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# I

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## Close Encounters of Diverse Kinds

JONATHAN Z. SMITH

Noah sail'd round the Mediterranean in Ten  
Years, and divided the World into Asia, Afric and  
Europe, Portions for his three Sons. America  
then, it seems, was left to be his that could catch  
it.

John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*  
(1698), Treatise One, ch. XI, par. 142.

### I

To signal at the outset, as Steven Spielberg has done, the indebtedness of my title, I remind you of the labors of the late Chicago-area professor, J. Allen Hynek, to put the study of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) on a scientific basis.<sup>1</sup> In Hynek's typology, "close encounters of the first kind" are where alien ships are sighted; in the "second kind," the UFOs leave some physical mark of their presence; "close encounters of the third kind" are where contacts with the occupants of a UFO are made.<sup>2</sup> It will be with a variant of the latter "kind" with which we shall initially be concerned, considered, recently, by some to be a distinctive new type, "close encounters of the fourth kind."<sup>3</sup>

Since the fall of 1957, when a Brazilian farmer, Antonio Villas Boas, reported that a spaceship had landed on his farm, the occupants taking him aboard and performing a variety of physical acts on him,<sup>4</sup> a specific mode of American UFO tale has emerged, and found a secure, iconic place in popular culture: the Abduction Report.<sup>5</sup>

The first North American version was that of Betty and Barney Hill in the White Mountains of New Hampshire on the evening of September 19, 1961; it was widely disseminated through the television movie, *The UFO Incident*, and more recently reconfigured in a characteristically ingenious fashion in the late, lamented TV series, *Dark Skies*.<sup>6</sup> The Travis Walton narrative (Arizona, November 1975), recounting his five-day capture, the subject of the Paramount film, *Fire in the Sky*, is, perhaps, best

known, having received nationwide media attention.<sup>7</sup> The most developed, all but canonical report, is the Betty Andreasson narrative.<sup>8</sup> The most popular account remains Whitley Strieber's best seller, *Communion* (1987), presented as an autobiographical recounting of a series of experiences undergone by this well-known writer of horror stories.<sup>9</sup>

In all, by 1987, some 1200 North American abductions were filed under the name of the abductee; 600 to 700 narratives had been collected; 300 of these were carefully studied by the folklorist, Thomas E. Bullard, with 103 considered by Bullard to be "high information cases."<sup>10</sup> Bullard's comparative studies suggest that there is a persistent structure to Abduction Reports, with the same episodes recurring in invariant order in 80% of the "high information" narratives.<sup>11</sup> "A single deviation accounts for failure of sequence in almost all of the remainder."<sup>12</sup> Bullard distinguishes eight episodes.<sup>13</sup> By his own statistics, I would reduce the number to seven.

1. *Capture*. The aliens take the individual aboard a UFO.<sup>14</sup>
2. *Examination*. The aliens subject the individual to both physical and mental tests.<sup>15</sup> The first two episodes, capture and examination, are the most developed segments of the Abduction Reports. With the obvious addition of the penultimate episode, the return, they recur most frequently and contain the highest degree of repetitive elements.

To elaborate on the examination episode: once aboard, the human is taken to the examination room, a central, circular location, with a dome, dominated by an examination table, and usually lacking all other furniture. The placement of the room suggests that the ship was constructed with examination as its primary purpose. The abductee is stripped, cleaned, and placed on the table where she or he is subjected to a searching physical examination. The first stage is manual; the second, scanning with a mechanical device. Next, various needle-like instruments probe beneath the skin, with specimens of various sorts, especially bodily fluids, being taken. Either the ovaries or the testicles are probed in what seems to be the preoccupation of the examination with the reproductive system. (In one report, a male's examination was terminated and he was abruptly released because he had had a vasectomy). Finally, neurological tests are administered, at times climaxed by the insertion of some sort of miniaturized electronic device in the brain.

Significantly, it is most often in the context of the examination episode that we are given the fullest physical description of the aliens. While more than one hundred types of alien beings have been described in UFO reports and classified in taxonomic studies by Jadar U. Pereira, Eric Zurcher, David Chance, Patrick Huyghe, Kevin Randle, and Russ Estes,<sup>16</sup>

most commonly, in North American abduction narratives, they are represented as humanoids, three to five feet tall, with soft gray skin. Popularly referred to as “the Grays,” they have large hairless heads with tapering chins. Their eyes are large, extending around the sides of their heads like wraparound sunglasses. Their ears are tiny or absent, the nose and mouth are small holes. Their limbs are thin, with arms that reach to their knees. Their fingers are elongated, with less than five visible digits. Their legs are often short and oddly jointed, producing an awkward gait. They are most often represented as clothed in a neutrally colored, close-fitting garment which appears to be a uniform, at times belted or with a hood. There are usually no visual sexual characteristics. One alien, in some reports taller than the others, in other reports indistinguishable from the rest, serves as leader and liaison, both directing the examination and communicating with the human, frequently in a reassuring manner.<sup>17</sup>

3. *Conference.* The effects of the examination on the abductee are often described in terms ranging from discomfort and embarrassment to pain and terror consistent with its nature as a rape-like violation of a helpless subject. However, following the examination, the next reported episode is a conference between the aliens and the human, usually by means of telepathic communication, which, without supplying the reasons, claims a shift in attitude by the abductee towards the aliens from fear and hostility to friendly, positive feelings.<sup>18</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a different sort of narrative has emerged which describes the examination as sexual abuse, often related to an alien project of producing human-alien hybrids. This focus brings about a concomitant decline in the number of reports of a positive conference, the conference often being replaced by a horrified viewing of the hybrid embryos or children.<sup>19</sup>

