

Astro-Chthonic Anomaly

*Exoskeleton of the flabby body
Pulpy sack, cowering in a UFO
Invertebrate inebriation
Egg and runny stuff
Jism network
White spunk running down black rubber
Battery ooze
The old ones and their young-uns
Amorphous appendage
Ectoplasm sculpture*

Mike Kelley, Minor Histories, 2004

*I lost... you know, I lost another day, what I lost
was gold, golden notions... erased.
smoke dreams, phantoms...*

Communion, dir. Philippe Mora, 1989

Somewhere there the land is hollow.

Penda's Fen, dir. Alan Clarke, 1974

Through a vertiginous core sample from the astral to the subterranean, through veiny portals of extraocular musculature, the line of sight descends from murky air that's filled with spectres of unknown beings. It passes over lithic monuments and pastoral wastes, down through the windblown grassy tufts, mossy materials, compost, loam and grit. It bores into the shell of the earth, down through endless geologic strata, into the caverns of the chthonic* imaginary. Within the lurid, conchological walls of this dank, clammy basement, a lucid dream-vision of an extra-terrestrial serpent uncoils from an incubation. A temporal anomaly in the crypt.

(CREAKING)
(INAUDIBLE)
(CREAKING CONTINUES)
(CHIMING)
(EARS RINGING)
(MUFFLED SPEECH)
I cannot hear!
(EARS RINGING)
Oh!
(GROANING)
Please!
(CHANTING IN THE DISTANCE)¹

*All of us gaze into that "dark glass" in which the dark myth takes shape, adumbrating the invisible truth. In this glass the eyes of the spirit glimpse an image which we call the self, fully conscious of the fact that it is an anthropomorphic image which we have merely named but not explained.'*²

* The term "chthonic" comes from the Greek *chthonios*, meaning of, in, or under the earth. In: *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece & Rome, Volume 1* (2010)

¹ Fan transcription of the sound and dialogue of *A Field in England* dir. by Ben Wheatley (Film4 Productions, 2013) from a script website specialising in the American cartoon *The Simpsons*
https://www.springfieldspringfield.co.uk/movie_script.php?movie=a-field-in-england [accessed 19 February 2018]

² Carl G. Jung, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies* (Routledge Classics, 1959), pp. 118-9

As extra-terrestrial encounter with the astral, the contemporary UFO phenomena is a psychospiritual fog of anxiety and euphoria - a fusing of the mythic, the mystic and the abject. In the United States and Europe the first reports of specifically 'Unidentified Flying Objects' began at the end of the 1940s, coinciding with the founding of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Speculatively these encounters can be understood as symptoms of a technocratic age preoccupied with a post-Trinity nuclear anxiety and Cold War paranoia. Additional to this, following the collapse of 1960s countercultural utopianism catalysed by the prohibition of LSD, the Manson murders, a recession and the end of the Vietnam War, UFO religious groups flourished, particularly in the United States, as belief in the alien 'Other' and a future yet-to-come were seized upon to infill the spiritual vacuum left behind.³

UFO mythology, as a rumour articulated through visions⁴, insists on the irrefutable honour of the eye witness account - yet these visions over time are multiplied and warped through the sludge of memory or dredged through theta stage hypnosis. The cumulative effect of the telling and retelling, and the apocryphal outpourings that these oscillations amass, obfuscates by sheer proliferation, a process vastly accelerated by the muddying of account, rumour, news and 'truth', that the Internet allows - a 'resonating psychic amplifier' of palpable paranoia.⁵

In contactee history, the psychically overwhelming otherness of the alien encounter is so seismic to human consciousness that it is consistently perceived as mystical, religious or eschatological. The fracture introduced by traumatic experience (in this context - encounter with or abduction by - the alien Other), is thought to act as a catalyst for triggering mystical or altered states of consciousness - states of being that are 'allowed' to emerge through the temporary suppression or dissolution of the stable sense of self as the result of such an extreme physical or emotional suffering.⁶ Contrary to this, these alien encounters can instead trigger a euphoric state - a neurosomatic 'high' that bleeds back into everyday terrestrial life and compels radical anomalous behaviour - including the founding of UFO religions and myriad forms of extra-terrestrial spirituality and artistic expression.⁷

Anecdotally, accounts of UFO sightings and alien abduction are characterised by spatiotemporal anomaly - long expanses of diaphanous, unaccounted for time; vehicles exhibiting erratic behaviour and bursts of meteoric speed or abrupt switch of direction - speeds and movements unfamiliar to human technological progress and that could only be performed by 'weightless objects'. In the 1950s, in the early days of the contemporary UFO phenomenon, psychoanalyst Carl Jung described UFOs as the psychic products of subjective projection - a superimposition of both fears and desires onto anomalous neurological and technical experiences to produce an alien vision.⁸

Jung goes on to draw comparison between the circular 'flying saucer' and mandala (cross-

³ Erik Davis, *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2015) p. 257

⁴ Jung, p. 1

⁵ Davis, p.290

⁶ Jeffrey J. Krippal, 'The Traumatic Secret: Bataille and the Comparative Erotics of Mystical Literature' in Jeremy Biles and Kent L. Brintnall (eds.), 'Negative Ecstasies: Georges Bataille and the Study of Religion' (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015) p. 155

