

## Reply to Joan Seager

Regarding Joan Seager's statements on "UFO Abductions and Race Fear" [BAE 5.4]:

Ms. Seager, I'm afraid, draws upon a colloquialism with which I am unfamiliar. This may be generational, but as a GenXer, I'm afraid I do not know what a "bee-in-the-bonnet piece" is. I do make apologies if she found it overtly lengthy, but I prefer depth of exposition to quick "sound bites." Nonetheless, she does state that I make some dubious assertions.

She goes on to point out that UFOs are sighted with as much frequency in Brazil and Mexico, which are "unwaspish"

places, as in the U.S. I don't doubt it for a minute! In my article, I was addressing UFO *abductions* — the nominal subject of the journal — and not UFO sightings in general; and in specific I was pointing to a certain type of *interpretation* of abductions which is prevalent in the countries which I mentioned. I did not mean to suggest that abduction incidents or UFO sightings were less prevalent outside those countries — only that in those countries a certain type of interpretation (or belief system) with regard to explaining abductions is gaining ground.

Steve Mizrach

## More On John Mack's Abduction

"DO ALIENS EXIST?" This is a standard question for abduction books, but it is not the question addressed by John Mack in his book *Abduction*. He considers a question with more far-reaching consequences "WHAT IF ALIENS EXIST?" The answers he gets from speaking with a number of experiencers is a positive, energetic portrayal of hope, spiritually fulfilling goals, and an indication that the individual and his or her choices may matter in the grand scheme.

John has been much faulted for not being more scientific in his book, but many of his extraordinary findings are not easily studied. A first step in scientific verification is to note that others independently and prior to John's book have made similar observations. Joe Nyman also notices that some experiencers feel that they were once aliens. Leo Sprinkle, Gilda Moura and Maralyn Teare note that the experiences seem to be designed for the experiencer's growth or enlightenment. Substantiating this further requires other therapists and investigators to look for evidence of these claims among their experiencers. It is not scientific to claim these things don't exist without looking for them. If or when others find it, hopefully some clever psychological researcher will figure out how to do a critical experiment. We are not at that stage yet. John and others are still at the beginning of these studies.

To complicate matters further, the topic of abductions does not neatly fit into what is "scientific," but strays into philosophy and realms of the spirit, even the goal or meaning of life. John can hardly be faulted for following his subject wherever it leads, and where it is appropriate to speak as a philosopher rather than a psychiatrist. Experiencers who have never heard of John Mack, speak of striving for balance or harmony with our planet and one another, of creating beauty and seeking peace. They feel called to be healers, ecologists, helpers and they become frustrated when their contributions, which seem so manifestly important and needed, are declared fringy and New Age. Science, which could be their ally in making vital contributions to the health and welfare of the people of the world, becomes perverted when it is used so unthinkingly to discredit them and discard their values. It is important to note that science does *not* and cannot make values and the goals which come from them. But as John Mack notes science makes conditions for what is believed and Western

science is built on dualism and materialism. As well as taking Dr Mack to task, critics should join him in discussing whether these percepts are really taking us where we want to go.

To me no review of an abduction book is adequate without taking into consideration the observations of those people who think they may have experienced the phenomena. Not being an experiencer myself I've spoken to many experiencers, and potential experiencers about *Abduction*. So far the most positive ratings have come from potential experiencers, people who are considering exploring their experiences. The confirmed experiencers say that there is a lot of doubt, indecision and confusion which also comes from exploring memories. The meaning is not so clear as John's book indicates it is with the experiencers he sees. I hope that experiencers will discuss *Abduction* in BAE, for one thing John Mack's book does is to give experiencers a larger ground for discussion than has previously been laid out. Surely this is one of its important features.

Andrea Pritchard

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As a very recent subscriber to BAE and a therapist who works with experiencers (and an experiencer myself), I would like to add a comment to those already lodged regarding Mack's *Abduction*. His real failure is not as a scientist but as a clinician. He fails to bring any understanding of depth psychology to the dialogue and he is disingenuous when he does try to look as if he is looking beneath the surface. To begin with, most of Mack's clients seem prime candidates for the diagnosis of fantasy-prone personality, but the author appears oblivious of the possibility. Let us take one case for example. In chapter 13, Dave, 38 years old, is referred to many times as "boyish," but Mack never connects this personality trait to the complex named by Carl Jung the Puer Aeternus (the eternal child), even though it is well-known that the theme of flying — and even of leaving this planet — is an integral part of this psychological matrix. (See Marie-Louise von Franz's excellent study of St. Exupery's *The Little Prince* in her book *Puer Aeternus*.) In fact, Mack seems oblivious of Jungian thought or finds depth-psychological concepts such as complexes and archetypes irrelevant.

Even though the puer complex seems especially significant in light of the fact that Dave reports a number of past lives in which he also died before achieving manhood — giving new meaning to the aeternus aspect of the complex — and Dave freely admits he's "almost forty years old and I don't act like it," Mack not only fails to connect that complex with his abduction memories, but even states that "There is nothing about him to suggest a tendency toward psychopathy, delusions, or a proneness to fantasy." That is an astounding remark from a psychiatrist, and it overlooks so much of Dave's history that it suggests delusion on Mack's part.