4. *Tour.* The conference is usually followed by an escorted tour of the ship.<sup>20</sup>
5. *Journey.* The ship then leaves its landing site and conveys the human to a “strange place,” usually not identified as the aliens’ home base. In a very few cases, a “divine” figure is encountered.<sup>21</sup>
6. *Return.* A necessary part of the narrative structure of the Abduction Report, the return tale is usually quite brief, often reversing the capture sequence. The human is escorted out of the ship, frequently to the place of initial contact, and watches the UFO’s departure.<sup>22</sup>
7. *Aftermath.* A distinctive feature of Abduction Reports is that they do not conclude with the reintegration of the abductee into society or the resumption of ordinary life. She or he remains strongly marked by the experience, exhibiting a variety of often puzzling

symptoms.<sup>23</sup> Acute thirst and the need to bathe are the most immediate. Later, there will be nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety attacks, and noticeable personality changes, often relieved by remembering the experience under hypnosis. Others report further paranormal experiences, incidents of extrasensory perception, or visions of “men in black,” a subtype, studied by Peter M. Rojcewicz, which seems to be one of a number of subordinate elements which interpret the abduction experience as demonic. (Note that the recent Columbia-Amblin film, *Men in Black*, has quite inverted the significance of these figures).<sup>24</sup> In a few cases, further abductions, or recollections of previous abductions, are reported.

It will serve little purpose, here, to pause over the question of the truth of these reports, or to rehearse the various theories, from the psychoanalytic to the folkloristic, that have been brought to their interpretation.<sup>25</sup> For our reflections, their nature as narratives allow them to be linked with Mark Rose’s “paradigm” for science fiction: texts that “are composed within the semantic space created by the opposition of human . . . and non-human,”<sup>26</sup> and our attention is directed to their most elaborated episode and theme, the examination.

It may seem a simple conclusion to assert, with Bullard, that in these narratives, “the examination appears to be the real purpose of the encounter,”<sup>27</sup> and yet, this is quite remarkable. When one reads in the wider UFO literature, and, most particularly, in the alien contact or encounter literature produced by the stunning variety of UFO religions,<sup>28</sup> a variety of other motivations prevail: they are from a superior culture and bring us wisdom; they are from a threatened culture and bring us warning; they are from a dying planet or species which needs something from us; they come to lead; they come to share; they come to give; they come to exploit; they come to punish; they come to replace; they come to destroy. Whatever the scenario, there are interests at stake, be they ours, theirs, or mutual. By contrast, in the Abduction Reports, there are rarely explicit motivations.<sup>29</sup> Rather than interests, there seems only to be interest, or, better, disinterested observation, a curiosity often felt to be prurient by the abductee.

At one level, the Abduction Reports seem to be a modernist version of the literary subgenre, reverse anthropology, well known through texts such as *Gulliver’s Travels*. Americans are captured as specimens. They are helpless. They are manipulated (literally) without regard to their feelings as if they were not of the same order as their examiners. The humans are stripped, cleaned, and probed for incomprehensible reasons. Their only acknowledged function is that of providing data. And yet, faithful to the all but pornographic male fantasy of the ethnographic enterprise, the ab-

ductees' own emotions at being violated begin with fear and hostility and end with good will. It is only the concluding episode, the aftermath, which challenges this dominant scientific romance as the narratives go on to record the aftershocks, the posttraumatic effects of the encounter. Once examined, nothing is (or will be) ever the same again.

While it is tempting to develop these themes into a contemporary fable, one which would invoke a host of images from discipline and panopticons to the ambivalences of post-colonial discourses, something does not fit. Above all, it is the silence—not a lack of communication, but a lack of interrogation.<sup>30</sup> The aliens betray no interest in human culture, and impart nothing of their own. There is no trace of the interspecific, interlocutory agendum of cultural encounter which informs ethnographically sophisticated science fiction novels such as Chad Oliver's *Unearthly Neighbors* (New York, 1960); which underlies the recent essay by Jonathan vos Post, "How to Talk to an Extraterrestrial"<sup>31</sup>; or which was raised at the 1970 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in their symposium, "The Role of Anthropology in Outer Space."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, as has been noted, while not the explicit subject of the reports, there is a silent, mutual examination of bodies, ours and theirs. It is from a comparison of these bodies that I shall derive my fable for our reflection.

What the aliens seem to be interested in, above all, what they appear to most want to understand, is difference. As their bodies are represented to us in the Abduction Reports, it does not matter whether they are clothed or unclothed; either way they are uniform, neutrally gray, with no distinguishing features, whether of physiognomy or status. This uniformity was strikingly replicated in the 1997 collective suicide of the Heaven's Gate group with their erasure of difference by means of identical dress, haircuts, and traveling cases as well as the neutered males, as they awaited transportation to an alien ship hidden behind the Hale-Bopp comet.<sup>33</sup> In the Abduction Reports, the aliens are neither naturally nor culturally marked in any way visible to their human subjects. Their observed activities—search, seize, probe, release—could just as readily and interchangeably be performed by NASA-style robots. In archaic language, they are "protoplasts," "homunculi," existing permanently in this preformative state without any apparent imprinting mechanism to give them characteristics. They lack even the mysterious contagious processes of mimicry, of simulation, by which the protoplasts in the pods in the now thrice-made film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, assume the personal appearance, habits, character, and memory of those human individuals to which they are placed in close proximity. In the Abduction Reports, there is no transfer, only collection; and while there is concentrated interest in the human reproductive system, there are no processes of reproduction.

The aliens' attention to the body, to that which is, at one and the same time, most typical and most individual in any complex species, is an examination of that site at which difference, whether evaluated as natural or cultural, is most immediately apparent. The aliens' preoccupation with probing beneath the surface of the skin both the human reproductive system and the brain, while ignoring other, equally significant physiological systems,<sup>34</sup> is to focus on precisely those systems in which the problematics of difference are most complex and rich in information.

