

**Unexplained! 347 Strange Sightings, Incredible Occurrences, and Puzzling Physical Phenomena**, by Jerome Clark. Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1993, 443 pp., \$14.95 (paper).

There are quite a number of compendia featuring anomalies; so my first reaction to this publication was, "Why? What could be different about this one?" To my delight, I found it fresh and eminently worthwhile in several respects: its particular coverage, the comprehensive detail of its bibliographic references, the high intellectual level of its analysis.

As in encyclopedias, the entries are in alphabetical order. There is a table of contents, but there is no index; and more-or-less related entries are not cross-indexed, for example "Almas", "Bigfoot", "Hairy Biped", "Jacko", "Minnesota Iceman", "Wildman", "Yeti", "Yeti Photograph", "Yowie". So this is not a comprehensive work of reference, not an encyclopedia. Its value and interest lie more in its eclectic choice of topics and thoughtful analysis.

Coverage: Some entries have to do with well-known anomalies ("Unidentified Flying Objects", for instance) or with various aspects of them. Thus relating to UFOs there are "Airships, Unidentified", "Area 51", "Men in Black" and others. But elsewhere there is rather the flavor of urban legends than the more usual "scientific" anomalies: "Alligators in Sewers", "David Lang Disappearance".

The best insight into the criteria for inclusion may be the book's subtitle: . . . Sightings . . . Occurrences . . . Physical Phenomena". The emphasis is empirical and pragmatic (though postulated mechanisms—theory—do turn up occasionally, as in "Earthlights and Tectonic Stress Theory"). Under "Teleportation", Clark says specifically that psychic claims lie outside the book's scope; so the inspiration is Fortean more than anything else (and the sixteen-page Introduction gives insight into why Clark believes that to be valuable).

Bibliography: Each entry lists "Sources", conveniently in wide margins. I found these impressively comprehensive and judiciously chosen. If all anomalists did anywhere near as well as Clark does here, then the mainstream scholarly or scientific world would have much less excuse for ignoring or disdain-ing Fortean endeavors.

Analysis: The entries are neither uncritical abstracts of the sources nor dogmatic acceptances or dismissals: they are thoughtful assessments. Having spent much time myself in trying to get clear about just a few anomalies, I found myself overwhelmed by Clark's learned competence on so many topics. I can judge that directly in only a couple of cases, of course, but the judgment seems confirmed by spot-checks of the bibliographies and by the judicious tone of the discussion.

There's no such thing, of course, in anomalistics as experts whose conclusions demand to be accepted: by definition, anomalies remain to be understood. But there are those who deserve to be recognized as authoritative in

view of their command of the literature and of their knowledge about the claims and the claimants; and the author of this book is one of those few. I know (not from this book) that Clark and I estimate differently the plausibility of some anomalous claims; yet his arguments and viewpoint are nevertheless of interest and value to me. Curious seekers for the truth about anomalous claims will be well served by this volume.

A significant part of the analysis is not in the individual entries but in the Introduction. This ought to be required reading for anomalists for its insights into the pitfalls of human knowing. Thus "The three hardest words for human beings to utter are I don't know"; and the Introduction has such sub-heads as "Dismissing the Unexplained", "Seeing is Believing", "The Value of Skepticism", "Cautious Belief", "Accepting Ambiguity". Perhaps the mainstay of the discussion rests on the "Old Hag" work of David Hufford which itself should be known to all anomalists. This book offers an intellectual feast for anomalists, at an unusually affordable price. It is meaty in content and in analysis, and has food for thought and reliable references to further reading. Moreover it's well suited to be read in bits—an entry at a time, or a few at a time, punctuated by periods of thought and wonderment. The last paragraph of its Introduction is most germane:

"Here at the fringes of reason and experience, we can only marvel at how little we understand about some kinds of human experiences. Whether their causes, when at last understood, turn out to be profound or trivial, these experiences are undeniably strange. Just as undeniably, they remind us what a mystery this world is, and what mysteries we ourselves are."

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**UFOs in the 1980s: The UFO Encyclopedia, Vol. I.** by Jerome Clark. Detroit: Apogee Books, 1990. 234 pp. **Vol. II: The Emergence of a Phenomenon: UFOs from the Beginning through 1959.** Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1992. 433 pp. Each volume \$95, hardback (available from Apogee Books, Penobscot Building, Detroit, Michigan 48226).

His goal, author Jerome Clark declares in his introduction, was to produce "a comprehensive encyclopedic survey of the phenomena of unidentified flying objects, the nature of research on UFOs, the persons who study them, and the related social, scientific, and religious manifestations of interest in anomalous aerial phenomena." To a great degree, he succeeds. This is a book pri-