First, Dave suffered a major trauma at age seven when a friend accidentally poked his eye out in a sword fight with sticks. Dave was hospitalized, suffered terrible pain and nightmares, and then had to wear a fake eye. He was tormented by other schoolchildren for years over that. He admits that he never grieved the loss of his eye for many years, and that his father also rarely expressed emotion. He admits that he has carried a great deal of pain and shame all his life. Yet Mack never even wonders if Dave could have compensated for all that by developing a fantasy life in which his issues of feeling powerless, his trauma over being operated upon, his humiliation at being a social pariah, his rage and terror could all be expressed safely.

It is clear on the surface to any careful reader that Dave has created a rich fantasy life with quasi-messianic spiritual aspirations. His consuming passion is the development of the ability to channel healing Chi energy, which he is learning to increase through the practice of karate. Indeed, he has some kind of karate master-cum-guru (who also seems fantasy-prone) who encourages such ideas and who has suggested that Dave contact Mack to learn more about his alien abduction experiences. Dave lives in a romantic world in which he considers himself spiritually to be a Native American. "I'm a modern-day Indian," Dave boasts. His special totem animal is the rare white deer. Yet he shoots and kills a white deer and has it mounted. Why does Mack not even wonder if this may symbolize an inner conflict? Dave describes fantasy upon fantasy unrelated to the alien abductions, even relates that he often blanks out and goes into a different reality during karate practice, and that he smokes marijuana regularly, which is known to accelerate paranoid fantasy processes. Yet Mack blithely evaluates him as "a practical, down-to-earth home builder." Mack's astonishing denial of Dave's fantasy-proneness completely negates the credibility of his entire analysis. Moreover, this kind of blindness to his patients' psychological issues pervades the book.

What we are left with is a collective hallucination, unmediated by any deeper awareness. Perhaps that must wait for a later phase in the unfolding of this phenomenon. Let us suppose that the abduction phenomenon is indeed the upthrust of a new myth that is destined to grip the human race. Such a mythos must certainly emerge from a higher intelligence than our conscious minds, and from which we have long been alienated, but may not be alien in the sense that appears on the surface of the imagery reported by abductees. Just as the mythological system of ancient India began with the naive deity-strewn Vedic period and developed into the power dynamics of the Brahmanas and only much later the philosophical exegesis of the Upanishads, with its emphasis on the Self, this new religion of the Alien Other is developing its own Brahminical class

who give forth at conferences and seminars, and in a growing number of books, yet whose more philosophical voices are still few and often unperceived. Yet the monolith of consensus reality is visibly cracking. Mack's book will no doubt open wider the floodgates of the collective unconscious for this marvelous techno-psycho-mystico-sado-masochistic mythological imagery to swirl even more widely through our culture, attracting and enrolling ever more adherents, abductees, messengers, channelers, hybrid aliens, experts, informers and disinformants, linking up syncretically with older myths, creating finally a new transhuman universe of meaning for the next generation to be born into. This could indeed be the last generation of humanity as we know it. A transhuman mythology cannot but bring in its train a transhuman beingness.

In essence, then, perhaps the alien abduction phenomenon compensates for the one-sided scientism that caused us as a culture to lose touch with the wisdom of our hearts and with our deeper psychic reality. This reality can only reach us in such a dramatic manner. It distills for us as perhaps no other kind of controversy could the insight that consensus reality itself is a collective hallucination — Mahamaya, the Great illusion — as yogic and Buddhist sages have long taught. Any perspective one takes on the narratives of experiencers or one's own memories of such a numinous experience leaves one stranded in a story-line, subject to the blinding as well as the revealing qualities of all mythos. As Mack so well demonstrates by his own psychological blindness, and the debunkers do in equally dogmatic ways, the lesson seems to be not to take sides but to pursue understanding at a deeper level, to seek something very different from this Mystery than a yes or no as to its veracity. We must allow this anomaly to pry open our collective psyche even further, until it opens us all to wonder, to awe, to astonishment — to becoming more fully alive to psychic reality, to realize our unity of being, and our global peril.

From my own perspective, alien intelligence is no doubt real, but it is the intelligence of the Cosmos itself that we have been so long alienated from. Whether that intelligence reaches us in the form of little grey humanoids or as angels or nightmares of ecological disaster or a satori of Buddha Consciousness, the power of the Other will seek us until we have regained the long-lost Oneness.

One kudo to Mack at least for offering evidence that the experience of alien contact has been the vehicle for major positive transformations in the lives of most of his patients, who find a meaning and a sense of specialness in the experience, as well as a way to access unconscious feelings of alienation and powerlessness and of mastering them. Being abducted by aliens can provide a deep healing. It enables us as a society to explore dimensions to our reality long repressed by the false and flat religion of materialism. Nor does any of this rule out the possibility that extraterrestrials are indeed behind the phenomenon. But if we are to make real contact with that *intelligence*, then we must understand its theatrics more deeply, more symbolically, than Mack or anyone else has yet been able to do. Just as we have learned to interpret dreams symbolically, to discover the higher intelligence behind their seemingly senseless scenarios, we must probe the alien abduction scenario with greater wisdom, in the context of the *philosophia perennis*. We may come to perceive it as

another kind of Bardo state, and the aliens as analogues to the fierce deities of Tibetan Buddhism.