The comparison of bodies, theirs and ours, which underlies the central episode of the Abduction Reports might be expressed in the technical terminology of classical taxonomy as follows: the aliens' bodies, in their pre-formative uniformity, appear as essential; the humans' bodies, in their variegation, appear as accidental. The fable I want to construct out of the Abduction Reports for our further reflection is one of singularity and diversity. While the genre of fable requires relative brevity, this very characteristic often compels its exegesis and application to take the "long way round." In this case, the detour is necessarily historical, an element in the histories of the western imaginations of difference which will lead us to isolate the intellectual moment that made the invention of "race" necessary—the first, new, influential anthropological theory since the classical period, and one that made urgent the emergence of the human sciences.

## II

It is a commonplace to speak of western intellectual history as an inter-relationship between Athens and Jerusalem. Within the sphere of anthropological thought, at least through the sixteenth century, it is undoubtedly true. The biblical account of human origins and subsequent relations, especially the genealogical and territorial map of Genesis 10, was overlaid upon the rich Greek and Roman ethnographic tradition, especially as categorized and transmitted by classical and Christian encyclopaedists. The resultant system exhibited remarkable flexibility, ever accommodating to new elements. For example, as late as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, aided by the pseudo-Berossian forgeries of Annius of Viterbo,<sup>35</sup> new segments were added to both the Noachic genealogies and migrations to account for the origins of the population of all of known Europe, as well as Africa and Asia, as may be seen, for example, in the well-known ninth chapter of Jean Bodin's *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History* (1565).<sup>36</sup>

It was a system that, by its very elasticity, prevented surprise whenever similarities or differences were encountered in the peoples mapped upon it. For the genealogies that underlay the system, as well as the biblical

narration of anthropogony, guaranteed the essential unity of humankind. All were children of Adam and Eve, even though their lineages must be traced through Noah's three sons: Shem, Japhet, and Ham. Differences were, therefore, accidental. Drawing upon Greek and Roman theories, these were explained by the effects of climate, especially for somatic characteristics, and as the results of migration or diffusion for cultural divergencies. Similarities and differences were perceived as having documentary characteristics, allowing the mapping of spatial and temporal associations. Adopting the archaic Christian apologetic language for the relations of Christianity to classical culture, a notion of anthropologically significant survivals was developed in which the Christian scholar sought "seeds," "sparks," "traces," "footprints," "remains," or "shadows" of the original, essential unity of humankind amidst its palpable, contemporary diversity, and through which one could discern placement and reconstruct historical relations.<sup>37</sup>

Take, for example, the encounter with the Mongols (or, Tartars) in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the occasion for the first new ethnography in the West since Roman times. Older Christian pseudo-Sibylline oracles were updated to place the Mongols within the framework of an apocalyptic scenario that associated them with the Scythians, one of the borderlines of humanity on the old Herodotean ethnographic map, and, through them, with the release of the feared, biblical tribes of Gog and Magog, walled in by Alexander the Great in Jewish and Christian versions of the *Alexander Romance*.<sup>38</sup> In support of this, a new version of the pseudepigraphical *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle Concerning the Wonders of India* was produced, proclaiming the presence of apocalyptic trials and associating them with the advent of the Mongols.<sup>39</sup> Other initial reports of the Mongol incursions displayed more positive biblical placements: the first notice (1221) identified Genghis Khan with King David,<sup>40</sup> while the Hungarian Dominican, Brother Julian (1238), as well as the *Alexander to Aristotle* letter, declared them to be "sons of Ishmael."<sup>41</sup> An interpolation into a set of fourteenth-century French manuscripts of *Mandeville's Travels*, confusing Khan and (C)ham, connected the Mongols with the Noachic Hamitic lineage.<sup>42</sup> The Mongols were hitherto unknown to the West, but their presence constituted no surprise; they could be classified as another "remnant" of biblical ethnography. The literature on the Mongols, taken as a whole, demonstrates the power of the amalgamation of the Greco-Roman ethnographic tradition and the biblical. Even in times of extreme distress and military conflict, the flexibility of the system proved able to assimilate new elements while holding the map intact. Differences remained in the realm of accident; similarities in that of essence.

I know of no serious challenge to this interpretative system until the



post-Columbian debates over the nature of the Americas. It is here, for the first time, that a strong language of alterity emerges. America is an “other world,” a “new world.”<sup>43</sup> I shall not take time, here, to review the slow and difficult history of this perception,<sup>44</sup> but pause only to note that, as such, the American continent was a world wholly unknown to either the Greco-Roman or the biblical authors. In that regard, both sets of writings were irrevocably impeached. True, the Noachic model was reexamined, including the suggestion that there were two Arks, one that repopulated the familiar three-lobed world island of Africa, Europe, and Asia, a second that sailed, with its cargo of quite different species, to the new world<sup>45</sup>—an hypothesis most likely based on an observation of the effects of interweaving the so-called “J” and “P” Flood narratives, which, among other doublets, results in Noah, his family and the animals entering the Ark twice (Genesis 7.7–9[J]/Genesis 7.13–15[P]).

Other authorities expanded the migratory model in the face of the dilemma created by Noah having three rather than four sons. For example, in Gregorio García’s enormous encyclopaedic work on *The Origin of the Indians of the New World and the West Indies* (1st edition, 1607), theories that the Americas were populated by Jews, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Africans, Ethiopians, French, Cambrians, Finns, Frisians, or Scythians are reviewed.<sup>46</sup> As an appendix to this naval, Noachic, transatlantic catalogue, another possibility is raised, returning to the original Columbian misidentification of the native Americans as “Indians,” but, in fact, now a correct understanding, that the Americas were populated by an overland migration of Chinese or, more likely, Mongols.<sup>47</sup> Once this theory was isolated and disseminated, most famously by Edward Brerewood’s *Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages, and Religions through the Chiefe Parts of the World* (1614)<sup>48</sup> and by John Ogilby’s *America, Being the Latest, and most Accurate Description of the New World* (1671),<sup>49</sup> the old genealogical enterprise was resumed as to the Noachic genealogy of the Mongols, with descent from Japhet now being the most frequently argued connection.<sup>50</sup> But the haunting and shattering conclusion could not be long avoided; the elasticity of the old system finally proved insufficiently flexible. The Americas were a novelty that resisted absorption. There were no “traces.” The native Americans were untraceable. The “new world” was not merely newly discovered, it was not merely different, it was “other” in its very essence—a radical conclusion first and more readily made with respect to its flora and fauna. Thus Acosta (1590), in a passage much discussed in seventeenth-century works on the implications of America for biblicist anthropology:

