

## **Communion: The Mystical and Erotic Dimensions of Alien Abductions**

by Megan Wilde, RELI 363, Fall 02

### **Introduction**

Human beings have always placed religious significance on the sky, imagining it to be the abode of the divine. The ancient Egyptians buried their pharaohs with special rites so they could join the sun god in the heavens. The Romans believed that the founder of their city, Romulus, was taken into the sky by Jupiter. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God is thought to rule from the sky. It is not surprising then that human beings might regard the aliens of the contemporary world, who also come to us from the sky, as divine. It follows that encounters with aliens would be religious experiences. As religious experiences, alien encounters are more in line with the modern, scientific worldview than traditional cosmologies. A hi-tech society that can no longer believe in salvation by a superhuman deity can believe in salvation by technologically-advanced superhuman extraterrestrials. Thus, alien abductions can be seen as a “projection of traditional religious themes onto a technological framework.” (Whitmore 74)

Like religious and mystical experiences which are often couched in terms of sexual union, when these extraterrestrial encounters assume the form of abductions, they often involve some form of sexual union of the abductee and the alien. The purpose of this union is creating a new race of human-alien hybrid beings that will save mankind. If viewed as psychological events, these sexual unions could be seen as a resurfacing of the Jungian archetype of the triad – the One and the Other come together to form a third that restores a lost unity. A spiritually incomplete human unites with an emotionally and physically incomplete alien to produce a more perfect race of beings that will provide salvation for both species.

On another level, the sexual union of alien and human offers a different form of salvation – salvation from the male homoerotic model of traditional mystical experience. The alien partner is usually the opposite gender of the abductee; their union is therefore a heteroerotic one. This offers an escape from the traditional model of a male mystic uniting with a male god. Furthermore, the alien-human union is more gender-inclusive, in that the experiences of women are equally valid as those of men.

### **History of the Abduction Experience**

Throughout history and across cultures, people have reported encounters with beings from other worlds. Such encounters closely resemble alien abductions in their often sexual nature and the

religious significance frequently placed on the otherworldly beings. The Hopi believed they were taught agricultural techniques and given spiritual guidance by Kachinas, spirit-like beings from other planets. The Cherokee and Lakota/Dakota “believe that they are descended from star people, specifically from the ‘seven sisters’ constellation or Pleiades.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 170) The Irish believed in fairies, who were thought to be fallen angelic beings from other planets. Like aliens, fairies needed the help of humans to reproduce, and “encounters with [fairies] were often erotic experiences for the humans involved.” (Whitmore 77) The Norsemen believed in a race of dwarves who abducted humans for reproductive purposes.

Alien encounters were occurring as early as 1758, when Emanuel Swedenborg published a treatise about his travels to the various planets of the solar system, including Mars where he performed a detailed study of Martian anatomy. The modern abduction phenomenon began much more recently with the experiences of Barney and Betty Hill in 1961. While driving down an isolated rural road in the White Mountains, the couple were reportedly taken aboard a UFO and subjected to various physical examinations by gray-skinned humanoid beings with large heads, slanted black eyes, and small mouths. These physical examinations included “a device placed over [Barney’s] groin” that removed “something” (Denzler 49) and a “pregnancy test” (Denzler 49) conducted on Betty. However, these details were not recalled until 1962 when Barney and then Betty underwent hypnosis. Thus, the Hill abduction includes almost all of the properties of a typical modern abduction experience – gray-skinned humanoids, physical examinations, reproductive procedures, and hypnotic recall.

