

Alleged Experiences Inside UFOs: An Analysis of Abduction Reports

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Abstract— Six well-documented UFO abductions reported in Spain are reviewed. Investigation reveals them to be the result of hoax, delusion or psychosis. On a global scale, the annual distribution of abductions plotted according to year of report shows clusters associated with media-related triggers. Abduction narratives seem to proceed from internal sources, representing non-physical experiences of psychological origin inspired by publicized material, plus a significant number of hoaxes. A danger exists that the abduction syndrome may get out of hand.

Introduction

A pragmatic definition for the *abduction case* has been proposed: it is one "in which a witness claims to have been taken forcibly on board a UFO and scrutinized closely or examined medically by alien creatures" (Eberhart 1986a). Qualitatively it is to be differentiated from the *contactee case*, a term which "originally referred to a small group of individuals who in the 1950s claimed direct contact with the space people that piloted the flying saucers. These contacts usually contained many psychic elements as well as a religious or an ethical message" (Eberhart 1986b).

The existing empirical background for the abduction phenomenon is a large one, indeed. This new category of events — or reports — has recently flooded the pages of specialized journals and its magnitude is counted in the hundreds (Bullard 1987). When the author was invited to present a paper at the June 1987 MUFON International UFO Symposium held in Washington, D.C. (Ballester Olmos and Fernandez 1987b), the perception that American ufologists were specially captivated by this type of events was more than obvious.

Following the symposium, the author felt compelled to undertake a personal study of this contemporary theme within the UFO problem. Were there similar reports in Spain? Were there discernible trends in the mass of foreign cases? Those were the two main questions we posed.

Methodology

Our methodology followed a three-fold scheme: (i) we reviewed the general archives of UFO landing experiences reported in Spain in order to isolate those cases containing abduction *motifs* (Brunvand 1983), if any, in an attempt

Location	Date		Medical Examination	Missing Time	Event Consciousness	Event Disclosed by Hypnosis	Interpretation
	Report	Event					
I. Abduction Cases							
Tendilla (Guadalaajara)	Jan. 1978	Dec. 18, 1977		X	X	X	Hoax
Medinaceli (Soria)	End 1978	Feb. 5, 1978	Y	X	X	X	Probable hoax
Vich (Barcelona)	Mar. 1980	Mar. 28, 1970			X		Deafmute fantasy
Almogía (Málaga)	Jun. 1980	1976			X		Hoax
Junilla (Murcia)	Jan. 1982	Jul. 1947	X		X	X	Psychosis & hoax element
Vallgorquina (Barcelona)	Sep. 1985	Jul. 21, 1985	X	X		X	Psychosis & hoax element
II. Missing Time Cases							
Teba (Málaga)	Sep. 1975	Sep. 15, 1975		X			Hoax
Benacazon (Sevilla)	Jan. 1976	Jan. 28, 1976		X			Unexplained event
Angues (Huesca)	Apr. 1976	Apr. 1, 1976		Y			Unexplained event
Torrejoncillo del Rey (Cuenca)	Dec. 1978	Aug. 17, 1977		X			Hypnagogic vision
La Roda, San Javier (Murcia)	Feb. 1980	Nov. 11, 1979		X			Dream

Table 1

Abduction Cases in Spain

to discern their nature; (ii) we reviewed the case material accumulated worldwide on this anomaly, studying its reporting and phenomenological features in a global manner to look for any discernible pattern in the data; and (iii) we reviewed the published literature on the UFO abduction mystery in order to gain greater insight into the ongoing debate, to provide a stronger foundation for the discussion of the available case material.

This paper discusses our results. Spanish abductions have been reviewed, worldwide trends are examined, some reflections on this kind of experience are presented, and a few conclusions are proposed.

The Abduction Experience in Spain

To begin with, the author scanned the Spanish UFO literature and the files of close encounter reports, in order to separate the *documented* cases from the rumors and anecdotal cases unsupported by specific data, which were not taken into consideration. As a result Table 1 lists six abduction cases in Spain. For information purposes, a few "missing time" cases, regarded as potential abductions according to the stereotype, have been added, although no hypnosis was used in the investigation process and no kidnapping report ever emerged.

Two distinctive features are observed in the data. First, typical abduction reports did not appear in Spain until the end of the 1970s. Second, although researchers' files record some 3,500 UFO cases, including 230 screened close

encounters (Ballester Olmos and Fernandez 1987a, 1987b) and several contactee cases, the abduction experience is extremely rare in Spain, with only six known episodes.

In contrast, there were notorious contactees in Spain in the 1950s and 1960s who attracted considerable press interest. However abductions in Spain have had little or moderate social impact. In fact the term "abduction" was not introduced to the media until 1979. Previously, foreign cases of this type had not reached the general public and were viewed by specialists as exotic exceptions to the UFO phenomenon.

Curiously, the emergence of abduction events in our country runs parallel to the transient publicity given to local and foreign abductions in the Spanish media.

Table I shows that the first two cases ever reported arose in 1978. They were very similar to each other in content and both reports referred to a recent occurrence. They were published in the daily press, in popular magazines, and received national TV coverage.

