

# Of UFOs and trailer parks

Is academia ready to study a whole new subgroup?



## A sidelong view

### Bill Slocum

Dr. John Mack is a Harvard psychiatrist and a Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer. He is also one of the few university professors around whose work can be found on the same pages as Anne Murray's wonder workout and the exclusive about the little boy who sprouted wings.

Dr. John is the author of "Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens." The book details sexual experiences between human beings and their space creature captors. According to an Associated Press article, one man recalls a female alien taking a sperm sample from him when he was in high school. Another claims she is the mother of a space baby.

The book was published more than a year ago, and since that time Dr. John has been cruising the talk show circuit, telling Oprah and Larry about these unique episodes of alien-human, ahem, intercourse. Now the university is reviewing Dr. John's tenure. Apparently they are annoyed at seeing their august name captioned under this fellow's talking head as he relates why exactly Earth girls are easy.

They have led the way in women's studies, Afro-American studies, American Indian studies, and Bisexual Polynesian studies. So it was only a matter of time before the Ivy League came up with their own extraterrestrial scholar.

Dr. John's attorney is arguing that just like Galileo and Freud, his client is the victim of closed minds who seek to punish him for daring to think in unorthodox ways.

But of course. Mankind has always been daunted by that which he does not know, be it a heliocentric world or the innermost thought processes of the human mind. And what could be more intimidating than the thought of Alpha Centaurians hovering over us; hormones raging?

There are two ways Harvard can handle Dr. John. One is to throw him out of the school under the dubious claim that he does not measure up to the university's traditions of Western thinking. But if they did that, a whole academic subculture of Harvard could be placed in mortal jeopardy. How are courses about lesbian biker movies and victims of European Civilization supposed to thrive when a little exploration into extraplanetary mores is so ruthlessly stamped out?

Instead of trying to fight it, Harvard should enjoy the slide. After all, encouraging the study of UFO abductions is a sure way the university can reach out to the only cultural subgroup it has not yet embraced: The white trash nation.

Think of it: With only a slight dip in academic standards, a whole new universe of learning could be added to Harvard's already-impressive curriculum. A sample of white trash classes might run like this:

**Sociology 232** — "Elvis Sightings Across the American Midwest." — This course would educate students in the King of Rock n' Roll's many appearances since his alleged death in 1977.

Questions asked would include how Elvis has been able to subsist without any apparent means of nourishment or financial support, how he looks after all these years in self-imposed itinerant exile, and his relationships with other wandering undead rock musicians such as Jim Morrison, Andy Gibb, and the real Paul McCartney. The class will also chart the remarkable proximity in both time and place between Elvis and Big-foot sightings. Have Presley and Sasquatch developed a symbiotic attachment?

**Drama 303** — “Channelling Fast Lives in Method Acting” — Why should young actors spend hours trying to emulate historical figures like Cleopatra and Captain Bligh when they actually might have been these people in previous life experiences? Getting in touch with the fabric of these and other former existences is an expedient tool for method actors, and the main goal of this class. Featuring a guest lecture from Oscar-winning actress Shirley MacLaine.

**Astrophysics 431** — “Star Trek: The Opus” — An examination of the various “Star Trek” series and what they tell us about man’s future in space. Class topics will include race relations between Klingons, Romulans, and the Borg; the physical properties involved in “beaming up”; and the diverse command approaches of Captains Kirk, Picard, and that lady who looks like Katherine Hepburn.

**Nutritional Science 104** — How to eat all you want, never exercise, and live to be 132 on a diet consisting of Dannon yogurt and Doritos. Also tips on how to rejuvenate your body with the help of a secret skin’creme discovered in the Egyptian pyramids.

**Oceanography 456** — “Nessie: Behemoth of the Scottish Deep” — Is the Loch Ness monster simply a lost remnant of the Jurassic age, a kelp-eating dinosaur content to live in peace? Or is she rather a fierce carnivore, biding her time before embarking on a reign of terror that threatens all mankind? Course materials will include videotapes of old Godzilla films as a prescient warning of what is to come. Students will also take a field trip to Inverness to discuss via Ouija board possible terms of surrender with the shy but savage “beastie.”

**History 121** — “Review of the 21st Century” — Eminent futurologist Jeanne Dixon will take students through a study of the century to come, and the many surprises awaiting mankind there. Find out how future presidents will deal with such national threats as homelessness, Satanic possession, and Madonna’s zombic army. Also will examine pending visitations from assorted holy figures like Mary, Moses, and late Wendy’s pitchwoman Clara “Where’s the Beef” Peller.

Harvard and other institutions of higher learning have long devoted considerable resources toward incorporating into academia life experiences found in ghettos, barrios, and other centers of disadvantaged life, so why not trailer parks, too? A small diminishment in academic standards is nothing compared to the inclusion of one more subculture that has too long suffered the scorn of elitist dogma. Let’s give Dr. John a chance.