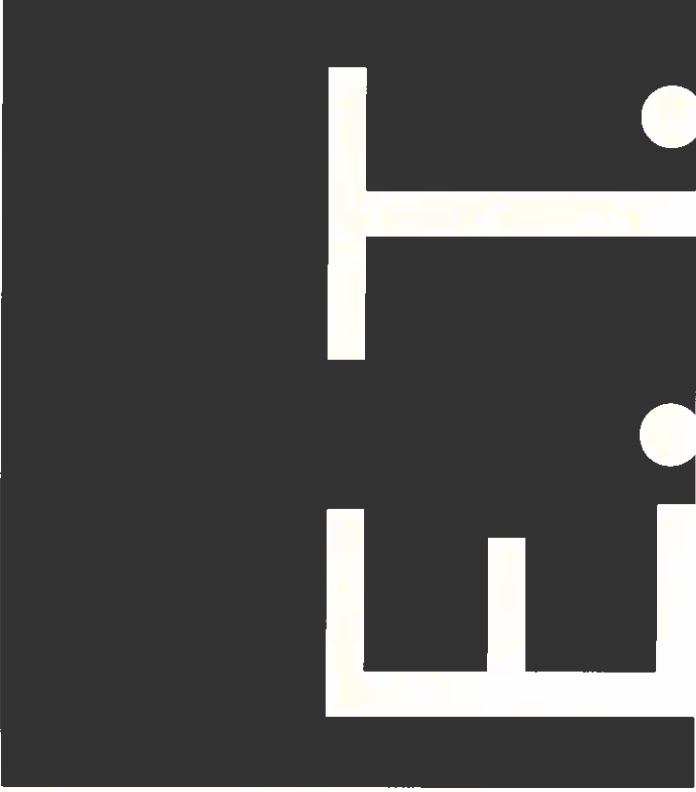


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CULTURE

Anthropology in Outerspaces

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science, employing concepts from genetics, statistics, and ecology that anthropology's precursors could not have imagined. In turn, anthropology's beginnings have themselves been made the object of anthropological contemplation, itself a form of folklore, of a piece with the social order that produced it, the same order of phenomenon as the beliefs and customs of the non-Europeans anthropology initially tried to understand.

Ufology, too — the study of and interest in unidentified flying objects and extraterrestrial visitors — is a discipline that has tried to understand racial diversity. Ufologists do not always call it "human" diversity, but then the earliest European anthropologists were not sure that all speaking bipeds outside Europe were human either. Ufology also has had to monitor its own folkloric and religious assumptions and strive for more scientific objectivity, hampered by the fact that the wider society, including academia, regards ufology's very premise as folklore. That premise is that some kind of intelligences, with forms that resemble those of humans, are interacting with humanity on a clandestine basis. Unlike the naturalists who accompanied the great European explorers on their expeditions, ufologists are in the position of responding to specimens that are coming to us. In fact, these specimens, the aliens, seem themselves to be anthropologists of a sort — and, to be fair, they might in fact prefer to call themselves zoologists, even entomologists, as they abduct frightened bipedal mammals from our towns and cities and examine, tag, and release them. Just as Europe's early explorer-anthropologists contemplated and debated the position of "savages" in a divine social order at the same time that they were operating through scientific and governmental institutions that were in the business of imposing that order on a global scale, so, in the same way, are Earth's UFO investigators in the odd position of trying to answer the question of how aliens fit into a cosmic order of intelligent races that also includes human races. I say odd because ufologists tell us that the spotty evidence we have to go on as to what this cosmic order might be is reports of encounters that seem to be the unfolding of an interplanetary, interracial drama, our role in which can only be guessed at, though most such guesses are not particularly encouraging.

Given such structural affinities, we should not be surprised to find that ufology and anthropology share intellectual roots: scientific and pseudo-scientific discourses whose commingling confounds boundaries between official and unofficial science, science and religion, anthropology and zool-

Ufology as Anthropology: Race, Extraterrestrials, and the Occult

CHRISTOPHER F. ROTH

Everything was puzzling for those early explorers. . . . Pierre Martyr quotes descriptions of monstrous beasts: snakes like crocodiles; animals with the body of an ox and a proboscis like that of the elephant; four-legged fish with ox-heads, their backs studded with thousands of warts and tortoise-like shells, as well as man-eating tyburons. But these, after all, are only boas, tapirs, manatees or hippopotamuses and sharks. . . . In that happy age, everything was still possible, as it is again today, no doubt, thanks to flying saucers! — Claude Lévi-Strauss (1955) 1984: 76

Colonialism was the midwife of anthropology. European exploration and conquest of the world outside Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries spurred a desire to collect and describe and understand a biological and geographical diversity of the planet that had only been wondered about or filtered through implausible legends. This included the study of human diversity, of race. In the beginning, this diversity was understood through unapologetically Western paradigms: biblical creation and eschatology, the theory of the humors, assumptions about climate and biology, Christian themes of divinity and hierarchy, and European folklore about vampires and devils. Today physical anthropology has become a harder

ogy, and historiography and prophecy. As a sociocultural anthropologist and someone who has immersed himself in UFO communities in several parts of the United States, I have constantly been in a position to notice this crosspollination. Never, when I tell someone I meet at a UFO interest group meeting that I am an anthropologist, is there the remotest wonder that I am therefore attracted to the topic.

Introduction

To explore the relationship between ufology and anthropology requires combining ethnography with intellectual history. Ufological communities, such as American ufology, which I focus on here, are not bounded communities that can be delimited demographically or geographically in a manner that permits their analysis to be coextensive with traditionally defined ethnographic projects. "Experiencers" of UFOs (abductees and contactees), enthusiasts, and researchers compose networks of individuals geographically dispersed and united mainly by discourses rooted in the published UFO literature, video media, and now the Internet. They communicate as individuals, in local groups, through organizations such as the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), and in online communities. To the extent that such a subculture has a "heritage," it is to be found in the canonical UFO sightings and events dating from the mid-twentieth century and the canonical texts that record and interpret those events. This literature has its own pedigree, of which most UFO enthusiasts are unaware. Its nineteenth-century origins are in occultism and the human sciences, evolving discourses that continue to intersect with ufology. Any exploration of the spread of these ideas must note their slow leakage from academia and occult institutions such as the Theosophical Society into loosely dispersed networks of autodidacts such as the ufological community. In this discursive space, older scientific and theological paradigms, however discredited they might be in contemporary academia, mix and combine with images from popular culture and the assumptions and belief structures that make up the worldview — including especially racial conceptions — that UFO enthusiasts share with their fellow citizens.

Ufology and academic social science intersect at various points. The "ancient astronaut" literature has been responding to developments in academic archaeology for more than half a century. Millennial flying-saucer

religions have been investigated by social psychologists and scholars of religion (Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter 1956; Balch and Taylor 1977; Balch 1982; Lewis 1995; Denzler 2001). Ufologists turn to folklore studies (such as Evans-Wentz 1911) to demonstrate the universality of something resembling the UFO experience (Vallee 1969a; Conroy 1989: 302–44), while sympathetic folklorists have fitted UFO reports into a "legend" paradigm (Rojcewicz 1987; Bullard 1987, 1989). Ufology has its own school of thought, referred to as the "psychosocial hypothesis," which explores the limits of the social and psychological embeddedness of UFO imagery and beliefs. Each of these intertings of traditions of thought deserves a separate study of the type attempted here. What I concentrate on now, however, is a particular line of thinking in ufology that has been continually informed by academic human sciences: the attempt to understand alien physical forms in light of understandings and paradigms in physical anthropology — a discipline that I will treat as, even in its high-academic form, emergent from and responding to folk thought and embedded in political, social, and popular-cultural discourses. Put simply, ufology is in one sense all about race, and it has more to do with terrestrial racial schemes as social and cultural constructs than most UFO believers are aware.

Cultural and physical anthropologists have attended to the social and political contexts of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century physical anthropology and how its understanding of human variation reflected and supported social and political structures in Europe and America. But, as twentieth-century anthropology shed the race concept and cultural and social anthropologists began to dominate the discipline and separate their project from physical anthropology, the older anthropological discourses that had legitimized a hierarchical racial and class order did not vanish. Those "disproven" paradigms persist in scientific creationism, racist anthropology, and other pseudo sciences. Donna Kossy (2001) provides a model for an intellectual history of such pseudo science (see also Kafton-Minkel 1989; Godwin 1992). Her work is essentially the dark underbelly of George Stocking's work on the history of academic anthropology. Ufology, despite its deep intellectual roots, is one less well-studied reservoir of such discredited ideas. I decline, as Stocking does (1968), to distinguish science and pseudo science, instead treating both as shifting folk categories (like the concepts "disproven" and "discredited" themselves), which, if applied analytically, would deny the historical contextualizability of institutional-

ized knowledge. Instead, I trace the rise of anthropological concepts and their diffusion into what became the ufological community, a community whose members by necessity have always been embedded in and responding to the socially constructed ethnoscapes of the larger society.

There is, in one sense, no organic folk culture of ufology distinct from a more official or intellectual discourse of it. Those interested in UFOs have always been avid autodidacts of religion, history, biology, physics, anthropology, and the occult. At a typical UFO interest group meeting in any American city, one can hear debates about social psychology, interdimensional physics, and the ethnography of shamanism. But there might be not a degree holder among them, and the names dropped are far more likely to include Carl Jung, Terence McKenna, Stephen Hawking, Immanuel Velikovsky, and Julian Jaynes than Freud, Marx, Boas, or Lévi-Strauss. Their ideas are more likely to echo the essentialisms of Müller, Eliade, and Castañeda than the relativism and social constructivism that characterize most academic thinking in the humanities and social sciences today. Any ethnography of the belief structure of ufology must, then, also be an intellectual history, responding to social and historical shifts in a tighter feedback loop than is the case with the mainstream developments in any academic discipline.

Ufology, explicitly or implicitly, is about the dissolution of boundaries — the boundaries between science and esotericism, fact and intuition, human and alien, and past and future. But as these boundaries blur others harden, including some already socially and culturally constituted by the wider society. What follows is a genealogy of some of the thought structures that diffused from anthropology to ufology during the twentieth century.

Ufology's Beginnings

A series of rapid stages following the Second World War led to the establishment of the ufological paradigm as we know it today. In the late 1940s, reports of strange aircraft were of wide interest, but the suggestion that they involved contact with nonhuman intelligence was explored mainly in pulp science fiction. In the 1950s, esoteric teachers on the fringes of American society seized on the flying-saucer topic as self-styled “contactees” and commanded wide audiences but little respect or credibility. In the 1960s, the idea of humans interacting with aliens began, at least theoretically,

to acquire scientific respectability. By then, the reports were not explicitly ideological or religious, and the thought structures and historical sequences that had structured science fiction and contactee narratives—all racially inflected through the terms and understandings of esoteric anthropology—persisted in a more subtle, though still determinate, form, this time in the charged atmosphere of the American racial landscape. It is this progression that I will trace here.

Although anomalous “airships” were reported in large numbers in the 1890s and most writers date the beginning of the UFO age to a series of events in 1947—the Kenneth Arnold sighting, the Maury Island Incident, the Roswell Incident—it was not until the early 1950s that anything that could be characterized as a UFO subculture or a flying-saucer movement came into being. Indeed, extraterrestrial explanations for UFO sightings did not even dominate public discourse on UFOs for the first few years after 1947 (Gross 1988).

But in the 1950s a cadre of self-described UFO contactees began reporting journeys and conversations with the “space brothers,” the pilots of the mysterious flying saucers that so many were seeing in the sky. The key contactees—George Adamski, Truman Bethurum, Daniel Fry, Orfeo Angelucci, Frank Stranges, Gabriel Green, George Hunt Williamson, and others—grabbed public attention from more sober-minded investigators of the sightings and, most importantly, established ideologies, narratives, terminologies, and positionings with respect to other discourses, all of which continue to shape ufology to the present day. Admittedly, this particular pedigree of ufology is an embarrassment to investigators of sightings and landings who imposed a forensic seriousness on the saucer topic in the 1960s and to the abduction investigators who have dominated ufology since the 1980s. For these “serious” investigators, the space brother movement is religion, while the investigation of sightings is science (Dean 1998: 40–4). But we will see that such disavowals and distinctions belie vigorous continuities in ideology, worldview, and language. The disavowal derives in part from the split in the 1950s UFO movement between the subjects of the encounters and the purveyors of the explanations (Keel 1975). The 1950s contactees were both, while serious investigators did not pretend to offer definitive answers to the flying-saucer mystery. When, in the early 1970s and afterward, “serious” ufologists such as Jacques Vallee and John Keel began offering fully formed hypotheses, they relied more

than they would admit on the milieu and mindset the contactees had brought about.

The explanations the contactees offered, and even the structure of their encounters with the space brothers, can be understood primarily in terms of the Theosophically based worldviews of which some explicitly partook and some versions of which much of their disparate audiences already accepted (Denzler 2001: 46). To understand that occult milieu, which was and remains the crucible of ufological thought, one must understand Theosophy and its role in a vernacular anthropology that countered a scientific discourse that had become separated from the foundational rationales of European and American society. Although few people did or do accept strict Theosophical tenets, and its principles and terminologies remain mostly impenetrable, Theosophy nonetheless created, reflected, and reinforced assumptions and beliefs that continue to permeate strains of Western thought that run afoul of both mainstream science and mainstream Christianity. These strains are where ufology lives.

Evolutionism to Theosophy

Theosophy, which was founded in the 1870s in England and the United States and reached its period of strongest influence in the 1890s, was in large part a reaction against Darwinism, and against scientism and rationalism in general, but it hardly resembled the scientific creationism that came to dominate anti-Darwinian thought in twentieth-century Britain and America. Stocking (1968) describes the shifting landscape of academic positions that characterized the transition from biblical creationism to Darwinian evolutionism, a landscape that defies the categories of "science" and "pseudo science," even when one focuses only on academic debates. Stocking reads this intellectual history through a debate between monogenism and polygenism, which predated the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Polygenism validated the British "commonsense" folk view of human physical variation, which held that there are biologically distinct races, some superior to others. This suggestion was heretical both to late-eighteenth-century biblical creationism and to the emerging position that humanity probably descended from primate stock.