It is noteworthy that the same year of 1978 saw the release of Spielberg's famous movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and the previous year *Star Wars* had been in all the Spanish theaters. In 1978 and 1979 national programs on Spanish radio and TV dealt with the abduction phenomenon. The *Blue Book Project* TV series was aired during 1979. This means that strong influences exploiting the theme of extraterrestrial contact, UFOs and abductions were combining at the time. They created a climate conducive to contamination and to the shaping of beliefs and ideas. It is hardly surprising that two further abduction cases were reported, although they had allegedly occurred several years before. These were followed by a 1982 report of an event dating back to 1946, and finally by a case in which both the abduction and the report were recent.

Case Abstracts and Interpretation

Summaries of histories, diagnosis of events and main information sources relevant to cases follow. Reports are included in the chronological sequence of their disclosure to the press or to the ufological community.

Case No.1. Tendilla (Guadalajara), December 18, 1977.

Miguel Herrero Sierra, a 34-year-old man, was going fishing before sunrise when the car lights failed. He stopped the vehicle. Nearby there was a landed object some 18 meters long. Two normal-looking beings took him into the craft. He was inside the UFO for about three hours, yet he had only 15 minutes recollection of the incident. Light hypnosis corroborated details given in the waking state (see Figs. 1 and 2).

Explanation: Hoax. The subject is a notoriety-seeking individual who is prone to fabrication. (Sources: *Mundo Desconocido*, No 21 March 1978. *Stendek* No.38, December 1979. J. Parra).

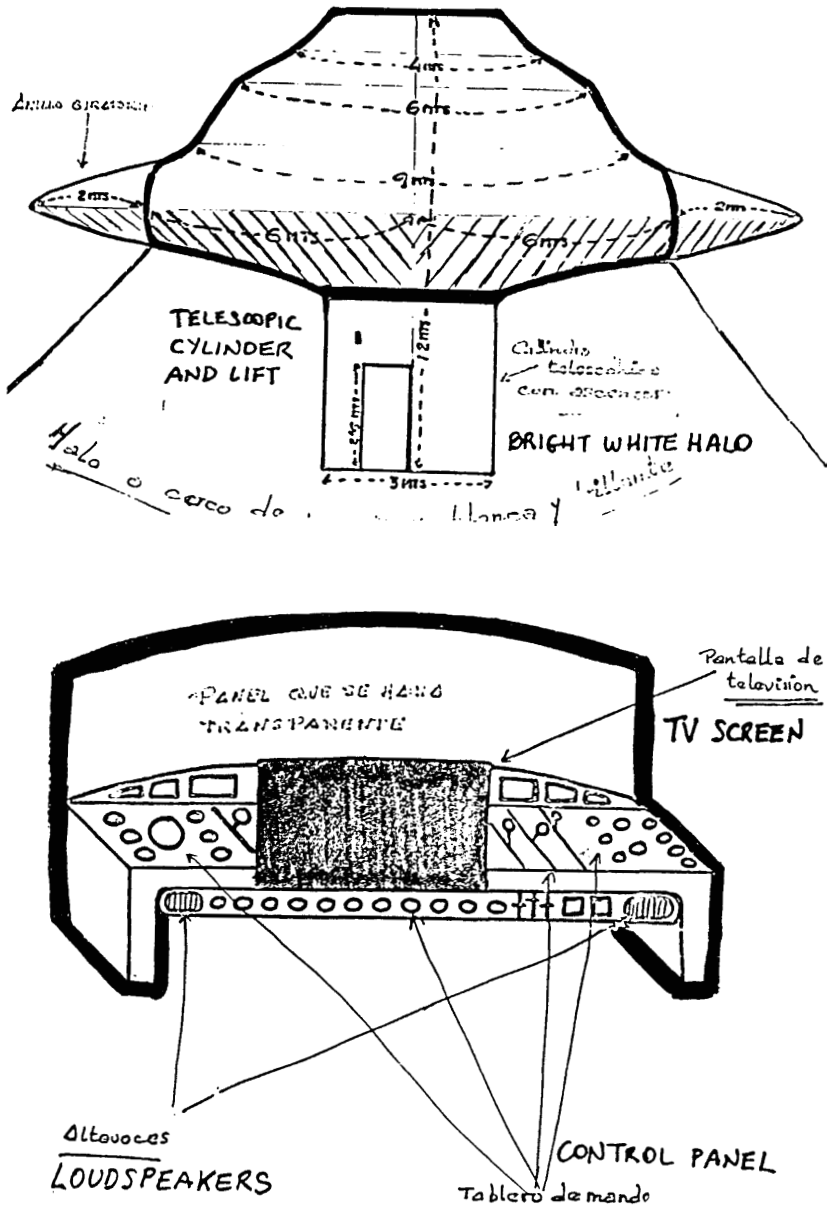


Fig. 1 Tendilla, December 18, 1977 case. The UFO and the control panel, according to the witness.

Case No.2. Medinaceli (Soria), February 5, 1978.