⁷ Robert Anton Wilson, *Prometheus Rising*, (Arizona: New Falcon Publications, 1983), p. 250

⁸ Jung, p. 4

chthonic sacred diagrams) using his proposition of the 'Self' archetype as representation of 'psychic wholeness'. Jung's archetypes detail a kind of primordial pre-programming of the human psyche by diagrammatic forms, meaning the development of cultures, traditions and the production of images (including artworks) all become expressions of these archetypes. The mandala-like form of the Self archetype (or UFO) is often seen in visions – involuntarily in schizophrenic hallucination as observed by Jung; in theta stage shamanic trance; or through the voluntary ingestion of psychotropic drugs.⁹

(CREAKING)
(INAUDIBLE)
(CREAKING CONTINUES)
(CHIMING)
(LOW RUMBLING)¹⁰

Chthonic ones are not safe; they have no truck with ideologues; they belong to no one; they writhe and luxuriate in manifold forms and manifold names in all the airs, waters, and places of earth. They make and unmake; they are made and unmade. They are who are.

Donna Haraway, *Staying With The Trouble*, 2016

Burrowing down through the pastoral sliver of 'lovely earth'¹¹ to the igneous plutonic depths, the vertical landscape in sections contains an imaginary cylindrical cross section of an ancient lithic landmark bored out of the earth's shell. This tor acts as gateway between the astral and chthonic - the next portal, between phantasmagorical beings in the clouds and the deep underworld. It channels futurological ET messages into the crypt, and ancient chthonic messages to the sky, disinterring the now in the relics of the deep past.¹² On the surface of the earth, lone figures traverse the doomy solitude of multiple wildernesses, gradually converging at this ancient portal, each participating in a collective pre-selection process for encounter with the Other, for receiving a gift from above.

Through the portal and below their feet, entombed in the geologic strata, lurks a syncretic serpentine mythology of infernal crones draped in snakes whose astral wings present an uneasy dissonance in the skyless subterranean. In the myths of theogony, these chthonic deities, the Erinyes Furies, are born of the earth (Gaia) impregnated by the castration blood of the sky (Uranus) - daughters of darkness with blood dripping from their eyes.

As mythologic astro-chthonic encounter, the vision of this oracular and tubular dreamscape is received through the ancient practice of oneiromantic incubation, where the mystic performs a ritual act, followed by a sleep in a sacred space, with the intention of receiving a divine dream. These nocturnal oracular visions rise from the subterranean depths to the dreamer, from triple gods of the underworld – Morpheus (providing dreams of human forms), Phobetor (dreams of beasts) and Phantasos (dreams of objects and illusions) – as visionary vapours to be intercepted by the incubating mystic. This syncretic amalgamation of ancient Greek mythology and abyssal serpentine creatures, embedded in the recesses of the

⁹ Terence McKenna, *Terence McKenna - Carl Jung & Psychic Archetypes* (Lecture) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNi9FVJIPyY> [accessed 20 February 2018]

¹⁰ *A Field in England* dir. by Ben Wheatley (Film4 Productions, 2013)

¹¹ *Penda's Fen*, dir. by Alan Clarke, written by David Rudkin (BBC, 1974)

¹² Mark Fisher, 'Lay! Lay! Lay!', *k-punk*, (30 March 2004) <http://k-punk.org/lay-lay-lay/> [accessed 26 February 2018]

dripping cavernous crypt, recalls the 'chthonic ones' - chimeric human/nonhuman critters, writhing and luxuriating in the dark, in the compost; forming alliances.¹³

(RUMBLING BUILDS)
(LOW RUMBLING)
(RUMBLING)
(CLANG)
(RINGING)
(LOW RUMBLING)
(RUMBLING)
(CHIMING)
(CREAKING)¹⁴

Seismic wobbles in the earth's tectonic plates cause fluctuations in the electromagnetic energy fields at geological points of immense tension. In Michael Persinger's speculative Tectonic Strain Theory, if in close proximity to these chthonic shifts, such energy fluctuations cause anomalous behaviour of neurons in the visual cortex, triggering luminous hallucinations that appear as spots of light, interpreted by the brain, according to cultural or circumstantial context, as meteorological phenomenon, divine vision or UFO.^{15 16}

Similarly, and equally speculatively, one discussion of the cause of visual hallucinations from psychotropic drugs, posits the human brain as a radio receiver for consciousness (rather than the producer of it). The effect on the radio-brain of psychoactive substances is to widen the bandwidth of cosmic radiation (such as electromagnetic energy) that it is ordinarily able to perceive/receive, recalling the lifting of perceptual filters in Huxley's psychedelic Mind at Large.¹⁷ As with Persinger's seismic hallucinations, the visions of lights that this broadening of perception can trigger are coincidentally most noticeable against the dark night sky and thus mistaken for weightless illuminated UFOs – the psychedelic encounter with the astrochthonic.^{18 19}

