attack and influence them from without—and to *possess* some unfortunate individuals—as Augustine puts it, to ‘inhabit their bodies’ and seize them from within (Augustine, 1945, p. 326). According to Athanasius’ *Life of Antony*, Antony, believing the desert to be the abode of demons,<sup>2</sup> went there ‘to do battle with the powers of evil’ (see Russell, 1981, pp. 172–177). Alone in the desert, he was ‘attacked by demons, who tried various devices to distract him from the holy life’ (Hall, 1991, p. 174). However, again, while all manner of harm to humans and animals, as well as natural disasters, were understood to be the result of demonic activity, a demon’s ultimate aim was to corrupt the soul, to tempt, and to disrupt a person’s relationship with God. Temptation is, as one theologian put it, ‘the invasion of Satan’s power into the world of creation. [It is] seduction, leading astray’ (Bonhoeffer, 1955, p. 24).

Early Christians’ apocalypticism, shaped by that of Jewish apocalypticism, has determined the nature of Western demonology, fundamentally distinguishing it from that of pagan religions (see Jones and Pennick, 1995, p. 60). Of particular significance is the clear understanding that ‘Satan embodies the ultimate truth behind the profuse demonology of popular thought’ (Ling, 1961, p. 12). This view led to the incorporation of folk beliefs into a systematic demonology. For example, Karen Louise Jolly notes in her study of popular religion in tenth- and eleventh-century England, that ‘Amoral creatures such as elves were gradually “demonised” to fit the Good–evil paradigm of the Christian moral universe. This process enhanced their similarity to demons. Their invisibility, their malicious attacks, and the need to “charm” them away all took on new meaning in Christian eyes so that elves began to resemble the fallen angels who seek to inflict internal and permanent harm on humans and their works, demons for Christian ritual to exorcise’ (Jolly, 1996, p. 136). Individual events and disturbances experienced on the plane of history are on the one hand understood as particularised demonic activity and on the other hand are projected into eternity, being fundamentally related to cosmic principalities and powers and the Satanic attempt to thwart God’s ultimate, salvific purpose.

As demonology evolved through the Middle Ages, and as is clearly evident in Heinrich Kramer’s influential witch-hunter’s manual of 1487, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, it focused increasingly on obsession, possession and demonic alliances with humans (see Bailey, 2003, which focuses on the medieval Dominican theologian Johannes Nider, whose demonology greatly influenced Kramer). As well as being the source of evil, as Jean La Fontaine comments, ‘Satan and his demons were believed to have human allies and servants. One of the ways in which devils, or the Devil, were believed to associate with human beings was in lending them extra-human powers to perform acts that were beyond the range of human beings. By the Middle Ages, learned magicians were suspected of summoning and using demons by their magic in order to exchange their souls for magical powers in Faustian contracts’ (La Fontaine, 1999, p. 85; see also Briggs, 1996, p. 3). Whilst witchcraft is in no sense limited to the West (see Parrinder, 1963; Bowie, 2000, pp. 219–258), it was only in the Middle Ages that, as Keith Thomas argues, ‘a new element was added to the European concept of witchcraft which was to distinguish it from the witch-beliefs of other primitive peoples. This was the notion that the witch owed her powers to having made a deliberate pact with the Devil’ (Thomas, 1973, p. 521).

<sup>2</sup> The desert (or wilderness) was commonly understood to be populated by demons. The desert is the abode of *Aza’zel* (Lev. 16:18) and, of course, is the place where Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the Devil (Matt. 4:1). See Russell, 1981, pp. 149–185.

In the modern period the belief in demons significantly retreated before the forces of rationalism and empiricism, but it did not disappear, and has not disappeared (see Russell, 1986). Even if demons no longer seemed credible to many, particularly as most of their various works could be explained quite easily by modern science and medicine, the belief in Satan has continued.

Of particular note in the modern West has been a series of ‘satanic panics’ (see Victor, 1993; Richardson et al., 1991). Working explicitly with traditional Christian demonology, in the early 1980s several lines of conspiratorial thought converged (see Victor, 1993, p. 8), the result of which was on the one hand graphic claims being made about satanic activity and on the other hand (see Best, 1991) a popular movement which bore more than a passing resemblance to the pre-modern witch craze. It is claimed that

there exists a secret organization, or network, of criminals who worship Satan and who are engaged in the pornography business, forced prostitution, and drug dealing. These criminals also engage in the sexual abuse and torture of children in an effort to brainwash them into becoming life-long Devil worshippers. In their Devil worshipping rituals, these criminals kill and sacrifice infants, and sometimes adults, and commit cannibalism with the body parts. They kidnap children for ritual sacrifice and commit random murders of indigents. They actively try to recruit into their secret groups, teenagers who dabble in occult magic. (Victor, 1993, pp. 3–4)

That many of these themes emerge virtually unchanged in abduction narratives and alien demonologies is significant. If one considers the demonologies within some sections of the Christian community (see, for example, Wright, 1996), the anti-cult world views that have inspired contemporary satanic panics, the supernaturalism of popular culture such as the satanic chic of contemporary heavy metal, (see Baddeley, 1999; Harris, 2000) or, as we will see, the demonisation of the extraterrestrial, it is clear that they are all drawing from a common pool of myths and ideas that can be traced back through the periods of the witch craze and the Middle Ages to early Christian thought and, ultimately, to Jewish apocalypticism.

### **Popular culture, abduction narratives and the technological demon**

From Johann Heinrich Füsseli’s disturbing painting *The Nightmare* (1782), which depicts an incubus squatting on the stomach of a sleeping woman, to Ridley Scott’s *Alien*, modern Western artists, writers and philosophers have drunk deeply from the waters of Christian demonology (see Frayling, 1996, p. 6). To take three influential, critically acclaimed films dealing with the subject, Roman Polanski’s *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), William Friedkin’s *The Exorcist* (1973) and Richard Donner’s *The Omen* (1976) all explicitly operate within the parameters of Christian demonology. Perhaps the most important of these films, *Rosemary’s Baby*, could almost be a filmic representation of the *Malleus*. Surprisingly, McGinn provides a very unperceptive review of the film simply fails to recognise the central themes of Western popular demonology. Although he is right to note that ‘there is no overt reference to the Antichrist tradition’ (McGinn, 1994, p. 272), there is certainly a strong implicit reference in the closing scene. Moreover, Polanski introduces us to a secretive group of individuals in the service of a personal Devil, to abominable satanic rites, to the suicide of a girl who had come into contact with this activity, to sexual intercourse between

an incubus and the sedated Rosemary (Mia Farrow), and finally to the Genesis 6-like product of that union, the demon child.<sup>3</sup>

More recently, should one be unfortunate enough to live in Sunnydale, the world view encouraged would not be wholly dissimilar to that of premodern Europe, in that, were it not for Buffy the vampire slayer, demons would swarm, obsess, possess and ‘shapeshift’ at will (see Wilcox and Lavery, 2002; Kaveney, 2001). There is even an episode, ‘Gingerbread’, that reflects contemporary satanic panics. Only now, we are told, the demons actually do exist (see Tonkin, 2001, pp. 50–51). As J. Lawton Winslade explains, ‘When two young children bearing occult symbols are found murdered, the usually oblivious town goes into uproar and suddenly we’ve entered the territory of media-frenzied incidents of “occult crimes”. Even though we later learn the two children are manifestations of an ancient demon ... the episode is both amusing and chilling as the mothers of the town (the aptly titled MOO—Mothers Opposed to the Occult) turn on their own children and provoke a literal witchhunt’ (Winslade, 2002).

If the concept of a unifying, personified source of evil still exists in Western Christian theology, the notion that there might also be swarming hordes of demons has generally been abandoned. But not so in popular culture and alien demonologies: like the malevolent extraterrestrials of popular culture—the destructive, megalomaniac Martians of H.G. Wells’ *The War of the Worlds* (1898) or, more recently, Tim Burton’s *Mars Attacks!* (1996) and Roland Emmerich’s *Independence Day* (1996)—they swarm like the hordes of hell. Alien demons are, like those that cast out by Jesus, ‘legion’ (Lk. 8:30). Again, unlike the alien messiahs of much Theosophically-derived UFO religion, and very much like the demons of Christian history, screen aliens are deemed a serious threat to human physical and spiritual well-being and those who think otherwise are deemed misguided and naïve. Indeed, *Mars Attacks!* bluntly ridicules the belief that aliens might be benevolent beings with a concern for the environment and the spiritual welfare of humanity. Not only is the welcoming party, accompanied by starry-eyed ‘new agers’, quickly reduced to carnage by the visitors from space, but a few seconds after the dove of peace is poetically released from the hands of an enthusiastic idealist, it is reduced to smouldering, charred flesh by an alien ray gun.

