

Harvard vs. the space aliens

In our town /James Smart

Phone Home.”

This outburst of popular interest was probably the first clue the Harvard academics had that maybe they should look into what Dr. Mack was up to.

They wouldn't have worried if they had merely read his book. It is full of serious, intellectual and Harvardenesque stuff, and in spite of its subject is, to be blunt, rather dull.

Dr. Mack points out, in the book, that his theme challenges the prevailing worldview or consensus reality of the Newtonian/Cartesian, or materialist/dualist, scientific paradigm. The Harvard establishment didn't blink until that concept got translated into standard American, and came out saying that his theme may be kinda wacky.

So a prominent Harvard kidney specialist is leading the writing of a report about Dr. Mack's counseling and studying of people who claim they were whisked off into the cosmos and sub-

jected to odd medical tests. The medical school dean will then decide whether Dr. Mack's work meets Harvard's standards for scholarship.

This flap will determine whether Harvard professors, before bothering to seek the truth on a subject, will now be required to find out whether their associates already have made up their minds about it.

It's easy to imagine committees of academics in the past censuring their colleagues for wasting time studying whether an atom can be split, or human flight was possible, or the earth revolved around the sun, or other concepts everybody knew were just plain nutty.

Apparently, a major objection to Dr. Mack studying people who say they were abducted by space aliens is that he seems to believe their stories.

The simple answer is to proclaim all Dr. Mack's abductees officially crazy. Then it's acceptable to study them. But if the study finds out that space aliens regularly do abduct earthlings, please, Dr. Mack, keep it to yourself. Don't let a newly discovered truth mess up that Newtonian/Cartesian paradigm.

A committee at Harvard Medical School is investigating a prominent professor because of his research about people who say they have been abducted now and again by little gray folks from outer space.

The medical school is part of Harvard University, which was founded in 1636 at Cambridge, Massachusetts. In those days they had their witch hunts farther north, up at Salem.

The man being investigated is John E. Mack, M. D., who founded the psychiatry department of Harvard's Cambridge Hospital. He wrote, edited or collaborated on seven heavy-duty psychiatric books, and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1977 for writing a biography of Lawrence of Arabia.

In 1994, he published "Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens."

A bunch of periodicals that didn't get excited about his earlier works like "The Development and Sustaining of Self-Esteem in Childhood" suddenly became interested in Dr. Mack. There were articles about his alien kidnapping book in such diverse magazines as Time, Omni, The Nation, People and the New York Times Magazine. Esquire headlined its article, "Professor Mack,