In 1965, after the Hills’ hypnotic sessions but before their account was publicly documented, another account of a Brazilian farmer, Antonio Villas-Boas, was published. In December 1957, a strange light approached Villas-Boas while he was working in a field. He tried to run, but two “people” (Denzler 51) emerged and dragged him into a UFO. There he was disrobed, subjected to a blood test, washed with some kind of liquid, and then became violently ill due to a strange odor inside the craft. In his public statement, he said that a “small female” (Denzler 51) approached him and immediately his illness dissipated. What Villas-Boas did not tell the press was that the female who entered the room was also naked. She came to Villas-Boas “with the expression of someone wanting something...[he] began to get excited...” (Denzler 52) and he was irresistibly drawn to have intercourse with the female. He stated, “[t]hat was what they wanted of me – a good stallion to improve their own stock.” (Denzler 52) Villas-Boas account thus added another element to the typical abduction narrative – forced sexual union between the human abductee and an alien for the purpose of breeding hybrid beings.

The first alien abduction account that was discussed as a religious experience was that of Betty Andreasson in 1979. Her narrative follows the typical narrative structure, but also involved a religious vision “of the death and rebirth of a phoenix.” (Denzler 54) “She [also reported] what can only be called a mystical experience, in which the aliens introduced her to a being called the One, with whom she experienced ecstatic union.” (Whitmore 76)

### **The Reality of the Alien Abduction**

The debate over the reality of alien abductions often is a clash between two opposite viewpoints. One argues that alien abduction reports are literal accounts of encounters with extraterrestrials. The other argues that alien abductions are either fantasy, hoax or psychological aberration. Despite the endless arguments and vast amount of evidence amassed by both sides, neither has successfully proven that alien abductions are entirely objective or subjective experiences. A few theorists have tried to find a compromise, offering a synthesis of the objective and subjective reality of abductions.

C. G. Jung laid the groundwork for this synthesis in *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*. Jung, concerning himself only with the “undoubted psychic aspect” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 7) of UFO sightings, offers three possible explanations for UFOs. The first is that “an objectively real, physical process forms the basis for an accompanying myth.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 7) The second is that “an archetype creates a corresponding vision.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 7) The final hypothesis is that “synchronicity” is at work – “an acausal but meaningful coincidence juxtaposing the appearance of strange objects in the sky with deep-seated psychic needs.” (Bullard 401) The psychoid unity buried in the human mind at times “reasserts itself through the mediation of archetypes in instances of synchronicity, where events mingle psychic and physical properties.” (Bullard 401) UFOs are thus a combination of the subjective and objective in that they are archetypal products – “tied to deeper levels where no ontological dichotomy exists.” (Bullard 401) The parallels between abductions, folklore traditions, mystical and near-death experiences can be explained by synchronicity, in that all of these experiences are the product of deep-seated mental forces combining with physical events.

Continuing the process of finding a synthesis of the objective and subjective, Kenneth Ring in [The Omega Project](#), looking at the similarities between near-death experiences and alien abductions, hypothesizes the existence of an “imaginal realm, an alternate reality that belongs to a

wider conception of existence than the conventional world view allows.”<sup>1</sup> (Bullard 400) Ring proposes that abductees, because they are often abused as children, develop dissociation as a coping mechanism at an early age. In conjunction with this dissociative capacity, these people also develop psychological absorption, the “ability to concentrate on inner or alternate realities.” (Bullard 403) These developmental faculties cause these people to shift into an atypical state of consciousness in the presence of strange phenomena and situations.

One such strange phenomena could be “earth lights, luminous phenomena produced by tectonic strain on rocks.” (Bullard 404) Electromagnetic energy from such phenomena acting on the temporal lobe of the brain (which is abnormally active in persons prone to abductions and near-death experiences) sets off hallucinatory and psychophysiological responses. These responses could then be shaped by cultural expectations into an apparent alien abduction.

This seems at first to be an argument for reducing abductions to neurological processes. However, Ring proposes that these neurological events open a window on another reality, which he terms the “imaginal realm.” This imaginal realm is “the cumulative result of human imaginative thought, and takes on the properties of a fully objective entity. It has form, dimension and persons inherent in it.” (Bullard 404) The concept of the imaginal realm unites a subjective experience with an objective reality.