Julio Fernandez, aged 31, was going hunting with his dog when he received a "mental order" to deviate from his route and to drive towards Medinaceli, in



Fig. 2 Tendilla, December 18, 1977 case. Alleged abductee Miguel Herrero rests in bed in the process of being hypnotized. Standing, Dr. Javier Parra, clinical psychologist, who classified the event as a hoax.

the vicinity of which his car stopped without explanation, just before sunrise. Then he and the dog were taken into a strange circular object, 50 meters in diameter, by two tall beings with prominent heads and elongated chins. Under hypnosis he recalled that he and his dog suffered unpleasant medical examinations. He was inside the UFO for over three hours (see Fig. 3).

Explanation: Probable hoax. Suspicious parallelism exists with the already-publicized Tendilla case. The hypnosis session turned out to be full of leading questions. (Sources: A. Ribera, *Secuestrados por Extraterrestres*, Barcelona: Planeta, 1981. *Contactos Extraterrestres*, No. 1, 1979. *Flying Saucer Review* Vol. 30, Nos. 3, 4 and 5, 1985. V. J. Ballester Olmos and J. A. Fernandez.)

Case No.3. *Vich* (Barcelona), March 28, 1970.

Julio Garcia Moratinos, a deaf-mute youngster of 17, was camping at night when he was taken into a 48-meter-long hemispherical object by two tall, hairy creatures who had suckers in lieu of hands. A humanoid-like, small robot also appeared. The young man was transported to a planet situated on the opposite side of the Sun with respect to the Earth, where he stayed for eight years. In the meantime his place was taken by a "double" (see Fig. 4).

Explanation: Fantasy inspired by published abductions and the Star Wars movie. (Source: First-hand, CEI. V. J. Ballester Olmos and J. A. Fernandez.)

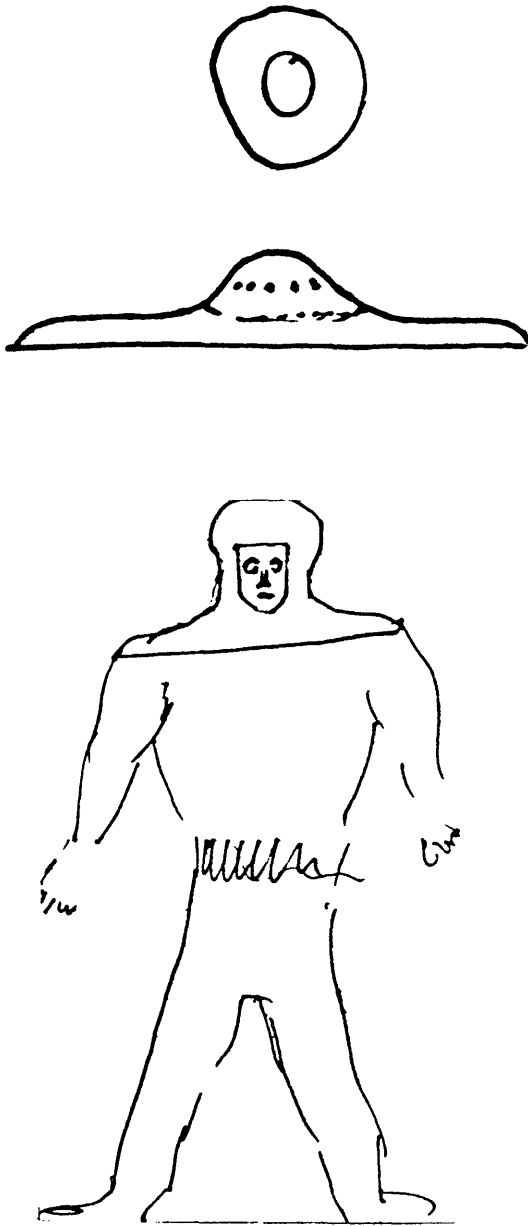


Fig. 3 Medinacelli, February 5, 1978 case. The UFO and one of the abductors, according to witness.