In this light, Theosophist racial theory was one in a panoply of responses to Darwinism and monogenism in the late nineteenth century.

This diversity is in fact reflected in the kaleidoscope of nonacademic scientific traditions still in play today (Kossy 2001: 77). In particular, Theosophy rejected Darwinian evolution's implication that hierarchies in creation, such as human dominance over animals, were random or illusory. Theosophists nonetheless also absorbed new findings in astronomy, geology, archaeology, philology, and comparative religion—in which their founder Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was unusually well versed—findings that, alongside Darwinism, were threatening to displace academic biblical creationism in what has been called the "death of Adam" (Greene 1959). Theosophy is a mystically based worldview that infuses with divinity the revolutionary findings in science while retaining the sense of order and progress in the universe—almost akin to a medieval theory of correspondences—that Christianity was feared to be surrendering to science. In rejecting the idea that all creation was of common stock, differentiating randomly and without direction or an overarching meaning, Blavatsky shared the concerns of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit paleontologist, who, noting the phased evolutionary periods in the fossil record that we now call punctuated equilibrium, developed a theory of autonomously directed biological and spiritual evolution guided not by programmatic divine intervention but by immanent cosmic principles. With an ultimately nontheistic view of evolution, Theosophy imposes order, direction, and hierarchy on anthropology, geography, and history.

Theosophy is a revealed religion that is based on texts and messages delivered to Blavatsky and her circle by discarnate Ascended Masters, usually multiply reincarnated Tibetan lamas. Theosophical ideas continued to shape occult movements throughout the twentieth century. Most of the vocabulary of the New Age—auras, astral projection, chakras, spirit guides, gurus, the Age of Aquarius—can be traced directly to Theosophical writers. This is equally true of occult treatment of race and difference, of human history, progress, and evolution, and of the supernatural geographies—interdimensional, subterranean, and extraterrestrial—on which a racial schema could be laid out. For its synthesis of science and religion, Theosophy drew on Eastern religions, which in Blavatsky's day linguistics, archaeology, and greater communication with the literate civilizations of the Far East were making available to westerners for the first time. The core of Theosophical thought is contained in Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and especially *The Secret Doctrine* ([1888] 1938), the latter purportedly

based on the "Stanzas of Dzyan," an apocryphal text. Blavatsky relied on obscure kabbalistic, Masonic, gnostic, and orientalist sources, but her views on race grew out of a combination of these and Victorian anthropology and philology.

Human origins and physical variation dominate the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*, "Anthropogenesis." Here we read of the (not yet completed) history of humanity as a succession of seven "Root-Races," corresponding to seven continents, some sunken, some yet to rise. The ethereal First Root-Race arrived from the moon to people a continent called the Imperishable Sacred Land (Blavatsky [1888] 1938, 3:35-58). The Third Root-Race lived on Lemuria—here borrowing geology's term for the proto-continent approximating present-day South Asia. The Lemurians, Blavatsky wrote, were the first to have humanoid bodies and sexual dimorphism. They mated not only with one another but with "she-animals," resulting in a mongrel race of low-browed cretins. Theosophy traces modern anthropoid apes to these Lemurian mongrels (Scott-Elliott [1925] 1962: 94). Purebred Lemurians learned agriculture, weaving, and other technologies from "Serpents of Wisdom and Dragons" (Blavatsky [1888] 1938, 3:219) from Venus (a planet whose inhabitants had by then evolved, ahead of us, to a state of divinity). Venusians helped the Lemurians, just "as we possibly, long ages hence, may similarly be called to give a helping hand to the beings struggling up to manhood on the Jupiter or the Saturn chain" (Scott-Elliott [1925] 1962: 99). These extraterrestrials also established the ancient Egyptian civilization (Fuller 1988: 212), as well as the whole tradition of occult lodges (Rosicrucians, Freemasons, and so on) that pass on secret knowledge today (Blavatsky [1888] 1938, 3:129-221; Scott-Elliott [1925] 1962: 106-7). Each of these elements emerges again in standard scenarios in ufology and in the subdiscipline of "ancient astronaut" historiography.

Survivors of Lemuria's catastrophic sinking, about eighteen million years ago according to *The Secret Doctrine*, became the Fourth Root-Race, which peopled Atlantis, the lost continent familiar to all occultists (Scott-Elliott [1925] 1962). The fifth race, the Aryans, spread from the Gobi Desert and Tibet to South Asia and Europe (Blavatsky [1888] 1938, 3:15-35; Campbell 1980: 44-45; Godwin 1992: 19-20; Kossy 2001: 7-8). The Anglo-Saxons, an Aryan subrace, dominated the world in the Victorian period as part of a divinely ordained sequence.

With the Aryans, Blavatsky's chronology begins to overlap scenarios developed by nineteenth-century historians and ethnologists. Specifically, Blavatsky drew on the work of F. Max Müller, the Sanskritist who championed the classification of language stocks as a method for sorting out the genealogies of races. Müller had turned to language structure, using a hierarchy of morphological systems to postulate the increasing or decreasing (evolving or degenerating) sophistication of civilizations and languages as they branched off from the parent stock. This lapsarianism defied western European common sense in privileging the revealed religions of India, not Judeo-Christian ones, as the original connection with the divine.

Blavatsky—unlike Müller, her affinity was also racial—linked modern groups with the seven Root-Races: Lemurians with black Africans and Dravidians (Scott-Elliott [1925] 1962: 92); Atlanteans with Mongols and Mesoamericans; and Aryans with Semites, Europeans, and others. There was and is agreement in Theosophy that two of the seven races were yet to come or were beginning to emerge. European dominance is, in Theosophical belief, currently waning as part of a divinely ordained evolutionary sequence. Most thinking on this subject was taken up by Blavatsky's followers after her death. Following Blavatsky, Annie Besant in 1909 identified the seven subraces of the (currently dominant) Fifth Root-Race as including North Indian Aryans, westward-migrating Aryans, Iranians, Celts, and the then cresting Teutonic (A.K.A. Anglo-Saxon) race (Besant 1910: 212). These races overlap, and superseded races can still remain strong and vital, but it is in the emerging sixth subrace of the Fifth Root-Race that we can find harbingers of the Sixth Root-Race. That great shift, Theosophists argued, would involve severe environmental changes, just as continental sinkings and climatic change accompanied the passing of the baton from one Root-Race to the other in the past. Such evolution was to occur independently, without either eugenic engineering or further extraterrestrial intervention, but the larger process was implacable (Besant and Leadbeater 1947; Wauchope 1962: 121-23).

American Occultism and the Shaver Mystery

After the First World War, Theosophy's currency waned. In America, where the attention of this history has settled, a Theosophist splinter group established itself at Point Loma, California, near the site where C. W. Lead-

beater, a disciple of Blavatsky, predicted the emergence of the Coming Race (Tillett 1982: 164). But by the 1940s it was only one of a panoply of alternative religions available to those who found both mainstream religion and mainstream science lacking in satisfactory answers. In the fertile ground of the occultist subculture, it is not surprising that the first reports of "flying saucers" and "flying disks" in the 1940s were taken seriously (see Heard 1950). While news reports in 1947 focused on possible military origins of the craft (Gross 1988), occultists looked to their own rich lore for answers. Two pairs emerge as founding figures in the 1940s and 1950s, around whom occult scenarios for the origins of the saucers coalesced. George Adamski and George Hunt Williamson are familiar to saucer historians as founders of the space brother movement. Setting the stage for them, however, were Richard Shaver and Ray Palmer, who led the first attempts to fit saucer sightings into a coherent occult schema.

Shaver was an amateur artist prominent in the radical labor movement of 1920s and 1930s Detroit. After his brother, Taylor Shaver, an author of boys' adventure fiction, died at the age of thirty in 1934 under what Richard felt were suspicious circumstances connected with their political activities, he entered an alcoholic decline and was institutionalized for paranoid delusions. He spent much of the next few years as an itinerant laborer throughout the United States (Pobst 1989). In 1943, Shaver cofounded much of UFO lore in accidental collaboration with Raymond Palmer, whom John Keel, one of the more perspicacious and skeptical observers of the flying-saucer phenomenon, considers, as a result, "the man who invented flying saucers" (1989). Palmer published the pulp science-fiction magazine *Amazing Stories*, as well as, later, the popular nonfiction occult magazine *Fate*, still in print today. By the early 1940s, pulp science fiction had run its course and faced competition from comic books for its male teenaged readership. Palmer was looking for a way to spice up sales when a letter arrived from one Richard Shaver containing a purported key to an ancient occult "Mantong Alphabet," based on the principle that "There is a basic universal meaning to every sound" (Palmer 1975: 43). Shaver's biographer puts it kindly when pointing out that the alphabet "runs counter to every accepted notion of history and the origin of language" (Pobst 1989: 22), though in its own way it echoes Müller's concept, via Blavatsky, of discoverable resonances of a perfect ancestral mother tongue. *Amazing Stories* published the alphabet on its letters page to test

readers' response. "Many hundreds of readers' letters came in," Palmer recalled, "and the net result was a query to Richard S. Shaver asking him where he got his Alphabet. The answer was in the form of a 10,000 word 'manuscript' entitled 'A Warning to Future Man'" (Palmer 1975: 36; see also Kafton-Minkel 1989: 136-37).

In it, Shaver asserted that Earth was first peopled by a race of extraterrestrial Titans. Making their home on Atlantis, they created "robot races" to serve them, but an increasing bombardment of lethal solar rays, which truncated the Titans' originally Methuselah-like life spans, drove them to build and inhabit a network of caves, which honeycomb the Earth today. Failing to escape the solar rays even there, the Titans migrated to another star, but there was not enough room on their rockets for all of the robot races, who were left behind. Some of these returned to the surface as they adapted to the changed atmosphere; these are humanity's ancestors. Others stayed underground; they survive today in two groups: the Deros, who de-evolved into a race of evil "midgetlike idiots," and a smaller population of Teros who continue to resist them. Most wars, plagues, and other ills are caused by Deros wielding the machines abandoned by the Titans, which fire firendish "stim" rays. These stim rays are also used to broadcast voices into surface-dwellers' heads—which is how Shaver learned of this complex history (Shaver 1975: 48-66; Kafton-Minkel 1989: 136-39; Keel 1989: 140-41).

Palmer reworked "A Warning to Future Man" as "I Remember Lemuria!" and published it in the March 1945 issue of *Amazing Stories*. He altered "the 'factual' basis of Mr. Shaver's manuscript" in only one instance.

I could not bring myself to believe that Mr. Shaver had really gotten his Alphabet, and his Warning to Future Man, and all the "science" he propounded, from actual caves in the Earth, and actual people living there. Instead, I translated his thought-records into "racial memory," and felt sure this would be more believable to my readers, and a reasonable and actual explanation for what was going on in Mr. Shaver's mind—which is where I felt it really was going on. (Palmer 1975: 38)

Much of Shaver's worldview is derived from Theosophy. The stim rays are modeled on the vril rays wielded by subsurface dwellers in the 1871 proto-science-fiction novel *The Coming Race* by Edward Bulwer Lytton, a

Rosicrucian. That novel was a direct influence on Blavatsky, who used the title phrase to describe the Sixth Root-Race (Kafton-Minkel 1989: 262). Shaver read Bulwer Lytton (Pobst 1989: 19), and the term *Tero*, which he etymologized according to the Mantong Alphabet, was actually probably derived from *Teros*, which meant “protective psychic energy” in Theosophical texts (Godwin 1992: 104). Shaver’s stories of extraterrestrials, Atlantids, and Lemuria betray a familiarity with Theosophical ideas, as does Palmer’s concept of racial memory.

The response to “I Remember Lemuria!” was overwhelming. Soon whole issues of *Amazing Stories* were devoted to the Shaver Mystery. The September 1946 issue featured flying-saucer-like ships on its cover and a Shaver piece, “Earth Slaves to Space,” about extraterrestrials who abduct humans into their spaceship (Keel 1989: 141–42). *Amazing Stories*’ circulation jumped to a quarter million, and thousands testified to their own Lemurian memories, encounters with Deros and Teros, and sightings of Dero and Tero craft (Kafton-Minkel 1989: 137; Keel 1989: 141). Palmer called Shaver “one of the most brilliant men I have ever met” (1975: 40), but it would be hard for anyone to dispute his original diagnosis that the Deros and Teros were figments of his imagination (38). As Keel writes:

Palmer had accidentally tapped a huge, previously unrecognized audience. Nearly every community has at least one person who complains constantly to the local police that someone — usually a neighbor — is aiming a terrible ray gun at their house or apartment. This ray, they claim, is ruining their health, causing their plants to die, turning their bread moldy, making their hair and teeth fall out, and broadcasting voices into their heads. Psychiatrists are very familiar with these “ray” victims and relate their problem with paranoid-schizophrenia. . . . They are a distrustful lot . . . and very suspicious of everyone, including the government and all figures of authority. In earlier times, they thought they were hearing voices of God and/or the Devil. Today they often blame the CIA or space beings for their woes. . . . Ray Palmer unintentionally gave thousands of these people focus to their lives. (1989: 140)

Then, on June 24, 1947, Kenneth Arnold, a pilot, reported seeing crescent-shaped craft skipping along in the air over Mount Rainier in Washington, “like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water” (Arnold and Palmer 1952: 11), and a reporter mangled his description to produce the catchphrase *flying saucer*. Palmer, by now fancying himself an investigator,

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contacted Arnold for details and enlisted his help later that year to investigate a dramatic sighting of a sputtering, listing, doughnut-shaped craft that hovered near Tacoma, Washington (20–21ff.), which became known as the Maury Island Incident. The prime witness, it turned out, was a dock operator who had once written a letter to *Amazing Stories* describing his encounters with stim-shooting Dero spaceships in Burma and Kashmir during the Second World War (Keel 1989: 141, Thomas 1999: 31–33, 40, 82). Science fiction and nonfiction were by now hopelessly blurred, and by the end of 1947 the modern age of UFO investigation was under way.