The career of the demonic alien, however, was launched a century before *Mars Attacks!* H.G. Wells’ Martians quickly captured the public imagination and went on to dominate popular culture:

The influence and appeal of [*The War of the Worlds*] are apparent not only in its many editions and in the well-known effect of the radio play adaptation in 1938, but also in innumerable imitations that have followed in the century since. As Arthur C. Clarke has written, the Menace from Space was virtually unknown before Wells but has come all too common since. (Dick, 1998, p. 112)

Although the alien messiah makes a brief appearance, particularly during the 1970s (see Ruppertsberg, 1987), when ‘a series of extremely popular science fiction movies featured extraterrestrials that are gentle, polite, wise, and above all, benevolent [possessing] a near saintly tolerance for human weakness and blundering’ (Brain, 1983, p. 218), this appearance was not to last. The premises of the alien messiah films were spectacularly overturned in 1979 by Ridley

<sup>3</sup> As his consultant for the film, Polanski appointed Anton LaVey, the founder, in 1966, of the Church of Satan and the author of several influential Satanist texts, notably *The Satanic Bible* (LaVey, 1969).

Scott's *Alien*. Standing in contrast to Steven Spielberg's *ET* (1977) and John Carpenter's slightly later *Starman* (1984), it mirrors emerging concerns about alien hostility, concerns which were fundamentally linked, in the 1970s, to stories of abductions. Beginning in the early 1970s there was an exponential rise in reports of abductions (see Whitmore, 2000, p. 1), many of which included, like the accounts of demonic activity, 'copulation and general mischievous sexual encounters with aliens' (Bartholomew and Howard, 1998, p. 264) as well as horrific exploratory extraterrestrial surgery and viewing the disturbing results of reproductive experimentation, including alien-human hybrid babies. Like Rosemary's satanic baby and the children in the *Village of the Damned* (1960/1995<sup>4</sup>), these hybrid infants were a threat (see Jacobs, 1999, p. 128–184). *Alien* powerfully reflects concerns about sexual interference and reproduction when a man is effectively raped by an extraterrestrial and later gives birth to the malign offspring through his chest. The demonised alien then quickly grows and becomes a predatory threat as, like the *nephilim*, demons tend to. In Norman J. Warren's obscure film *Inseminoid* (1981), a woman is raped, becomes a cannibal, and gives birth to predatory, vampiric, alien twins. These alien offspring are essentially space *nephilim*, technological demons with appetites and habits reminiscent of the mythic forebears.

Although only attracting widespread fascination in the 1970s, this popular concern with alien abduction can be traced back to 1966, when John Lear published a series of articles on UFOs in the *Saturday Review* that brought to public attention the disturbing experiences of Barney and Betty Hill, who claimed that they had been abducted by aliens in 1961. There followed the publication of a book by Lear's co-editor at the *Saturday Review*, John Fuller. Fuller's widely read book, *The Interrupted Journey* (1987 [1st ed. 1966]), together with a TV film of the same name, provided 'the model for the more sinister narratives which have come to dominate abduction literature' (Lavery et al., 1996, p. 8; see Matheson, 1998, pp. 47–76). As Elaine Showalter has noted, it is likely that the Hills' experience 'incorporated imagery from a movie, *Invaders From Mars* (1953), and TV programs about space aliens' (Showalter, 1997, p. 191). That the malevolent aliens of science fiction found their way into the Hills' abduction story is interesting, in that, over time, their own account generated a wave of interest that contributed to the return of the malevolent alien in late-1970s popular culture. It is by now hard to imagine the screen alien as anything other than malign. Indeed, the experiences reported by the Hills and narrative elements from *Invaders From Mars*, which include sexual interference, gynaecological testing, the taking of sperm samples, the placing of implants in the necks of humans and subsequent changes in abductees' personalities, are all central to later portrayals of the alien in both popular culture and abduction literature (see, for example, Jacobs, 1999, p. 92; Strieber, 1988, p. 30; Hopkins, 1981; Hopkins, 1987; Whitmore, 1995).

Just as comparisons have been made with Western fairies and demons (see Purkiss, 2000, pp. 15–17), so also comparisons have been made between fairies and alien abductions (see Vallée, 1969; Purkiss, 2000, pp. 317–322). Diane Purkiss argues that,

the similarities are most likely to be the result of common feelings. We might say that the fears and desires evoked and managed by such stories are so powerful that they have to have an outlet, and once fairies become too tame for such wild feelings, a new bogey has to be invented. We might

<sup>4</sup> Remade in 1995 by John Carpenter, *The Village of the Damned* is based on John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*.

add that fairies always came from an unknown that was both raw nature and vanished civilization—a rath in a wood, a graveyard. Now on earth there are no unknowns, no *terra incognitae*. But there are still the stars. And there are no civilizations about which we know nothing except the silence of what they built. But beyond the solar system, who can know? The unknown is necessary for stories; its silence is what lets them be heard. In space, everyone can hear you scream. What alien stories do show—loud and clear—is that we need something to scream about. (Purkiss, 2000, p. 320).

That which gets us screaming the loudest is that which we fear the most. The alien that is simply an organic blob is laughable—*The Blob* (1958/1988). The extraterrestrial that is unrecognisable green slime is derisory—*Inseminoid/Horror Planet* (1981). But the malign personal being, which is amoral, humanoid and demonic and which carries with it a history of diabolical baggage, is worth screaming about.

The malevolent alien in both popular culture and abduction narratives owes much to the history of Christian demonology. The alien as technological demon is popular because it seems plausible, seems plausible because it seems familiar, and seems familiar because it has been constructed from Western demonology.

### **Demonising the extraterrestrial in religious discourse**

Bearing in mind that malevolent alien in both popular culture and abduction narratives owes so much to the history of Christian demonology, it is not surprising that those sections of the Christian community most vulnerable to satanic panics understand the extraterrestrial to be, quite literally, a demonic manifestation. As Ted Peters notes, ‘During the decade of the 1970s numerous magazine articles and books appeared that dramatically challenged the alleged existence of UFOs and depicted the entire phenomenon as a Satanic plot’ (Peters, 1995, pp. 197–198). As with the demonisation of elves in late Saxon England, so extraterrestrials have been demonised in order to fit the good–evil dualism of the Christian world view. William Alnor, for example, makes the following statement: ‘I believe UFOs are real, but they represent a demonic delusion from the other side. I also believe that some of the flying vehicles they allegedly arrive in may be the work of fallen angels; they are not physical, but they are very real’ (Alnor, 1998, p. 160). Randall Baer insists that ‘there is a profoundly potent force behind whatever the UFOs really are. That force is definitely demonic in nature and has extraordinary brainwashing effects on people’ (Baer, 1989, p. 109). Douglas Groothuis, operating with a similar hermeneutic of suspicion, writes: ‘Christians should reinterpret [extraterrestrials] as very possibly the malevolent masquerading of some very low demonic beings and monsters’ (Groothuis, 1988, p. 31). Reflecting a key theme of Christian demonology, the purpose of these space demons, writes Frank Allnut, ‘is to confuse people about the true source of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ’ (quoted in Peters, 1995, p. 199). That is to say, continuous with Christian demonology, the principal purpose of the extraterrestrial is to interfere spiritually by tempting persons to look elsewhere for salvation, thereby disrupting their relationship with God.

This spiritualised, Christian interpretation of the extraterrestrial as demon is literally inverted in certain new religious narratives. The spiritual demon is given physical form. Spiritual myths and concepts are understood in terms of physical, extraterrestrial realities. Just as God and his

angels are understood to be *benevolent* extraterrestrials, so Satan and his devils are understood to be *malevolent* extraterrestrials. Consider the following statement made in 1970 by Bob Geyer, the leader of the now-defunct Church of Jesus the Saucerian:

Satan, that old prince of darkness, and his legions of demons, are also beings from other worlds. They came down from another planet. Once, Satan was a member of God's astronauts. He became too greedy and too ambitious. He may have exploited the inhabitants of Earth, or other planets. He may have tricked people into slavery. (Geyer, quoted in Evans, 1988, p. 66)

Complementing a broader soteriology, these demonologies function in much the same way as does Christian demonology. They constitute personifications of a good–evil dualism, in which humanity becomes embroiled. Benevolent extraterrestrials are now understood to protect humanity from malevolent extraterrestrials—‘technological demons’. Again, as in Christian demonology, these extraterrestrials are physically violent and sexually interested, but their primary concern, as the adversaries of goodness and truth, is to confound the plans that the benevolent aliens have for humanity. Again, where Jewish apocalyptic thought provided a *spiritual* interpretation of ‘the clash of warring forces ... in the earthly, political sphere’ (Ling, 1968, p. 124), in UFO religion that interpretation is inverted. The spiritual hosts and hordes become physical entities battling it out in the celestial sphere.