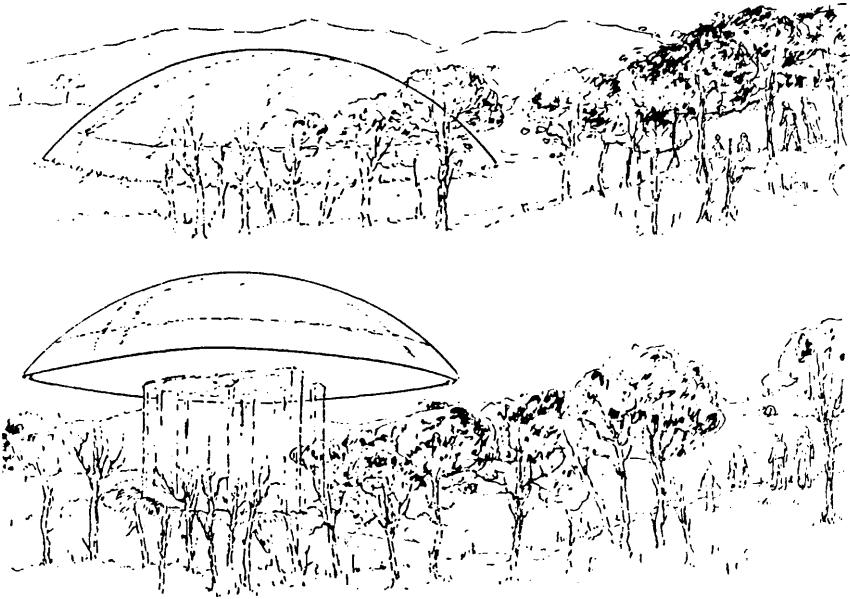


Fig. 4 Vich, March 28, 1970 case. The UFO landed and hovering, scenes previous to the abduction, according to the witness.

Case No.4: Almogia (Malaga), 1976.

Francisco Suarez Bravo, a 48-year-old shepherd, was abducted by human-like "extraterrestrials." He was taken in a big, "two-story" craft to the planet "Galaxy 38," where he married a woman named Maria, one of its inhabitants. He came back to Earth four years after the abduction, when he managed to escape in one of the alien crafts.

Explanation: Fraud concocted to conceal a case of abandonment of home. Rustic imagery linked to the subject's scanty culture. (Source: *El Caso*, June 21, 1980. V. J. Ballester Olmos and J. A. Fernandez)

Case No. 5: Jumilla (Murcia), July 1947.

Prospera Munoz, a 42-year-old telephonist, well-read in science-fiction and UFOs, read her first UFO book containing abduction material and started to recall an abduction she suffered when she was 7 or 8 years old. She was abducted by two beings of her own stature and received an extensive medical examination. She believes a metallic device was implanted in her brain. She had further encounters with alien creatures in 1954, 1960 and 1971. Under hypnosis she only confirmed her memories.

Explanation: Depression in a woman under dramatic psychological stress. (Sources: A. Ribera, *En el Tunel del Tiempo*. Barcelona: Planeta 1984. *Cuadernos de Ufologia* No. 4, December 1988. *Flying Saucer Review* Vol. 29, No.4, 1984. First-hand, J. Ruesga. First-hand, C. Berche.)

Case No. 6 Vallgorguina (Barcelona), July 21, 1985.

Xavier C., 23 years of age, had left his house to photograph a dolmen located 25 km away. He returned home more than 24 hours later, a full day that he did not remember at all. When his film was processed, a few slides appeared showing fuzzy silhouettes of hands with claws and a series of green, monstrous faces of apparently helmeted beings. Under hypnosis, he related an abduction episode which included a medical examination aided by instruments, performed by strange creatures who manufactured an exact "double" of him. Months later, the witness saw his double boarding a bus in Barcelona City.

Explanation: Hoax/psychosis. Unreliable testimony from subject belonging to esoteric circles, prior witness of bedroom apparitions. Sloppy hypnosis procedures. (Sources: *Flying Saucer Review* Vol.31, No. 4, 1986, and Vol.32 No.2, 1987. *Cuadernos de Ufologia* No.1 July 1987. V. J. Ballester Olmos and J. A. Fernandez).

Summary of Spanish Reports

This systematic review of the abduction reports in Spain has disclosed that all cases can be reasonably explained in terms which do not defy present-day knowledge. Conventional scenarios, deeply rooted in psychological and fraudulent backgrounds, have been found. In none of the cases was extraordinary evidence presented to support an anomalous event or a novel phenomenon.

It should be emphasized that the resolution of these cases in terms of hoax, delusion or psychosis has been proposed by dedicated UFO investigators, not by debunkers or dogmatic skeptics; consequently, it is unrealistic to suggest that the interpretations are biased.

Cases also seem to be influenced by the impact of published reports and by the subsequent media follow-up, in a sort of feedback effect.

Worldwide Trends

The first typical abduction case ever reported was that of young Brazilian Antonio Villas Boas in 1957, generally unknown to the ufological milieu before 1965 (Creighton 1965; Bowen 1966). Yet it was not until the now famous 1961 Barney and Betty Hill incident was published in book form five years later (Fuller 1966) that the abduction theme started to spread at a popular level.

UFO abduction cases blossomed in the late sixties and seventies. It appeared that a promising approach to this problem was to explore whether or not the

