

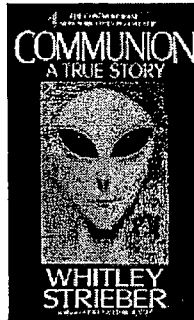


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December 27, 2000

**ADD TO CART****Communion: A True Story****Professor's Picks on Alien Encounters**by **John E. Mack****Note:** These selections may not appear, at first, to be related to alien encounters, but be assured they are.

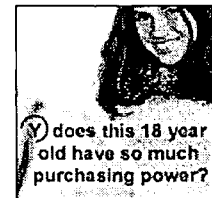
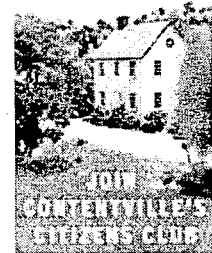
One of the most intriguing and provocative questions my colleagues and I at the Program for Extraordinary Experience Research (PEER) have faced is, "How does social and cultural change come about?" Lewis Hyde addresses this question in *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (1998). The "trickster" is an archetypal figure that exists in every culture, a kind of mischievous god whose job it is to shake up the system when it becomes stale, boring, too structured, or stultified. The trickster challenges, changes, and transforms the way things are done. He's a kind of outlaw, something that seems relevant to the work we do at PEER. For the alien-encounter phenomenon itself seems to operate like that -- as a game breaker for the culture, a phenomenon that challenges the set structures of the material paradigm.

In the Western materialist-scientific worldview there exists a sharp division between two worlds -- the so-called objective (or "outside") world and the subjective (or "inner") world. There have been various attempts to show that these two worlds are not all that exists. Patrick Harpur's *Daimonic Reality: Understanding Otherworldly Encounters* (1995) is one of the most eloquent expressions of that effort. Harpur defines another world that he calls "daimonic reality," a world of unseen agency that is always present and cuts across the objective-subjective divide. The ways of studying this world are different than the ways we study either of the other two worlds, and Harpur invites us to develop a methodology for exploring this third realm.

Michael Talbot's *The Holographic Universe* (1992) documents, in great detail, occurrences in modern history that have involved an unseen agency, such as unexplained "miracles." Talbot meticulously sets out evidence suggesting that there have been phenomena throughout human history that do not seem to obey the conventional materialist paradigm, thereby upsetting the consensus of conventional reality.

Budd Hopkins's *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods* (1987) is the first book I encountered that called attention to a sexual-reproductive dimension of the so-called alien-abduction phenomenon. Hopkins documents a theme that runs through many experiencers' reports, that there is some kind of seemingly exploitative sexual relationship whose ultimate aim is to create a hybrid race. In noting the importance of this theme, I am not saying I accept this as literally occurring in the material world, but the impressive consistency of these reports throughout the experiencer population cannot be dismissed.

Communion: A True Story (1987), by Whitley Strieber, is easy to read and compelling in its content. It is a "rapid entry" book into the awesome power of the alien-encounter phenomenon and makes a persuasive case for the reality Strieber was forced to confront -- its power, and the fearfulness with which he initially responded to it. Though I had spoken with Budd Hopkins and even met some experiencers, this was the first book I read on this phenomenon -- it's so vivid and clear that it rapidly drew me more deeply into the subject.

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Professor's Pick.



John E. Mack

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INSTITUTION
Harvard University

Throughout his career as a psychiatrist, Dr. John E. Mack has explored the question of identity -- how we experience ourselves in relation to one another, to the Earth and its many life forms, and to the cosmos. He addressed this question on the individual level in his early explorations of dreams, nightmares, and adolescent suicide. Later, he sought out the roots of collective experience -- the Cold War, the global ecological crisis, ethnonationalism, and regional conflict. These pursuits led Dr. Mack to the field of transpersonal psychology, which opened him to an expanded notion of reality, one that allows for experiences that don't fit into our usual understanding. Since 1990, Dr. Mack and his colleagues at the Program for Extraordinary Experience Research (PEER) have worked with over 200 individuals from six continents who have experienced encounters with unknown, possibly alien, intelligences. You can read more about Dr. Mack and PEER at www.peer-mack.org.

Mack's published works include: *Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformation and Alien Encounters* (1999); *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (1976 Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Lawrence of Arabia); *Abduction* (1995); and *Nightmares and Human Conflict* (1990).

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ReVision, a periodical that looks deeply into psychospiritual transformation, discovering who we are as human beings.

I WISH ALL OF MY STUDENTS HAD READ ...

Lao Tsu's *Tao Te Ching* -- it is "the way." The *Tao* is a concise spiritual statement that has survived for more than 2,500 years. It addresses the ways "things are," the deeper structure of reality that is true throughout time and space. This slim volume provides a reminder to people to bring themselves back into alignment with fundamental truths.

THE THINKERS WHO HAVE INFLUENCED MY WORK THE MOST ARE ...

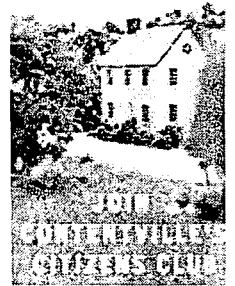
Stanislav Grof, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Gurucharan Singh Khalsa, and Elvin Semrad (my great teacher of psychiatry) -- all of whose work has advanced my knowledge of the inner world, the human depths, and how depth psychology relates to the "outside" world.

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