This dualism, although at heart Christian, is often very clearly articulated in groups which have their roots in the Theosophical tradition. As a member of the Aetherius Society told me, ‘We do acknowledge that there are malevolent forces outside the solar system. However, we are protected by benign cosmic intelligences who work ceaselessly on behalf of humanity’. Similarly, this idea is also developed by the Ashtar movement and Unarius, both of which have developed mythologies that betray the influence of Christian demonology. In her books *Project World Evacuation* (1982) and *Ashtar: A Tribute* (1985) Tuella (Thelma B. Terrill) explains that, although the space saviours are exercised over the build-up of negative energy on the planet and the potentially catastrophic disruption of the Earth's magnetic field, they have also had to contend with the dark forces of other alien races. She presents ‘detailed and complex information concerning the unfolding drama that she believed was playing out in the galaxy. Her work presented an epic narrative of battles between good and evil extraterrestrial forces’ (Helland, 2003, p. 171)—technological ‘principalities and powers’ (cf. Eph. 6:12).

Even more explicit in this respect is the narrative of *The Decline and Destruction of the Orion Empire* (1979) by Ruth Norman and the students of Unarius, which is essentially the story of the downfall of Satan, his opposition to the forces of good, and the subsequent fall of humanity, which now needs to be redeemed. The good–evil structure of the narrative has two key players: first, the co-founder of Unarius, Ruth Norman, known to her devotees as Uriel, ‘Archangel and Cosmic Visionary’, and second, one of her students, known as Antares, who, in a past life, was ‘the Fallen Angel, Satan, who had [in this life] come to [Uriel] to redeem himself’ (Tumminia, 2003, p. 68). Although explicitly identified with Satan, in Unarius mythology he is known as Tyrantus, who, prior to his fall, was an advanced being on the planet Aries. Closely adhering to the Christian understanding of the origins of Satan, the narrative begins with a glorious angelic being whose pride leads him to challenge Uriel's authority and thereby to fall. ‘After many lifetimes Antares took on the body of Tyrantus, master of the galaxy and commander of doom.

Tyrantus waged war on other planets'. Present-day students once resided in the Orion system. It was there they were enlisted to carry out evil deeds for Tyrantus' (Tumminia and Kirkpatrick, 1995, p. 94), including opposition to, even torture of, Uriel for thousands of years. Hence in this lifetime, through devotion to Uriel, they are seeking salvation by 'working out their *karma*'. However, the principal point as far as we are concerned is that, as Diana Tumminia notes, 'Whether as Satan or Tyrantus ("the Terror of the Orion constellation"), in all the subsequent past life stories that emerged, Antares was cast as Uriel's evil foil' (Tumminia, 2003, p. 68).

This notion of the evil foil, of course, is useful in that it can be employed to explain failure. For example, the Ashtar movement explained a series of failed prophecies regarding alien intervention as well as the proliferation of extraterrestrial messages that conflicted with the earlier communications of Ashtar, in terms spiritual warfare. As Christopher Helland notes, 'messages and practices from a previous generation, which were thought not to be consistent with current cosmology and communications, were attributed to the interference of negative space beings in the upper atmosphere of the planet' (Helland, 2003, p. 174). This led to the development of a demonology in which 'several young members of Ashtar's training forces had defected and become evil beings'. This, we are told,

occurred decades ago when a group of cadets rebelled from the Ashtar Command and formed their own negative extraterrestrial government. These beings made alliances with 'others of a similar rebellious nature' and began operating upon the 'lowest planes closest to the Earth'. Any messages that had been channelled in the past that contained overly negative information or erroneous dates for landing events were blamed upon these beings. (Helland, 2003, p. 174)

Two groups with strong links to the Theosophical tradition and its associated mythologies thus turn to the Christian tradition for their demonology. As John Saliba has argued, the Unariun concept of God 'is somewhat vague and does not correspond to the Judeo-Christian idea of a personal, creator God' (Saliba, 2003, p. 195). But this is not the case with Satan. The space gods may be Theosophical, but the space demons are Christian. Indian-influenced Theosophy simply does not have a developed demonology that can easily be translated into physicalist religion. Whilst there are, of course, demonologies within the Indian religious tradition that could be used, such as that surrounding Māra (the adversary of Gautama Buddha), these demonologies are complex and not well known (see Jayatilleke, 1975, pp. 256–258). Christian demonology, by contrast, is familiar and plausible.

To sum up thus far, we can identify five important areas of correspondence between UFO beliefs on the one hand and Jewish apocalyptic and Christian demonology on the other: (1) There is a cosmic battle between extraterrestrial principalities and powers. (2) There is a cosmic fall mythology to account for the existence of evil and the absence of love, peace and positive energy. The once great being Antares fell, thereby becoming Tyrantus, and members of Ashtar's training forces defected and became evil beings. (3) These 'fallen' rebel forces are understood to be personified manifestations of evil, the adversaries and would-be usurpers of personified goodness. Hence the 'negative extraterrestrial government' opposing Ashtar looks very much like an updated version of the demonic 'rulers of this present darkness ... the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places', which oppose God's government in the New Testament (Eph. 6:12). Moreover, the claim that these fallen beings exist on the 'lowest planes closest to the Earth'

comes very close to the Jewish apocalyptic belief that fallen angels hover in the lower air—a belief which subsequently fed into the Christian tradition and Western esotericism. (4) Spiritual problems, disagreements within the group, apostasy and misinformation are all manifestations of ‘demonic’ interference. (5) Finally, that ‘fallen’ beings make alliances with ‘others of similar rebellious nature’ echoes Western ideas concerning witchcraft and Faustian alliances.

Another UFO group that has roots in the Theosophical subculture but that has developed a far more explicit Christian demonology is Heaven’s Gate. Drawing very clearly on Christian apocalyptic thought, particularly as found in the Book of Revelation, the ‘exit statements’ of members who later committed mass suicide make explicit reference to Christian demonology. We are told that there are ‘forces against the Level Above Human’ which ‘distort any truth or reality of what the Kingdom of God is’ (Chkody, 1999a) and that these are ‘the “Luciferian” forces in opposition to the Next Level’ (Chkody, 1999a). Consequently, the founders of Heaven’s Gate, Marshall Herff Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Nettles, also known as ‘Ti and Do’, ‘Bo and Peep’, and ‘the Two’, are given explicit space messiah status, and their mission is understood in terms of opposition to demonic beings, referred to as the ‘space aliens’ or ‘Luciferians’. These demonic space aliens, we are told,

are real and ... use what is termed as ‘UFOs’. But their existence has carefully been made into legends or jokes to mask the reality of these physical beings. They have technology more advanced than that of humans, but behaviour that is no better. ...They have the same mammalian and egoistical behaviour that any human must learn to overcome. These ‘space aliens’ at one time... were in training for service to the Next Level, but through weakness, aborted their opportunity to further their Next Level knowledge (*mind*).... The agenda of these impostors is to distract and tempt those with deposits into their camp. (Chkody, 1999b)

Western demonological ideas are conspicuous here. Space aliens are fallen technological angels seeking to tempt humans away from the truth. Indeed, operating with a rigorous dualism, all the knowledge humans have is believed to ‘come from two sources ... a) the Next Level—the Kingdom of God and b) the opposition—the Lower Forces—Lucifer, Satan, or the Luciferians and their naïve servants’ (Jnnody, 1999a).

The ‘deposits’ mentioned in the exit statement relate to what is in fact a theology of election in Heaven’s Gate teaching, thereby betraying an essentially Reformed soteriology—not surprising in that the founder’s personal histories include involvement in Presbyterianism and the Baptist Church.<sup>5</sup> As with other UFO religions, so here the human race is believed to be the creation of superior extraterrestrials. Using a mixture of gardening and computing metaphors, Heaven’s Gate teaches that humans are beings with free will, placed in this ‘earthly garden’ to grow spiritually:

The purpose of this creation is to produce new members for the Level Above Human.... New members of the Kingdom of Heaven are born through a metamorphic process which begins when the Level Above Human, or Next Level, ‘plants seeds’—places deposits or ‘chips’ of Next Level mind (mind that comes from the Creator, the Chief of Chiefs, or Most High God—the term you use is not important) into human ‘plants’.... A deposit is potentially the *gift of life*, for it contains the

<sup>5</sup> Applewhite, the son of a Presbyterian minister, had studied for the ministry, and Nettles, although joining the Houston Theosophical Society later in life, had been brought up as a Baptist.

programming necessary to begin the metaphoric process which can lead to entry into the real Evolutionary Level Above Human, where there is no death. (Snnody, 1999)

This notion is similar to Justin's doctrine of the *spermatik logos*. Put simply, for Justin, reason (*logos*) unites God and humanity and secures the knowledge of God. Before the advent of Christ, Justin tells us, humans possessed seeds (*sperma*) of *logos* and thus were able to arrive at fragmentary truths about God. Those who lived according to reason, such as the great philosophers, could be termed 'Christians before Christ' (see Justin, in Stephenson, 1987, p. 61). (Christ, of course, was the *logos* made flesh.) However, there are demons which continually interfere with the divine-human relationship, tempting individuals away from reason, blinding them to the truth and leading them to worship foreign gods. Heaven's Gate makes a similar point: 'Although all religions contain seeds of truth which were planted by the Evolutionary Level Above Human, space aliens have twisted those truths so that souls might be blinded to the intended meaning and more easily influenced to do the opposite of what would be in their own interest' (Snnody, 1999). Elsewhere, as in some streams of Christianity, a militantly exclusivist approach is taken to world faiths: 'All religions have been spawned from the misinformation (distorted or corrupted truths) propagated by space-alien races ("Luciferians") who, knowingly or unknowingly, look to Lucifer as their god and victimize the humans on this planet' (Brnody, 1999).

