

George Hunt Williamson & the Genesis of the Contactees

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by Alec Hidel

[George Hunt Williamson -- 1950's era carnival barker for Adamski's Venusian UFO Space Brothers was not only a seminal UFOlogist but also a mysterious occultist and maverick archaeologist, after who the legendary "Indiana Jones" was eventually patterned. -B:.B:.]

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Excerpts:

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[...]

"There can be no doubt that, by accident or design, he [Williamson] and his various collaborators played an enormous part in shaping New Age thought in all its manifestations. Together they constituted the single most important occult group of the post-war era. Their influence is made all the more remarkable by the fact that it has seldom been acknowledged, or even perceived, by other researchers in the field.

[...]

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The 1950s threw up any number of space-age mystics and messiahs, each more dotty than the one before. Among the earliest and most influential of these was American channeler Dr. George Hunt Williamson, who died in 1986 at the relatively early age of 60. Williamson was a prolific writer on the theme of contact with extraterrestrials. It would however, be a capital error to classify him solely as a UFO researcher. He was above all an occultist whose activities helped to usher in a new magical aeon -- the aeon of the Flying Saucer. No attempt can be made to understand him or his work unless this fact is first taken into account.

Little is known of Williamson's life. Jacques Vallee states in Messengers Of Deception that his real name was Michael d'Obrenovic. This canard has been repeated in several articles on the early days of UFO research. I have on file a photocopied bibliography of the contactee movement (source unknown) in which it is stated that "Williamson [frequently] used his Yugoslavian family name of Michael d'Obrenovic although most of his writing was done under the Anglicized name." In actual fact, Williamson was born in Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, the son of George and Bernice (Hunt) Williamson. Inquiries to the Yugoslav government have revealed that although there was at one time a family named d'Obrenovic, it ceased to exist as long ago as 1903, when the head of the line was assassinated by revolutionaries.

Williamson's use of the title appears to have been entirely spurious, dating from an occasion in 1961 when he attended a wedding posing as H.R.H. Prince Michael d'Obrenovic van Lazar, Duke of Sumadya. Like some latter-day Dr. Mabuse, he routinely used disguises and aliases to further his own ends.

Williamson's academic qualifications were equally bogus. In the late 1950s he was listed in Who's Who in America and American Men of Science as a leading anthropologist and authority on the Hopi and Zuni Indians. It later transpired that his various

degrees and qualifications were either self-conferred or, in one notable case, acquired from an institution known as the Great Western University of San Francisco, which researcher John J. Robinson was moved to describe in Saucer News as "a massage parlour." Williamson's formal education actually came to an end in February, 1951, when the University of Arizona disqualified him for further study on the grounds of poor scholarship. Disdaining to re-register, he instead moved temporarily to Noblesville, Indiana, and there took up an editorial position with Valor, the in-house journal of William Dudley Pelley's Soulcraft organization.

Pelley was at the time enjoying a new lease on life, having recently been released from prison after serving an eight-year sentence for his wartime opposition to Roosevelt. A former fascist and leader of the Silver Shirts, he also had an abiding interest in occult matters and compiled 32 volumes of automatic writing on contact with higher intelligences. In addition to Williamson, his post-war circle is believed to have included seminal contactee George Adamski and others of the same kidney. Some authorities suggest that Pelley and Adamski first became acquainted as a result of their mutual interest in Guy Ballard's I AM cult. There is also evidence to suggest that Pelley may have introduced Williamson to Adamski.

Like many a UFO buff before and since, Williamson later gravitated to the southwestern state of Arizona, settling in Prescott and attempting to contact the space people by radio telegraphy and direct-voice channeling. According to investigator Sean Devney, quoting from eyewitness accounts, "When Williamson started to channel, it was something truly inexplicable. [He] would begin speaking in several different voices, one right after the other."

On November 20, 1952, Williamson and his wife Betty were among the witnesses to George Adamski's historic first meeting with Orthon the Venusian in the desert near Mt. Palomar, California. This event more than any other seems to have catalyzed his activities. From then on, he switched into high gear, publishing The Saucers Speak in 1954 and following it up with a series of the most remarkable UFO documents ever conceived.

Another little-known but influential saucer cultist was Dr. Charles Laughead, [who was also alleged to have founded the Lockheed aircraft company -- the name being the anglicized version of Laughead] who with his wife Lillian published Williamson's Book of Transcripts in 1957. (Lillian Laughead was among the dedicated to Williamson's Other Tongues, Other Flesh "for her contribution to the Lemurian interpretation of the tracks in the desert.") Laughead is thought to have emerged from the same pseudo-occult background as George Adamski, et al. In 1949-1950 he gave up a position at Michigan State University to help the famous Marion Dorothy Martin, aka "Mrs. Keech", who had lately been told by spacemen that the end of the world was imminent. The full story of what happened next is told in When Prophecy Fails (Festinger, Reicken and Schacter, University of Minnesota, 1956). Laughead's role in that affair was basically that of agent provocateur. Without him, it is doubtful whether events would have turned out as they did. He is referred to throughout When Prophecy Fails as "Dr. Armstrong." His efforts on behalf of Mrs. Keech were rather akin to those of Thurber's Get-Ready-Man, who "used to go about shouting at people through a megaphone to prepare for the end of the world." When the appointed hour came and went, and the world continued much as before, Laughead moved on to other things, and chanced to meet Dr. Andrija Puharich in a hotel in Acambaro, Mexico.

