

By A. Robert Smith

**A** half dozen years ago, Harvard psychiatrist John Mack thought anyone who worked with people who claimed they'd been abducted by aliens from outer space must be crazy. A year later his whole frame of reference changed when he met Budd Hopkins, a pioneer in alien research who had worked with some 200 "abductees."

"Nothing in my then nearly 40 years of familiarity with the field of psychiatry prepared me for what Hopkins had to say," Dr. Mack writes in his recent book, *Abduction*. When Hopkins later introduced him to four abductees, he was impressed with their coherence. "None of them seemed psychiatrically disturbed except in a secondary sense, that is they were troubled as a consequence of something that had apparently happened to them. There was nothing to suggest that their stories were delusional, a misinterpretation of dreams, or the product of fantasy. None of them seemed like people who would concoct a strange story for some personal purpose." He was also impressed with the "consistency of stories down to the most minute details."

As a physician, Mack wondered how these people coped with their weird experiences and what lay behind them. In his book he tells how he

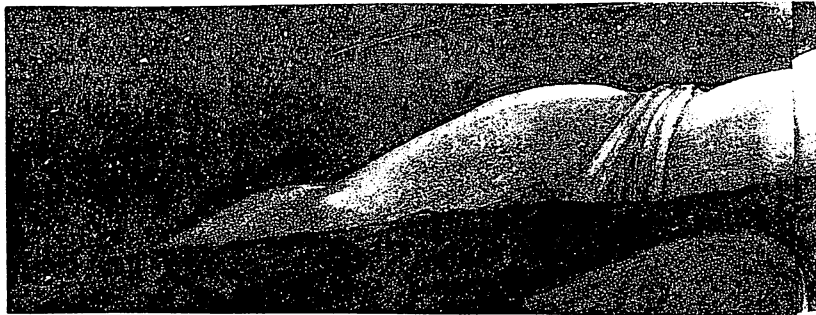
worked with 76 such people, 47 of them women, who recalled being taken into a strange craft, suffering appropriate emotional reactions, but showed no sign of a mental condition that might produce such a story.

Working with them "affected me profoundly," writes Mack. "The intensity of the energies and emotions involved as abductees relive their experiences is unlike anything I have encoun-

tered in other clinical work."

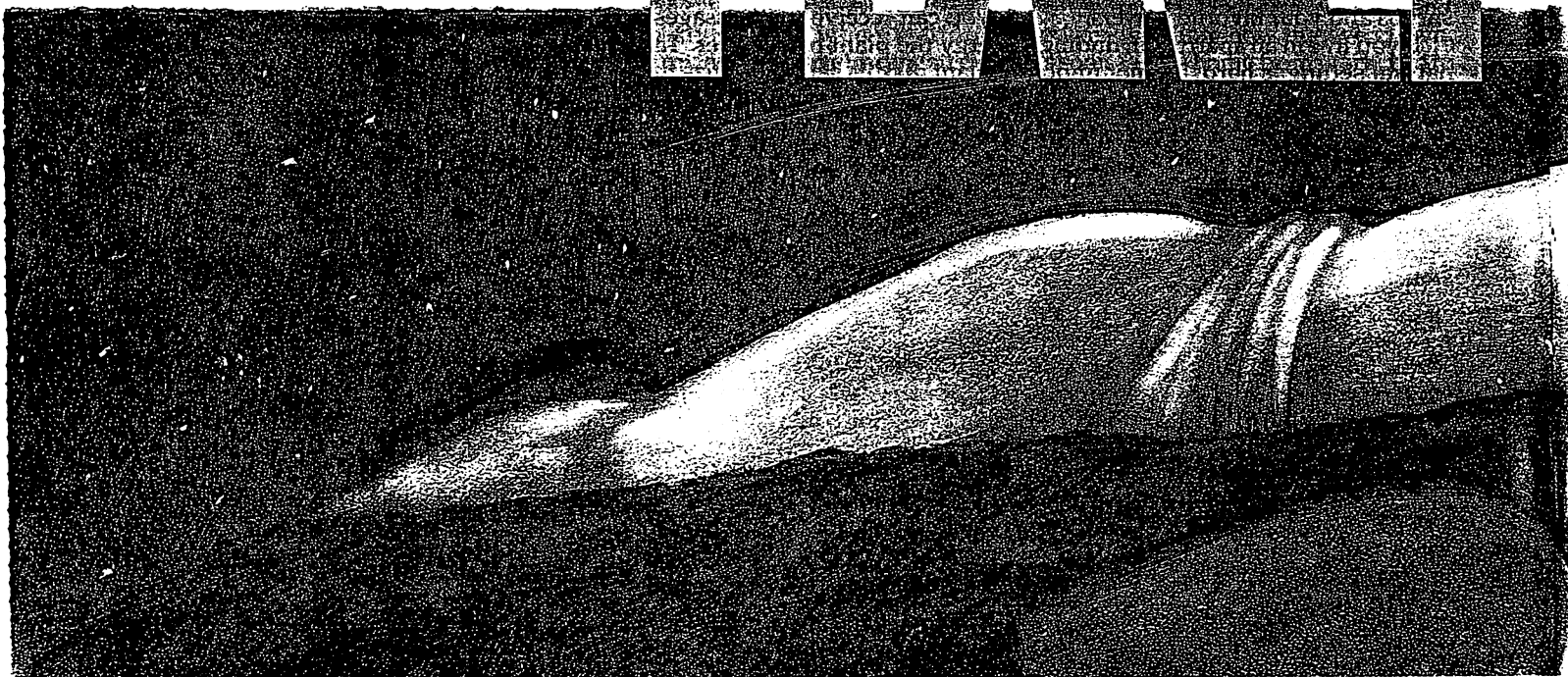
More than just a subject for psychology journals or classroom discussion, Mack thinks it has "important philosophical, spiritual, and social implications." Most of all it shook his scientific sense of reality, rooted in the material world.