George Adamski and Orthon

Quite separately from Arnold and Palmer’s gumshoeing or Shaver’s jottings, by the early 1950s some were claiming to have contacted the flying saucers’ pilots. Peter Washington (1993) sees some of these UFO contactees as among the most direct continuations of Theosophical belief (380–81). But contactees as overtly Theosophist as, for instance, George King or Eduard “Billy” Meier decades later are the exception rather than the rule. For the most part, occultism has been an oblique influence, as was the case with Adamski, and Williamson, who segregated, even hid, their Theosophical doctrines from their more UFO-oriented readership. Adamski’s narratives and theories unite quasi Theosophy, anthropology, and a new model for the relationships between experiences and investigation and between humans and extraterrestrials.

Adamski, “philosopher, student, researcher, saucer researcher” (Leslie and Adamski 1953: 171), was a Polish immigrant who also claimed “Egyptian” ancestry and began his career as an esoteric writer, the author of the explicitly Theosophical *Questions and Answers by the Royal Order of Tibet*. Arriving in the 1920s in California, he settled on the slopes of Mount Palomar (near the Hale Observatory), where he acquired an informal following as an esoteric teacher (Flammonde 1971: 52–54).

But Adamski’s innovation was to claim face-to-face contact with extraterrestrials. His lectures on UFOs and an article in *Fate* (Flammonde 1971: 55) attracted local saucer enthusiasts, including a “Dr.” George Hunt Williamson and his wife Betty and one Alfred C. Bailey, a chiropractic-school dropout and railway conductor (Williamson and Bailey 1954: 35–36), and his wife, who attended Adamski’s next attempt to flag down and estab-

lish contact with saucer pilots (Leslie and Adamski 1953: 185–86). Picnick-
ing with the Williamsons and Baileys near Blythe, California, on Novem-
ber 20, 1952, Adamski photographed a silvery, cigar-shaped craft hovering
above them (188–89). Then he was approached by a long-haired man who
emerged from a landed saucer dispatched from this “mother ship” (200).
His name, Adamski learned later, was Orthon. Here we get the first real
account in the literature of an encountered alien. The creature was

about five feet six . . . round faced with an extremely high forehead; large, but
calm, grey-green eyes, slightly aslant at the outer corners; with slightly higher
cheek bones than an Occidental, but not so high as an Indian or an Oriental; a
finely chiselled nose, not conspicuously large. . . . As nearly as I can describe his
skin the colouring would be an even, medium-colored suntan. And it did not
look to me as though he had ever had to shave, for there was no more hair on
his face than on a child's. (195)

The most unusual thing about Orthon was his androgyny. When they
shook hands,

The flesh of his hand to the touch of mine was like a baby's. . . . His hands
were slender, with long tapering fingers like the beautiful hands of a woman. In
fact, in different clothing, he could easily have passed for an unusually beautiful
woman; yet he definitely was a man. . . . His hair was sandy in color and hung in
beautiful waves to his shoulders, glistening more beautifully than any woman's I
have ever seen. And I remember a passing thought of how Earth women would
enjoy having such beautiful hair as this man had. (195)

Everything about the description of this “first” extraterrestrial was to
prove a durable model, not only for other 1950s space brothers, but for
reports stretching to the present day, of gentle, androgynous, humanlike
beings resembling a mixture of Nordic and “Oriental” (which could imply
Semitic as well as South or East Asian) features (see Sanderson 1967: 165).
Although these human-looking types have been eclipsed by the “Grey”
types that now dominate ufological imagery, they are still with us; since
the 1980s, ufologists have called them Nordics (often pronounced “Nor-
diques,” with an accent on the second syllable). Orthon, in fact, resembled
no one so much as the Himalayan Ascended Masters in the Theosophical
literature, who “combined their handsome Indian looks with suspiciously

pale skin and European features” (Washington 1993: 166). In the classic
nineteenth-century ethnologist's sense, Orthon was a true Aryan, a spiritu-
ally advanced, androgynous, and physiognomically Orient-tinged Nordic.

Orthon told Adamski that his fellow Venusians, as well as those from
other planets visiting Earth, were worried about radiation from atomic
bomb tests leaking into space (Washington 1993: 198–99). He explained
that spacemen do not visit populated areas because “there would be a tre-
mendous amount of fear . . . and probably the visitors would be torn to
pieces by the Earth people, if such public landings were attempted” (202).
Every aspect of the meeting with Orthon has continued to echo through-
out the contactee and abductee literature.

Adamski sent an account of the event to a British publisher, who coinci-
dentally was looking for a way to package a slim manuscript it had received
from an Irish nobleman (Moseley and Pflock 2002: 27) named Desmond
Leslie, which explained various archaeological mysteries in terms of the
Venusian visitation scenarios in Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. This coinci-
dence led to the publication of *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (Leslie and
Adamski 1953). With this book, two now-vast literatures were launched:
that of alien contact and that of the ancient astronaut theory.

The following spring, the first Interplanetary Spacecraft Convention
was held at Giant Rock, California. Already Adamski shared the podium
with other “contactees,” including George Van Tassel, Orfeo Angelucci,
Truman Bethurum, and Daniel Fry, as well as Williamson and the au-
thor of the first book on the Roswell, New Mexico, crash, the Hollywood
journalist and professional con man Frank Scully (Flammonde 1971: 63).
Fry was a military engineer at the White Sands Proving Ground in New
Mexico; his Martian contact, Alan (with the accent on the second syllable),
was descended from refugees to Mars from a human colony in the Hima-
layas after a Lemurian-Atlantean war, following Shaver's take on Theo-
sophical history (Fry 1966; Flammonde 1971: 71–73). Bethurum's abduc-
tor was Captain Aura Rhanes, an olive-skinned, brown-eyed woman from
the planet Clalion, whom, like the other contacts, he met in an imprromptu
desert saucer landing. Rhanes, like Alan, warned of the evils of pollution
and war and unchecked technological leaps in general (Bethurum 1954).
What is striking is how rapidly so many details of the contactee phenome-
non became established in this initial period, roughly 1953 to 1959.

George Hunt Williamson, Ufology's First Anthropologist

In the 1950s, the contactees were regarded as a lunatic fringe by those who increasingly wanted to study UFOs scientifically and had no patience for reports of contact with the saucers' pilots, even when it was agreed that those saucers were probably piloted. By the 1960s, this distinction would gradually erode, and, as we will see, investigators by the 1980s devoted themselves primarily to contacts and abductions. With that shift, what had been the 1950s contactee discourses began to color ufology as a whole, despite the fact that by that time Adamski and his contemporaries had been rejected as frauds. It is important, then, to locate socially and institutionally some of the key figures in the development of interstellar racial schemata in the 1950s contactee movement.

Not surprisingly, a pivotal role in the early contactee movement belonged to an anthropologist—or at least a self-styled one—George Hunt Williamson, mentioned previously as having witnessed Adamski's first contact. He was involved around that time in an esoteric society called Soulcraft, whose founder, William Dudley Pelley, had been the most prominent pro-Nazi activist in the United States from the rise of Hitler through the attack on Pearl Harbor. Pelley had organized the paramilitary Silver Shirts organization, modeled on Hitler's Brown Shirts, whose membership overlapped heavily with that of the IAM Religious Activity (Vallee 1979: 192–93), a direct Theosophical offshoot (still in existence), which adds, to the usual Tibetan adepts, more thoroughly Anglo-Saxon Ascended (or reincarnated) Masters such as King Arthur and George Washington (Kinney 1989: 27–28). In 1936, Pelley ran for president on the Christian Party ticket, with German Nazi funding and an anti-Semitic platform. "The time has come for an American Hitler and a pogrom," he stated in one campaign speech (Kossy 2001: 12). President Franklin Roosevelt interned Pelley for sedition in 1942. Paroled in 1950, he immediately founded Soulcraft, and Williamson was among his first associates.

James Moseley, who met and interviewed all of the contactees in the 1950s and later published exposés of both Williamson (Aharon 1957; Moseley and Mann 1959; Robinson 1963) and Adamski (Moseley and Pflock 2002: 333–52), writes that Williamson was "deeply interested in anthropology and, he claimed, possessed extensive knowledge of the ways of various tribes of Plains Indians, acquired by years of living among them"

(62), though his curriculum vitae was riddled with fabrications and phony degrees (Moseley and Mann 1959; Robinson 1963). More or less simultaneously with the publication of *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, Williamson and another witness to the Orthon landing, Alfred Bailey, published an account of communications from interplanetary civilizations, *The Saucers Speak!* Williamson claims in the book to have conducted "anthropological field work amongst the Chippewa Indians" of northern Minnesota (Williamson and Bailey 1953: 28), but, after reading news reports of flying saucers and reading Donald Keyhoe's *Flying Saucers Are Real* (1950), he "now collected my legends and so-called myths in a more serious manner" (Williamson and Bailey 1953: 30). Williamson asserts, as most ufologists and contactees would today, that many myths and legends throughout the world are records of interactions with interplanetary visitors.

The Saucers Speak! is the first detailed published message from extraterrestrials. The bulk of it transcribes messages—through automatic writing, the Ouija board, and ham radio—from saucer pilots sternly warning Earthlings either to join a political and spiritual confederation of planetary civilizations or to risk self-annihilation through war, atomic testing, and other evils. "You are a dead civilization," "Nah-9" of the "Solar X" group warns bluntly. "We want your cooperation. Time is limited" (Williamson and Bailey 1953: 44). With only occasional references to a deity, these extraterrestrials mostly invoke evolutionary hierarchies à la Blavatsky: "Do not think of us as Gods," Ponnar from the planet Hatonn advises the Williamsons and Baileys. "We are men like yourselves. We are only far ahead of you in progression" (77). But Nah-9 also warns that imperialist aliens from Orion had less benevolent designs on Earth (57).

Later, Palmer published Williamson's solo effort, *Other Tongues—Other Flesh* (1953), which, like the more widely read Leslie and Adamski volume, was divided between an account of the 1952 contact and a more historical and mythological section. Here for the first time extraterrestrial races are fitted into a Theosophical scheme of racial hierarchy. Williamson claims that humanity began with ancient breeding between advanced extraterrestrials from Sirius and Earth's indigenous apes. Other chimeras bred in this period disappeared in the Deluge. The task today, Williamson argues, is to sort out the purer from the mongrel races, for humanity today is made up of an array of different alien-animal or "angel and beast" combinations, with different races visiting Earth all the time and interbreeding and going

unnoticed among us. Some of this quotes directly Pelley's own Blavatsky-influenced book *Star Guests* (1950), which conveyed information, received through automatic writing, about early evolution.

Williamson, performing an esoteric exegesis of pictographs embedded in Orthon's Mojave Desert boot print, reveals that there are three main alien races visiting Earth today. The first are the "Migrants," angelic beings trying to guide humanity toward its highest potential. Venusians such as Orthon were presumably among these. The second are the "Harvesters," who visit Earth in flying saucers, preparing for a new age by exterminating the "evil children" of the planet. The third are the "Intruders," the conquering forces from Orion referred to by Nah-9. The Intruders from Orion were cast-off souls, "slop" and "waste" (1953: 383), and his description of how to recognize Orion folk in human society draws directly on 1930s-style anti-Semitic boilerplate of the kind that Pelley shouted in his rallies.

People of Orion are not our kind of people, they do not belong in our Confederation. They interrupt and are unruly. At present time there is a small group of people on Earth working for Orion. These people are sometimes small in stature with strange, oriental type eyes. Their faces are thin and they possess weak bodies. They come among you to disperse all things not in keeping with their own ideas; they upset our plans. They run amuck and we avoid them. They prey on the unsuspecting; they are talkative; they astound intellects with their words of magnificence. While their wisdom may have merit, it is materialistic, and not of pure aspiration towards the Father. We have our own men who watch over these pirates of Creation. They have their own Council and the Orion Confederation; but they know little through their own ingenuity for they are the Universal parasites! Disturbers, negative; soon they will be eradicated. (386-87)

Later Williamson claimed that this fifth column aimed to "come to Earth and eliminate all life forms on it and then land and use our planet as a great storehouse of natural resources" (1959: 223). But they would fail because "these forces have had their day under the sun and that day has been 500,000 years of continuing decadence. Their sun is about to set, and their day is done. Their power is momentary now as the Earth prepares for its Graduation Day, its Purification Day" (226).

This message was echoed in a founding text of an 1 AM Religious Activity offshoot called Summit Lighthouse or Church Universal and Triumphant, a more militant and UFO-oriented Ascended Master fellowship.

Mark Prophet, Summit Lighthouse's founder, identifies a counterfeit race on Earth, not born of God.

Needless to say, these human automatons are the chaff and their final end can come through only one process: transmutation. For this is the only approved method whereby the wicked shall be removed from the face of the earth.

In the Bible these soulless beings are referred to throughout as "the wicked," for they have been seen to it that all the more specific descriptions of their race have been removed—lest mankind discover them and rise in righteous indignation against their overlords. And thus the death of John the Baptist and that of Jesus the Christ were brought about by the counterfeit race.

Today, as always, they occupy positions of authority and financial power. They have gained control of the destiny of empires. . . . The injudicious use of taxation exerted by their direction has placed an unconscionable yoke upon the neck of humanity.

Their control of entertainment media and the trends of youth toward dissident art forms and discordant music has perverted noble attitudes and spawned a race of delinquent rebels. (1965: 11214)

Although such explicit anti-Semitism has always been on the fringes even of the UFO movement, it is impossible to ignore its formative effect on the UFO discourse. It is not the fascist political orientation of the old contactees that marginalizes them today; in fact, it is striking how many UFO enthusiasts will, off the record and after some theatrical dissembling, allow, for example, that Jews probably do control the media. This has been especially true since the 1990s, when the Internet facilitated a convergence between ufological and conspiracy-theory discourses that is now nearly total.¹ Rather, modern believers are put off only by the lack of verisimilitude in the 1950s reports: the rosiness of the Venusian (and other) messages, the beings' too human appearance, and the rapid obsolescence of their scientific pronouncements.