Similar to Ring’s hypothesis is that of researcher Rick Strassman. Strassman conducted a study involving the effects of DMT, a potent psychedelic that is found naturally in small amounts in the human brain. Strassman found that DMT induced a variety of experiences in his subjects, including mystical experiences and more importantly abduction experiences. The fact that an abduction experience can be induced by the injection of a chemical again seems to point towards abductions as a purely neurological phenomena. However, Strassman, like Ring, posits the existence of an alternate reality, to which DMT acts as a gateway. He uses the analogy of changing channels on a television. Usually most people are “watching everyday reality, Channel Normal.” (Strassman 315) “DMT provides regular, repeated, and reliable access to ‘other’ channels.” (Strassman 315) These other channels are transmitting all the time, but we do not normally tune into them. Our mind is

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<sup>1</sup> “The term *imaginal* was taken from the writings of Henry Corbin, a scholar of Muslim mysticism, who in turn based the notion on the work of a twelfth-century Sufi named Ibn al-‘Arabi. According to al-‘Arabi, the imaginal realm is an inherently ambiguous world that stands between the corporeal and the spiritual worlds and must be understood in terms of both. Manifestations from this realm can bring entities from here into contact with the corporeal world of human beings in such a way that the sensory impressions made on human observers are virtually indistinguishable from the sensory impressions made by ordinary material objects.” (Denzler 113)

simply not designed to do so. But when high amounts of DMT are released in the brain, our mind is opened up to these other planes of existence.

Psychologist John Mack proposes a similar understanding of abduction experiences that involves the existence of other “ontological levels” or “multiple universes” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 37). These other realms, he suggests, are in some way connected to “dark matter” that constitutes ninety-nine percent of the matter in the universe. (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 37) Mack cites the thoughts of theologian Huston Smith, who postulates “an invisible order with its own population and ways of behaving [that may not even] need physical underpinnings” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 37) might exist within this invisible dark matter. Mack goes on to discuss “consciousness as a vehicle of interdimensional transport” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 59) that enables the human mind to enter the realms in dark matter.

For the purposes of this paper, we will combine all of the above hypotheses. We will look at alien abductions as neither entirely objectively real nor entirely subjectively real. Like Jung, we will assume that encounters with aliens involve the mediation of archetypes in events that combine physical and psychic properties. This assumption allows us to examine alien abductions as psychological events. However, we will not exclude the possibility that these psychological events are in some way connected to an alternate objective reality, like Ring’s “imaginal realm,” Strassman’s alternate channels or Mack’s realms in dark matter.

### **Mystical Dimensions of Alien Abductions**

“The sacred, the numinous, is that which is ‘wholly other.’” (Whitmore 80) As the name suggests, aliens are a personification of the wholly Other – they are physically, sexually and spiritually Other. As encounters with the numinous Other, alien abductions are essentially mystical experiences. As one abductee hypothesized, “I think this whole phenomenon [of abductions] is about the desire of humanity to touch the numinous and the numinous coming closer.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 223)

By definition, mystical experiences involve a direct encounter with the divine. Abductees often describe their experiences as such. One abductee said that her abduction enabled her to “plug into Source, or God...[a state of] unqualified and unmitigated love...[as she became] a medium to, if you will, the Divine.”(Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 68) Another abductee concluded that “ultimately [the abduction is] about knowing God.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 221) Other abductees speak of abductions as a “return to the One” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 231) or

coming “face to face with the infinite...[becoming] connected to all that is.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 239)

William James argued that there were four characteristics of a mystical experience, all of which are manifest to some extent in the alien abduction experience. First, the mystical experience is ineffable. Likewise, “abductees have trouble finding the words to describe what has occurred.” (Mack, *Abduction* 49) The abductee feels isolated from the rest of the world, because their powerful experience is so difficult to relate to others. One abductee said of her abduction, “I experienced an ineffable moment of total merging. I don’t know how else to describe [the experience].” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 240) Another abductee found herself at a loss “to convey the ineffable beauty and power” (Mack, *Abduction* 261) of the alien realm.