The phenomenon of alien abduction also, I predict, will have profound political implications within another decade. Moreover, it will help to bring about the realization of an astonishing new paradigm of what it means to be human. The question of whether abductions actually happen is already irrelevant, just as in the Middle Ages it was irrelevant whether a relic of the True Cross was genuine or not. Faith creates its own reality.

Finally, I would like to add that to make sense of the phenomenon of alien abduction reports, we must place it in context with other issues of recovered memory — from memories of incest and satanic abuse, past lives and prenatal recollection, to our social-historical memory. Memory is intricately tied in with our identities. Paradoxically, just as we are recovering more memories than ever, at the same time our memory, is slipping away from us, historical memory as well as personal memory. People seem to be losing their memories at a younger age. Alzheimer's is not just an illness of the old. We are under tremendous species-wide stress and our memories and minds are fragmenting under the pressures — if not from a lifetime of video games, channel surfing on TV and drinking sodas from aluminum cans — as our social cohesiveness dissolves. Memory is in some ways a collective project, and with the worsening social decay our personal consciousness cracks open and memory dissipates as well. And so fantasy intrudes into the gap, to make sense of it.

I would propose that the phenomenon of missing time is an issue of memory and identity loss, which becomes filled in

with culturally-suggested scenarios that arise from that crack in our personal consciousness through which deeper psychic contents erupt and become clothed in cultural symbols.

When personal consciousness cracks open in the context of meditation, there is a receptiveness to the Nirvanic Void, and great peace ensues. But to one who does not have a Buddhist or yogic context to contain such a numinous experience (or absence of experience), the personal consciousness becomes overwhelmed and terrified at the cosmic nothingness on which he or she floats unaware. And since many more people today have been raised superficially — that is, on surfaces, with TV and movies and fundamentally false family interactions, rather than with deep and soulful relationships of true intimacy and authenticity -- the personal veneer of conscious identity cracks easily, and results in decompensation, or chaos. We have a whole society full of such fragile people, some of whom who deal with the loss of self by becoming ever tougher and more cruel on the outside to avoid their gnawing vulnerability. Others respond in opposite ways. (For alienated people whose sense of Self has been abducted, and who have been abused at least emotionally if not sexually, what better metaphor than an alien abduction and anal rape to express their unconscious complex of feelings?)

Mack's clients are wiser than they know when they report that they feel they are human/alien hybrids. The aliens have indeed arrived, and as usual, they are us. For those in this field who take the phenomenon seriously, it is crucial that we respond not only scientifically, but with our whole psyche, with awakened hearts, to hear the aliens' message. The fate of the Earth is at stake.

*Robert Shubow, Ph.D.*

## BAE On Hiatus in 1995

*BAE will be going on hiatus for a year after the next issue (which completes the current volume and current subscriptions).*

*There have been a number of changes (all good!) in my personal and professional life in the last year, as well as some new projects related to my interest in the abduction experience and the paranormal. Ultimately there were more things to do than could be done well in the time available, and I was faced with the difficult (at times agonizing) decision of what to set aside. BAE is one project that will be put on hold. Lest skeptical tongues start wagging, let me affirm that this decision does not reflect a loss of interest in the abduction experience, nor a change in my conviction that the phenomenon is deserving of serious consideration and study. It is simply a reallocation of a scarce resource (time!).*

*BAE has taught me a great deal, and has given me a valuable opportunity to meet or correspond with many of you. Together, in the last five years we have stimulated thinking, "networked" readers, identified new and lesser-known sources of information, and kept track of the latest developments in the mainstream scientific and medical literature related to anomalous experiences. Most important, I think we have shown that much can come from thoughtful study and discussion that avoids positions of arch skepticism or fixed belief. To all those who supported and contributed to this project, my heartfelt thanks.*

*For this last issue (which will include a complete index to BAE) I invite readers to comment briefly (in one page or less, if possible) on the following questions:*

- What has been the most significant change in the study of the abduction experience over the last five years?*
- What do you predict will be the most significant change in the next five years?*

*David Gotlib, M.D.*

# Contribution and Subscription Information

Bulletin of Anomalous Experience is a networking newsletter about the UFO abduction phenomenon and related issues, for mental health professionals and interested scientists. Subscriptions are **\$25 per calendar year** (6 bimonthly issues); back issues are also available at **\$25 per calendar year**. Remit in U.S. funds for U.S. and foreign orders, and Canadian funds for Canadian orders. Make cheques or money orders payable to "David Gotlib, M.D.", *not* to BAE.

Material for publication in computer-readable format is especially welcome. I can accept 3.5" or 5.25" diskettes. I run Word for Windows 2.0, but you can also send files in ASCII format. (Macintosh users: I don't have a Mac-to-PC conversion program, so please send files that are readable on an IBM system). If you are online, you can also e-mail material to me at my Internet address (see below).

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