Nonetheless, the 1950s contactees quietly shaped ufological discourses. For one thing, we can see in contactees' writings some of the shifts from an Old World theosophy (broadly defined), with its orientation toward South Asian civilizations and esoteric mystery religions and its obsession with the place of the Anglo-Saxon in world politics and history, to a New World occultism focused on futuristic technology; a more generalized valorization of the tribal, with less emphasis on the East and more on the Americas;

and a preoccupation, always present and rarely acknowledged, with comprehending the role of America in the world and the meanings and values of different components of the American ethnoscape. These shifts can be read in and on alien bodies, since so much of American racial discourse is inscribed on bodies and in folk racial classifications.

Williamson's vision of the physically weak, materialistic aliens infiltrating our society is a durable image, even though these particular beings—like Shaver's Deros, whom they resemble—were never reported, photographed, or encountered face-to-face during the early contactee period. They were invoked only as a specter. It was instead the soft-skinned, long-haired Nordic space brothers who were stepping out of the saucers to interact with humans directly. In effect, the “slop and waste” beings from Orion were not so much aliens as a secret society within humanity, hidden in plain sight. This concept of demonic intruders among us, infiltrating our social institutions, moving in next door, originates in anti-Semitic conspiracy theories dating even to the Middle Ages (Trachtenberg 1943), and, as we will see, some features of the image of the abducting Greys stem directly from components of these scenarios.

Nonhuman Alien Imagery

Two images are important for seeing the shift from Aryans to Greys that began to accelerate by the 1960s. First are the Martians in H. G. Wells's 1898 novel *The War of the Worlds*: technologically invincible, coldheartedly bent on conquest, and yet so physically vulnerable that tiny terrestrial microbes fell them on the brink of world conquest. Second, we can mention the dead pilots from the Roswell crash. In the first Roswell book, Scully's *Behind the Flying Saucers* (1950), the alien corpses are not long-haired Aryan-featured Venusians but “little fellows . . . in all respects perfectly normal human beings,” except for unusually perfect teeth (133), a “lack of beards” (though “some had a fine growth resembling peach fuzz”) (24), and their stature (a little more than three feet tall) (22). They were, according to Scully, “perfectly normal in their development. The only trouble was that their skin seemed to be charred a very dark chocolate color” as a result of the crash (129). The pilots' fully human morphology in these initial reports is significant, since descriptions of their (always hidden) bodies changed as the UFO mythos did: by the late 1980s, the corpses

in Hangar 18 were popularly represented as more or less standard Greys (see, e.g., Beckley 1989).

I want to connect these two images, Wells's and Scully's, with the idea of the human-looking but slightly ethnic invaders of Williamson's warnings. The Roswell aliens were “men” in nearly every respect except their size, their indiscernible ethnic look due to the charred skin, and the fact that their piloting skills were (apparently) unsuited to Earth's conditions, just as Wells's aliens were vulnerable to Earth's pathogens. Like Williamson's space Jews, with dastardly but quixotic designs, the Roswell and *War of the Worlds* aliens were ultimately paper tigers, poor pilots and all bluster, weaklings who did not fully appreciate their own vulnerability. In this, there is an affinity with the muscular condescension in much anti-Semitic propaganda.

I am hardly arguing that Wells's and Scully's aliens were as metaphorically Jewish as Williamson's Orion races. But some larger symbolic associations in European and American culture inform both sets of images: the idea of a vulnerable, decrepit race, fancying itself privileged (“chosen”), which preys, or attempts to prey, on more healthy decent folk. But to indulge that argument fully we need first to understand the Greys and explore the emergence of that image, which has become by now the central racial image in ufology.

It is not until the 1960s that we find U.S. sightings of UFO pilots that are not of the thoroughly human-looking type. The idea that aliens might look human became the old, discredited view, just as we smile at the American-English-speaking Caucasians that populate every galaxy in the old *Star Trek* series. Moseley interviewed Scully on this point in the early 1950s and “asked him how he accounted for his little spacemen and Adamski's big ones looking so much like Earth people. After all, conditions on other planets were much different than those here. A practicing Catholic, he offered an argument I'd already heard from several saucerers, among them Adamski and Williamson: since God made Earthmen in his own image, and since he also made the creatures on other planets, it follows that they look similar to us. 'It would not be like God to make a monster. Besides, what does science really know about conditions on other planets?' (Scully didn't have much use for science.)” (Moseley and Pflock 2002: 79).

In fact, when the origins of Adamski's Venusians and other space brothers were speculated on at all, the answers were usually some form of Blavat-

sky's: that Earth's indigenous apes were jump-started in their evolution by either direct physical breeding with or metempsychotic spiritual infusion by extraterrestrials. This thesis is in fact the mainstay of all ancient astronaut scenarios (Kossy 2001: 1-43; Sanderson 1967: 207-16; Sitchin 1976), and of course it dodges the question of why terrestrial apes and extraterrestrial humanoids were so similar to begin with. Pelley, for example, theorized that present-day terrestrial races as well as spiritual visitors among us today trace their ancestry to various permutations of interbreeding and directed evolution among indigenous apes, other animals, visitors from Sirius, and angelic "Christ People" (1950: 101-3)—most, coincidentally, already being upright bipeds.

Now, however, in the 1960s came reports of what would soon be called "little men" sightings. The more scientifically minded ufologists only gradually acknowledged that there was an emerging consistent pattern to "reliable" reports (unlike, say, those of Adamski et al.) of "UFO occupants." Jacques Vallee wrote in the late 1960s:

Interest in landing reports is rapidly rising among the public and among UFO students. Several factors contribute to the development of this interest. First of all, the recent wave, with its maximum in July-August 1965, has confronted us with a remarkable number of incidents in this category, thus forcing many to accept the reality of accounts they had previously denounced as hoaxes. (1969b: 27)

A typical such encounter involved a witness who accidentally stumbles on a landed saucer, with a "little man" either taking soil samples or servicing the craft; on realizing he has been seen, the creature climbs back in the ship and flies away.

Amid the bewildering variety of creatures in 1960s reports—robots, little gremlins, elves, and, especially in European and South American reports, hairy dwarves (Bullard 1987 Lorenzen and Lorenzen 1976)—there was nonetheless a statistical tendency for the beings to be short, large headed, and hairless, with not at all prominent mouths and noses. There was nothing of the Aryan Venusian about them. As one collator of these reports summarized it:

Comparatively few people have claimed that they were both close enough and calm enough when they encountered the pygmy types to make any detailed observations, but those who have reported more than generalities have certainly given us some things to think about . . . Here, we find a strong indication of the

head being disproportionately large; the eyes large; and the mouth slit-like; the ears range all the way from "not apparent" to fantastic structures like those of some bats that can be folded at will. In only one case that I know of have the hands been said to differ markedly from ours. . . . The feet are often said to be "like stumps" but are seldom seen, as the little creatures have usually been observed standing in grass or other ground cover. (Sanderson 1967: 147; see also Lorenzen 1969; and Denzler 2001: 47)

"Skin color," this study continues, "has been said to range from 'very dark,' whatever that may mean, to very white, and bluish, or bluish-green" (Sanderson 1967: 149). Most features of this pattern became more solidified after 1966, with the publication of the first reported American UFO abduction, the 1961 experience of Betty and Barney Hill.

Betty and Barney Hill

If it is significant that the 1950s contactee movement was founded by white supremacist theosophists in the aftermath of the Second World War, it is also not surprising that the abduction phenomenon began with the suppressed trauma of a mixed-race couple during the civil rights era. Whereas the 1950s contactees sought to reerect a toppled racial order on a shifting cold war geopolitical landscape, the Hills' story grasps for a position from which white and black Americans can ponder, resolve, and transcend racial divisions. Like the 1960s themselves, the Hill abduction was terrifying, but with a note of optimism.

Keel has pointed out that "Contactees remained in disgrace in the U.S. until 1966 when John Fuller published the story of Betty and Barney Hill" (1975: 885)—though modern saucer jargon now classifies them as abductees, as opposed to noncoerced contactees. In many ways, indeed, the Hill abduction put figures from the little men sightings into a contactee narrative but in a form palatable to more scientifically minded members of the UFO community, partly because the Hills were unwilling and confused, in contrast to the suspiciously confident and coherent ideological pronouncements of Adamski and other gurus (Denzler 2001: 58). While Adamski and Williamson purveyed specific racial ideologies, for example, and while each contactee had a political agenda, the Hills were passive victims of interstellar racial dynamics that they little understood.

In brief, Barney Hill, a black postal employee, and his wife Betty, a white

social worker, were returning from a driving trip to Quebec on their way to their home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the night of September 19, 1961, when they were distracted by an odd light in the sky and then by uniformed men at what seemed to be a roadblock. They arrived home inexplicably later than they had planned and with distressing memory gaps. Barney reported the sighting to a nearby air force base (not mentioning the roadblock), after which they tried to put the incident out of their minds. But gnawing facts such as scuff marks on the tops of Barney's shoes, unusual marks on their car, the amnesia, and disturbing nightmares caused them to question whether there had not been more to their superficially uneventful sighting. Betty wrote to the National Investigative Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), the most prominent UFO organization of its day, and was put in touch with Donald Keyhoe, the country's most prominent ufologist. The committee sent two investigators, who suggested that regressive hypnosis could pierce the amnesia. By then Betty had devoured every book on UFOs in her local library. Eventually the Hills were regressed by Benjamin Simon, an army psychiatrist. What emerged were memories of an abduction from their car into a spaceship by entities far stranger than those first recalled, a medical examination that included a "pregnancy test" on Betty and an extended conversation with the crew's leader on the extent and purpose of the aliens' presence.

Simon elicited and compiled the story in fits and starts, drawing on notes Betty had made of vivid dreams she had had after the incident, the details of which were discussed with Barney at the time and collaboratively redefined as true memories sharpened through further hypnosis. This much-criticized methodology has since become nearly universal in ufological research. In 1966, a locally renowned UFO author, John Fuller, published the Hills' full story, first in *Look* magazine and then in a book, *The Interrupted Journey* (1966). Thus, a template was created that contained nearly all the elements of what came to be known as a typical alien abduction.

To say that *The Interrupted Journey* has racial overtones is a bit like saying that *Moby-Dick* has nautical overtones. It is fundamentally a book about race and not only insofar as a mixed-race couple becomes the focus of an epochal confrontation between humanity and an extraterrestrial race, with sharp hints of an interest in interbreeding. Jodi Dean has discussed how, oddly, Fuller attempts to bury racial aspects in the Hills' lives (1998: 55, 164–65). But race erupts throughout the narrative nonetheless.

Any difficulties in being a mixed-race couple in 1961 is belied by the consciously mundane scene Fuller sets at the beginning of his narrative to contrast with the horror that follows: Betty and Barney stopping at a diner in northern New Hampshire on their way home from a vacation in Montreal. Already, though, the geography in which they are moving suggests transgression and liminality: boundaries of all types are constantly crossed, with a density and structure that are almost literary or mythical. Barney describes wonderment at the presence of "Negroes in Montreal" (1966: 72), recounts difficulties with a non-English-speaking gas station attendant (72), and was tickled to tune in French-language radio (124). After clearing U.S. customs out of Quebec, they enter a new border region within America, "a section of the state," Fuller writes, "that is said to have threatened to secede not only from Vermont, but from the United States as well" (4). Their encounter will occur in the White Mountains, near a town called Indian Head. Their attempt to reach the comfort and safety of home will be resisted by a slowing down of time and their inability to pull free of these border zones.

Just past another border, that between Vermont and New Hampshire, they stop at the diner. The waitress reacts negatively to the fact that they are a mixed couple, but Fuller tries to assure us that, "Regardless of what attention their mixed marriage drew in public places, they were no longer self-conscious about it" (1966: 4). The encounter with the waitress is given a more menacing mood when it is described in Barney's own voice under hypnosis two years later. Once in the diner

There is a dark-skinned woman in there, I think, dark by Caucasian standards, and I wonder—is she a light-skinned Negro, or is she Indian, or is she white?—and she waits on us and she is not very friendly, and I notice this, and others are there and they are looking at me and Betty, and they seem to be friendly or pleased, but this dark-skinned woman doesn't. I wonder then more so—is she Negro and wonder if I—if she is wondering if I know she is Negro and is passing for white. (73)

This attention to social detail and vigilant assessment of the safety of different social situations and the racial identities of different people is surely an African American survival strategy. Even by those standards, Barney's preoccupations with hybridity and hostility are obsessive. For Fuller, however, the recovered memories get interesting only later that night, as the

Hills, in their car, begin to see lights in the sky and hear strange beeping noises.

Barney's descriptions of the men at the roadblock are shot through with racial imagery. His first glimpse, through binoculars aimed at the saucer's windows, is of a face like "a red-headed Irishman," an impression he attributes to the fact that "Irish are usually hostile to Negroes." Next to the "Irishman," staring directly at Barney, is a less friendly alien who looks "like a German Nazi" with "a black scarf around his neck" (87). But they have eyes that are "slanted! But not like a Chinese" (88). "I've never seen eyes slanted like that," he adds (91); they are hypnotic eyes, "telling me, 'Don't be afraid'" (96). They have uniforms that put him as much in mind of the hats and jackets of Canadian hoodlums that unnerved him on the Montreal trip as they do of military uniforms (113-14). The Hills and their hypnotist consistently refer to their abductors as "men," "strangers," and "pilots," and Barney goes so far as to say "it did not seem that they had different faces from white men" (120).

But, though Barney's initial descriptions are mostly of menacing Caucasians, during one hypnotic session he draws what we can call the first illustration of a typical late-twentieth-century alien abductor, with bald head, large slanted eyes wrapping around the side of the head, vestigial nose, and lipless, expressionless mouth (143). He clarified these impressions later: "The men had rather odd-shaped heads, with a large cranium, diminishing in size as it got toward the chin. And the eyes continued around to the sides of their heads, so that it appeared that they could see several degrees beyond the lateral extent of our vision. This was startling to me." The mouth "was much like when you draw one horizontal line with a short perpendicular line on each end. This horizontal line would represent the lips without the muscle that we have. And it would part slightly as they made this mumumummm sound . . . Also, I didn't notice any proboscis, there just seemed to be two slits that represented the nostrils" (260).

Betty saw and remembered more, especially through her initial dreams, which were later clarified as real memories. Her descriptions of the "men" are less "alien" than Barney's. They were between five feet and five feet four inches tall: "Their chests are larger than ours; their noses were larger (longer) than the average size although I have seen people with noses like theirs—like Jimmy Durante's. Hair and eyes were very dark, possibly black. . . . They were very human in their appearance, not frightening. . . .