Extraterrestrials are understood to elect individuals and to plant 'deposits' in them. These individuals are unaware of these deposits until they come into contact with a 'Representative of the Level above Human', such as particularly Applewhite and Nettles. Moreover, just as the Christian elect are understood to respond to the preached gospel, so the deposit is activated only when it encounters a Next Level Mind. An activated deposit coincides with the joining of minds. Where the work of the Holy Spirit leads to the union and communion of the Christian with God, which, in turn, involves a process of sanctification, in Heaven's Gate teaching there is an activation of the deposit, a melding of the spiritually immature mind with the highly evolved mind, and a subsequent technological sanctification as the former mind is matured. Heaven's Gate understands Luciferians to be able to locate those with deposits and to prevent them from graduating to the Next Level. Demons target the chosen and, again, tempt them away from faith in God and towards the pleasures of the world. Just as Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11), so, in Heaven's Gate demonology, the 'Luciferians' tempt the elect with 'mammalian behaviour' and the pleasures of this world. The consequent satanic panic mentality understands demonic forces to operate freely in the affairs of the secular world. Hence the teaching and messages posted on the Heaven's Gate website are, like some Christian fundamentalist teaching, permeated with paranoia about sinister forces which control everything, from the world governments to shopping transactions. In many ways the world is, as it was for Justin, 'swarming everywhere [with demons, which obsess] men's souls and bodies, infecting them with vice and corruption' (Kelly, 1977, p. 167; cf. Justin, in Stevenson, 1987, p. 60):

We feel the current world economic systems are against all the guidelines given to humans by the Next Level at the beginning of and throughout this civilization. Although currency systems were not given to humans by the Next Level, we prefer to pay cash to using credit cards or purchase plans.... Banks are definitely tools of the 'Luciferian' forces... and we would prefer not to make any banking

transactions ... [because] there are very real space-alien forces in opposition to us who can use such things as bank accounts and mailing addresses against us. (Glnody, 1999)

Furthermore, it is believed that these Luciferian forces have particularly promoted sexual promiscuity in contemporary Western society. Strongly suggestive of premodern Christian demonology, sexual desire per se is understood to be the result of demonic coercion: ‘The “lower forces” have succeeded in totally addicting humans to mammalian behaviour. Everything from ads for toothpaste to clothing elevates human sexuality. Being from a genderless world, this behaviour is extremely hideous to us’ (Glnody, 1999). The idea of being genderless and, particularly, celibate is, in common with certain streams of Christian thought, linked to purity.<sup>6</sup> Augustine, of course, understood sex negatively, it being fundamentally linked to the doctrine of original sin, the guilt of which was passed on by means of sexual intercourse. The following Heaven’s Gate prayer (to Ti and Do!) illustrates this attitude to sexuality well:

I ask for your inner strength so that I may completely withdraw this vehicle from all the inner addictions of its animal flesh, and for your keenness so that I can block all thoughts or mental pictures of mammalian behaviour, and for your consistency in maintaining non-mammalian behaviour of the Evolutionary Level Above Human—around the clock—in order that my soul (mind) will be compatible with and able to occupy a genderless vehicle from the Next Kingdom Level. (Brnody, 1999)

Division in the movement during the 1990s, following a general collapse of commitment, was, as it often is, interpreted in terms of demonic activity. During research on the group, Robert Balch relates an episode that illustrates this rationale. Do and Ti had disappeared, and the members were becoming demoralised. One member, Aaron, Balch recalls, ‘received a “revelation” that split the group into factions. Aaron argued that the final step in the process of ridding ourselves of attachments was overcoming our dependence on the Two. Only by transcending our need for spiritual teachers could we be expected to enter the next kingdom’ (Balch, 1995, p. 151). In less than a week three quarters of the group had adopted Aaron’s thesis and defected. Word then came that ‘the Two’ had ‘emerged from the wilderness’ and that a big meeting was planned.<sup>7</sup> However, the rumour was unfounded. ‘Aaron reemerged as a divisive force and factionalism increased’. The point is that, in struggling to understand what was going on, the response was, as in the Ashtar movement, to turn to demonology. Balch recalls that ‘some of the more committed members decided that our camp had been invaded by spirits. They laid the blame on a low-ranking Colorado recruit, claiming that he had been possessed by Beelzebub’ (Balch, 1995, p. 152). Turning to the vulnerable in the group and accusing them of demonic activity is, as we have seen, not without precedent in Western history.

<sup>6</sup> While the link between the demonic and sex is developed along broadly Christian theological lines, its origin can perhaps be traced to the founder’s guilt about his own double life which vacillated between homosexual and heterosexual identities and a subsequent personally devastating dismissal from a university post after an affair with a student (see Balch, 1995, pp. 141–142).

<sup>7</sup> As noted with regard to the Jewish and Christian understandings of the desert/wilderness, much could be made of that statement in relation to demonology.

Regardless of the power of such dark forces, the demonised alien of UFO religion is never the superior of the benevolent, messianic alien. Consequently, with its roots firmly in soil of Christian theology, Heaven's Gate is clear that any plans the Next Level has will not ultimately be thwarted by Luciferian forces. This reassurance is tied to the story in Genesis 3. First, the following question is asked: 'Although the Lord knew that Lucifer was going to be in the garden and would use the forbidden fruit game to tempt Adam and Eve's resistance, didn't Adam have the opportunity to actually listen to the Lord as he gave those instructions, and not listen to other influences that came along (Luciferian)?' (Jnnody, 1999b). Second, it is assumed that their alien creators were aware of the presence of Luciferian forces. Third, the doctrine of free will asserts that the original humans were in a position to follow freely either a Luciferian path or the Next Level path. Fourth, it is asked, 'If this is so, could the Lord then have seen to it that the human kingdom would serve as a catalyst for humans to get out of what they shouldn't have gotten into in the first place?' Finally, it is asked (and here the doctrine of election surfaces again), 'Wouldn't this be especially true for those in whom the Lord takes an interest?' (Jnnody, 1999b). The argument is thus as follows. (a) God is able to rectify the situation and thereby overrule the Luciferian forces. (b) The process of returning to the Next Level is a process in which, as in some Christian theologies,<sup>8</sup> 'the Luciferians unknowingly serve the Level Above Human by being a catalyst for growth' (Snnody, 1999). (c) In accordance with Christian eschatology, the demonic forces know that they will finally be defeated at the end of the age: 'They are for the most part aware that with the cyclical spading-under of the garden, which is imminent as this is the end of the age, their ranks are scheduled to be recycled as well' (Snnody, 1999).

### The reptilian agenda

Having looked at UFO religion, I now want to focus on a new breed of demonic alien evolving within contemporary 'abduction spiritualities',<sup>9</sup> which almost certainly has its origins in popular culture, especially the popular fantasy magazine *Weird Tales*. H.P. Lovecraft, Clarke Ashton Smith and particularly Robert E. Howard wrote stories for *Weird Tales*, which included malign, subterranean serpent creatures. In one of Howard's stories, 'The Shadow Kingdom', the creatures were able to change into human form in order to insinuate themselves into positions of power in human society (see Barkun, 2003, p. 121). This theme is developed by other writers and conspiracy theorists who produce 'fact-fiction reversals' (see Barkun, 2003, pp. 29–33), or accounts which

<sup>8</sup> Donald Bloesch expresses the position well: 'The Bible posits a moral but not a metaphysical dualism, for biblical faith is adamant that the devil and his hosts are both restrained and used by the living God, to whom alone belongs ultimate power. [Although] evil is not directly willed by God it is under his controlling power. Behind the afflictions and sufferings of the human race lies the malevolent work of Satan, and behind his abysmal power lies the inscrutable hand of the living God.... He governs humanity both through the devil and cruel tyrants on the one hand and through just rulers on the other' (Bloesch, 1995, pp. 129–130). This vice, of course, removes any ultimate dualism but, as the apocalyptic writers were aware, in so doing brings culpability for ultimate evil uncomfortably close to God.