"In this view intelligence is largely a phenomenon of the brain of human beings or other advanced species. If, on



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the contrary, intelligence is experienced as residing in the larger cosmos, this perception is an example of 'subjectivity' or a projection of our mental processes.

"What the abduction phenomenon has led me (I would now say inevitably) to see is that we participate in a universe or universes that are filled with intelligences from which we have cut ourselves off, having lost the senses

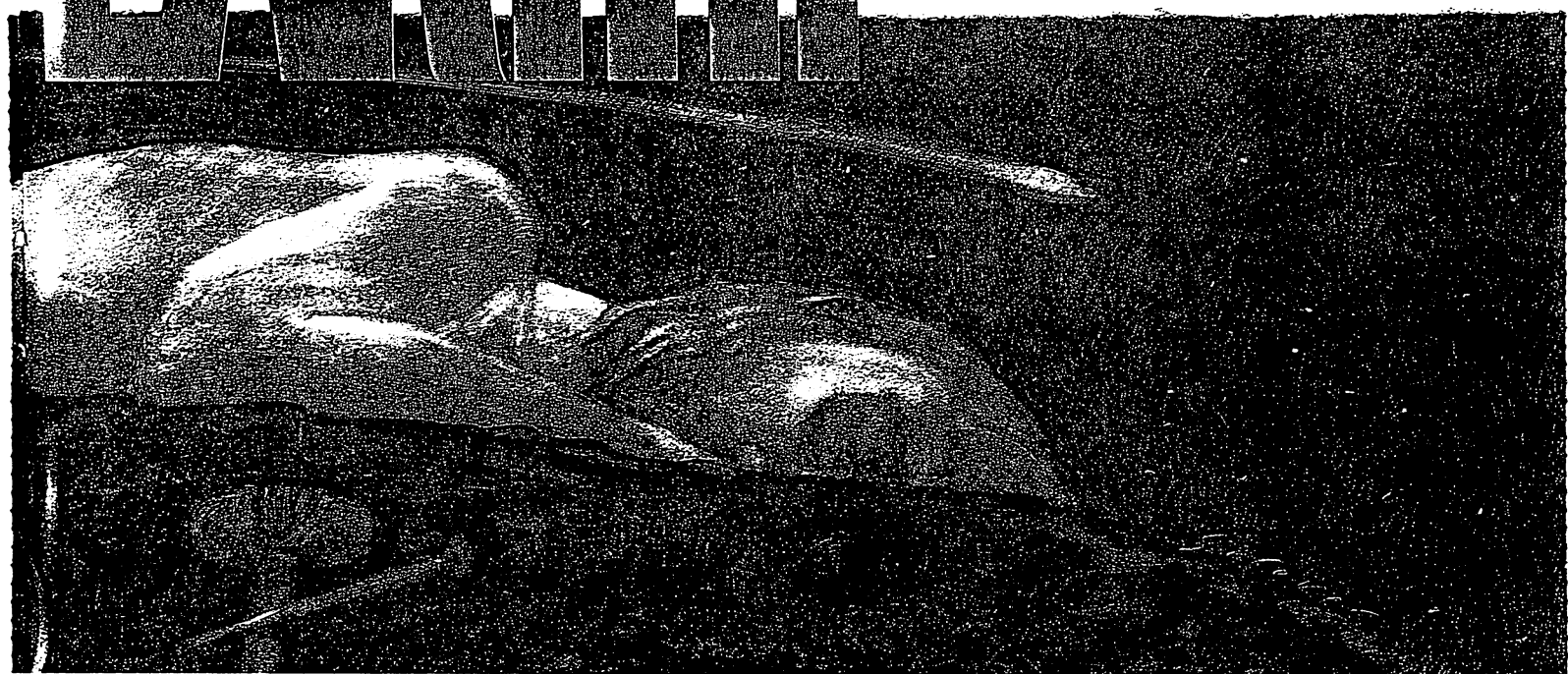
by which we might know them. It has become clear to me also that our restricted world view or paradigm lies behind most of the major destructive patterns that threaten the human future – mindless corporate acquisitiveness that perpetuates vast differences between rich and poor and contributes to hunger and disease; ethno-national violence resulting in mass killing which could grow into a nuclear holo-