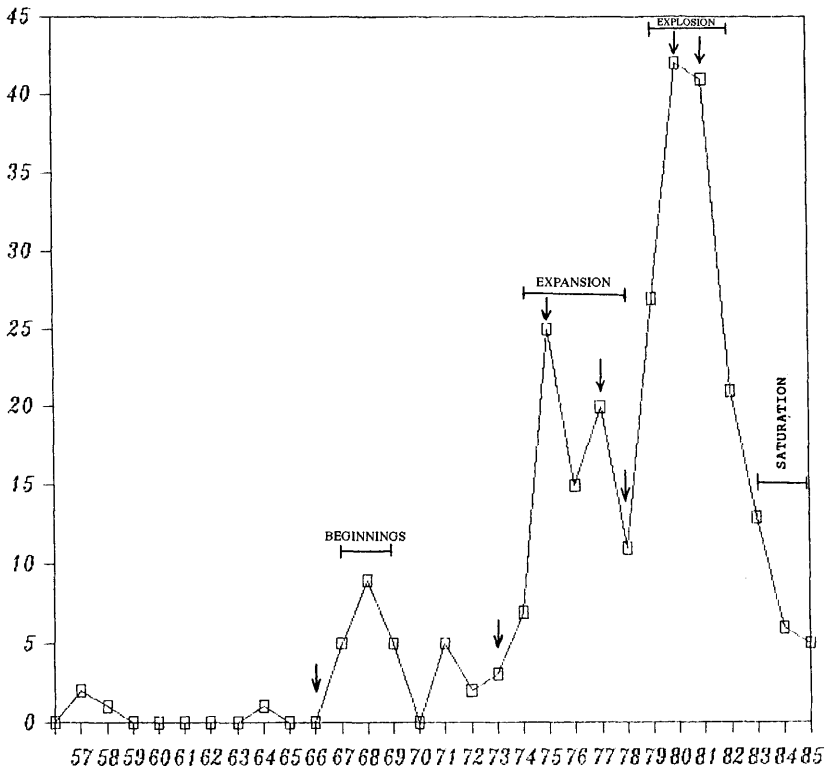


Fig. 5 Abductions Per Year of Report

time distribution of the events as reported was related to any significant trigger. For this purpose we resorted to the most extensive catalog of alleged UFO abductions (Bullard 1987). This is a computer-aided study of 309 reports, certainly a worthwhile effort. In the present situation, however, Bullard's work has limited value because lack of screening is a serious shortcoming when dealing with reports of events whose nature is far from defined.

Figure 5 displays cases per year of report from 1957 to 1985 (266 cases where the report date is known are considered). In order to highlight the most relevant items, an asterisk appears in connection with the most influential references or set of references, and arrows refer to them in the plot of fig. 5.

Several thoughts emerge when this graph is considered. The first observation is that abductions represent a contemporary phenomenon. One can also distinguish four different phases in the yearly distribution of reports. In other words four significant, coherent periods are detected in the body of occurrences, comprising three waves and a final decline, as follows:

- (1) 1967-1969: Beginnings. An initial, short-lived peak is visible. It is preceded by and clearly associated with the publication of a two-part article on the Hill case in *Look*, a newstand magazine which sold millions of

- copies, followed by a book by the same author (Fuller 1966)* and with the release of another book containing the full Fontes report on Villas Boas (Lorenzen and Lorenzen 1967).
- (2) 1974-1978: Expansion. A time period when UFO abduction information flows freely. Influential, wide coverage items include the 1973 Pascagoula case*, a 1975 TV movie* on the Hill incident, the 1975 logger Walton case, and a new book entirely devoted to abductions (Lorenzen and Lorenzen 1977).
 - (3) 1979-1982: Explosion. The market is heavily invaded during 1978, 1979 and 1980 by many books on UFO abductions in the U.S. and Canada, penetrating deeply into public opinion (Barry 1978; De Herrera 1978; Gatti 1978; Haisell 1978; Walton 1978; Bondarchuck 1979; Fowler 1979; Druffel and Rogo 1980; Gansberg and Gansberg 1980; Rogo 1980). An abduction comes to seem quite a natural thing to experience! Release of a book on "missing time" cases (Hopkins 1981)* reinforces the trend.
 - (4) 1983-1985: Saturation. Without any spectacular new input, the market saturates, the popular furor dies down, "ordinary" abductions are no longer news, and mass media interest declines. This is the end of the first cycle.

The abduction phenomenon is notably an American event. 50.5% of all cases recorded by compilers (Bullard 1987) proceed from North America. The selection of the literature in English as the major trigger variable is supported by the fact that fully 63.7% of all abductions in the world come from English-speaking countries.

Is there any indication of the direction which future trends may take? I believe so. 1987 saw the effect of two abduction "bombshells": *Communion* (Strieber 1987a) and *Intruders* (Hopkins 1987), books which enjoyed considerable publicity, including articles in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Our projection at the time was that the number of UFO abduction reports would increase considerably in consequence, and that this subject would keep most ufologists busy to the detriment of more fruitful research. This kind of experience would become, more than ever, the paradigm for the sympathy-arousing UFO event: who can't feel sympathy towards torture victims?

Such forecasts on report increase and "abductionology" becoming the main focus for ufologists, which were made in 1987, have proven to be reliable predictions. Statistics of abduction narratives beyond 1985 do not exist yet, but all indications point towards a high rate of reporting in recent years. On the other hand, in spite of the heavy fuel injected into "novel" issues such as Majestic 12, the Roswell crash and Gulf Breeze, abductions represent a central subject of study for many UFO investigators. at least in the United States.

Discussion of Case Material

Further cases represent variations with regard to the Hills' experience, one to which an alternative, sound, non-ET hypothesis has been proposed: Dr.