They seemed to be very relaxed, friendly, in a professional way" (296-97). Betty says only, "I had the feeling they were more like cats' eyes" (264). Her claim that the crew looked reassuringly human contrasts with her description of their skin tone: "Their complexions were of a gray tone; like a gray paint with a black base; their lips were of a bluish tint" (296), and "The surface of their skin seemed to be a bluish gray, but probably whiter than that" (264). Barney called the skin "grayish, almost metallic looking" (260).

Despite their disagreement on hair and noses, the points where Betty and Barney agreed—gray skin, unusual eyes, vestigial mouth, and cool demeanor—came to be typical of the Grey alien image now firmly lodged not only in the narrow world of UFO lore but, since the 1990s, in American mass culture. But the Hills cannot stop returning to an attempt to classify the crewmen by human ethnicity: "I keep thinking that the crew members are Oriental, Asiatic"—only shorter (271). "In a sense," Betty recalled, "they looked like mongoloids, because I was comparing them with a case I had been working with, a specific mongoloid child—the sort of round face and broad forehead, along with a certain type of coarseness" (264).

In a convergence of themes that is almost dizzying, Barney invokes academic anthropology to clarify his description.

Betty and I went to hear a lecture one time by Dr. Carleton S. Coon of the Department of Anthropology at Harvard, and he showed a slide of a group of people who lived around the Magellan Straits. We both had quite a reaction when we saw it, because this group of Indians, who lived in an extremely cold atmosphere high in the mountains where there was little oxygen, bore a considerably close resemblance to what I'm trying to describe. And the professor was telling us how this group of people had, in the course of many generations, shown considerable physiological changes to adapt to the climate. They had Oriental sort of eyes, but the eye socket gave an appearance of being much larger than it was, because nature had developed a roll of fat around the eye and also around the mouth. So it looked as if the mouth had no opening and as if they had practically no nose. They were quite similar, in a general way, to the men I'm trying to describe. (260)

Coon was in fact the last of the racist evolutionists in academic anthropology in the United States, a virulent segregationist as well as a dabbler in paranormal topics such as the yeti, and by the 1960s he was an embarrassment to his discipline and Harvard (Jackson 2001). By the time of

the Hills' abduction he was completing his magnum opus, *The Origins of Races* (1962), which was perhaps the last academic publication to follow the nineteenth-century practice of juxtaposing photos of Hottentots, Australian Aborigines, and Indians with head shots of lemurs, orangutans, and gorillas. Coon's was a polygenist argument, a variant on Vogt's ultimately, which held that the threshold to *Homo sapiens* had been crossed five separate times by five separate hominid populations, the ancestors of today's five races. Not only had the Hills been exposed to the routine racist practices of 1950s and 1960s America, but they had been directly exposed to raw, nineteenth-century racist anthropology halfheartedly repackaged for modern scientific sensibilities.

The Hills were struggling to identify their abductors' race, just as Barney had fretted over the ethnicity of the waitress in the diner—hence the theories that Barney and Betty spin out in their descriptions. Were the crewmen Nazis? white hoodlums? Irishmen? Chinese? South American Indians? Italian Americans like Jimmy Durante? And if they were none of these but something else, then how can their physical appearance enable categorization? If, as the Hills gradually came to feel sure, these were extraterrestrials, what would extraterrestrials look like? Would they be physiologically adapted to a colder, less oxygenated atmosphere, like the Straits of Magellan natives, but with those features more exaggerated? Would they be more evolved humans? And, if so, what would that look like? The descriptions of extraterrestrials in reports cannot be dissociated from attempts to understand what an extraterrestrial should look like.

Communion and the Birth of a Subculture

After the publication of *The Interrupted Journey*, the abduction phenomenon took off slowly. For one thing, more attention was suddenly paid to an earlier, dubious report from South America concerning Antônio Villas Boas, a Brazilian farmer who was seduced aboard a flying saucer by a red-headed alien who then used sign language to indicate that their offspring would be born and raised “up there” (Creighton 1969). Two dockworkers in Pascagoula, Mississippi, reported an abduction by clawed robotlike creatures in 1973, and Travis Walton, who went missing for five days in 1975 following a UFO sighting, told the story of his abduction to a still largely unbelieving ufological establishment. The year 1979 saw the publication of the

story of Betty Andreasson, a Massachusetts housewife, who reported ongoing encounters with squat, large-headed, cavernous-eyed creatures who invaded her home, examined her, and fed her religious imagery and messages. Andreasson, a devout Christian, called them “angels” (Fowler 1979).

The real explosion in the abduction phenomenon came only in 1987 with the publication of *Communion: A True Story*, by Whitley Strieber, a horror novelist known for tales of supernatural predators such as *The Wolfen*. *Communion* is a highly personal narrative of coming to grips with a consciousness-shattering series of encounters with grey-skinned humanoids. They invade his home, abduct him, examine him, probe him anally, torment him with dreams, plant apocalyptic visions in his head, and erode his sanity. Written in a riveting, fiction-like style, *Communion* became a phenomenal best seller, and more than any other event its publication is probably responsible for the proliferation of abduction reports in the late 1980s and 1990s and the emergence of a nationwide community of thousands of self-identified abductees.

It was in the context of a ufological community revitalized by the publication of *Communion* that I first began seriously examining the phenomenon of UFO belief. Although UFOs had long been a topic of interest in my Southern Californian upbringing, it was during the wave of interest following *Communion*—in some ways because of reading it—that I became more heavily involved in the UFO subculture, in Oregon in the late 1980s and early 1990s and continued that involvement after a move to Illinois. I attended interest group meetings and forums, met abductees, and interacted with those who were investigating sightings for MUFON and referring abductees to counselors and hypnotists. In fact, there was quite a lot of amateur hypnosis going on.

What I saw by 1989 was a complete shift in the social organization of UFO communities. Keel's account of the “flying saucer subculture” in 1975 is an instructive comparison: he describes a loose network of hobbyists focusing on material evidence for UFOs. Most belonged to scientifically oriented private research networks and were resolutely uninterested in the psychic, mystical, historical, or mythical dimensions of UFOs (Keel 1975: 885–87). In the post-*Communion* era of the late 1980s and early 1990s, by contrast, abductions were the main focus of ufology, and every UFO interest group contained self-described abductees.²

At a typical UFO group meeting since the late 1980s, a local investiga-

tor for MUFON, responsible for a cluster of countries, might give a rundown of developments that month—mostly reports of lights in the sky, followed up with interviews and the filing of reports. This contrasts strongly with the more lively forums that follow, with abductees moderating and providing the main viewpoints. All topics are admitted: alternative and mainstream religion, any paranormal topic, any alleged political conspiracy, and any new or old ideas in psychology or astronomy or physics or biology that might shed light on the UFO problem. The discourse relies heavily on the assumptions and jargons of popular and therapeutic psychology; abductees have come to be regarded as morally authorized victims whose voices must be heard and feelings respected.

Abductees and contactees are not just the stars of these new ufological communities; they are the experts. No educational background is necessary; in fact, the pronouncements of other so-called experts are sidelined when real people who have interacted with real aliens are in the room. Their memories, theories, and intuitions are treated as (not necessarily true) “information”—an important and all-encompassing category in ufological discourse—and the people at these meetings are hungry for it.

Epistemologically, the spirit of this discourse is agnostic. No idea is too absurd to be considered, but all ideas are provisional and subject to revision. Some see the abductors as good or bad extraterrestrials, angels or demons or fairies, manifestations of hidden domains of consciousness, or covert government operatives. Abductees with any of these viewpoints can share their experiences and commune with one another.

Amid this antinomian agnosticism, however, there are ideologically driven attempts to systematize the disparate data in contact reports. Much of this is in the form of channeled material, which tends to dominate the inevitable book tables at UFO meetings. But there are also informal local gurus. One, based in Seattle who used a generic-sounding name that may have been a pseudonym, offered counseling to abductees in the 1980s and 1990s and distributed his own cassette tapes detailing elaborate narratives and typologies. Such figures, including channelers who might technically be “contactees,” are distinct from abductees or physical contactees themselves, who typically do not offer or accept tidy explanations for their narratives, while still greedily devouring any such information, whatever the source. If the alien abduction program can be seen as a kind of physical anthropology being performed on humanity, then in the same way the

ufological community can be seen to be engaged in its own ethnological investigations of who the aliens are and how the different types can be categorized and why, or even whether, they are constituted as they appear to be.

Greys' Anatomy

Various alien types are reported in *Communion* and its sequels. Strieber early on distinguishes four types: “small robotlike” beings; “short, stocky ones in . . . dark-blue coveralls” with “wide faces, appearing either dark gray or dark blue in that light, with glittering deep-set eyes, pug noses, and broad, somewhat human mouths”; a type of five-foot-tall, “very slender and delicate” creature “with extremely prominent and mesmerizing black slanted eyes” and “an almost vestigial mouth and nose”; and, finally, “huddled figures . . . somewhat smaller, with similarly shaped heads but round, black eyes like large buttons” (1987: 29–30). One of the third type, delicate with hypnotic eyes, is pictured on the cover of *Communion*. The creature is more pale yellow than grey, the cranium is less bulbous than in most reports, and the Giaconda smirk typical of the cool detached manner that most abductees, including Strieber, report is missing, but it was this image, the classic Grey, that seized the ufological imagination. Untold numbers claimed to have affirmed their own alien abduction memories as a direct result of seeing this picture.

An exhaustive study published the same year as *Communion* by the folklorist Thomas Bullard cites a bewildering array of alien abductors, with the typical Grey only one species among a panoply that included mummies, trolls, sasquatches, and robots (1987: 239). The hairless, androgynous Greys and their cousins made up only 26 percent of Bullard's sample (238). Since then, they have overwhelmingly dominated the reports.

Even many of those who believe in the reality of abductions have suggested that the image of the Grey may have been constructed by the aliens—whose real appearance may be unknowable—because of its cultural resonances for us. This—whether one takes the perspective of believer, skeptic, or social scientist—leads to the question of why the Greys look as they do.

A skeptic within ufology, Martin Kottmeyer, sees the Hills' narrative as heavily influenced in detail by their culture and environment and adds,

"The fact that the Hills were a bi-racial couple may be relevant to why they stand at the creation of this tradition" (1994: 9). He tracked down popular-culture sources for the abduction and alien imagery, including H. C. Wells's emotionless, androgynous Martians (Kottmeyer 1990) and suggests that the Hills conjured up grey-skinned aliens, as opposed to black or white ones, as a way of preventing racial connotations from being imposed on their experience (Kottmeyer 1994).

This viewpoint is echoed by scholars who see the abduction narrative as redemptive for a society divided by race. Jonathan Z. Smith has called the abduction narrative a myth that transcends racial categories with the image of the blank, grey, alien Other (1994). The anthropologist Luise White claims that the abduction myth is "the opposite of essentialism; it argues passionately against racial exclusivity and depicts a universe in which races and even species must mingle and intermingle to survive. The men and women who [through being abducted] have seeded other galaxies argue against national and racial identities" (1994: 32).

Kottmeyer sees the aliens' grey skin as negotiating and transcending symbolic associations of white and black with life and death, good and evil, truth and falsehood, and so on. In almost every respect, he points out, the Greys are a middle ground. While not beautiful, "they can't be considered predatory or monstrous . . . Their goodness and badness are equally denied (1994: 7; see also Matheson 1998: 299).

Grey is also the color of metal, science and technology, and coldness, and these are frequent associations with the Greys. Terry Matheson points out that aliens' large heads suggest "not so much . . . great intelligence as inordinate rationality, and their disproportionately large, black, pupilless (and thus expressionless) eyes could hint of sight without insight . . . If ever a race of beings exemplified the negative consequences of rationality it is these eminently drab, boring, and virtually sexless creatures with their expressionless faces and emotionless ways" (1998: 298–99).

In these and other respects, aliens' bodies reflect an exaggeration of the rational and cerebral capacities and an atrophy of the affective, sensual, and erotic capacities. Reproduction for them has shifted entirely to the technological and utilitarian, away from the erotic and the genital, indeed, away from sexual dimorphism itself. These capacities and tendencies, however, are projections and are mapped on alien bodies that are isomorphic (two arms, two legs) with our own. Moreover, the relationship

between abductees' and aliens' bodies betrays differences—in intelligence, morality, emotionality, vigor, and cultural level—that for centuries have been mapped onto racial differences in folk and academic thought. The aliens may come from outer space, but we can find the origins of alien body types in the structure of very terrestrial racial schemes.

Greys and the American Ethnoscape

As anthropologists, we want to read abduction narratives as emerging from rather than impinging on a human belief world. Even if we are being visited by immensely superior aliens, our visitors would be understandable and perceptible only after being fitted into a preexisting cultural scheme for categorizing beings, as has often been the case among human societies, with different peoples perceiving one another at first—and often thereafter as well—as ghosts, animals, angels, or devils. This should be equally true of imagined, posited, or otherwise invented visitors. For want of a better term, such a classification is *racial*—and we have no better term precisely because popular discourse has clung to concepts that anthropologists have had to abandon as scientifically untenable. Race is an appropriate template for viewing the abduction phenomenon because race has always been more mythology than biology.

In North American English, *black*, *white*, and *red* are longstanding terms for African Americans, Europeans, and American Indians, respectively, *yellow* and *brown* being more recent additions to represent East Asians and Hispanics. In an exploration of why American Indians are "red," Raymond Fogelson points first to an older black-white opposition in European folk ethnology that pivots on an "ancient Cold-Hot, North-South . . . axis" (1985: 10; see also Kossy 2001: 69–116). The Columbian encounter, and European oceanic expansion in general, supplemented this original dichotomy, Fogelson writes, by bisecting it with "a Wet-Dry, East-West axis encompassing a Yellow-Red polarity" (10). Here American Indians are associated with arid climates and Orientals with tropical ones. Temperaments and predispositions can be superimposed on this scheme, going back to Linnaeus. This East-West dichotomy converges to some extent with the Old World longitudinal divide between western European Aryans and darker, shorter, eastern Slavs, which nineteenth-century racist scholars such as Gobineau and Klemm described in terms of a divide between

“active,” western, light-skinned peoples and “passive,” eastern, dark-skinned ones (Kossy 2001: 83).