What I say of the *guanacos* and *pacos* I will say of a thousand varieties of birds and fowls [in the Americas] that have never been known [previously] by either

name or appearance, nor is there any memory of them in the Latins or Greeks, nor in any nations of our [European] world over here. . . . It is well to ask whether these animals differ in kind and essence from all others, or if this difference be accidental . . . . But, to speak bluntly, anyone who in this way would focus only on the accidental differences, seeking thereby to explain [away] the propagation of the animals of the Indies and to reduce them [to variants] of the European, will be undertaking a task he will not be able to fulfill. For, if we are to judge the species of animals [in the Americas] by their [essential] properties, they are so different that to seek to reduce them to species known to Europe will mean having to call an egg a chestnut.<sup>51</sup>

This radical zoological conclusion could even be deployed analogically in seventeenth-century arguments for extraterrestrial life, as in Otto von Guericke (1672): “Anyone who would deny the presence of living creatures on the planets because he is not capable of imagining any creatures other than those he sees here on earth should know that in America there is no wild animal of exactly the same kind as in Europe, Asia or Africa.”<sup>52</sup>

The zoological and botanical discoveries of essential difference with respect to the Americas foreshadowed the same sort of revision within anthropology. The novelty and the alterity of the Americas introduced surprise.

### III

It is in the context of this disarray with respect to the centuries-old amalgam that a previously refused resource within theories associated with Greco-Roman ethnography was recovered and re-situated at the center of the European anthropological enterprise. The biblical narrative, and, therefore, western ethnologic theory was, up to this point, relentlessly monogenetic. There was a single ancestral pair from whom all humankind descended; there was a single locus, traditionally understood as somewhere in the Armenian mountains, from which all the intra-familial diversities of humankind ultimately diffused. However, such an account could not be sustained if, as the novelty and the alterity of the Americas suggested, difference was an affair of essence rather than of accident.

Deep within the Greco-Roman theories of migration and diffusion, mixture and borrowing, climate and ecology as the explanations for cultural similarities and differences was a second, oppositional structure which emphasized immobility and originality: that of autochthony.<sup>53</sup> While best known as an Athenian political topos (autochthony equals autonomy), the notion, more widely applied as in emergence myths, suggested not only that some people were sprung from the very soil they inhabit, but implied, as well, a plurality of places of origination. Rejected

by the monogenetic presuppositions of the biblically oriented Christian anthropology, autochthony was a theory of polygenesis.

Even at the present time, when we have returned to a Darwinian rather than a biblical notion of monogenesis, the concept of polygenesis persists in some of our most common ethnic designations: “aborigine” (classically understood as the Latin equivalent of autochthony), a people who has been in this or that place from their beginning; “indigenous,” “creole,” and “native,” a people first born (or, created) in the place they inhabit. Ironically, these terms in colonialist discourse shifted from expressing their firstness to ours, becoming a designation of the inhabitants found in a place when we first “discovered” it.

Some scholars find anticipations of polygenetic theory in the Renaissance hermeticists, especially Paracelsus and Bruno.<sup>54</sup> The scattered references are far from clear and seem to reflect speculations about spontaneous generation. By the seventeenth century, these hints would be fully developed. One of the earlier, unambiguous polygenetic accounts of the Americas is by an anonymous author, L. P., Master of Arts, in a work entitled *Two Essays, Sent in a Letter from Oxford, to a Nobleman in London* (1695):

The West Indies and the vast regions lately discovered towards the South abound with such a variety of inhabitants and new animals not known or even seen in Asia, Africa or Europe that the origin of them doth not appear so clear . . . especially seeing that there are no records or monuments of their migrations out of Asia or any other known parts of the world, either before or after the Flood; and their differences from all the rest of the Globe, in manners, languages, habits, religions, diets, arts and customs as well as in their quadrupeds, birds, serpents and insects, render their derivation very obscure and their origin uncertain, especially in the common [biblicist] way and according to the vulgar opinion of planting all the earth from one little spot. [In their] great zeal to maintain a Jewish tradition . . . every corner of the earth is searched to find out a word, a rite, or a custom in order to derive from thence many millions of different peoples. . . . [But] all nations agree in some words and in some customs, therefore a resemblance in a few of them is no proof. . . . I can see no way at present to solve this new face of nature by old arguments fetched from Eastern rubbish or rabbinical weeds. . . . Let them all [i.e., the new world humans, flora, and fauna] be *aborigines*.<sup>55</sup>

Although L. P.’s essay was not widely circulated, it contains, *in nuce*, the paradigmatic logic of the polygenetic argument: (1) given the utter novelty of the Americas, (2) the biblical account must be rejected (here the rejection contains an anti-Semitic element), (3) as must be the quest for “traces”; (4) the solution is that the life forms of the Americas are autochthonous: “let them all be *aborigines*.”

The polythetic logic had already been fully elaborated in its theological rather than its anthropological implications in one of the most controversial and widely known works of the seventeenth century, Isaac de la Peyrère's books collectively entitled *Prae-Adamitae* ("The Preadamites," 1655; English translation, *Men Before Adam*, 1656).<sup>56</sup>

Peyrère represents that longstanding fear of Catholicism, the lay Bible reader. He tells us that he has spent twenty years pondering Romans 5.12–14, the classic Augustinian and Reformation proof text for original sin, itself a monogenetic notion.<sup>57</sup> On the basis of the phrases "sin was not imputed when the Law was not" and "even over those whose sin was not like the transgression of Adam," he concluded that "sin was in the world before Adam" although "it was not imputed until Adam." Therefore, there were many sorts of humans before Adam; Adam was not the ancestor of humankind.