<sup>9</sup> I distinguish UFO religion from abduction spirituality on the grounds that the latter is the result of claimed experiences of alien abduction, rather than simply contact with extraterrestrial beings. Moreover, abduction spiritualities are taught and developed by individual abductees, rather than organised groups or churches. Of course, abduction spiritualities may eventually lead to the establishment of formal UFO religions.

significantly blur the distinction between fact and fiction. Of particular note is Maurice Doreal, who had been involved in the Theosophical subculture and subsequently founded the Brotherhood of the White Temple (c. 1930). Doreal developed elaborate theories about a subterranean serpent race and, subsequently, incorporated extraterrestrials into his thinking in the early 1950s. These themes were later elided in order to produce a theory of a Serpent Race which, he claimed, in the latter half of the twentieth century would become an ally of the Antichrist (Doreal, 1992, pp. 29, 47–50; Barkun, 2003, p. 119). Although we need not explore the ‘inner-earth’ conspiracies associated with serpent creatures, it is worth remembering that, as Michael Barkun comments, in the popular imagination, the subterranean world ‘is the location of hell, where the devil supervises the punishments endured by the wicked. And Satan, the Evil One, is also the serpent who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, bringing humanity sin and mortality’ (Barkun, 2003, p. 123). That these reptile beings originally resides in a subterranean underworld is significant. At this early stage, we see (a) a reptilian creature stepping out of the pages of fiction into the occult subculture; (b) the elision of the reptile with popular UFO lore of the early 1950s; and (c) an explicit relationship being established with Christian demonology.

In contemporary UFO demonologies, these creatures, often referred to as ‘reptilians’ or ‘reptoids’, and, less frequently, ‘insectoids’ (for example, Jacobs, 1999, p. 94), are usually described as a ‘tall, mostly humanoid-type race, with snake-like eyes and skin’ (Icke, 2001, p. xxi). Tony Dodd, a British UFO researcher, describes ‘a seven-foot-tall lizard, only with arms and legs’ which is aggressive and highly intelligent (Dodd, 1999, pp. 203, 232). Whilst the greys—the slim aliens with large, dark, almond-shaped eyes—are sometimes understood to be malevolent in that they experiment on humans, it is the reptilians and reptoids that are beginning to dominate contemporary extraterrestrial demonology. Gail Seymour, a contactee and psychic healer specialising in the treatment of abductees, claims that they rape, torture, and murder. She recounts how she first became aware of the reptilians. ‘About six months ago I noticed that all of my new clients were being raped and tortured by an “unseen force”—a force that was definitely not the greys’. As to why this species of alien is suddenly becoming prominent, according to Seymour, since mid-August 1999 (she is very specific about the pre-millennium timing) ‘there has been a change of command. The greys, formerly intermediaries for the reptilians, acting as their front line of attack, seem to have stepped backward. The reptilians are now coming forward’ (Seymour, 2002a).

Not only has popular fiction become fact, but also the parallels with pre-modern accounts of incubi and succubi are often conspicuous. Indeed, there is clearly a sense in which reptilians are understood to be a spiritual threat. Some victims, for example, speak of ‘possession’ and, according to one, ‘a sucking effect in [the] solar plexus “like a vacuum cleaner” ’ (Seymour, 2002a). Indeed, as we have seen in Doreal’s thought, Christian demonology is explicitly used. For example, according to Seymour, ‘Satan was real alright. I think he was a big deal and the head of the reptilian invasion’ (Seymour, 2002b). Again, reptilian demonologies make much of the biblical account of the serpent tempting Eve, which, we are told, was actually the initial reptilian contact with humans.

Almost certainly because it provides a physicalist account of Christian demonology, the popularity of the reptilian has spread rapidly. The demon interferes directly with the human. Consequently the increase in reports about reptilians follows the increased interest in abduction generally. Parallel to the shift in popular culture, which was in turn linked to the rise of interest in

abduction, reptilian demonologies are becoming far more common. Even Michelle LaVigne's otherwise very positive interpretation of extraterrestrials, *The Alien Abduction Survival Guide*, reports the following discussion with Hetar, a beneficent alien with whom she has developed a relationship: 'Hetar once showed a picture of an ET that looked like a humanoid/lobster/lizard mix. He told me to be careful of these ETs. I asked why. He said, "Because they will eat you"' (LaVigne, 1995, p. 83). Similarly, reptilians have begun to find their way into the theologically positive, Theosophical streams of the Ashtar Command. For example, on the website of the Ashtar Lightwork Centre, where it is difficult to find anything negative about extraterrestrials, we read the following testimony (by one who, significantly, was clearly aware of abduction demonologies):

My first conscious contact with a so-called Alien in this life, was with one of the people commonly referred to as Greys.... One night when my sister Galimai-A and myself were in the living room, talking, a silver gray coloured lady stood at the entrance, and asked politely if she could please come in. She spoke telepathically.... Of course I first was a bit suspicious. I also knew of the nasty abduction stories.... But she insisted she was not of that part of the race.... She told us the 'bad guys' are not silvery gray, like herself and her benign people, but a dullish brownish gray, [because] all the spiritual light had gone from them. This part of the race chose a connection to the Reptilians. They have cut themselves off from the light... affiliated with the reptilians... [and] live on another planet, where they are closely guarded by the Ashtar Command. (Ashtar Light Network, 2003)

The text goes on to relate how some aliens fell by allying themselves with the reptilians and 'functioning like the Borg in Star Trek'. The result was a great battle between good and evil aliens: the visitor 'showed us some of the things that happened during that war', things that 'were ten times worse than Roddenberry was allowed to show' (Ashtar Lightwork Centre, 2003). This last point both indicates Christian influence and suggests that *Star Trek* is understood to have been used by extraterrestrials to reveal truth.

This myth of an ancient battle between good and evil aliens, the result of which is the dominance of the reptilians, is particularly developed in the surreal conspiracy theories of David Icke. Indeed, Icke is perhaps most responsible for developing and popularising the demonology. This is particularly interesting, since his ideas can be traced back very clearly to Doreal (and thus to Robert Howard's fiction). For example, Doreal produced a long poem, 'The Emerald Tablets', which, he claimed, was the work of Thoth, a Priest who had lived in Atlantis. This text is important not only because it mentions demonic serpent creatures but also because it is used extensively by David Icke (see particularly Icke, 2001). Indeed, many of Doreal's themes are explicit in Icke's work.

In recent years Icke has devoted his career to exposing 'the reptilian agenda', the ultimate aim of which is the 'control of planet Earth and its entire population'. Icke's conspiracy theory, which Seymour told me she shared,<sup>10</sup> includes the belief that the world's leaders, including US Presidents, the British royal family and even leading religious figures, belong to a shape-shifting, reptilian–human hybrid bloodline (see Icke, 1999). This is perhaps the most recent manifestation of another widespread conspiracy theory, one which concerns a group of malevolent individuals, collectively referred to as 'the Illuminati' (see Barkun, 2003, pp. 45–64). The original thesis can be

<sup>10</sup> I have been surprised at the number of those I have spoken to who find Icke's ideas, if not entirely convincing, at least plausible.

traced back to John Robison, a Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, who published a work in 1798 claiming to expose ‘a conspiracy against all the religions and governments of Europe’ (Robison, 1967). His book included a discussion of the Bavarian intellectual Adam Weishaupt, who sought to propagate Enlightenment thought through a secretive society, which he founded in 1776, called the Order of the Illuminati. Although Weishaupt was removed from his post as Professor of Canon Law at the University of Ingolstadt and his Order suppressed, Robison and others were convinced that the Illuminati, as well as the Freemasons and other secret societies, continued to spread their influence in an effort to secure world domination. Because secret societies, particularly the Freemasons, were already suspected of conspiring with the Devil, the thesis seemed plausible to many. Over time, the confluence of conspiracist ideas led to the construction of a metanarrative which claimed that ‘individual Masons influenced by the Order of the Illuminati were in league with the Devil (as agents of the Antichrist)—a claim that quickly became entwined with allegations that Jews were behind the plot. These claims of conspiracy made their way to the United States in the 1800s, generating Protestant suspicion about Freemasons and Catholics’ (Berlet, 2001, p. 231).

The Illuminati conspiracy has proved to be enormously popular over the last two hundred years (see Barkun, 2003, pp. 45–64). Although today’s conspiracy theorists may be unaware of Robison or Weishaupt, in my own conversations with people I have been surprised at how often the conspiracy surfaces. I have come across several variations of it in the last few years, most of which link the Illuminati to what the geographer Richard Peet has as referred to as the ‘unholy trinity’: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (Peet, 2003).<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it is arguable that Icke’s own development of the Illuminati conspiracy, which is linked to such dominant, global institutions, accounts, to some extent, for his growing popularity. For example, some people I have spoken to disagree with the reptilian component of his thesis, but genuinely think that his overall conspiracist understanding of history and world affairs is fundamentally correct.