The East-West cline, unlike the North-South (white-black) one, is a cline of indigenouness, too, and here it is important to look at the role of westward migration in Theosophical racial theory and its convergence with ideologies of manifest destiny. One of the more persistent racial themes in ufology has been an interest in tribal or “primitive” peoples, especially American Indians. Indians are in a sense to white Americans what humanity in general is to the aliens (or, what I will argue is analogous, what Anglo-Saxon Americans are to more recent immigrants).

For Europeans, the American Indian became associated in folk thought with a vainglorious vigor, strength, and individualism. Indians in this folk view were portrayed—and in popular culture continue to be portrayed—as destined for defeat and eradication, despite their physical strength. Vigor and a harmonious relationship with their natural environment are contrasted with technological and organizational deficiencies that doom them to defeat. One of the most enduring images of the American Indian in popular culture is the “last of his tribe,” admirable, proud, defiant, and unbowed but doomed in the march of history. This Indian is seen as individualistic and, paradoxically, symbolic of the American ideal of liberty. In this view, his nobility is vicariously absorbed into the American sense of self even as the people themselves fade from history (Berkhofer 1978; Weatherford 1988: 117–31). But this nobility is also literally absorbed, as (again according to the national myth) scattered Native American genetic lines survive in an attenuated form in a new, mongrelized but coded-as-white majority.

This subtheme of the national myth has its blunter counterpart in New Age historiographic discourses. In addition to inventing what we recognize today as the alien conspiracy theory, George Hunt Williamson also innovated, in *Other Tongues—Other Flesh*, another trend that has become strongly associated with New Age and UFO lore: an interest in the role of the American Indian in human history and alien contact. *Other Tongues* sets out new terms for the occult approach to human history, focusing more sharply on Native Americans.

As Theosophy fragmented in the early twentieth century, meanwhile, Asiaticism was being challenged in the domain of ethnology by Benjamin Lee Whorf, an anthropologist, linguist, and Theosophist who spe-

cialized in Mesoamerican and Pueblo peoples. Whorf, addressing the matter (like Müller) at the level of grammar, argued (unlike Müller) for the particular suitability of many Amerindian languages and their concomitant cosmologies for expressing revolutionary ideas in twentieth-century physics for which “standard average European” languages were poorly equipped (1941, 1950). For Whorf, this was a scientific revolution with spiritual implications. Whorf’s romanticization of Native American languages in what was otherwise a Boasian, antievolutionist “linguistic relativity hypothesis,” dovetails with Theosophical tenets such as the inevitable waning of Anglo-Saxon domination, anticipation of the new ascendant civilization (the Sixth Root-Race), and a call for the unity of science and religion. In more private pronouncements intended for Theosophist ears only, Whorf argued that America would be the home of the Coming Race, its destiny assured by the subtle infusion of Amerindian blood into a largely European-dominated gene pool. For him this Amerindian blood derived from a proto-Mongol stock older and purer than those that remained in eastern Asia (n.d.: 569). These mongrelized descendants of the Indians “will be the future and true lords of the Western Hemisphere, as indeed the colonization by the whites was also preparatory to this destiny. It has been, in point of fact, the function of the Indian to prepare the ground of a wild continent, which never before had known the tread of man, so that it could be entered and inhabited by civilized man” (568).

This shift in occult historiography was an American innovation. Like the *Book of Mormon* a century earlier (Wauchope 1962: 50–68) or the Mu (i.e., Lemurian) historiography of James Churchward (1931; Wauchope 1962: 28–49), Williamson’s work draws the New World into a sacred Old World geography and history, while retaining a broadly Theosophical model. This recentring of world history toward the Americas was a necessary stage in the transplanting of occult racial concepts into the new American soil. This was later echoed in the resurgence of the ancient astronaut spurred by *Chariots of the Gods?* (Däniken 1969), arguably the most popular UFO book ever. An easy criticism of Däniken’s view of history is that it sees Indians as effectively extinct and looks only to their ancient monuments, not their living cultures, for evidence of a civilization “high” enough to require hypothesizing alien intervention. But in this way Amerindian archaeology becomes “our” past, the heritage of all Americans, including European Americans. This privileged role of the American Indian, among the world’s

tribal peoples, as the seeding ground for a European-based New World civilization is, then, explicitly a genetic model — metaphoric in mainstream culture but real for Whorf and white New Age and secular liberal discourses that valorize any Native American ancestry, no matter how remote (see, e.g., Deloria 1970: 1–27; Churchill 1992: 215–22; Francis 1992: 109–43; and Kehoe 1990).

This New Age racial order is at the root of the racial schema whose branches are the alien and the “oriental.” As we will see, this “occidentalism” of the noble savage complements the ignoble civilization of the aliens. But the aliens, as we will see, are an extension of an orientalism that was first extended to Eastern immigrants to the Americas.

Aliens and Immigrants

Mirroring in some ways the relationship between indigenous Indians and white settlers in American ideology is the relationship between white settlers and nonwhite or “less white” immigrants to America, including groups that had to “earn” their whiteness, such as southern Europeans, Irish, and East European Jews (Jacobson 1998). Again the relationships among ethnic groups ranged conceptually along this East-West cline have always been more shifting, more permeable, and more fraught with ambivalence (Said 1978) than has been the case with the harsh taboos against miscegenation that traditionally patrolled the black-white color line (which is essentially a North-South cline, whether Europe versus Africa or northern versus southern states). Much of this anxiety is rooted in the paradox of Anglo-Saxon anti-immigrant sentiment in a nation founded by Anglo-Saxon immigrants. These ambiguities are resolved only through a racial supremacy that transcends history and autochthony. In this, it has become expedient for Anglo-Saxon supremacism in the United States, overtly or covertly, to reproduce arguments and conceptual structures from traditional European racist anthropologies that defined Slavs, Jews, Orientals, and other structural easterners (including East Asians in the twentieth century and Arabs in the twenty-first) as simultaneously predatory and inferior Others.

A foundational narrative here is the Jewish blood libel, the belief, dating to the Middle Ages, that Jews require the blood of Christians, often babies, for nutritional or sacramental purposes (Trachtenberg 1943; Dun-

des 1991). This narrative unites two images: the predatory, conspiring Jew; and the physically weak Jew dependent on the essence of decent folk for his or her sustenance. This paradoxical combination of weakness and menace has structured anti-Semitism throughout history, up to and including the forged (but still widely circulated) nineteenth-century *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and the Ariosophy of the Nazi era. The operative idea is that, individually and physiologically, Jews are weak, but they are a threat through their shrewdness and intelligence and their capacity for clandestine collective strategies. This idea, along with the vivid imagery of cannibalism or blood drinking, reverberates in other European folk beliefs as well and frequently converges with a class dimension. The emperor Constantine was rumored to require the blood of peasants for his nutritive therapeutic baths, it was no accident that the gaunt but nonetheless deadly Count Dracula was an eastern European aristocrat, and socialist rhetoric in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries drew heavily on the metaphor of the bloodsucking capitalist.³

These themes from anti-Semitism and its allied folk imagery have their echoes in official U.S. racial ideology. The intersection of anti-immigrant legislation and eugenics in the early twentieth century led, for example, to the identification of Jews as an oriental race whose physical deficiencies threatened to contaminate the Anglo-Saxon gene pool. Short stature, a compromised lung capacity, and other maladaptive effects of interbreeding or of breeding with other Asiatic groups were cited in defense of anti-immigrant policies and legislation. As one historian of this line of thinking points out, “Interestingly, this image of the Jews as small and physically weak, averse to labor and ‘sensitive to pain,’ was the opposite of the racial image of the American Negro, who was represented as oversized, frighteningly strong, given over only to physical activities, and immune to pain” (Hart 2002: 117). In this anti-immigrant rhetoric, the Jewish threat was thought to be inadvertent, unlike the plots for world conquest outlined in the *Protocols*, but physical weakness contrasts with the hardiness of “our pioneer breed” (and with the robust, individualistic Indians the pioneers succeeded).

Physically smaller than European Americans, East Asians, too, whether as immigrants or military adversaries, became associated with weakness, passivity, and a submergence of individuality in the service of a collective ideology that itself constituted the threat — a tendency associated with

Confucianism, with Japanese honor and the blindly loyal kamikaze pilot, and then with communism and a manufacturing sector based on fascist-style corporate loyalty. Popular imagery of inscrutability, unthinking devotion, and bloodlust dominated anti-Japanese propaganda in the 1940s. In the late twentieth century, the Oriental came also to be associated with technological wizardry, in this case as an economic threat. Arguably, East Asians for Americans fill the role Jews have traditionally had in Europe — economically successful Orientals suspected of being in league with shadowy, foreign, global agendas. In the twentieth century, fears of Japanese and then communist fifth columns in the United States led to popular stereotypes of short, foreign, emotionless Others as merciless, conspiratorial, and beholden to collectivism and authoritarianism — the very opposite of the free, individualistic American Indian and, by extension, of what European Americans see themselves as having become.

As in much anti-immigrant rhetoric, it is significant that the immigrant's homeland be seen as inhospitable, hence the reason for emigrating. This sets up a contrast between an overfarmed, overcrowded, used-up "old country" — often with a dysfunctional or stifling political life — on the one hand and, on the other, the unspoiled wide-open spaces and rich soil of America. One need only think of the Founding Fathers' sense of the decadent European aristocracy or the whole notion of the refugee, either economic or political. Here the East-West landscape itself maps a distinction between health and frailty that is also inscribed on racialized bodies.

Surely, Greys are not always metaphoric Orientals, either East Asian or Jewish, though it is hard to ignore the convergence in abduction reports with stereotypical East Asian physiognomic and characterological stereotypes. Betty Andreasson described one of her abductors as Chinese looking (Fowler 1990: 304), and the Hills, as we have seen, also compared their abductors to East Asians. Lyssa Royal, a channeller who works with abductees, is perhaps atypical in her (in its way Blavatskian) assertion that the extraterrestrials who originally seeded the Earth and manipulated human genetic history created "the Asian races on Earth" to give humans an evolutionary jump start. She writes, "If you look at the characteristics of the Asian races, you will find that there is a smaller amount of diversity. The concentration on individuality is not there. . . . [A] person . . . can be sacrificed for the good of the whole. . . . These [are] the key elements needed to bring about the probable reality on Earth that was desired" (Royal and

Priest 1992: 132–33). Nonetheless, such a view picks up not only on racist stereotypes at large in American popular culture but on currents of ufological thought as well. The abduction mythos, like Shaver's and Williamson's writings before it, extends the structure of this orientalist logic — of the physically weak, shrewd, elite outsider whose threat stems from a need to prey on his or her physical and moral superiors through conspiratorial behavior and technological advantage.

Science Fiction: Weak Bodies and Dying Planets

These themes can be found in *The War of the Worlds* as well as 1930s and 1940s comics. Flash Gordon, the original comic-strip space-adventure hero, was in constant conflict with Ming the Merciless, an explicitly Chinese Genghis Khan figure who ruled the planet Mongo (as in Mongol). The sprawling Flash Gordon narrative openly invokes anti-immigrant feeling, beginning with Flash crash-landing on Mongo after an attempt to use his ship to divert it from a collision course with Earth. As one scholar of "yellow peril" imagery writes, the evil races on Mongo "were but mere ripples, chain reactions from a cancerous core, which was inhabited solely by Chinese, or rather, constructs allegedly Chinese" (Ma 2000: 7; see also Wu 1982; and Marchetti 1993). Ming anticipates many attributes of the abducting Greys: cold, lithe, feline, implacable, inscrutable, and in control of vast technologies, in contrast to the blond, good-humored Flash Gordon, who operated mostly as a resourceful swashbuckler (Ma 2000: 9–10). If we try to trace other sources of the spindly Greys in popular imagery, we can look to film footage from the Nazi death camps of masses of emotionally numb, impossibly thin, large-headed, hollow-eyed, balding figures whose physical helplessness contrasts sharply with claims that these poor wretches had been bent on world domination. For 1940s America, such objects of pity were also an immigrant tide. Like the aliens, they come from a doomed world to ours and are threatening precisely through their weakness and need.

Kottmeyer (1990) has marshaled significant evidence against Budd Hopkins's claim (1987: 192), shared by many who believe in the reality of alien abductions, that abduction reports are convincing because they are unlike anything in mainstream science fiction and therefore cannot be attributed to its influence. Kottmeyer writes, in fact, "I ask, is there anything about

UFO aliens that does not resemble science fiction?" (1990). He argues in particular for the likely influence on Betty and Barney Hill not only of Keyhoe's *Flying Saucer Conspiracy* (1955), which Betty read before the emergence of the full details of the abduction, but of abduction-type scenes in the 1953 film *Invaders from Mars*. Also, a bald, noseless, earless, large-headed extraterrestrial with wraparound eyes was featured in an episode of the science-fiction television series *The Outer Limits* that aired twelve days before the February 22, 1964, hypnosis session in which Barney described and sketched his now famous alien image (Kottmeyer 1990). In turn, as has often been pointed out, the abduction of Travis Walton was reported in 1975 just two weeks after the airing of an NBC television movie based on *The Interrupted Journey* starring Estelle Parsons and James Earl Jones as Betty and Barney (Klass 1989: 25–26).

But Kottmeyer (1990) joins other historians of science fiction in gravitating toward *The War of the Worlds* ([1898] 1983) as a foundational text for how our culture thinks about the possibility of extraterrestrial life, in a way that has permeated all popular-culture representations of the alien. Of all Wells's imaginative works, most of them steeped in Victorian assumptions, only this one has left a lasting impression on American popular culture; indeed, it launched the entire alien invasion motif in mass culture and was popular in the United States long before Orson Welles's 1938 "panic broadcast." Those who—like Hopkins, apparently—have not reread it recently might misremember it as being more of the "monster that ate Cleveland" variety than anything reported by modern abductees. But a close reading of *The War of the Worlds* reveals shared themes.