Second, James states that the mystical experience is noetic. Many abductees describe being “enlightened” after their experience [Mack, *Abduction* 45; Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 212]. They feel that they have gained from their experience a “different perspective about time and the nature of human identity.” [Mack, *Abduction* 48] One abductee describes her experience as a “total awareness.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 236)

Third, James contends that the mystical experience is transient, in that it cannot be sustained or recalled perfectly once it is gone. The recollection of an abduction is imperfect, often very dreamlike<sup>2</sup> in retrospect, and is frequently only brought forth during altered states of consciousness such as hypnosis or deep relaxation. (All of these qualities are usually cited in arguments against the objective reality of abductions.) These characteristics all confer a transient quality upon abductions.

Finally, the mystical experience is passive according to James. Abductees are acutely aware of “their lack of control of the [abduction] process” (Mack, *Abduction* 46) while it is taking place. Looking into the eyes of the aliens somehow makes abductees acutely aware of their “loss of will.” (Mack, *Abduction* 37) In describing his abduction, author Whitley Strieber recollects, “[i]t was a truly awful sensation...I was absolutely helpless in the hands of these strange creatures.” (Strieber 26) In a hypnosis session, one abductee cried out in terror, “They’re in control.” (Mack, *Abduction* 86)

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<sup>2</sup> This dreamlike quality supports the applicability of a Jungian analysis of alien abductions, which are full of common dream imagery, such as flying and appearing naked in public places. It is also worth noting the similarity between alien abductions and “waking dreams” (hypnogogic and hypnopompic states). Having suffered from such dreams, in which I saw a dark, evil figure sitting in my bedroom, I can attest to their seeming objective reality. Abductees’ complaints of an inability to scream and pressure on their chests could be products of waking dreams, in which such complaints are common.

Given the mystical nature of abductions, it is not surprising that the patterns found in typical abduction narratives manifest many “congruencies with numinous encounters, and with archaic shamanistic symbolism.” (Whitmore 81) Both mystical experiences and alien abductions often begin with the perception of light that paralyzes, blinds or disorients the mystic or abductee. “The experience of Saul on the road to Damascus, Muhammad on the Night of Power, or Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*” (Whitmore 69) all involve the appearance of brilliant light. Likewise, “abductees observe or feel intense light and vibrational energies during their experiences...Light and energy seem to be at the core of or *are* everything.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 80) One abductee’s experience began when she “saw a white light above [her] and felt [her] arms being held to [her] sides.” (Mack, *Abduction* 80) Another abductee was outside when he was suddenly “bathed in a light.” (Mack 295) Another abductee described the beginning of his experience as, “[I feel] a complete immersion in diffuse light, and there’s a vibration that I’m aware of...” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 67) Such vibrational, energy-related experiences are similar to manifestations of chi, prana, kundalini awakenings, and yogic traditions of India and China, all of which “are associated with profound spiritual transformations.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 80)

After seeing light, abductees find that their bodies are paralyzed, as they are approached by one or more aliens almost always in the night. “The visions of abductees have analogies to the experiences of religious ecstasies and saints, who report seeing angels, demons, or revered religious figures coming to them in the night.” (Whitmore 70) One abductee “felt as if she were ‘physically pinned down...[as she saw] three beings hovering above [her].’ (Mack, *Abduction* 206)

The physical appearance usually attributed to the aliens “is standard for many types of supernatural beings, from angels as described in Christian medieval texts to the devas encountered by Nala in the *Mahabharata*.” (Whitmore 70) The aliens are typically described as having white or grey, slender and delicate humanoid bodies. Their heads are generally disproportionately large, bald, and “bulbous;” (Jacobs 223) their eyes are large, slanted, black and “completely penetrating;” (Jacobs 202) and their other facial features are “almost vestigial” (Strieber 29) or non-existent. Whitley Strieber draws a parallel between the appearance of his primary alien abductor and the “glaring face of Ishtar,” (Strieber 126) the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of love, fertility and war (on the cover of this paper).