Icke’s relatively complex thesis is interesting in that, whilst it is highly critical of Christianity, its fundamental ideas demonstrate a dependence on Christian demonology. This becomes explicit when he traces the origins of the reptilian occupation of Earth. Although Icke had been developing his conspiracy theories for several years (see Icke, 1994), and although an interest in UFOs is evident in his earlier books, in the second half of the 1990s his emphasis shifted very firmly towards an extraterrestrial demonology. Following popular writers such as Erich von Däniken (1969) and Zecharia Sitchin (1990), and in a similar way to the Raëlian Church and Heaven’s Gate, he provides a physicalist reinterpretation of the Genesis accounts of encounters between supernatural beings and humans (see Partridge, 2003, pp. 21–26). However, unlike much UFO religion, for Icke the consequences of this alien-human contact are almost entirely negative. ‘The Old Testament’, he notes, ‘talks about the “Sons of God” who interbred with the daughters of men to create

<sup>11</sup> Richard Peet and his co-authors are not conspiracy theorists, and their interesting book on neoliberalism is not concerned with such theories. However, the point is that, the cogent thesis of the book (and other treatments of the ‘unholy trinity’) could easily be interpreted in this way. Add a sentence about the Illuminati to the following statement printed on the cover, and it comes very close to David Icke’s theories and those of other conspiracy theorists: ‘The lives of all of us, particularly if we live in developing countries, are intimately affected by a triad of hugely powerful, well-financed, but fundamentally undemocratic and out of control organizations—the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Centre’.

the hybrid race, the Nefilim [*sic*] (Icke, 2003b). It is these hybrid beings that constitute Icke's reptilian demonology. Again, following Sitchin, he claims that 'Sumarian clay tablets ... talk of a race of "gods" from another world who brought advanced knowledge to the planet and interbred with humans to create hybrid bloodlines' (Icke, 2003b). Turning to mythological civilizations, he argues that 'way back in "pre-history", there was a highly developed civilization in the Pacific, which has become known as Lemuria, or Mu. These peoples and others also founded another great civilization on a landmass in the Atlantic, which we know as Atlantis' (Icke, 2001, p. xxi).

Betraying some chronological snobbery, Icke's point is that aliens can be traced throughout the ancient and mythical civilizations by simply linking them to great architectural and engineering achievements. In other words, he assumes that our ancient forebears were incapable of such work and insists that 'the knowledge that built fantastic and unexplainable ancient structures like the Great Pyramid and other amazing sites across the world' was extraterrestrial; they were all constructed by 'extraterrestrials of many varieties' (Icke, 2001, p. xxi). However, at this early period, good and evil alien races co-existed on Earth. There were battles for supremacy. Alien races engaged in warfare until alliances were made as a result of interbreeding. Of particular significance was the interbreeding between the reptilians and 'the blond-haired, blue-eyed Nordic peoples' (Icke, 2001, p. xxi), the outcome of which was the ancient Aryan 'master race'. Subsequently, according to Icke, 'these hybrid bloodlines ... were put into the positions of ruling power, especially in the ancient Near and Middle East, in advanced cultures like Sumer, Babylon, and Egypt' (Icke, 2001, p. xxi). Hence he believes that he has identified not only a fundamental demonic continuity between Aryanism and Nazism, but hybrid reptilian bloodlines, which can be traced through history. It is these bloodlines that 'later became the royal and aristocratic families of Europe'. Moreover, he says, 'thanks to the ... British Empire and other European empires, they were exported to the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and right across into the Far East, where they connected with other reptilian hybrid bloodlines, like those, most obviously in China, where the symbolism of the dragon is the very basis of their culture' (Icke, 2003b). Hence the 'biggest secret', as he calls it (Icke, 1999), is that 'a global secret society called the Illuminati ... have been holding the reigns of power in the world since ancient times. ... The Illuminati have been working to a long planned and coordinated agenda to create a world government, central bank, army, and a micro-chipped population linked to a global computer' (Icke, 2003c).

Concerning the Illuminati, Icke is again explicitly indebted to a mixture of ideas drawn from popular conspiracy theory and Christian demonology, in that he understands them to be practising Satanists (see Icke, 2001, pp. 312–334). However, as with Seymour and unlike conspiracy theorists who stand explicitly within the Christian tradition (as Robison did), the term 'satanic' is essentially synonymous with 'reptilian'. 'Satanists' are those who are committed to the demonic reptilian agenda, and the reptilians themselves are involved in all the activities popularly attributed to Satan and Satanism. 'My use of the term Satanism', he says, describes 'a system of ritual sacrifice and torture which, staggering as it may seem to most people, is commonplace all over the world today. Satanism is another name for the worship of a highly destructive, negative force which has been given endless names over the centuries. Nimrod, Baal, Moloch or Molech, Set, the Devil, Lucifer, there is no end to them' (Icke, 2003d). Hence strikingly similar to some Christian fundamentalist statements about Satanists, reptilian–human hybrids are continually and systematically involved in 'the abuse and satanic ritual abuse of children, and human sacrifice ceremonies in general' (Icke, 2003b). He continues, 'follow the Illuminati–reptilian bloodlines

from the ancient world to now and they have ALWAYS taken part in human sacrifice ceremonies and blood-drinking. The sacrifices to “the gods” in ancient accounts were literally sacrifices to the reptilians and their hybrid bloodlines. The story of the blood-drinking Dracula is symbolic of the reptilian “vampires” (Icke, 2003b). As to why the vampiric reptilians need to drink human blood, the answer is simple. If they don’t, they are unable to ‘maintain their DNA codes in their “human” expression’ (Icke, 2003b). In other words, without blood, ‘they manifest their reptilian codes and we would all see what they really look like’ (Icke, 2003b). This is why, declares Icke, ‘people like George Bush, Henry Kissinger, and a stream of the other Illuminati “big names” ’ need to be exposed ‘as reptilian shape-shifters who take part in human sacrifice and blood drinking. The two go together’ (Icke, 2003b).

Icke offers people not only an extraterrestrial version of christian satanic panic demonology, but a version which is fundamentally rooted in and dependent upon that demonology. Indeed, just as those involved in witch crazes and satanic panics become paranoid and obsessed with conspiracy theories, convinced that the servants of Satan operate all around them—the priest, the teacher, the doctor, the social worker, the shop assistant, the police officer or indeed anyone who acts out of the ordinary—so, understanding reality to be multidimensional, Icke argues that reptilians live, unseen, all around us in a fourth dimension. This dimension is significant, he says, because it is ‘the traditional home for the “demons” of folklore and myth’ (Icke, 2003a). Again, just as demons are able to work through their human accomplices in witch-craze and satanic panic cosmologies, so, in Icke’s thought, ‘fourth-dimensional reptilian entities work through hybrid bloodlines because [being part reptilian] they have a vibrational compatibility with each other’ (Icke, 2003a).

This mythology is, as noted, reinforced through popular culture. However, in Icke’s case, this reinforcement is not passive but active. That is to say, Icke urges those new to his ideas to study, for example, Kenneth Johnson’s TV series *V* (NBC, 1984–85), which, he claims, will educate people about ‘what is REALLY going on’ (Icke, 2003b). The overlap between the basic structure of Icke’s demonology and the storyline of *V* is so striking that it hard to avoid the conclusion that it has been a significant factor in its construction—particularly bearing in mind that it was written before Icke produced his own demonology. Essentially, *V* is about reptilian extraterrestrials which, while appearing respectable and friendly, are actually a malevolent, vampiric species who eat humans and plot to take over the planet. Other films he explicitly endorses include *The Matrix* (1999), which is clearly viewed by him as an important exposé (Icke, 2001, p. xvii); John Carpenter’s *They Live* (1988), which tells the story of a drifter who accidentally uncovers an alien plot to take over America; and David Schmoeller’s *The Arrival* (1990), in which an alien parasite turns a human into a vampire. ‘I urge you’, he writes, ‘to think about watching these movies to get up to speed if you are new to all of this’ (Icke, 2003b).

Icke, of course, isn’t alone in claiming that aliens actively use popular culture to educate us. For example, in a channelled message from Soltec of the Ashtar Command, we are given the following information:

We will enter into a campaign of spreading our imagery through your media.... So-called fictional sci-fi books, which will gain mass popularity, will actually be truth disguised as fiction. This will gently accustom humans to the concept of the Ashtar Command.... Your media culture is the strongest influence on your western society and it is therefore obvious that we would begin to announce ourselves to the mass consciousness in this manner. (Soltec, 2003)

## Conclusion

The argument of this article is that, while much of UFO religion has its roots in Theosophical thought, its demonology is firmly rooted in the Christian tradition. While the extraterrestrial saviours are Theosophical (see Partridge, 2003, pp. 7–21), and while doctrines of reincarnation and *karma* are often employed, when it comes the construction of a demonology, UFO religionists, contactees and abductees quite naturally turn to the myths and ideas with which they are most familiar. Consequently, alien demonologies function in much the same way as popular Christian demonologies and, in extreme cases, tend to inspire responses similar to those in the early modern witch crazes, in the conspiracy theories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in the more recent satanic panics. Indeed, even strongly Theosophical groups that deny the existence of an actual Devil or any form of ontological evil still seem bound to the conceptual framework of Jewish apocalyptic and Christian demonologies. For example, although Mark-Age states that ‘there is no such thing as a Satan’, Christian terminology is still used. Satan is simply reinterpreted as ‘the evil that lives in men’s mind’s, heart’s, desires, ambitions and greed’ (Mark-Age, 2003). This Satan, moreover, is that of the New Testament that tempted Christ. Where in the more traditional Theosophical narratives there is a tendency to internalise the demonic, this detraditionalised demonology is still fundamentally Christian in that many of the same themes are discussed, including the temptation away from the plan of the Creator and the celestial battle of Armageddon,<sup>12</sup> information about which is channelled by the archangel Michael and the effects of which are manifest in the wars, disasters and sufferings of humanity.