The novel recounts the landing and devastating attacks of Martian invaders in England until they are halted by a susceptibility to bacteria to which humans have developed immunity. Like the vampire or the imagined medieval Jew, the Martians' doomed plans are motivated entirely by a need for human flesh.

Strange as it may seem to a human being, all the complex apparatus of digestion, which makes up the bulk of our bodies, did not exist in the Martians. They were heads—merely heads. Entrails they had none. They did not eat, much less digest. Instead, they took the fresh, living blood of other creatures, and injected it into their own veins. . . . Blood obtained from a still living animal, in most cases from a human being, was run directly by means of a little pipette into the recipient canal. (Wells [1898] 1983: 132–33)

The Martians, then, are in search of alternative nutrients, apparently responding to a food crisis on their home planet. The narrator describes what can be ascertained about the Martian food chain.

Their undeniable preference for men as their source of nourishment is partly explained by the nature of the remains of the victims they had brought with them as provisions from Mars. These creatures, to judge from the shrivelled remains that have fallen into human hands, were bipeds with flimsy, silicious skeletons (almost like those of the silicious sponges) and feeble musculature, standing about six feet high. (Wells [1898] 1983: 134)

In fact, this spongy livestock resembles the Greys of late-twentieth-century abduction reports more closely than the Martian invaders themselves do. But in the invaders we can also see the origins of some themes in descriptions of the Greys. Physiologically, there is the enlarged head and eyes and vestigial nose, ears, hair, and trunk, and the invaders, too, are emotionless and androgynous (134).

Although the Martian invaders are hardly aristocratic in their bearing, Wells portrays them as possessing a technologically and intellectually superior civilization. For a scientifically minded writer such as Wells, who studied under the Victorian evolutionist Thomas Henry Huxley, this is also expressed biologically. The narrator of *The War of the Worlds* remarks, in the midst of his description of the Martian anatomy, that

a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute, writing long before the Martian invasion, did forecast for man a final structure not unlike the actual Martian condition. His prophecy, I remember, appeared in November or December, 1893, in a long-defunct publication, the *Pall Mall Budget*, and I recall a caricature of it in a pre-Martian periodical called *Punch*. He pointed out—writing in a foolish, facetious tone—that the perfection of mechanical appliances must ultimately supersede limbs; the perfection of chemical devices, digestion; that such organs as hair, external nose, teeth, ears, and chin were no longer essential parts of the human being, and that the tendency of natural selection would lie in the direction of their steady diminution through the coming ages. The brain alone remained a cardinal necessity. Only one other part of the body had a strong case for survival, and that was the hand, the "teacher and agent of the brain." While the rest of the body dwindled, the hands would grow larger. (Wells [1898] 1983: 135)

The narrator's memory for publication dates is so precise because this is in fact Wells's tongue-in-cheek reference to his own anonymous composition, "The Man of the Year Million" (Anonymous 1893; see also *Punch* 1893). There Wells describes a future human strikingly like a Grey:

Eyes large, lustrous, beautiful, soulful; above them, no longer separated by rugged brow ridges, is the top of the head, a glistening, hairless dome, terete and beautiful; no craggy nose rises to disturb by its unmeaning shadows the symmetry of that calm face, no vestigial ears project; the mouth is a small, perfectly round aperture, toothless and gumless, jawless, unanimal, no futile emotions disturbing its roundness as it lies, like the harvest moon or the evening star in the wide firmament of the face. (Anonymous 1893: 1797)

As for character, "emotion" will "fall within the scheme of reason" (1797) in this far future.

The notion that aliens might be some future version of ourselves has persisted in American science fiction and ufology. Betty Hill herself, although she rejects most of what is now being presented as the standard abduction scenario, has in recent years taken to the *Homo futuris* theme in describing her abductors.⁴ In a memoir, she writes about returning to school to study archaeology and physical anthropology, relating how she asked the instructor to "evaluate" a bust that had been made from her and Barney's descriptions of her abductors, whom she now calls "the astronauts," "for I thought it might be 'future man'" (Hill 1995: 96). The instructor

asked if he could keep it for a few more days, as he wanted other physical anthropologists to study it. When he returned it, he said they agreed this was "future man." We would look like this in about 25,000 years if we continue along the paths of evolution as we have been in the past. He was puzzled. This was my first semester in physical anthropology, so he wondered how I was able to do this. I told him it was not knowledge, for I had met him — future man." (96)

Hill is here picking up a line of thinking on evolution and extraterrestrials that can be traced to Wells's Huxleyan prophecy. The physiognomic aspects of Wells's view of future human evolution — bald, scrawny, with large heads and vestigial lower facial features and depleted lust and emotion — have been strikingly stable in popular-scientific writings in the intervening century (see, e.g., Wolstenholme 1963). The notion that Greys' bodies mark the future path of human evolution is echoed by numerous UFO

writers, including Strieber, who suggests, among countless other hypotheses he agnostically pitches his readers, that aliens might be evolved beings visiting from Earth's future as time travelers (1987: 223–24). The French ufologist Aimé Michel, writing in 1969 before the explosion of reports of Grey abductors, notes that some of the early "little man" sightings

usually fit in with the idea of an interpolation, in the future, of the past evolution of mankind (intensified cephalization, i.e. growth of the size of the head; regression of the vegetative organs, i.e. jaw, mouth, nose, and so on). In other words, just as though a biological and genetic technique had "done a job" on human nature in the very simplest manner, contenting itself with "stepping up the performance" in those features peculiar to it (which are linked to the use of the brain), and artificially accelerating the natural rate of evolution of mankind." (251)

Berlitz and Moore, writing about the Roswell aliens, concur: "the features of head enlargement, hairlessness, muscle deterioration, elongation of arms, loss of height, etc., might be said to be a perceptive guess of how we will look in the far future, the point from which the 'aliens' may conceivably have come" (1980: 114; see also Davenport 1994).

Wells's narrative, like his earlier novel, *The Time Machine*, prompts a resolution of a British class struggle, in this case with clean, healthy, scientifically minded working-class people set to triumph over a spoiled, soft, decadent upper class in an imminent struggle for survival under Martian domination (Wells 1898] 1983: 163–67). Analogous themes in American science fiction and ufology have, not surprisingly, a more racialized cast. Wells's contrast between two types of bodily vigor — the fattened, "beautiful" food herd that the upper classes will become and the lean, strong, "clean" working classes capable of decisive action — have an analogy closer to our purposes in the relation between humanity in general and the Martian invaders or between indigenous savages and European colonists. The Martians at first seem to be in some sense like the ideal survivor of their invasion: proactive, technologically proficient, unwilling to be cowed. But in the end the Martians turn out to be fatally weak: pampered by the sterile Martian atmosphere, they eventually succumb to microscopic germs to which warmer and more earthy indigenous humans are immune; they are "slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria" (Wells 1898] 1983: 177), in particular those thriving on the very corpses of their human victims. But

despite the failure of the Martian conquest, we are left with the impression that a newly invigorated humanity can somehow emerge from the rubble, just as, as Whorf would say, a “new American” is felt to have emerged from the bloodiness of the Indian wars, combining the best elements of both.

Hybrid Vigor

We now turn to the theme of the emergence of a new humanity from the effects of an encounter with an invader. Just as racial concepts are often revealed in the question of interbreeding, and racial tensions and anxieties are sharpened, in the same way the question of the supposed alien hybridization program brings into focus many of the nascent anthropological themes in the abduction scenario. The effect of alien contact on the future of humanity has been an undercurrent in ufology from the beginning, but it reached its clearest articulation in the closing years of the twentieth century. The idea, from Blavatsky, that Venusians jump-started human evolution echoes throughout the ancient astronaut literature and has served as a kind of eugenic charter, both for the explicitly ideological contactee reports and, more subtly and indirectly, for the less ideologically explicit sighting and abductee reports. But abductee reports began to acquire a political flavor by necessity as the alien breeding program that emerged in the writings of abduction researchers began to emerge as a detailed scenario with implications for human destiny. Many abductees have told me that they cannot explain or defend the racial or political implications of the breeding program, and in some cases the eugenic and racist implications troubled their more or less politically liberal consciences; they tell me they can only describe what they have seen.

Budd Hopkins, an abstract painter from New York City, began to track patterns in different abduction accounts in the 1970s (Hopkins 1981) and in 1987 published *Intruders*, which describes an Indiana family's repeated alien abductions through the generations. His primary abductee and witness, “Kathie Davis” — who later published her own account under her real name, Debbie Jordan (Jordan and Mitchell 1994) — brought the possibilities raised by Hill's pregnancy test to their logical conclusion: Jordan had been impregnated by alien abductors, followed by the removal of a hybrid fetus. This rapidly became a standard element of the abduction scenario

and dominated the sequels (e.g., Fowler 1990) to *The Andreasson Affair*, which dwelled more and more on outer-space nurseries full of languishing hybrid babies and fetuses floating in liquid.

Although females' narratives, and themes of nurturing and loss, dominate abductee discourse, human men, too, are involved in the breeding program. One abductee, Bruce Smith, had a series of dreamlike coerced sexual encounters with Grey-type aliens — experiences that made sense to him only after attending a lecture by Hopkins. What followed for him was the mixture of anger at the aliens and parental pride and affection that many abductees report. Smith also began to be abducted into nurseries on board spaceships, where he was urged to interact with his hybrid brood in “dance/movement therapy sessions” as a way of providing bonding experiences of which the full-blooded aliens are incapable. The aliens indicated to Smith that millions of such children were being bred, adding, “The hybrid kids are going to populate . . . the earth directly sometime between the year 2020 and 2030. By then the earth will be a much different place. These hybrid kids are being prepared to live in that new environment and with the new spiritual frequency that the earth will vibrate in.” “You,” the aliens told Smith, “will be an elder to the new ones of ours on earth. . . . You will be the bridge from the old to the new; from the old planet to the new; old *Homo sapiens* to the new gene pool. You know so well the ocean of emotions your people have. . . . You can help them adjust, understand, accept and integrate; help them make the transition” (Smith 1990: 15; cf. Commander x 1994: 38–45). To hear Smith, like others, describe it, the Greys prey on his human, emotive capacities and his “seed” in much the same way that Wells's Martians ingested human flesh. For Smith, who gradually became impotent with everyone except his Grey paramours, “this idea of losing my sexual energy really weighed on my mind. Were the greys storing it up for the kids? Was passion needed besides sperm to make a baby? Maybe the greys drank my passion like an elixir. Maybe I was just a tasty bit of ‘soul food?’” (16).

Researchers and abductees are divided over how to view the breeding program. Hopkins, for one, openly struggles to interpret the experiences positively: abductees, for him, “are, in every sense of the word, victims. And yet, unmasked, they are also pioneers” (1987: 202). David Jacobs, a Temple University historian who followed Hopkins to become a leading figure in

the abduction investigation field, sees the alien agenda as more menacing. The hybrids and aliens, he fears, will "integrate into human society and assume control" of the earth (1998: 25).

John Mack, a Harvard psychologist who in the 1990s rapidly ascended to the pinnacle of the degree-revering ufological community, even as his credibility was attacked within Harvard's halls, takes a more holistic and metaphysical approach. He notes the striking convergence of details in abductees' reports of how the breeding program operates but balances this with an acknowledgment (rare in ufology) of the complete lack of corroborating physical evidence. For him, this demonstrates that the phenomenon of abduction reports is operating on a nonphysical plane, one not subject to positivist materialist epistemology. Ultimately, for Mack the breeding program and the birth of a new species are metaphors for an ongoing and necessary expansion in human consciousness—which may or may not involve literal extraterrestrial visitors (1994, 1999). This minority viewpoint within ufology is shared at times by the shifting views of the agnostic Strieber. It is certainly supported by what biologists tell us, that interbreeding between species from different planets—even between related species adapted to different planets—is an absurdity (see Swords 1991). So, too, is the idea that a civilization capable of interstellar travel would rely on *in vivo* fertilization and gestation instead of genetic engineering. But abductees themselves know only what they have seen and usually find antipositivist perspectives such as Mack's unsatisfying. Even Mack acknowledges that the breeding program is as "literal and concrete" (1994: 395) for his own abductee clients as it is for Hopkins's, Jacobs's, or anyone's.

Most abductees are closer to Jacobs, seeing the hybrid program as part of a series of coming changes on the planet that involve evolution, environmental collapse, and some reordering of the global social order. Mack's abductee clients (1994: 414–17) provide us with some of the most orderly interpretations of the data. Like Wells's Martians, Greys tend in this view to come from a doomed world. Mack's client "Scott" reports that the aliens were from a planet that "was yellow, mostly desert, and lacking water. Once there had been trees and water, but something . . . 'went wrong' and [the aliens] 'went underground.'" They now live in an "artificial environment" on their home planet. Analogous changes are in store for Earth: "The aliens will only come 'when it's safer,'" Scott tells Mack. "But that will not occur until there are 'less and less' of us as we die off from disease,

especially more communicable forms of AIDS that will reach plague proportions" (104).

"Joe," an abductee and himself a psychotherapist, tells Mack that the alien hybrid program and genetic engineering are "'necessary' so that 'humans aren't lost in their race and their seed and their knowledge,' for 'human beings are in trouble. . . . A storm is brewing,' an 'electromagnetic catastrophe resulting from the 'negative' technology human beings have created." He tells Mack that the purpose of the interbreeding is "evolutionary, to perpetuate the human seed and 'crossbreed' with other species on the ships and elsewhere in the cosmos" (186).

Andreasson, who tells us less about the aliens' world and regards them more as angelic helpers, nonetheless tells a similar story. She says it is not just a human genetic program; like Noah's, it involves all species, so that they can survive some form of mass destruction (Fowler 1990: 119, 201–3), as well as escalating infertility (213). The human-alien hybrid species, she suggests, will have a better balance of intellect, which humans tragically misuse, and emotion, which aliens mostly lack (19). Andreasson sees herself as part of a cohort the aliens chose for this program in the early 1940s: "Those who were contacted would be used in some way in the future to help people understand that the aliens were doing something beneficial for mankind and to help people not to be afraid of the coming of the aliens" (329).