Benjamin Simon, the psychiatrist who treated the interracial couple, believes it was a fantasy created by Betty and transmitted to Barney (Fuller 1966); so thinks British researcher Hilary Evans who, after careful study, interprets it in terms of dream material rather than as a really-lived occurrence (Evans and Spencer 1987; Evans 1987b). To add further complication, hypnotic regression techniques used in the investigation of the Hills case have been shown to be counter-indicated in the study of such incidents (Baker 1986; Ballester Olmos 1987; Evans and Spencer 1987).

Moreover, professional papers on psychology have advanced the concept of "fantasy-prone personality" (Wilson and Barber 1981, 1983; Lynn and Rhue 1986). Such studies have correlated hypnosis to imaginative involvement, which indicates that hypnosis — as a tool to gain access of recall — leaves much to be desired in terms of objectivity, as this state of mind enhances vivid fantasy and hallucinatory abilities among tested subjects, a fact underlined by Vallee in several of his field observations of abductee cases (Vallee 1990,1992).

Critical analyses have discovered strong psychological bias in participants of noted abduction experiences. Kenneth Ring's "Omega Project" has demonstrated that UFO percipients are not, as previously claimed, typical members of the population (Ring 1992). Psychiatrist Ernest Taves evaluates the Andreasson case (Fowler 1979) as a personal fantasy (Taves 1981). Scott Rogo, co-investigator of the Tujung case, disagrees with his co-author and offers a fully psychological conclusion to the claims, based on sexual anxieties and the dynamics of the emotional interrelationship of the female couple involved (Druffel and Rogo 1980). Evans (1987a) writing on those two major abduction episodes, thinks of the witnesses as "projecting their internal crises as external UFO contact scenarios, evading responsibility for the way in which they resolved their crises". Even shared abductions are unimpressive to the critic's eye. Thus, the play of dominant-subordinate roles and subjective fantasy transference have been advanced to explain multiple-witness abduction cases. (Moravec 1985).

As expected, the abduction phenomenon has come under fire from the skeptical school. Klass (1981, 1983, 1984, 1988) has presented numerous arguments to refute major abduction stories, like the cases of the Hills, Hickson and Parker, Walton, Andreasson, "Kathie Davies", etc. Other skeptics have also produced valuable food for thought, dismissing the events as explainable occurrences of a psychosocial or fraudulent nature (Oberg 1978, 1987; Sheaffer 1981, 1984a, 1984b).

Even a formal theory — refutable according to methodological requirements (Popper 1981) — has been proposed as a model for the abduction experience: Lawson (1977, 1980) has found out that the detailed, imaginary abduction stories developed by hypnotized but unabducted people were indistinguishable from allegedly real events. The subjects may have been reliving the physical and psychological traumas of their birth (Lawson 1982, 1985; Rimmer 1984). As Evans (1987b) put it concisely: "while the experi-

ments do not prove that the 'true' abductees are making up their stories, they do suggest that anyone who subconsciously wishes to do so is able to find within himself the necessary resources."

Interestingly enough, well-known fiction novelist Whitley Strieber, author of *Communion*, a book which tells a complex, elaborate and continuing abduction story, now explains that "the abduction experience is primarily a mystical experience" (Strieber 1987b). This is a strange way to describe the experience of being forced to enter into an unknown vehicle and to be closely examined against your will by strange creatures! If one were the subject of rape, assault, robbery, kidnapping, or if one had just suffered a severe car, train or plane crash, would one classify it merely as a "religious-type event" in one's life? Probably not, because one would be convinced one had lived a very real, painful and intense occurrence. This fact constitutes the main difference with the Strieber report.

Even the apparently obvious ET connection was disputed by Strieber himself in an interview: "I won't say the source is definitely extraterrestrial. The whole thing is a hall of mirrors" (Callahan 1987). Considering Strieber's testimony — a life-long, fearful story of interaction with alleged aliens, his own evaluation of the experience appears shocking. If this series of abductions is more mystical than materialistic, and if its extraterrestrial origin is doubted by the very percipient, what are we left with?

The answer seems to lie in a composite of mental creations (apparently believed by the subject) or hallucinations in fertile imaginations. Our impression is that Strieber has begun to admit the ambiguity of his story: "it isn't as simple as whether it happened or not.... The origin of these perceptions is in question. But my sense is that this experience is initiated outside the individual's mind. To me, the array of realistic detail makes the experience indistinguishable from a real event" (Strieber 1987b).

The author's assessment of actual cases, both Spanish and foreign, plus the analysis of the global picture of the problem leads to the conclusion that reports follow specific, media-related triggers, strongly suggesting that the abduction syndrome is psychological in nature. Our contention is that the rise and prevalence of UFO abductions is largely based on three factors: (1) inadequate and misused methods for the release of memories (i.e., hypnosis); (2) biased interpretation of the output content (i.e., the ufologist's preconceived ideas); and (3) pure commercial interests. Such interests have even interfered with the experience itself: for instance it seems that the entities requested Strieber to change the title of his forthcoming book from *Body Terror* to *Communion* (Druffel 1987).