The external demon, we have seen, has been particularly promoted by abduction narratives and conspiracy theories, both of which are explicitly evident in ‘the reptilian agenda’. Being far more dependent on external malign entities, they have drawn explicitly on biblical and popular Christian demonologies.

Finally, along with Christian demonology, the demonised alien is principally shaped by popular culture. But we have seen that even this influence has itself been informed by a demonology that runs like a continuous thread from Jewish apocalypticism to the reptilian agenda. Indeed, I would not be surprised to learn that many new Western demonologies outside UFO religion are also fundamentally Christian.

## Acknowledgments

I want to thank those who commented on an earlier version of this article which was delivered as a paper at the 2003 BASR conference. I also want to thank Robert Segal for his helpful comments on a later draft.

---

<sup>12</sup> Armageddon is detraditionalised, in that it seems to be the battle to transform corrupt human selves: ‘We have come to the place in the Battle of Armageddon where each person must accept responsibility for the conditions prevailing everywhere on the planet’ (Mark-Age, 2003).

## References

- Adamski, G., 1949. *Pioneers of Space: A Trip to the Moon, Mars and Venus*. Leonard-Freefield, Los Angeles.
- Alnor, W.M., 1998. *UFO Cults and the New Millennium*. Baker, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Ashtar Lightwork Centre, 2003. *The Greys (Zetas)—unbiased*. Available from: <<http://www.ashtarlightworkcenter.com/greys/index.htm>> (Accessed: 9/1/2003).
- Augustine, 1945. *The City of God*, Vol. II. Dent, London. Trans. by Healey, J. Ed. by Tasker, R.V.G.
- Baddeley, G., 1999. *Lucifer Rising*. Plexus, London.
- Baer, R.N., 1989. *Inside the New Age Nightmare*. Huntington House, Lafayette, LA.
- Bailey, M.D., 2003. *Battling with Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages*. Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA.
- Balch, R.W., 1995. Waiting for the ships: disillusionment and the revitalization of faith in Bo and Peep's UFO cult. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *The Gods Have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds*. State University of New York Press, Albany, pp. 137–166.
- Barkun, M., 2003. *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Barrett, C.K. (Ed.), 1987. *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*. SPCK, London.
- Bartholomew, R.E., Howard, G.S., 1998. *UFOs and Alien Contact: Two Centuries of Mystery*. Prometheus Books, Amherst, MA.
- Berlet, C., 2001. The Illuminati. In: Brasher, B.E. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism*. Routledge, New York, pp. 231–232.
- Best, J., 1991. Endangered children and antisatanist rhetoric. In: Richardson, J.T., Best, J., Bromley, D.G. (Eds.), *The Satanism Scare*. Aldine de Gruyter, Hawthorne, NY, pp. 95–106.
- Bloesch, D.G., 1995. *God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love*. Paternoster Press, Carlisle, UK.
- Bolt, P.G., 1996. Jesus, the daimons and the dead. In: Lane, A.N.S. (Ed.), *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realm*. Paternoster Press, Carlisle, UK, pp. 75–102.
- Bonhoeffer, D., 1955. *Temptation*. SCM Press, London.
- Bowie, F., 2000. *The Anthropology of Religion*. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Boyce, M., 1985. Zoroastrianism. In: Hinnells, J. (Ed.), *A Handbook of Living Religions*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK, pp. 171–190.
- Brain, B., 1983. Saviors and scientists: extraterrestrials in recent science fiction films. *Et Cetera: A Review of General Semantics* 40, 218–229.
- Briggs, R., 1996. *Witches and Neighbours: the Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*. Fontana, London.
- Brnody, 1999. Up the chain. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Chkody, 1999a. Earth exit statement. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Chkody, 1999b. The hidden facts of Ti and Do. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Clines, D., 1996. The significance of the 'sons of God' episode (Genesis 6: 1–4) in the context of the 'primeval history' (Genesis 1–11). In: Rogerson, J.W. (Ed.), *The Pentateuch: A Sheffield Reader*. Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, pp. 33–46.
- von Däniken, E., 1969. *Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past*. Souvenir Press, London.
- Dick, S.J., 1998. *Life on Other Worlds: The Twentieth Century Extraterrestrial Life Debate*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Dodd, T., 1999. *Alien Investigator: The Case Files of Britain's Leading UFO Detective*. Headline, London.
- Doreal, M., 1992. *Flying Saucers: An Occult Viewpoint*, second ed., Brotherhood of the White Temple, Sedalia (first ed. no date given).
- Evans, H., 1988. Demonic UFOs. In: Brookesmith, P. (Ed.), *UFOs: Where Do They Come From?* Macdonald, London, pp. 62–74.
- Festinger, L., Riecken, H.W., Schachter, S., 1964. *When Prophecy Fails: A Social and Psychological Study of a Modern Group that Predicted the End of the World*, second ed., Harper and Row, New York (first edition, 1956).

- Forsyth, N., 1987. *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.
- Frayling, C., 1996. *Nightmare: the Birth of Horror*. BBC, London.
- Fuller, J.G., 1987. *Interrupted Journey: Two Lost Hours 'Aboard a Flying Saucer'*, 2nd ed., Dial Press, New York (first edition, 1966).
- Galloway, A.D., 1951. *The Cosmic Christ*. Nisbet, London.
- Glnody, 1999. Why we must leave at this time. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Groothuis, D., 1988. *Confronting the New Age*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL.
- Grünschloß, A., 2000. Wenn Die Götter Landed ... Religiöse Dimensionen des UFO-Glaubens. *EZW-Texte*, 153, EZW, Berlin.
- Grünschloß, A., 2003. When we Enter into My Father's Spacecraft: Cargoistic Hopes and millenarian Cosmologies in New Religious UFO movements. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *Encyclopedic Sourcebook of UFO Religions*. Prometheus Books, Amherst, MA, pp. 17–42.
- Hall, S.G., 1991. *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*. SPCK, London.
- Harris, K., 2000. 'Roots'? The relationship between the global and the local within the extreme metal scene. *Popular Music* 19, 13–30.
- Helland, C., 2003. From extraterrestrials to ultraterrestrials: the evolution of the concept of Ashtar. In: Partridge, C. (Ed.), *UFO Religions*. Routledge, London, pp. 162–178.
- Hopkins, B., 1981. *Missing Time: A Documented Study of UFO Abductions*. Richard Marek, New York.
- Hopkins, B., 1987. *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods*. Random House, New York.
- Icke, D., 1994. *The Robots' Rebellion. The Story of the Spiritual Renaissance*. Gateway, Bath, UK.
- Icke, D., 1999. *The Biggest Secret*. Bridge of Love, Wildwood, UK.
- Icke, D., 2001. *Children of the Matrix*. Bridge of Love, Wildwood, UK.
- Icke, D., 2003a. A concise description of the Illuminati. Available from: <<http://www.davidicke.com/icke/articles/illuminati.html>> (Accessed: 6/1/2003).
- Icke, D., 2003b. The reptilian connection. Available from: <<http://www.davidicke.com/icke/temp/reptconn.html>> (Accessed: 6/1/2003).
- Icke, D., 2003c. Who really rules the world? Available from: <<http://www.davidicke.com/icke/visitor.html>> (Accessed: 6/1/2003).
- Icke, D., 2003d. Who are the draconians? Case files of Branton: Case File #32. Available from: <<http://reptile.users2.50megs.com/research/r100799c.html>> (Accessed: 6/1/2003).
- Jacobs, D.M., 1999. *The Threat*. Simon and Schuster, London.
- Jayatilleke, K.N., 1975. *The Message of the Buddha*. Allen and Unwin, London.
- Innody, 1999a. Incarnating and discarnating. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Innody, 1999b. Be fruitful and multiply. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Jolly, K.L., 1996. *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill.
- Jones, P., Pennick, N., 1995. *A History of Pagan Europe*. Routledge, London.
- Jung, C.G., 1969. *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*. Signet Books, New York (first edition, 1959).
- Kaveney, R., (Ed.), 2001. *Reading the Vampire Slayer*. Tauris Parke, London.
- Kelly, J.N.D., 1977. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Black, London.
- King, G.R., 1935. *Unveiled Mysteries*. Saint-Germain Press, Chicago.
- Kluger, R.S., 1967. *Satan in the Old Testament*. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL.
- La Fontaine, J., 1999. Satanism and satanic mythology. In: Ankarloo, B., Clark, S. (Eds.), *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: the Twentieth Century*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, pp. 81–140.
- Lagrange, P., 2000. Kenneth Arnold. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *UFOs and Popular Culture: An Encyclopaedia of Contemporary Myth*. ABC-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA, p. 34