Puharich records his impressions of Laughead and his wife in Uri, referring to them as "charming but naive people." Laughead, for his part, was delighted at meeting a fellow M.D. in such unlikely surroundings and immediately launched into an account of his work with George Hunt Williamson:

"Through the assistance of a young man who is a very fine voice channel or medium, we have been in frequent communication for over a year with one of the ancient Mystery Schools in South America. These sessions covered a wide range of subjects, from ancient history and life origins on this planet, to science and religion. This Brotherhood also serves as a communication center for contacts with intelligences on other planets and star systems, and on spacecraft. Some of these intelligences are

obviously not human. Their knowledge and wisdom far exceed our comprehension. For simplicity we referred to them as Space Beings or Space Brothers..."

Puharich was initially dismissive of all this, no doubt viewing it as a flight of fantasy. Later, on returning to continue his research at the Round Table Foundation in Maine, he received a letter from Laughead containing two space messages, "each from a different channel." These, together with a paranormal experience involving a self-renewing piece of carbon paper, went some way toward changing his mind, laying the groundwork for the Spectra/Hoova affair described in the latter half of Uri.

Puharich's pursuit of Spectra (a hawk-headed entity said to communicate through Uri Geller) effectively placed him beyond the pale of orthodox science. Few people during the 1970s were prepared to substantiate his more extravagant claims. One who did was Ray Stanford, himself a contactee of many years' standing. In the autumn of 1973, Stanford was allegedly teleported a distance of some 30 miles, car and all, while en route to a meeting with Geller. This happened on two separate occasions and was reported to Saul-Paul Sirag with all due sobriety. For more on the Geller-Stanford connection, see Cosmic Trigger by Robert Anton Wilson.

Perhaps significantly, Stanford was a product the same milieu as Laughead and Williamson. Throughout the early '50s he and his twin brother Rex were involved in a long-running UFO case involving telepathic communication and channeling. One of their fellow contactees at the time was John McCoy, who in 1958 co-authored UFO's Confidential with Williamson.

McCoy wove many strange new skeins into the tapestry of UFO research, notably the theory that a cartel of "International Bankers" lay behind many 1950s sightings. ("International Bankers" is of course a favorite synonym among far rightists for people of the Hebrew persuasion.) For better or worse he and Williamson continue to influence the sensibilities of UFO researchers worldwide.

The Stanford brothers subsequently went their separate ways, each distinguishing himself in his chosen field. Rex worked extensively as a parapsychologist, first at St. Johns University in New York, and later for the Texas based Center for Parapsychological Research, while Ray formed the Association for the Understanding of Man (AUM), a fairly typical Great White Brotherhood setup.

Others of the original Adamski / Williamson circle weren't so lucky. Channelers Wilbur Wilkinson and Karl Hunrath, who collaborated with Williamson during the latter half of 1953, disappeared in November of that year after setting off from the Gardena Airport in Los Angeles county to make contact with a grounded UFO. No trace of their rented plane was ever found. D.J. Detweiler of Carlsbad, California, the man responsible for processing Adamski's earliest flying saucer photographs, died shortly afterwards. Hal Nelson, an associate of Hunrath and Williamson, was drowned, and Lyman Streeter, the ham radio operator whose contactee experiences are described in The Saucers Speak, [not to mention the delightfully kooky 1954 Williamson treatise entitled "A Message From Our Space Brothers Via Shortwave Radio" which pioneered such concepts as "density" levels, "photon belts" and so forth] ...succumbed to a 'heart seizure'. (?)

Williamson later ventured the opinion that Hunrath "was working as an agent for the Blacks of six solar systems of the Orion Nebula." His own researches continued in an unbroken trajectory, encompassing hermetics, ancient tribal lore, and Theosophical literature. There can be no doubt that, by accident or design, he and his various collaborators played an enormous part in shaping New Age thought in all its manifestations. Together they constituted the single most important occult group of the post-war era. Their influence is made all the more remarkable by the fact that it has seldom been acknowledged, or even perceived, by other researchers in the field.

As the 50s drew to a close, Williamson ceased to play an active role in UFO research, and instead founded a monastery in the Andes mountains. This occupied his time for several years. Later he returned to Santa Barbara, California, and was ordained into the Nestorian Church. Always an enigmatic figure, he died

in 1986, having retained his secrets to the end. Many details of his involvement with the Soulcraft group and its offshoots are now lost to us. Others of the circle are either dead or widely dispersed. Pelley and Adamski ...Hunrath and Laughead ... John Mc Coy and the Stanford brothers...It was from the tangled lives of these men that the contemporary UFO mythos first grew and took shape.

>From The Excluded Middle #3
P.O. Box 1077, Los Angeles, CA 90048

via CloudRider@aol.com

[[George Hunt Williamson](#)]

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