Yet others honestly disagree. Nine alleged abductees whose cases appeared in a book by Hopkins (1981), were given psychological tests. Conclusions purportedly favor the mental health and psychological normality of witnesses (Bloecher, Clamar and Hopkins, 1985). Nevertheless, these results are open to contrary interpretation, as they do not appear clear-cut or definitive: on the contrary, they are ambiguous and contain both pro and con arguments about

the psychological make-up of percipients. One may either see a sober balance in the witnesses or recognize several instability features in them (mild paranoia, hypersensitivity, wariness, weak identity, social vulnerability, high anxiety, etc.), which would maximize their exposure to mind tricks (Keul and Phillips 1987).

Failure to detect any standard psychopathology in UFO abductees does not mean that these fantastic stories automatically become true, and those who tell them reliable. An authority on altered states of consciousness, R. Siegel, explains UFO abductions on the basis of hallucinations proceeding from stress, darkness and isolation: "Such situations can create images that are strikingly vivid and cause those who see them to respond to them as if they were real." Siegel explains that if abduction reports are alike, it is because they arise from "a common subjective state of consciousness in which archetypal images emerge" (Weintraub 1987). In contrast, folklorist Bullard has reached the conclusion that abductions are real, rather than folklore, a conclusion that has surprised many, especially in Europe.

The indisputable fact is that when we go deeper into the life histories of the abductees we frequently find indications of previous anomalous experience. In some cases a succession of strange experiences has marked their lives from childhood to adulthood (Fowler 1979, 1982; Ribera 1984; Strieber 1987a). Whether this is an indication of a psychotic personality is an open question, but there are strong indications that it is meaningful to speak of an "abduction-prone personality."

Lately, research on this topic has multiplied. Its review far exceeds the scope of this paper, but it should be noted that it is more pro than con. One of the most radical examinations of the problem just reduces it to be "the first myth to develop in the modern, high-tech, instant global communication world" (Spencer 1989).

Vallee (1990) has also touched upon this subject. For him, the concept of UFO abduction belongs to the same "tapestry of alien contact" described by human beings worldwide for centuries: in the old-time traditions in the form of demons and elves, and in the present time as interstellar navigators. This is probably true, although others — myself included — feel that the common ground in such images is naturally and spontaneously linked to people's imagination and creative power, not to the actual physical presence of entities from other worlds. Or, as Bartholomew (1989) has put it: "Do fairies, ghosts, and extraterrestrials exist as living beings — or are they some product of the human mind? The obvious answer to which the evidence overwhelmingly, unemotionally and logically points is a resounding no! They are mental constructs."

Conclusions

If we come back to the introductory remarks of this paper, it appears that the history or development of "ufology" marks a transposition from one myth to

another: with the passing of time, *respected* abductions have come to replace *discredited* contacts, in a kind of transmutation from old-time, naive, early space-age stories to contemporary, sophisticated, technology-age stories, although UFO abductions still contain typical contactee elements. It seems that the UFO novelty had been exhausted and that an even more dramatic kind of incident was needed to replace the obsolete contactee experience. In fact, some researchers see essentially the same phenomenon as contact encounters, in an updated and more sophisticated form (Evans 1987b).

The study of actual reports in Spain, careful examination of the literature, and the analysis of the impressive Bullard catalogue of world-wide abduction tales leads the author to the following conclusions: (1) Distorted or stressful psychological strata seem to generate the abduction experience or syndrome in the minds of alleged abductees. Pure hoax is also present in a higher proportion than previously suspected. (2) Media effects evidently trigger the report of abductions. It is proposed that they also trigger the events themselves. (3) There is little prospect that abductions will be scientifically studied by academic experts as long as the main input originates in the commercial book market.

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Response to Ballester Olmos

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Ballester-Olmos is a well-known Spanish UFO researcher who has had many years of experience in this field. His sincerity is unquestioned as is his courage to undertake the study of this extraordinary phenomenon. His contributions to the field of UFO research are well known, but virtually all of his experience has been in the study of the sighting phenomenon. This area of research is very different than that of the abduction phenomenon although they both have the same origin. As far as I know, this is his first foray into abduction research.

There are fundamental problems with this article, not the least of which is that the author has no serious knowledge of the tenets of the abduction phenomenon. Ignorance of the subject of which he is writing allows him to make the mistake of assuming an arbitrary standard for what constitutes an abduction. Therefore he lumps together various accounts, some of which are indicative of legitimate abductions, and others of which are not. This leads to a serious problem: Since he has no standard for what an abduction is or how to go about investigating it, he cannot tell when an abduction is a hoax or the truth. This is evident when he examines eight cases of purported abductions. Several of these cases do not fit the known abduction profiles and Ballester-Olmos correctly perceives that they are internally generated and therefore not abduction cases. He has several other cases, however, in which the evidence for a hoax or for a psychological generation is not as clear-cut as he would have us believe. In fact, a few of these cases might indeed fit the legitimate abduction profile and at the very least they require more sophisticated investigation than he has done. Nevertheless, he lumps all the cases together as being psychological in origin. This is a case of arbitrary negative selection bias. Without a thorough knowledge of how to separate the "signal" from the "noise," Ballester-Olmos's tendency is to find only noise. This was a problem that plagued researchers in America for many years but in the last decade has been alleviated because of advances in knowledge about the phenomenon and in methodology to uncover its tenets.