- Lavery, D., Hague, A., Cartwright, M., 1996. Introduction: Generation X—the X-Files and the cultural moment. In: Lavery, D., Hague, A., Cartwright, M. (Eds.), *Deny All Knowledge: Reading the X-Files*. Faber and Faber, London, pp. 1–21.
- LaVey, A.S., 1969. *The Satanic Bible*. Avon Books, New York.
- LaVigne, M., 1995. *Alien Abduction Survival Guide*. Wild Flower Press, Newberg, UK.
- Leadbeater, C., 1912. *A Textbook of Theosophy*. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, India.
- Ling, T., 1961. *The Significance of Satan: New Testament Demonology and Its Contemporary Relevance*. SPCK, London.
- Ling, T., 1968. *A History of Religion East and West*. Macmillan, London.
- Lurker, M., 1987. *Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons*. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- Luther, M., 1955. *Luther's Works*. Trans. by Schick G.V. Ed. by Pelikan, J. Vol. II. Concordia Publishing House, St Louis.
- Mark-Age, 2003. I Am Nation Newsletter. Available from: <<http://www.islandnet.com/~arton/markage.html>> (Accessed: 7/1/2003).
- Matheson, T., 1998. *Alien Abductions: Creating a Modern Phenomenon*. Prometheus Books, Amherst, MA.
- McGinn, B., 1994. *Antichrist: Two thousand Years of the Human Fascination with Evil*. Harper San Francisco, San Francisco.
- Nielsen, K., 1998. *Satan: The Prodigal Son? A Family Problem in the Bible*. Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, UK.
- Parrinder, G., 1963. *Witchcraft: European and African*. Faber and Faber, London.
- Partridge, C., 2003. Understanding UFO religions and abduction spiritualities. In: Partridge, C. (Ed.), *UFO Religions*. Routledge, London, pp. 3–42.
- Peet, R., 2003. *Unholy Trinity: The IMF, World Bank and WTO*. Zed Books, London.
- Peters, T., 1995. Exo-theology: speculations on extraterrestrial life. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *The Gods Have Landed: New Religions From Other Worlds*. State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, pp. 187–206.
- Purkiss, D., 2000. *Troublesome Things: A History of Fairies and Fairy Stories*. Allen Lane/Penguin Press, London.
- Richardson, J.T., Best, J., Bromley, D.G. (Eds.), 1991. *The Satanism Scare*. Aldine de Gruyter, Hawthorne, NY.
- Robison, J., 1967. *Proofs of a Conspiracy Against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, Carried on in Secret Meetings of the Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies, Collected From Good Authorities*. Western Islands, Boston (first edition, 1798).
- Ruppenberg, H., 1987. The alien messiah in recent science fiction films. *Journal of Popular Film and TV* 14, 158–166.
- Russell, J.B., 1977. *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Russell, J.B., 1981. *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Russell, J.B., 1986. *Mephistopheles: the Devil in the Modern World*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Saliba, J., 2003. UFOs and religion: a case study of Unarius Academy of Science. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *Encyclopedic Sourcebook of UFO Religions*. Prometheus Books, Amherst, MA, pp. 191–208.
- Segal, R.A., 2003. Jung on UFOs. In: Partridge, C. (Ed.), *UFO Religions*. Routledge, London, pp. 314–328.
- Sellon, E.B., Weber, R., 1992. Theosophy and the Theosophical Society. In: Faivre, A., Needleman, J. (Eds.), *Modern Esoteric Spirituality*. SCM Press, London, pp. 311–329.
- Seymour, G., 2002a. Reptilians. Available from: <<http://www.abduct.com/irm.htm>> (Accessed: 1/5/2002).
- Seymour, G., 2002b. The late Karla Turner speaks of reptilian atrocities. Available from: <<http://www.abduct.com/irm.htm>> (Accessed: 1/5/2002).
- Showalter, E., 1997. *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and the Modern Media*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Sitchin, Z., 1990. *Genesis Revisited*. Avon, New York.
- Smith, S.G., 2003. Opening a channel to the stars: the origins and development of the Aetherius Society. In: Partridge, C. (Ed.), *UFO Religions*. Routledge, London, pp. 84–102.
- Snoody, 1999. Deposits. Available from: <<http://www.heavensgatetoo.com/exitchk.htm>> (Accessed: 26/8/1999).
- Soltec, 2003. Ashtar Command and popular culture. Available from: <<http://spiritexpress.org/acc/home/acsoltecl.htm>> (Accessed: 24/3/2003).
- Stevenson, J. (Ed.), 1987. *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337*. SPCK, London.
- Strieber, W., 1988. *Communion*, second ed. Arrow Books, London (first edition, 1987).

- Stupple, D., 1984. Mahatmas and space brothers: the ideologies of alleged contact with extraterrestrials. *Journal of American Culture* 7, 131–139.
- Thomas, K., 1973. *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*. Penguin, Harmondsworth, UK.
- Tingay, K., 2004. The Theosophical Society. In: Partridge, C. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of New Religions*. Lion Publishing, Oxford, pp. 320–322.
- Tingay, K., 2000. Madame Blavatsky's children: Theosophy and its heirs. In: Sutcliffe, S., Bowman, M. (Eds.), *Beyond New Age: Exploring Alternative Spiritualities*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp. 37–50.
- Tonkin, B., 2001. Entropy as demon: Buffy in Southern California. In: Kaveney, R. (Ed.), *Reading the Vampire Slayer*. Tauris Parke, London, pp. 37–52.
- Trachtenberg, J., 1943. *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.
- Trachtenberg, J., 1970. *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study of Folk Religion*. Atheneum, New York (originally published 1939).
- Tuella, 1982. Project World Evacuation by the Ashtar Command. Guardian Action Publications, Deming, Utah.
- Tuella, 1985. Ashtar: A Tribute. Guardian Action Publications, Deming, Utah.
- Tumminia, D., Kirkpatrick, R.G., 1995. Unarius: emergent aspects of an American flying saucer group. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *The Gods Have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds*. State University of New York Press, Albany, pp. 85–104.
- Tumminia, D., 2003. When the archangel died: from revelation to routinization of charisma in Unarius. In: Partridge, C. (Ed.), *UFO religions*. Routledge, London, pp. 62–83.
- Vallée, J., 1969. *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers*. Regnery, Chicago.
- Victor, J.S., 1993. *Satanic Panics: the Creation of a Contemporary Myth*. Open Court, Chicago, IL.
- Wallis, R., 1974. The Aetherius Society: a case study in the formation of a mystagogic congregation. *Sociological Review* 22, 27–44.
- Wenham, G.J., 1987. *Genesis 1-15*. Word Books, Waco, TX.
- Westermann, C., 1994. *Genesis 1-11: A Continental Commentary*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Whitmore, J., 1995. Religious dimensions of the UFO abductee experience. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *The Gods Have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds*. State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, pp. 65–84.
- Whitmore, J., 2000. Abductees. In: Lewis, J.R. (Ed.), *UFOs and Popular Culture: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Myth*. ACC-Clio, Santa Barbara, CA, pp. 1–4.
- Wilcox, R.V., Lavery, D. (Eds.), 2003. *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD.
- Winslade, J.L., 2002. Teen witches, wiccans, and 'wanna-blessed-be's': pop-culture magic in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. *Slayage: the On-line International Journal of Buffy Studies* 1. Available from: <<http://www.slayage.tv/essays/slayage1/winslade.htm>> .
- Wright, N.G., 1996. Charismatic interpretations of the demonic. In: Lane, A.N.S. (Ed.), *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons and the Heavenly Realm*. Paternoster Press, Carlisle, UK, pp. 149–163.

**Christopher Partridge** is Professor of Contemporary Religion at University College Chester, Chester, England. His research focuses on new religions, contemporary alternative spiritualities and popular culture in the West. He is the author and editor of several books and articles in the area. Most recently he has edited *UFO Religions* (Routledge, 2003) and *The Encyclopedia of New Religions: New Religious Movements, Sects and Alternative Spiritualities* (Lion, 2004), published in the USA as *New Religions: A Guide* (Oxford University Press, 2004).