Fowler, in interpreting Andreasson's experiences, builds directly on the Wellisian theories of Michael Swords, a university biologist with an interest in ufology. Swords suggests that the aliens represent a future course of evolution, including bodily features suggesting mechanization of reproduction and an artificial environment (1985: 8). These features, Fowler (1990: 224–26) and Swords both point out, are in fact neotenic. Fowler goes so far as to say that the aliens look specifically and significantly like fetuses (xxii, 213, 220, 223). In particular, the aliens look like larger versions of the hybrid fetuses in the incubators seen on board their spaceships, just as Andreasson described a vivid encounter, in a spaceship's "vivarium," with baby hybrids who were essentially greatly downsized Greys (104–6). For one thing, pedomorphism and neoteny reinforce the image of the alien as lustless but physically needy in other ways, as weak and dependent, selfish, and coming from a controlled environment (the womb) that spoiled and softened them. Mack writes, pointedly, that, although the purpose of the

hybridization program seems to be hybrid vigor, "Vigor" seems a strange word in this context when one thinks of the listless hybrid children that have been described by so many abductees aboard the ships" (1994: 199).

Hybrid Programs and Contemporary Races

Fowler uses these thoughts as a jumping-off point for ruminations that, intentionally or not, sound straight out of Blavatsky. He writes that the aliens claim to "have coexisted with Man from his very beginning" and may share with us a common genetic ancestor, who

may be traced to a highly advanced race of extraterrestrial beings who discovered our solar system millions of years ago. In the course of their scientific activities on this planet, they may have genetically altered one of earth's primates to make it in their own image. This would explain the amazing similarities between fetal apes and fetal man. . . . Have we any clues as to who these ancestors might be? Yes. Evidence indicates that mankind's heredity may be related to the tall, blue-eyed, blond, robed entities seen by Betty and others. It is apparent that whoever they are, the small fetus-looking Watchers are subservient to them. (1990: 227-28)

In sum, the progression of logic runs roughly as follows. Aliens are currently abducting humans and interbreeding with them, as evidenced by abduction reports. This interbreeding program seems to be multigenerational, and it is unclear when it began. Therefore, one can guess that it might be a permanent part of human genetic history and that humans themselves might originally have been the product of this interbreeding. (Once this conclusion is reached, a whole literature from Blavatsky to Zechariah Sitchin is immediately made comprehensible and relevant.) Human physical variation, then, like all facts about human physiology, must be the product of this alien interbreeding. Finally, it can then be assumed that some human ethnic groups are more purely alien in their ancestry than others and that different groups might be traceable to different alien groups. Once one has accepted the American cultural concept of race, the racial order becomes, for a UFO believer following this logic, a reflection of a cosmic hierarchy. The millennial themes so common in the abduction scenario, involving environmental and other cataclysms that the aliens can foresee and that justify the hybridization program, inevitably

begin to take on racial themes. Who will be saved? And, if it is the hybridized human families that will be saved—the abductee families—who, exactly, are they?

Despite common claims by abduction researchers hankering for legitimacy to the effect that abductees come from "all walks of life," it is abundantly clear both anecdotally and in the opinions of many abduction researchers I have interviewed that, although there have been, for example, a few prominent African American contactees, the abductee population is overwhelmingly white. Barney Hill stands almost alone. Investigators tend to try to account for this as a problem of reporting, which can be attributed to cultural and social factors. Whatever the reason, the fact remains.

Although it is a topic most researchers avoid, several abductees have told me that they were told or feel that the dearth of nonwhite abductees is no accident. One told me that, although she has encountered African American abductees on board ships during abductions, she has gleaned from her interactions with aliens that the coming winnowing of humanity will deplete the nonwhite populations of the earth most heavily. Another abductee, one with a leftist, countercultural orientation, told me that he has come to feel that the reason blacks are abducted less frequently is because the aliens are less able to "deal with" the bodily, physical—as opposed to cerebral or spiritual—predisposition of black people. Donna Bassett, the journalist who infiltrated John Mack's abductee support group for *Time* magazine (Willwerth 1994) and subsequently led an investigation of Mack, told me in 1994 that Mack's circle of abductees was also foretelling the decimation of nonwhite races. Abductees have expressed to me sadness and anger over this scenario, but, once they have interpreted their own experiences in a certain way, the conclusions seem for them inevitable.

Here, of course, there are strong parallels with scenarios for the emergence of the Sixth Root-Race in early-twentieth-century Theosophist writings (Besant 1910; Besant and Leadbeater 1947), which also suggest that natural disasters will wipe out portions of humanity, followed by the emergence of a future race from the remaining, largely white, mostly American population. With the Theosophists, too, divinely ordained racial functions sit awkwardly alongside sincerely held egalitarian and antiracist views. The submergence and disappearance of races whose time has passed are simply part of the natural order of things.

In ufological discourse, however, these racial themes, which most ab-

ductees and researchers struggle to repress, sometimes do erupt in fully formed racist ideologies, as is the case with Robert Girard, whose self-published book *Futureman: A Synthesis of Missing Links, the Human Infestation of Earth, and the Alien Abduction Epidemic* (1993) does not flinch from racist conclusions. He follows the ancient astronaut view of human evolution, including his own theory that the black, red, and yellow races represent earlier, imperfect attempts by aliens at genetic engineering, while the white race ("Self-Aware" man) represents a spiritually superior product of the alien-bred Cro-Magnon lineage destined to rule the other races. Alien abductions, he claims, are recent and part of a fresh attempt to preserve these superior genetic strains when the great mass of overbreeding brown-skinned humanity is exterminated in the near future (1993; Kossy 2001: 38-40). Girard, who is also a prominent UFO bookseller, veered from his usual titles by offering the controversial racist, pseudo-scientific best-seller *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein and Murray 1994) in his Christmas 1994 catalogue, adding in a capsule review that the book

will provide information to anyone reading or contemplating the ideas expressed in . . . *Futureman*. Whether you want it, like it or believe in it or not . . . the only (and last) workable solution to catastrophic overpopulation will be the outright extermination of vast numbers of humans who are incapable of making any meaningful contribution to that civilization. These number well into the billions among us now: humans who have absolutely no purpose or justification for being here. . . . Given the enormity of the crisis facing our species, and by extension, all of earth's living species, there must someday come the deliberate elimination of (hopefully) the vast majority of humans now living. (Arcturus

Books 1994: 3)

Most UFO believers have no sympathy with such a view, but Girard's genocidal rage is in one sense only a logical progression from the millennial visions many abductees are reporting and the fact that those who claim they are part of the breeding project are almost all white Americans.

Hybrids as an Ethnic Group

Another logical evolution from the abduction scenario has emerged only within the past decade. Although Williamson and Adamski discussed the presence of aliens among us, it is only since the early 1990s that there

has been a strong movement of people from abductee families claiming alien or hybrid identity for themselves. This emerged slowly at first, with Hopkins and Jacobs reporting that some of their clients were wondering if some of their own, Earth-dwelling, human-looking children might not be alien hybrids, just as their half siblings in orbiting hatcheries were (Hopkins 1987: 283; Jacobs 1992: 153-86; Jacobs 1998: 70). The prolific New Age pulp writer Brad Steiger coauthored a series of books beginning in the 1980s (B. Steiger and F. Steiger 1981; B. Steiger and S. Steiger 1992; see also Mandelker 1995) alerting humanity to the emerging presence of these "star people" or "star children," all with heavy religious overtones. One chapter, "Rearing the Star Child," gives advice to parents such as "I have found that star-shaped, luminous decals are excellent for decorating a child's ceiling" (B. Steiger and S. Steiger 1992: 163). Steiger also presents a "Starbirth Questionnaire" as an aid to determining if the reader is a star child. The long list of telltale symptoms includes sinusitis, imaginary childhood friends, seeing "a bright light even when your eyes are closed," painful joints, "a more than normal attraction . . . to the name Leah or Lia," and a feeling that "your father and mother were not your true parents" (B. Steiger and F. Steiger 1981: 46-47). Dual human and alien identity is also a strong theme among Mack's clients (Mack 1994, 1999), many of whom are self-identified aliens or hybrids, and Mack, like the Steigers, painstakingly refuses to distinguish between reincarnation and interbreeding, physical and spiritual reality, and the metaphoric and the real.

The social function of alien self-identification is structured similarly to the phenomenon of reincarnation beliefs in mainstream U.S. society: in contrast to societies with long-standing reincarnation traditions such as, for example, some indigenous North American groups, middle-class Americans can reincarnation beliefs usually serve to set the believer apart from his or her community and kinship network rather than weaving him or her into it more firmly (Harkin 1994: 194-95). Middle-class reincarnation is almost never within the family and tends to be expressed in past-life memories focusing on romanticized ancient civilizations such as pharaonic Egypt or classical Greece, out of all proportion to the statistical representation of those societies in the accumulated human population. Mack's clients who report past-life memories fall into this pattern as well (Mack 1994). In a sense, being the reincarnation of an alien is a further extension of this radical-individualist trend.

But inevitably alien self-identification adopted the modern American discourses of identity politics and minority rights. The first issue of *Other Wise*, an Olympia, Washington, zine devoted to alien-identified families, describes the childhood of its editor, who was “mostly a normal kid—except for one thing. Tucker had a Secret that she was hiding behind her pigtailed and skinned knees. . . . Lots of nights Tucker went to bed scared and had nightmares about people learning her Secret and not liking her anymore because of it.”

We can see in this growing movement a co-optation of most of the themes in minority politics discourses, such as negative media imagery that encourages prejudice against “real aliens, not the tentacled monstrosities from movie studios” (Estron 1996: 5). There is even an organization called ETADO, the Extra-Terrestrial Anti-Defamation Organization (Alexander 1997). A book called *E.T. 101* (Iho 1990) counsels those coming to terms with their alien identity. Other publications use the jargons of abuse survivors, parents of special needs children, and homosexual outing. Just as the abductee Leah Haley’s children’s book *Ceto’s New Friends* (1994) introduces children to alien visitation (much as *Adoption Is Forever* and *Heather Has Two Mommies* counter for children the stigma of other unconventional families), in the same way a page from *Other Wise* no. 3 urges parents of hybrid children to “be honest with them about their heritage” and tells us, “Hybrid kids are fun, but challenging. Some of the challenges can be: strange sleep-wake cycles (corresponding to day length on another planet), weird taste in foods, and something called ‘hybrid vigor,’ which translates to ‘very busy, into-everything kid.’” (As with Steiger’s questionnaire, one is reminded here of quizzes designed to alert parents to their teenagers’ drug use, which merely list symptoms of adolescence.)

Inevitably, if unintentionally of course, this is partly an acquisition by “unmarked,” nonethnic, mainstream Americans of the moral authority of an oppressed minority. I have been told repeatedly that abductees are likely to have Native American or “Celtic” ancestry—that is, whites with these ancestries. *Celtic*, of course, is not an ethnonym used in Irish American communities, while abductees of Native American ancestry almost never have enough of it to be involved with Native American communities or to experience racism as a visible minority. Being an abductee or hybrid is one of the few ways an American WASP can be ethnic.

Conclusion

Since the UFO movement can be expected to continue to shift and innovate as rapidly as it has done in the past, one cannot predict the future course of the alien self-identification movement. Certainly, it bears this resemblance to earlier phases in the history of ufology as anthropology: like Blavatsky’s theory of evolutionary meddling from Venus, like the Aryan space brothers of the 1950s, and like the complex image of the Greys, the belief in new aliens among us is an attempt to weave contemporary ethnoscapes into a divine plan that is explicitly hierarchical.

An occasional hope expressed by UFO enthusiasts is that encounters with extraterrestrial intelligence will somehow act as a catalyst that will lead to world peace or the bridging of differences among human groups. (The dark side of this is the common conspiracy theory that, for example, a faked alien invasion by global elites will be used as the excuse to impose a monolithic New World Order on humanity; see, e.g., Hayakawa 1993.) But, as we have seen, differences, the very idea of ethnicity and race, are part of American cultural conceptions of what it is to be human. Insofar as aliens are incorporated into preconceived notions of humanity, they will be accommodated as a part of—not a transcendence of—existing evolutionary, racial, and ethnic dimensions on which our conceptions of human diversity are already arranged. This is what gives us George Hunt Williamson projecting anti-Semitic fears onto an alien infiltration of our social institutions; Betty and Barney Hill abducted and probed by “men” who morph from Irishmen to Chinese to specimens from an ethnological slide show; thousands of white middle-class Americans reporting that they have been kidnapped and raped by high evolutionaries trying to save their race and ours simultaneously; nightmare fantasies of genocide, for which we can blame the aliens, not whites; and a growing number of abductees and their children believing that they themselves are downtrodden immigrants, adding grey or green to the palette of white, brown, red, black, and yellow Americans.

I have tried to leave aside here the question of what, if anything, abductees and contactees are really experiencing, which may or may not be a phenomenon better categorized as neurological, spiritual, or something else. But the narratives and imagery they employ are immediately woven

into an existing coherent and evolving folk anthropology that is already structuring most thinking about race and difference, a folk anthropology that dips into and out of academic anthropology at surprising junctures. Academic anthropologists, after all, have (for good scientific and political reasons) stopped making pronouncements on racial difference, but, since most Americans "know" that race is real and must mean something, someone has to be providing some answers.

Notes

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1. There is a strong strain of anti-Semitic conspiracy theorizing that makes ufological connections, including especially the work of Milton William Cooper (1991) and David Icke (e.g., 1997). Both are controversial but still well known in both right-wing conspiracist and ufological subcultures. These themes also converge in the literature of the Nation of Islam, which one could characterize as an anti-Semitic sect headed by a UFO contactee (Kossy 2001: 101-15).

2. At no point, however, have any significant number of UFO enthusiasts, investigators, believers, or even abductees had anything to do with UFO "cults" such as the Laughheads (Festing et al. 1956), Bo and Peep (A.K.A., Total Overcomers, A.K.A., Heaven's Gate), or the Raëlians, despite such groups' high media profile and their attraction to sociologists and scholars of religion (see, e.g., Lewis 1995).

3. My thanks go to the late Valerio Valeri for pointing out some of these connections.

4. She has gone so far as to say that abductions have nothing to do with reproduction, that the vast majority of reports are psychological in origin, and that "no one has been abducted more than once" (Hill 1993).