With this established, he turns to an exegesis of the opening chapters of Genesis. Genesis 1.26–27 shows that God created, by the power of the Word, vast numbers of humans (i.e., Gentiles) just as the deity created all of the different sorts of animals and plants. Genesis 2 records the special creation of Adam, the first Jew, out of clay. Turning his attention to a set of well-known conundrums, Peyrère notes that the Cain and Abel story indicates the presence of numerous other peoples: If the brothers were farmers and shepherds, who made the knife that killed Abel? Where did Cain's wife come from? Who are the others who would kill Cain? Who inhabited the cities that "covered" the world at that time?

More generally, he asserts, the Jewish biblical chronology is strictly limited. It comprises no more than some 5000 years. But Peyrère knows of older histories: the Chaldaeans record 470,000 years of history, the Mexicans and Peruvians write of thousands of suns, and Chinese history extends back 880,000 years.

Drawing upon the biblical criticism of his friend Richard Simon, Peyrère then argues that Moses wrote an epitome of earlier records at a comparatively late date. In Genesis chapters 1–11, Moses compressed a series of long works into several brief chapters, being more interested in his own time than in prehistory. Thus, Moses was being no more than hyperbolic when he declared Adam to be the first human rather than the first Jew; the Flood was a limited phenomenon, confined to parts of Palestine which were easily repopulated by Noah's three sons. Hence all parallels between the biblical account and other cultures are merely superficial.

The polygenetic accounts of L. P. and La Peyrère in principle freed anthropology from its biblical framework. The Bible was reduced to a parochial document, the history of the Jews of a relatively early period. It was no longer to be understood as the universal history of humankind.

Human diversity now became an urgent intellectual problem. While these radical conclusions would be debated throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they contributed to the formation of the first, new western theory for explaining human similarities and differences, the theory of race, the possibility that the genus *homo* might be divided by essential rather than accidental characteristics into separate species of differing lineages—a possibility first put forth by François Bernier in an article in the *Journal des Savants*, April 24, 1684.<sup>58</sup>

It was neither Orientals nor Blacks, who had long been mapped on the old Greco-Roman and biblical taxonomy, that gave rise to the intellectual problematics of race. Rather it was the unanticipated presence of native Americans, a surprise of profound implication, rendered even more certain once it was clear beyond doubt, post-Magellan, that America was not a part of Asia.

#### IV

To expand fully on the history of race theories and polygenesis would require a lengthy study, recalling the judgment of George Stocking, Jr.: “It seems fair to say that polygenism—or more broadly the problem of race—was the central concern of pre-Darwinian anthropology.”<sup>59</sup> I can, here, give only a few conclusions, shorn of their necessary historical narratives which would, among other matters, have to trace the development of two complex terms and ideas, the new sixteenth-century coinage, “race,” and an old term, now reconfigured, “species.”

Simply put, monogenesis celebrated similarity, polygenesis, diversity—the latter leading, for the first time, to the development of a complex vocabulary for describing and explaining difference, limited by the unfortunate eighteenth-century decision to correlate biological and cultural characteristics. From the point of view of difference, with respect to biology, the intellectual choice was whether to understand the human “races” as “varieties” (i.e., accidents) or “species” (i.e., essences). If difference was understood to be accidental, a monogenetic account could be fashioned where difference was accounted for by environmental and historical causes. If difference was understood to be essential, then a polygenetic account which held the races to be irreducible was required. From the point of view of similarity, with respect to culture, a monogenetic account would need to refurbish the old language of diffusion and derivation. A polygenetic theory would have to emphasize parallel, independent development. In the biological language introduced by Richard Owen in the nineteenth century, for monogenetic approaches, cultural resemblances would be “homologies”; for polygenetic ap-

proaches, they would be “analogies.”<sup>60</sup> From these choices, combined with questions of hierarchy, a necessary component in any classical taxonomic enterprise, one can generate the central debates which dominated eighteenth- and nineteenth-century anthropological discourse, and, still, to a large degree, rule popular perceptions, processes, and notions of cross-cultural comparison.

Having undertaken an historical detour, we can return to the Alien Abduction Reports. The central episode, the examination, appears to be a displacement onto “them” of our popular notion for understanding human difference as chiefly an affair of bodies, as being only “skin deep.” The uniformity of their bodies, in contradistinction to the differentiation of ours, is a striking exaggeration of our commonsense belief, derived from the Greco-Roman and biblical amalgam, that there is an essential core of human sameness and, therefore, that difference is accidental, transferred, in the narratives, to the imagination of an unambiguously polygenetic situation: alien and human. But, in the examination episode, it is the silence that remains, be it expressed in the lack of either the interrogative or the indicative with respect either to the aliens’ culture or to ours, or in the lack of recognition of the problematics of communication, within and between cultures, let alone across phyla, expressed in the Reports as the aliens too ready use of English or extralinguistic mental telepathy.

To this one must respond, whether with respect to popular belief or professional procedure, that the issue of human differentiation will not be settled by more observation at the somatic level, but rather by theories of an intellectual sort. It will not be settled by taxonomies of differential exclusion, but by comparative structures of reciprocal difference. It will be settled, at the level of culture, only by thoughtful projects of mediated discourse, by enterprises of translation, recalling that, whether intra-cultural or intercultural, translation is never fully adequate, there is always discrepancy. *Traduttori traditori*. And that, therefore, central to any proposal of translation are questions as to appropriateness or “fit,” expressed through the double methodological requirement of comparison and criticism. As Isaiah Berlin framed it, in the course of one of his meditations on Vico: “In a sense, the mere existence of an extraordinary variety of very dissimilar languages . . . is itself an index or, one might say, a model of the irreducible variety of human self-expression, such that even in the case of cognate languages, complete translation of one into any other is in principle impossible; and the gap—indicative of difference in ways of perceiving and acting—is at times very large indeed.”<sup>61</sup> To which I need only add that in culture as in language, it is difference which generates meaning.