caust; and ecological destruction on a scale that threatens the survival of the earth's living systems."

Mack includes abduction experiences with many other recent influences that have challenged the conventional scientific wisdom, such as near-death experiences, meditation practices, the use of psychedelic substances, and shamanic journeys, leading to an altered state of consciousness. While there is a tendency to connect this phenomenon with UFO sightings, Mack notes that many ancient myths depicted human beings communicating with nonhuman forms of intelligence and spirits.

"The contemporary Western tenet that we are alone in the universe, conversant only with ourselves, is, in fact, a minority perspective, an anomaly," notes Mack. "Across many epochs, humans have reported making contact with a multitude of gods, spirits, angels, fairies, demons, ghouls, vampires, and sea monsters. All have been said to instruct, direct, harass, or befriend humans with varying dispositions, motives, and purposes. While many of these beings have seemed quite at home on Earth, the majority made their visits from other habitats or dimensions. The sky, in particular, has always been a popular haven for non-humans and has come to represent extraterrestrial dimensionality rather opulently, especially as Earth's fron-

# ALIENS TO SAVE EARTH?



tiers seemed, in recent times, to have shrunk. As Ralph Noyes has noted, 'we used to populate the earth with spirits and gods. Now they have been chased away and the sky is their haven.' "

Natives of the Marshall Islands of the Pacific traditionally believed in an outer world that corresponds in some ways to the modern conception of outer space, he noted. Native American Hopi tradition has it that they were taught by the Kachinas, spirit-like beings from other planets. Irish folklore holds that fairies originated on other planets and travel about the skies in cloudlike aerial "fairy boats" or "spectre ships." The Koryaks of Siberia remember the mythical era of their Great Raven, when humans could go up to Heaven without difficulty. In short, countless myths, tales, and legends tell of beings who fly away into Heaven and travel freely between Heaven and earth. Mack thinks today's UFO abductees, while unique, are "continuing an amply documented tradition of ascent and extraterrestrial communication."

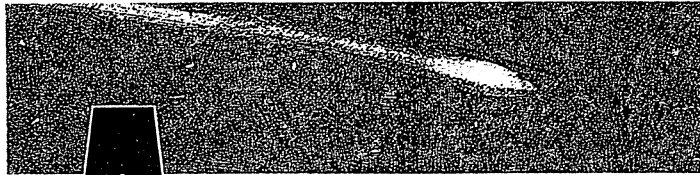
Folklorist Peter Rojewicz alludes to the possibility of "an intelligence, a spirit, an energy, a consciousness behind UFO experiences and extraordinary encounters of all types, that adapts its form and appearance to fit the environment of the times." He cites a long history of sightings of unusual aerial phenomena, and beings or objects of light, including in ancient times "celestial cars, chariots that flew in the sky, flying palaces that shined and moved about in the sky.... Fiery crosses were also seen over western Europe." In the United States, in the 1800s, Americans witnessed ships sailing in the sky. These vehicles in the sky may have been related to contemporary UFOs but were interpreted according to the technology and mythology of their time.

Psychologist Mario Pazzaglini points out that manifestations of a UFO nature have been recorded for the last 10,000 years, starting with Ezekiel in the Old Testament, who depicts a vision containing wheels, angels, light, and clouds. Since ancient times people have seen fires in the sky, crosses, lights, or beams, and apparitions,

many of them interpreted as religious miracles. Such phenomena often fit with already existing spiritual beliefs held by the viewers.

The phenomenon of humans being transported into other dimensions also has a long history in most cultures. Tibetans have believed that humans could separate from the "etheric" or "subtle" body and go traveling in an out-of-body capacity for hours or days at a time.