After the initial encounter, abductees are somehow transported to the UFO. They are often floated upwards, passing through walls and other obstacles. During this transport, the abductee will often feel disembodied, “as if their soul only were being taken to the UFO.” (Whitmore 70) One

abductee describes this experience as follows: “I feel lightness. You lose your body. I’m moving. I’m melting. There’s a lot of vibration...It’s like going through a tunnel...I’m like expanding...There’s wind all around, and this tremendous energy and activity all around...I know I’m safe and I know I’m protected. It’s like waves of energy....It’s totally unbelievable. I’m going through a tunnel. I’m flying. It’s like flying through years. It’s flying through nothingness.” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 65) Strieber compares the “‘out of the body’ sensation” to the effects of the deadly chemical tetradotoxin.

Once onboard the UFO, abductees are disrobed and undergo an intensive physical examination that usually involves sexual molestation and reproductive experimentation (*the sexual aspects of abductions will be discussed in more detail later*). Strieber describes the beginning of his first physical examination: “[The alien] had been given the box and now slid it open, revealing an extremely shiny, hair-thin needle mounted on a black surface...I became aware – I think I was told – that they proposed to insert this into my brain.” (Strieber 28) Shortly after this, Strieber reveals another terrifying part of the examination:

“Two of the stocky ones drew my legs apart. The next thing I knew I was being shown an enormous and extremely ugly object, gray and scaly, with a sort of network of wires on the end. It was at least a foot long, narrow, and triangular in structure. They inserted this thing into my rectum. It seemed to swarm into me as if it had a life of its own. Apparently its purpose was to take samples, possibly of fecal matter...” (Strieber 30)

Sometimes as part of this examination, the aliens will insert some sort of implant, often thought to be a tracking device, into the abductee’s body. “[One abductee] recalled feeling frightened and abandoned as a ‘wiggly’ filament he called an ‘implant’ was threaded into his penis while he lay on a table... He thought, ‘They’re leaving something in me so I know I’ll never be alone again.’”<sup>3</sup> (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 248)

After the physical examination and experimentation, abductees are often given some sort of message to take back to humanity. The message almost always involves a revelation of the aliens’ purpose – the creation of a new hybrid race that will save humanity. Sometimes these messages are also moral injunctions, some of which involve apocalyptic visions. “[One abductee] attributes her apocalyptic fears to the ‘awakening’ that her encounters have brought about, especially the ‘energy, the vibration’ that has come with them. In her visions Karin sees an object, or a shower of them, like meteors or possibly nuclear warheads, causing destruction everywhere, ‘like God’s wrath exploding’ on the Earth. In an instant ‘everything changes, everything’s being annihilated. Cities are going to be

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<sup>3</sup> There is a parallel here between penile implants and circumcision, which is also a mark of God on the male body.



lost in the blink of an eye,' and everything will come to an immediate halt.'" (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 94) As part of the message the aliens impart, the abductee often comes to understand that he or she is "chosen." Strieber is told by an alien, "You are our chosen one." (Strieber 83) Abductees will also sometimes undergo some sort of healing or gain healing powers at this point in the abduction. One abductee claims she was given "capacity to heal myself and heal other people." (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 68)

The entire abduction scenario as described above has many exact parallels to shamanic initiations. Like an abductee being transported to the alien ship, the shaman is pulled "into the world of the Other." (Whitmore 71) Once there, the shaman undergoes "brutal physical and mental ordeals." (Whitmore 71) The shaman is given eschatological knowledge and returns to society as a healer and chosen spiritual authority, just like the abductee. "When you become a shaman," one abductee said, the "initiation brings you to the edge to meet death." This abductee's encounters with aliens also take her "to the edge...it is like meeting death." (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 136)