The novelty of the Americas gave the West its first compelling lan-

guage of difference, shattering, thereby, the older synthetic theory of essence and accident. We have yet to set forth a set of equally compelling cultural and comparative theories adequate to this new language. This remains, today, the unfulfilled challenge to the human sciences.

## Notes

1. J. A. Hynek, "Epilogue," in S. Spielberg, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1977): 253–56.

2. J. A. Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974): 31–34, et passim; Hynek, "Epilogue": 253–54.

3. The terminology gained some currency by its inclusion in the Glossary of A. Pritchard, D. E. Pritchard, J. E. Mack, P. Kasey, C. Yapp, eds., *Alien Discussions: Proceedings of the Abduction Study Conference held at MIT, Cambridge, MA* (Cambridge, MA: North Cambridge Press, 1994): 680: "CE-IV is not part of Hynek's original classification but is used to mean abduction by entities." C. D. B. Bryan entitled his account of the conference *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind: Alien Abduction, UFO's, and The Conference at M.I.T.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995). In fact, the new terminology was little used in the published proceedings. My understanding of the abduction narrative is echoed by David Webb, at the conference, "We have a huge catalogue of CE-III cases of which the abduction cases are a subset" (Pritchard, et al., *Alien Discussions*: 99).

4. G. Creighton, "The Amazing Case of Antonio Villas Boas," in Ch. Bowen, ed., *The Humanoids* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969): 200–38; C. and J. Lorenzen, *Encounters with UFO Occupants* (New York: Berkley Books, 1976): 61–87; K. Randle and R. Estes, *Faces of the Visitors: An Illustrated Reference to Alien Contact* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997): 133–41. As Boas's reported experience included compelled sexual intercourse, it more closely resembles a later stage in the development of abduction narratives. (See below, n. 19.)

5. See T. E. Bullard's classic work, *UFO Abductions: The Measure of a Mystery* (2 vols.: vol. 1, *Comparative Study of Abduction Reports*; vol. 2, *Catalogue of Cases*; Mount Rainier, MD: Fund for UFO Research, 1987). He gives a general definition of the Abduction Report as a narrative where a "witness is captured and held in unwilling temporary detention by extraordinary and apparently alien beings usually aboard a flying craft of unconventional design and usually for purposes something like a medical examination" (1: vii). See below, for Bullard's description of typical plot elements.

6. J. G. Fuller, *The Interrupted Journey* (New York: Dial, 1968) is the richest account, widely known through its abridged serialization, "Aboard a Flying Saucer," *Look*, October 4, 1966, 44–48, 53–56; October 18, 1966, 111–21. The television film, *The UFO Incident*, first aired on NBC, October 20, 1975. See further the important synoptic treatment of the Hill narratives in Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 2: 79–93.

7. T. Walton, *The Walton Experience* (New York: Berkley, 1979).

8. R. E. Fowler, *The Andreasson Affair* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall,

1979); Fowler, *The Andreasson Affair, Phase Two* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982).

9. W. Strieber, *Communion: A True Story* (New York: Avon Books, 1987). Strieber's narratives have continued in a series, from *Transformation: The Breakthrough* (New York: Avon, 1988) to *Confirmation: The Hard Evidence of Aliens among Us* (New York: Avon, 1998). Strieber's relations with the wider UFO community have become increasingly tense. See the account by S. Casteel, "Q&A: Strieber Sounds Off," *UFO* 8:5 (1993): 20–23.

10. Bullard's works, since his dissertation, "Mysteries in the Eye of the Beholder: UFO's and their Correlates as a Folkloric Theme Past and Present" (Indiana University, Bloomington, 1982), have been central. In addition to his foundational study, *UFO Abductions*, also summarized in Bullard, *On Stolen Time: A Summary of a Comparative Study of the UFO Mystery* (Mount Rainier, MD: Fund for UFO Research, 1987), see, among others, "UFO Abduction Reports: The Supernatural Kidnap Narrative Returns in Technological Disguise," *Journal of American Folklore*, 102 (1989): 147–70; "Hypnosis and UFO Abductions: A Troubled Relationship," *Journal of UFO Studies*, n.s. 1 (1989): 3–40; "Folkloric Dimensions of the UFO Phenomenon," *Journal of UFO Studies*, n.s. 3 (1991): 1–57; as well as his several contributions in Pritchard, et al., *Alien Discussions: A Comparative Study of Abduction Reports: Update*, (45–48), "The Rarer Abduction Episodes," (72–74), "The Well-Ordered Abduction: Pattern or Mirage" (81–82), "The Variety of Abduction Beings" (90–91), "The Relation of Abduction Reports to Folklore Narratives" (389–92), and "Addendum: The Influence of Investigators on UFO Abduction Reports: Results of a Survey" (571–619; on the latter, cf. Bullard, *The Sympathetic Ear: Investigators as Variables in UFO Abduction Reports* [Mount Rainier, MD: Fund for UFO Research, 1995]).

11. Bullard, "Folkloric Dimensions": 23; Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 52–57.

12. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 47–57, et passim; Bullard, "UFO Abduction Reports": 153–54.

13. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 58–63.

14. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 58–63. Bullard distinguishes four subelements in this segment of the narrative. (a) Alien intrusion by the UFO. (b) Entry into a "zone of strangeness" where ordinary physical laws seem suspended. (c) A time lapse in which the individual becomes, in some way, mentally impaired. Most frequently expressed as amnesia, it remains a curious (and troubling) feature of the abduction experience that the majority of them have been recovered under hypnosis. (See Bullard, "Hypnosis and UFO Abductions"). (d) The actual procurement of the individual is often described as a series of events: a beam of light strikes the individual, pulling him or her towards the ship; aliens approach and a brief conversation, by speech or telepathy, follows which pacifies the subject who is then escorted (frequently "floated") to the ship. If there has not been a previous impairment of the faculties, the abductee often experiences "doorway amnesia" upon entering the craft, which is usually described as the familiar "flying saucer." Inside, there is uniform antiseptic lighting with no visible source. Temperatures are cold; the atmosphere is misty and it is difficult to breathe. Doors open and close without apparent seams. See, now, B. Hopkins "The Abduction Experience: Acquisition," in Pritchard, et al., *Alien Discussions*: 49–52, which re-



flects the shift, in the later phase of Abduction Reports, from outdoors to the subject's bedroom. See the perceptive remarks on this shift in J. Dean, *Aliens in America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998): 100–101.

15. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 81–103. Compare the section, “Medical Examination and Subsequent Procedures,” in Pritchard, et al. *Alien Discussions*: 53–64.

16. J. U. Pereira, “Les Extra-Terrestres,” *Phénomènes spatiaux*, special issue 2 (1974); E. Zurcher, *Les Apparitions d'humanoides* (Nice: Alain Lefevre, 1979); P. Huyghe, *The Field Guide to Extraterrestrials* (New York: Avon, 1996); D. Chance, *A Visual Guide to Alien Beings* (n.p., 1996); K. Randle and R. Estes, *Faces of the Visitors*. Cf. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 239; D. M. Jacobs, et al., “Descriptions of Aliens,” in Pritchard, et al., *Alien Discussions*: 86–99.

17. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 238–99.

18. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 104–111.

19. The sexual-abuse narrative provides the focus of works such as B. Hopkins, *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1987); D. M. Jacobs, *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); Jacobs, *The Threat: The Secret Alien Agenda* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); and J. E. Mack, *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994); and it was a major component in the reports and discussions at the 1992 M.I.T. Abduction Conference, see Pritchard et al., *Alien Discussions*, esp. D. M. Jacobs, “Subsequent Procedures,” (pp. 64–68); C. D. B. Bryan, *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind*: 17–20 et passim. As articulated in the pithy comment of J. Dean, *Aliens in America*: 101: “Rather than an outside event, happening mostly to men on the road . . . in the early sixties and . . . in the seventies, abduction in the late eighties happens inside, in bedrooms.” See the few instances of this element in earlier reports in Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 91–92, 350–60; 2: 66–75.

20. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 111–12.

21. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 112–17. Bullard classifies the encounter with a divine being as a sixth separate episode (pp. 117–18). On the basis of his statistics, it is uncommon enough to be subsumed as a component in the journey-episode.

22. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 63–66.

23. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 143–73.

24. P. M. Rojcewicz, “The ‘Men in Black’ Experience and Tradition: Analogues with the Traditional Devil Hypothesis,” *Journal of American Folklore*, 100 (1987): 148–60. Compare the novel by S. Perry, based on the screenplay by E. Solomon, *Men in Black* (New York: Bantam, 1997) which represents the Men in Black as a government agency dedicated to tracking down, regulating, and/or destroying alien life-forms disguised as humans.

25. See the review of the literature in Bullard, “Folkloric Dimensions.”

26. M. Rose, *Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981): 31–32.

27. Bullard, “UFO Abduction Reports”: 157. This has been a persistent theme in Bullard's work; see *UFO Abductions*, 1: 90, “the examination is the major goal

of the abduction, perhaps its only goal"; 1: 358, "examinations are the heart of abductions"; see further, 1: 122–23, 354 et passim.

28. For a valuable overview, see the collection, J. R. Lewis, ed., *The Gods Have Landed: New Religions from Other Worlds* (Albany: State University of NY Press, 1995).

29. A few narratives do give reasons comparable to those listed above (Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 108–109, 123, 125–26, 136–38), but they are a distinct minority. The narratives of sexual abuse (see above, note 19) often provide hybridization as a rationale.

30. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 110–111, 119–20.

31. J. vos Post, "How To Talk to an Extraterrestrial," in B. Fawcett, ed., *Making Contact: A Serious Handbook for Locating and Communicating with Extraterrestrials* (New York: Avon Books, 1998): 54–98.

32. M. Maruyama and A. Harkin, eds., *Cultures Beyond the Earth: The Role of Anthropology in Outer Space* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

33. I rely on contemporary news reports. It should be noted that the Heaven's Gate group, under a variety of names, had been active with respect to UFO mythology since 1973, and had been well studied by sociologists since 1975. See R. W. Balch, "Waiting for the Ships: Disillusionment and the Revitalization of Faith in Bo and Peep's UFO Cult," in Lewis, *The Gods Have Landed*: 137–86, and the bibliography by J. G. Melton and G. M. Eberhart in Lewis: 275–76.

34. Bullard, *UFO Abductions*, 1: 90–91.

35. Johannes Annius of Viterbo, *Commentaria super opera diversorum auctorum de antiquitatibus* (Rome, 1498). See the discussion of this work in D. C. Allen, *The Legend of Noah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963): 114–16.

36. Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem* (1565), in the English translation by B. Reynolds, *Method for the Easy Comprehension of History by Jean Bodin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969): 334–64.

37. See further, M. T. Hodgen, *The Doctrine of Survivals: A Chapter in the History of Scientific Method in the Study of Man* (London: Allenson & Co., 1936).

38. R. E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983): 9–24 et passim. For the Gog-Magog traditions, see A. R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Enclosed Nations* (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1932; vol. 12 in the series, Publications Medieval Academy of America), esp. 58–86.

39. Lerner, *Powers of Prophecy*: 12, n. 5, referring to an unpublished text, MS UB Innsbruck 187 (fol. 8r–v).

40. F. Zarnacke, *Der Priester Johannes* (Leipzig, 1879–83): 4–59. Note that King David, while understood as a "recirculation" of the biblical figure, is here identified as the son of Prestor John.

41. G. A. Bezzola, *Die Mongolien in abendlandischer Sicht, 1220–1270* (Bern, 1974): 41–43.

42. For example, Fitzwilliam Additional MS 23, fols. 144–45, in J. B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in European Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981): 102–103 and 237, n. 68. See also, M. Letts, ed.,

*Mandeville's Travels: Texts and Translations* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1953), 1: 154–55.