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duced by grosser matter cannot communicate with these subtle things," says the Dalai Lama. "In some, you witness the grosser level of mind subdued and the more subtle mind become active. Then there's an opportunity, a chance to communicate with or sometimes see another being who is more subtle than our mind or body."

Jacques Vallee, in his books *Dimensions* and *Passport to Magonia*, described hundreds of sightings of strange sky-borne objects and their occupants across time, continents, and societies. He cites the seemingly unexplainable presence of disks in the symbology of various civilizations — the Phoenicians and early Christians, for instance, associated them with communications between angels and God. He compares some of the phenomenology of a UFO encounter with historical records of experiences of a mystical nature. Beams of light commonly play a role in both UFO and out-of-body encounters.

Vallee says beings throughout history have appeared in different guises, possessed with extraordinary powers, and often tried to take something belonging to humans, or to communicate with or simply play tricks on them. "The UFO occupants, like the elves of old, are not extraterrestrials. They are denizens of another reality," he believes. "Abductees' interaction with aliens is a part of an age-old and worldwide myth that has shaped our belief structures, our scientific expectations, and our view of ourselves."

Vallee believes that the UFO phenomenon represents evidence for other dimensions beyond space/time. Edgar Cayce also talked about other dimensions (*The 4th Dimension* — Jan./Feb.) "The UFOs may not come from ordinary space, but from a 'multiverse' which is all around us, and of which we have stubbornly refused to consider the disturbing reality in spite of the evidence available to us for centuries."

Dr. Mack suggests we remain open to learning from phenomena that we do not yet understand. "The most glaring question is whether there is any reality independent of

consciousness. At the level of personal consciousness, can we apprehend reality directly, or are we by necessity bound by the restrictions of our five senses and the mind that organizes our world view? Is there a shared, collective consciousness that operates beyond our individual consciousness? If there is a collective consciousness, how is it influenced, and what determines its content? Is UFO abduction a product of this shared consciousness? If, as in some cultures, consciousness pervades all elements of the universe, then what function do events like UFO abductions and various mystical experiences play in our psyches and in the rest of the cosmos?"

UFO abductions resemble other dramatic paranormal experiences in which the individual's ordinary consciousness is radically transformed. The person is initiated into an altered state of being "which results, ultimately, in a reintegration of the self, an immersion or entrenchment into states and/or knowledge not previously accessible."

Sometimes the process is triggered by illness or trauma, and sometimes the person is "simply pulled into a sequence of states of being from which he or she emerges with new powers and sensitivities." The shaman learns how to penetrate into other dimensions of reality where he is endowed with a sensitivity that can perceive and integrate these new experiences." Like many abductees, the initiate hones his new sensibilities in the service of wisdom that can be used by his people.

The experience of internalizing what is first perceived as external light happens frequently during mystical flashes or transcendental journeys that result in spiritual rebirth, reports Mack. "The mystic or the shaman, like the abductee, makes a pilgrimage, usually with ardor, to receive a new dimension of experience or knowledge. This involves a rebirth which is sometimes very distressing, a retracing of one's steps to a preternatural, primordial arena to recondition the consciousness of the experienter."

**M**ack sees the abductee as "a modern Dante, whose ontological underpinnings are unraveled. Returned to his bed or his car after his time with aliens, he struggles to reassemble his world view. Most often, he undertakes his journey alone, and many times his absence is not even noticed by those to whom he might turn to corroborate his coordinates."

Dr. Mack believes that most abductees experience consciousness expansion and personal transformation. In case after case the "information communicated by alien beings to experiencers is fundamentally about the need for a change in human consciousness and our relationship to the earth and one another. Even the helplessness and loss or surrender of control which are, at least initially, forced upon the abductees by the aliens – one of the most traumatic aspects of the experiences – seem to be in some way 'designed' to bring about a kind of ego death from which spiritual growth and the expansion of consciousness may follow."

One abductee, Sara, described her experience as "dimensional merging ... because it really wasn't happening here. It was half happening here and half happening somewhere else."

Catherine spoke of a "place" she remembered between times of embodiment on Earth. In that "place" bodies were not solid, appearing only in a

kind of energy outline. "This was from a long, long, long, long time ago," she explained. "This was before any of us had lives here. This place is in a totally different universe. It's not in our earth space/time dimension."

Anne had a sense of converging time frames, as if she were functioning simultaneously in different times. "This is real. It's not philosophical," she insisted. "I can really go to another time frame and [my experiences] can pull me from other time frames to here."

Abductees often call their experiences "dreams," Mack says, which may be a euphemism to cover what they are sure cannot be – "namely an event from which there was no awakening that occurred in another dimension." Mack said he has seen "distress, even tears, on the face of an abductee who is realizing that an experience that he or she had chosen, more comfortably, to consider a dream had occurred in some sort of fully 'awake' or conscious state, however different this might be.

