

21A.211
Study Questions
Space alien possession, recovered memory,
Satanic abuse, daycare trials

People arguing about whether space alien abductions are real, in our readings and especially, in the film, use a variety of criteria for making judgements about truth, about how we know something is true or false? What are some of these criteria? ("We know space alien abductions really happen/are ridiculous because.....")

How is space alien abduction like or unlike spirit possession? Does it matter that we don't call them spirits? Ditto multiple personality disorder? Are the multiple personalities like spirits? How do spirits and personalities affect issues of identity and responsibility?

Any altered states?

How are the claims about aliens and Satanists like those concerning witches? What doctrines further claims, just as beliefs about the witch's sabbath did?

What kinds of issues and fears in late 20th century American society are projected onto space aliens and Satanists? What is the significance of experiments on board the spaceships?

What about the role of courts? How is it different for aliens and Satanists?

Who are the privileged experts like the ministers and lawyers of the great witch hunts? How do they interpret and shape events? Is there an equivalent to the *Malleus*?

What kind of special discovery procedures equivalent to torture are used to uncover abductions and Satanism? What hidden realm is it most important to uncover and reveal?

How do the positions of John Mack and Bud Hopkins differ concerning the nature and intentions of the aliens? What is the alternative Mack keeps offering us (Either X is true and it's not likely, or else Y is true)? What is anthropology's answer?

How do the images of alien abduction and satanic conspiracies build over time? What is the role of the media? How clear is the boundary between fiction and non-fiction?

Most of the accused witches were innocent, and although malevolent magic does occur, worldwide conspiracies of witches were imaginary. Space aliens, on the other hand, may or may not be real, but child abusers and Satanists do occur. Some abusers, moreover, do conspire together. Lyme disease (see the article by Grann in the reader) is real, and Americans were held prisoner in Indochina. How then could fears and beliefs about real things be like fears of imaginary witches? What do we do with the fact that while Joseph

McCarthy was raving on about Communist spies in the State Department, there really were spies there?