43. See the useful collection of the terminology of novelty in K. Kretschmer, *Die Entdeckung Amerikas und ihre Bedeutung für die Geschichte des Weltbildes* (Leipzig, 1892); 360–69.

44. See my discussion of this, with the essential bibliography, in J. Z. Smith, “What a Difference a Difference Makes,” in J. Neusner and E. S. Frerichs, eds., *‘To See Ourselves as Others See us’: Christians, Jews, ‘Others,’ in Late Antiquity* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985): 21–44.

45. See the critique of this view of an “*otra Arca de Noé*,” in José de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (Seville, 1590), Book I, chapter 16, in the edition of E. O’Gorman (Mexico City, 1962): 45.

46. G. García, *El origen de los Indios de el Nuevo Mundo e Indias occidentales*, 1st ed. (Valencia, 1607); 2nd ed., A. Gonzalez de Barcia, ed. (Madrid, 1729). I cite the reprint of the 2nd ed., edited by F. Pease (Mexico City, 1981): 41–308.

47. García, *El origen*: 239–48, 315.

48. E. Breewood, *Enquiries Touching the Diversity of Languages, and Religions through the Chiefe Parts of the World* (London, 1614): 96–102.

49. J. Ogilby, *America, Being the Latest, and most Accurate Description of the New World* (London, 1671): 35–42.

50. See, among others, A. Tornielli, *Annales sacri, ab orbe condito ad ipsum Christi Passione repartum, praecipus ethicorum temporibus apte ordinateque dispositi* (Milan, 1610), 2: 239; A. de la Calancha, *Cronica moralizada de la Orden de San Augustin en el Perú* (Barcelona, 1639), 1: 41–46.

51. Acosta, *Historia natural y moral*, IV.36 in O’Gorman: 202–3. For its use in debates, see, among others, Matthew Hale, *The Primitive Organization of Mankind, considered and examined according to the Light of Nature* (London, 1677): 198–201.

52. Otto von Guericke, *Experimenta nova (ut vocantur) Magdeburgica de Vacuo spatio* (1672; rep., Aalen, 1962): 216, as cited in K. S. Guthke, *The Last Frontier: Imagining Other Worlds from the Copernican Revolution to Modern Science Fiction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990): 178.

53. The classic study remains that of N. Loraux, “L’Autochthonie: Une to-pique athénienne,” *Annales, Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 34 (1979): 3–26, English translation, N. Loraux, *The Children of Athena* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993): 37–71. See further, E. Montanari, *Il mito dell’autoctonia* (Rome, 1981); V. J. Rosivach, “Autochthony and the Athenians,” *Classical Quarterly*, 81 (1987): 294–306.

54. For example, Paracelsus, *Astronomia magna* (1537–38), in K. Sudoff and W. Mattiessen, eds., *Paracelsus: Sämtliche Werke* (Munich, 1922–33), 12: 35, 114, 469. Giordano Bruno, *De immenso, innumerabilibus et infigurabilibus* (1590), in F. Fiorentino, et al., eds. *Jordani Bruno Nolani, Opera latine conscripta* (Naples, 1879–86), 1.2: 282.

db55. L. P., Master of Arts, *Two Essays, Sent in a Letter from Oxford, to a Nobleman in London. The First, concerning some Errors about the Creation, General Flood, and the Peopling of the World. In Two Parts. The Second, concerning the Rise, Progress, and Destruction of Fables and Romances. With the State of Learning*

(London, 1695), reprinted in J. Somers, *A Third Collection of scarce . . . Tracts* (London, 1751), 3: 291–308 (rep., London, 1814). I follow the convenient reprint of extracts from the latter in J. S. Slotkin, *Readings in Early Anthropology* (New York: Werner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research Inc. [no. 40 in the series, Viking Fund Publications], 1965): 82–83. Another reprint of the relevant passages may be found in T. Bendyshe, *The History of Anthropology* (London: Trübner and Co., 1865): 365–71 (same as *Memoirs of the Anthropological Society of London* 1 [1863–64]: 335–458). See the polemic rejoinder by J. Harris, *Remarks on some late Papers (by L.P.) relating to the Universal Deluge* (London, 1697). The only extended treatment of this important essay is G. Gliozzi, *Adamo e il nuovo mondo* (Florence, 1976): 585–93.

56. Isaac de la Peyrère, *Prae-Adamitae, sive Exercitatio super Verbibus duodecimo, decimotertio et decimoquartyo, capitia quinti Epistolae D. Pauli ad Romanos. Quibus inducuntur Primi Homines ante Adamum conditi* (n.p. [Amsterdam], 1655); anonymous English translation, *Men Before Adam. Or a Discourse upon the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth Verses of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans. By which are Prov'd that the first Men were created before Adam* (London, 1656). See further, D. Pastine, “La origini del poligenismo e Isaac La Peyrère,” *Miscellanea Seicento*, Istituto di Filosofia della Facolta di Lettere e Filosofia dell’ Università di Genova, 1 (1971): 7–234; R. H. Popkin, *Isaac la Peyrère: 1596-1676* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987), with rich bibliography.

57. Hence Pius XII’s attack on polygenesis, along with other modern scientific theories, in the encyclical, *Humani Generis*, August 12, 1950.

58. F. Bernier, “Une nouvelle division de la Terre d’après les différentes espèces des races d’hommes qui l’habitent,” *Journal des Savants*, April 24, 1684.

59. G. W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968): 40.

60. R. Owen, *Lectures on the Comparative Anatomy and Physiology of the Invertebrate Animals* (London, 1843). See further, E. R. Lankester, “On the Use of the Term Homology in Modern Zoology, and the Distinction Between Homogenetic and Homoplastic Agreements,” *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, 6 (1870): 34–43.

61. I. Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas*, ed. H. Hardy (London: John Murray, 1990; rep., Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 61.