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I regret to see that it is now possible — and may even be necessary — to take alien abductions seriously.

Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens (Scribners, \$28.50) is far from the first published report that obsidian-eyed ETs in flying saucers or cigars are taking men, women and children on short but repeated visits to alien laboratories for orific invasion.

But Dr. John Mack is the first Pulitzer-winning author and Ivy League professor to give *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind* such context and credibility.

Thanks to tabloids and specialty mags, the UFO cover-up conspiracy has become popular mythology.

Thanks to monster best-sellers by Whitley Streiber (*Communion*) and Budd Hopkins (*Missing Time*, etc.), a broader spectrum of readers has been softened up.

But not until Dr. Mack's dispassionate accounts of the most illuminating of his hundreds of hypnotic regressions of alleged abductees did the situation become impossible for the scientific theocracy to ignore.

Well, not *impossible*. "I am in a paradigm war," he tells me. "There are people who say this is fraudulent, he is foolish and bewildered ... and there are people who compare me to Galileo ... not a whole lot in the middle, people who say *How interesting!*"

The challenge posed by *Abduction* is to find explanations that make better sense than Mack's speculations.

Most of his subjects are even more reluctant than their psychiatrist to give their visions credibility. Some of them have had their lives destroyed in ways that simply never happens with unfounded nightmares. Watch Mare Winningham in the miniseries/video of *Intruders*, on which Mack acted as consultant, for some of the feeling that it is easy to lose in reading, or to eliminate any suspicion that people would invent such things to get onto Oprah. While Mack remains wary of bandwagon-jumpers, "I keep finding that this is a club nobody really wants to belong to.

"I have also come to appreciate that a small group of people control what we're supposed to think."

On scores of radio talkshows he has found callers-in to be very open, "and

so are the hosts, who tend to be personalities of some power and independence in their cities."

Likewise, "The top scientists tend to be mavericks. They see the probabilistic, paradoxical nature of everything in matter and in consciousness. It's the ones who say, 'Give me a cigarette lighter off of a UFO, give me a guarantee,' that give me a very bad time ... And it wouldn't matter if we had the captain's log itself, they would explain it away as 'having an inadequately proven pedigree ... If you really want to make them mad, you say, well, do you really think there's any criterion for knowledge other than shared experience?"

"But they, and the media and politicians who listen to them, tend to lay out the official reality for the culture."

Another concern has more to do with



fads in spirit communication. At the turn of the century, for example, whole libraries were being dictated to spiritualists by entities who made tables rap once for 'A', twice for 'B' ... 25 times for 'Y.' Could *none* of them learn Morse Code? And where have all the rappers gone? (Gone to channels every one?)

"One way to look at that," says Mack, "all of these phenomena are as Sara described in the book, like slits in the cellophane membrane that separates us from the unseen world, the world of energies we've cut ourselves off from."

When pushed, Mack offers an interpretation not unlike the Dalai Lama's: "I do kind of see the alien phenomenon as a sort of outreach program of the cosmos to the consciously and spiritually impaired ... well designed, I think, to be rather shattering to our collective arrogance ... they treat us like we treat endangered species.

"They say over and over again: We are not ready to be in a relationship with them. They are too other for us. We cannot connect to them in a healthy way ... A consistent report is that the aliens have to tone down their energy levels enormously in order to enter our world."

The message that is being communicated (often telepathically) adds extra urgency to feelings of impending ecocrisis. "It may be that they are doing all they can — trying to create some kind of hybrid species which may survive in some less embodied reality in some parallel universe, and trying to make a few of us aware of our destructiveness ... Virtually *all* the abductees with whom I have worked closely have demonstrated a commitment to living in greater harmony with the earth."

No, he has not regressed himself, nor discovered any alien experience of his own. "As far as I know, I'm pure."

Lucky thing. A legitimate psychiatrist *must* have had therapy, but no legitimate ufologist may ever see a UFO.

"It's illogical," he knows, "but it's consistent if you start with the ideological premise that this is impossible, so anyone who takes it seriously is in some way disturbed."