The problem is complicated further by the fact that dreams are an important way that we normally process and integrate experience during the night. Therefore it is not surprising that, since abductions are themselves powerful and disturbing experiences, they may frequently give rise to true nightmares or dreams that re-create in modified form the abduction experience, even during the same night that the abduction occurred."

How can such traumatic experiences also be spiritually transformative? Mack says, "To me there is no inconsistency here, unless one reserves spirituality for realms of the sublime that are free of pain and struggle. Sometimes our most useful spiritual learning and growth comes at the hands of rough teachers who have little respect for our conceits, psychological defenses, or established points of view. Zen Buddhist teaching is notorious for its shock treatment methods. One might even go further and argue that genuine spiritual growth is inevitably disturbing, as the boundaries of consciousness are breached and we are opened to new domains of existence."

Abductees discover that the universe itself is intelligent. "They develop a sense of awe before a mysterious cosmos that becomes sacred and ensouled. The sense of separation from all the rest of creation breaks down and the experience of oneness becomes an

essential aspect of the evolution of the abductees' consciousness."

**W**hat can we learn from the abduction phenomenon?

Mack thinks the "use of modern technology to tear resources from the earth is bringing the biosphere to the brink of collapse. We are a species out of harmony with nature, gone berserk in the indulgence of its desires at the expense of other living beings and the earth that has given us life. The task of reversing this trend is momentous. Even as we recognize the peril we have created, the vested interests that stand in the way of discovering a balance in our relationship with nature are formidable. Huge corporate, scientific, educational, and military institutions consume many billions of dollars of material goods and maintain, as if mindlessly, a paralyzing stasis that is difficult to reverse. For international business the world seems at times to be nothing more than a giant market to be divided up among the cleverest entrepreneurs."

Mack believes we resist changing our notion of the cosmos. The U.S. government funded a Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, SETI, on the assumption that extraterrestrial intelligence could be found by sending radio waves into the universe. "To search expectantly for a radio signal from an extraterrestrial source," remarked philosopher Terence McKenna, is "as culture-bound a presumption as to search the galaxy for a good Italian restaurant."

The mystery behind abductions is threatening to the power elite and a special problem for government, because the business of government is to protect its people. "For officials to acknowledge that strange beings from radar-defying craft can, in seeming defiance of the laws of gravity and space/time itself, invade our homes and ab-

(Please turn to page 53)

**"The UFO Experience: Transformational Encounters in Consciousness"** is the theme of an A.R.E. Conference at Virginia Beach, May 11 - 14, which will feature John Mack, author of *Abductions*; Budd Hopkins, author of *Missing Time and Intruders*; psychic Ray Stanford; John Van Auken, author of *Spiritual Breakthrough*; and astronomer James Mullaney.

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## UFOs *(Continued from page 25)*

duct our people creates particular problems," Mack observes. "This may explain why government policy in relation to UFOs has been, from the beginning, so confusing, a kind of garbled mixture of denial and cover-up that only fuels conspiracy theories."

The abduction phenomenon invites us "to discover the meaning of our 'power' in a deeper, spiritual sense," says Mack, who hopes it may distract nations from their struggles for ownership and dominance of the earth and from exploiting nature without regard to future generations.

"Growth without restraint has become an end in itself, ignoring the inevitable collapse that cannot be far off if the multiplication of the human population continues unchecked and the pillaging of the earth does not stop." The UFO abduction phenomenon seems "intricately connected with the nature of human greed, the roots of our destructiveness, and the future consequences of our collective behavior. For the abductees, and the rest of us if we pay attention, the encounters are profoundly enlightening in the fullest sense."

Western religious leaders may have a problem with abductions, but Eastern religious traditions, which have always recognized a vast range of spirit entities in the cosmos, seem to have less difficulty accepting the abduction phenomenon "than do the more dualistic monotheisms, which offer powerful resistance to acceptance."

What does Mack think it means?

"Abductions seem to be concerned primarily with two related projects: changing human consciousness to prevent the destruction of the earth's life, and a joining of two species for the creation of a new evolutionary form.

"Nothing in my work on UFO abductions has surprised me as much as the discovery that what is happening to the earth has not gone unnoticed elsewhere in the universe. That the earth itself, and its potential destruction, could have an effect beyond itself or its own environment was altogether outside the world view in which I was raised. But it would appear, from the information that abductees receive, that the earth has value or importance in a larger, interrelated cosmic system that mirrors the interconnectedness of life on earth. The alien abduction phenomenon represents, then, some sort of corrective initiative."