Furthermore, it is obvious that Ballester-Olmos is not familiar with current abduction research and literature. Rather than using the knowledge from those who have advanced our understanding of the abduction phenomenon by fleshing out its parameters and identifying the procedures and events that characterize it, he has resorted to using well-known debunkers and skeptics for his information about abductions, such as Hillary Evans, Robert Rimmer, Alvin

Lawson, Robert Bartholomew, Marc Moravec, Philip Klass, James Oberg, Robert Schaeffer, or those who are profoundly confused about the meaning of the data such as, D. Scott Rogo, Whitley Streiber, Jacques Vallee, and others. None of these men are abduction researchers. Abduction researchers are either given short shrift, or not mentioned at all. Without current knowledge of the phenomenon, much of which directly addresses many of the problems he finds with his population and with the phenomenon itself, Ballester-Olmos displays a lack of knowledge about the debate over its origins. For example, he states that Fantasy Prone Personality, is a psychological condition that is "firmly established." In fact, it is not an established psychological condition and is not accepted by the American Psychiatric Association as a disorder. Furthermore, Ballester-Olmos is not aware of the work done on fantasy prone personalities by Rodeghier, Goodpaster, and Blatterbauer which effectively refutes this hypotheses. Nor is he aware of the work done by June Parnell or Kenneth Ring which also demonstrates that abductees are not suffering from this "condition."

Ballester-Olmos tries to make the case that publicity causes abduction cases. He is not aware that no study has ever linked publicity to the generation of sightings or experiences and that in 1952 the Air Force convincingly demonstrated that newspaper and magazine articles do not cause sightings. He does not discuss the role of publicity in bringing forth older abduction cases that people have often hidden even from their families for years. He does not realize that this same phenomenon has happened in rape cases, UFO sighting reports, childhood abuse, and so forth. There is not a shred of evidence that the legitimate abduction phenomenon has anything whatsoever to do with publicity. If this were true, we would have seen a dramatic rise in abduction reports as a result of the recent television and feature movies, *Intruders* and *Fire in the Sky*. These films did pry lose some previous abduction reports as they emboldened people to come forward, but they did not generate abduction events by the hundreds or thousands as would have been expected considering that millions of people saw them. Similarly, thousands of abduction reports should have come forward from the showing of *The UFO Incident* which has been televised nationally many times since 1975. Although it caused a few abductees to come forward with their previous accounts, it generated no abduction events whatsoever.

His citing of Australian researcher Marc Moravec's theories to account for "shared abductions" as being the products of "dominant-subordinate roles and subjective fantasy transference" has no substance in the evidence and is wholly a construct of Moravic's who has not engaged in primary abduction research. He is not aware of the cases in which two people who do not know each

¹ M. Rodeghier, J. Goodpaster, and S. Blatterbauer, Psychosocial characteristics of abductees: results for CUFOS abduction project, *Journal of UFO Studies*, New Series, Vol. 3, 1991, p. 59 -90. Parnell, R. L. Sprinkle, Personality characteristics of persons who claim UFO experiences, *Journal of UFO Studies*, New Series, Vol. 2, 1990, p. 45 - 58. K. Ring, *The Omega Project*, New York: Morrow, 1992.

other are abducted at the same time and can later identify each other as victims. Ballester-Olmos's reliance on people such as Klass and other members of CSICOP to explain away abduction cases, suggests that he does not understand the methodology employed by these notorious debunkers. His discussion of the profoundly flawed Lawson "study" of abductions and their relation to birth trauma displays a singular lack of awareness of the almost complete demolition of this study over the years by abduction and UFO researchers.

His conclusions that abductions are psychological are not supported by his own evidence. He may be right, but the evidence for this conclusion is simply not contained in his article. Moreover, the reasons for his conclusion — poor hypnosis, bias, and monetary gain — are not only unsupported, they are only barely discussed.

Basically this article is a polemic against abductions with little supporting evidence other than his examination of some rather dubious claims. He concludes from this and from the writings of debunkers that the entire abduction phenomenon is psychological and that the abduction phenomenon does not exist in Spain. Proving a negative is a risky business at best, but Ballester-Olmos seems to be trying to do it without the massive, solid, and circumstantial evidence that one would need to make such an attempt.

What we can learn from this article is that if the state of abduction investigation in Spain is indicative of this researcher's knowledge, then Spanish researchers have a long way to go before they have a sophisticated understanding of how to recognize and investigate these cases, regardless of their viewpoint. My book *Secret Life: Firsthand Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions*, will be published in Spain in 1994. I have already received many hundreds of letters from possible abductees in America and Europe. It will be interesting to see what response, if any, will come from Spain. If it is as elsewhere, then the case for Spanish exceptionalism will be even more difficult to make.