(LOW RUMBLING)
(RUMBLING)²⁰

Lucy A Sames, March 2018

¹³ Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2016). p. 2

¹⁴ *A Field in England* dir. by Ben Wheatley

¹⁵ Kate MacAlpine, 'Mysterious ball lightning may be a hallucination', *New Scientist* (2010) <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn18918-mysterious-ball-lightning-may-be-a-hallucination>

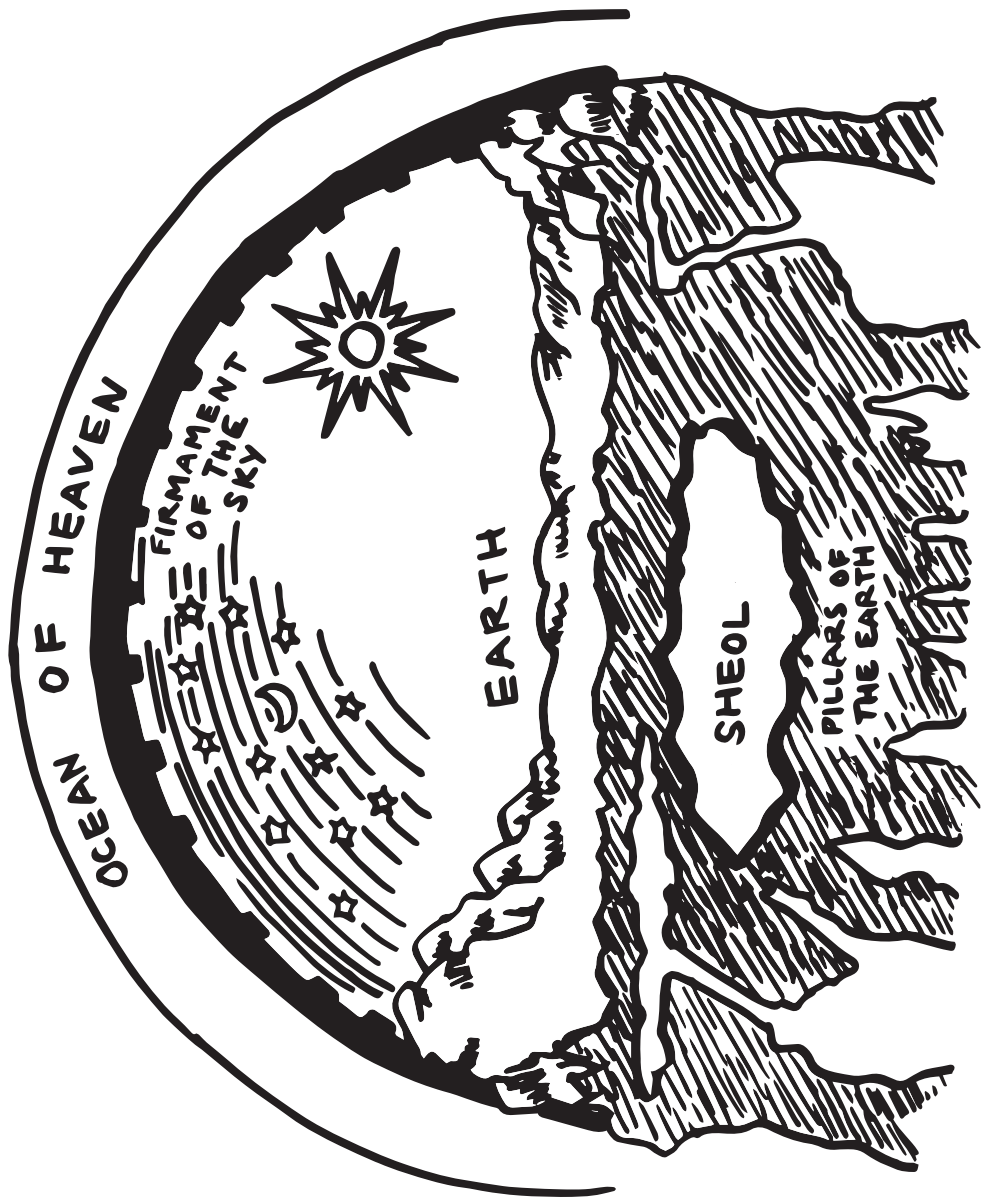
¹⁶ Michael Persinger 'The Tectonic Strain Theory and French's "Haunted Room" Experiment', *Sacred Pathways* (31 May 2015) <https://sacredneurology.com/2015/05/31/the-tectonic-strain-theory-and-the-haunted-room-a-blog-by-dr-michael-persinger/> [accessed 2 March 2018]

¹⁷ Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell*, (Penguin, 1952)

¹⁸ Chris A. Rutkowski, *Abductions and Aliens* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2009) p. 199

¹⁹ James L. Kent, *Psychedelic Information Theory: Shamanism in the Age of Reason* (Washington: PIT Press, 2010) p. 38

²⁰ *A Field in England* dir. by Ben Wheatley



OCEAN OF HEAVEN

FIRMAMENT OF THE SKY

EARTH

SHEOL

PILLARS OF THE EARTH