Shamanic initiations, mystical experiences and alien abductions all cause a radical transformation of an individual's consciousness. "[The abductee] is initiated into a non-ordinary state of being which results, ultimately, in a reintegration of the self, an immersion or entrenchment into states and/or knowledge not previously accessible." (Mack, *Abduction* 8) This new state of awareness often involves the disintegration of self and in its place a unity with all of creation. One Brazilian shaman in his encounters with aliens came to realize that "we are just one...when you come from nowhere and are everywhere, there is no distance...no time and space." (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 168) Another abductee finds in his alien encounters a "deeper connection with the divinity, a sense of oneness with all beings." (Mack, *Abduction* 198) Mack describes "ego death" (Mack, *Abduction* 48) as being an integral part of the transformative process that takes place in abductees.

### **Sexual and Erotic Aspects of Alien Abductions**

We have now seen how abductions are mystical encounters with the Other. "One of the primary arenas for the day-to-day confrontation with otherness is the individual's dialogue with the opposite sex. The sexual symbolism often associated with religious experience is in this view an underscoring of the otherness which typifies the encounter with the numinous." (Whitmore 72) Thus, like mystical experiences which are erotic, alien abductions, though more explicitly sexual in their nature, are also erotic encounters with the numinous Other.

Let us begin by examining more closely the sexual and reproductive procedures that figure prominently in abduction accounts. First, we will look at the procedures performed on male abductees. One abductee's experience is described as follows:

“As Credo (an African medicine man) was lying on the table in pain, a quite human-looking white woman who was wearing no clothes came up to him... This creature looked and felt to him ‘utterly unnatural.’ She touched his face and aroused him with her hand. Then she climbed over him ‘like a crazy Zulu girl.’ But it was not Credo said, like making love to a real woman...’ The most frightening part of all was that the creature seemed to attach something to his penis that caused him to ejaculate ‘too much.’” (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 197)

Strieber had a similar experience with a female alien being, who aroused and collected semen from him without his being fully aware of it. Another male abductee also recalled having been forcefully aroused as his mind was filled “with all sorts of erotic escapades” (Mack, *Abduction* 59), and he was then brought to orgasm by the hand of an alien female, who explained that they needed his sperm “for their needs... to create special babies for work we’re doing to help the people on your planet.” (Mack, *Abduction* 60) As one male abductee was introduced to a female being who “was to be his teacher,” he realized, “[t]hat we’re gonna... we’re gonna fuck... I’m going to breed with her.” (Mack, *Abduction* 319) In all of these accounts, the male abductee unwillingly or unknowingly engages in intercourse with or is manually brought to orgasm by a female alien being, who is obviously engaged in the act for the purpose of collecting semen for the breeding of “special babies.”

Now we will examine the procedures performed on female abductees. One female abductee described a sexual encounter with a male alien being as “dimensional merging,” (Mack, *Abduction* 210) which involved not only the penetration of her vagina but also of the physical dimension. Another female abductee had a fairly different and more prototypical experience. A male being inserted “a big metal thing” into her vagina and then put a thinner “version of it” into it. As she realized what he was trying to do, she exclaimed, “Oh God, Oh God. He’s taking it... He’s cutting inside me. I can feel it... He’s got it. He takes out this hunk... He takes out the thing he put in and there’s something attached to the end of it. It looks like a fetus...” (Mack, *Abduction* 163) Another female abductee also had experiences involving the implantation and removal of embryos:

“...the beings separated her legs ‘like in a regular gynecologist’s office...’ Then a long tube was inserted into her vagina and she felt ‘a pinch.’ She knew this was one of the times that an embryo was inserted into her ‘because I’ve been through this before and I recognize the routine.’ The [male] leader had taken an embryo out of one of the drawers and brought it over to her. ‘The other way (when they remove a fetus from her body) is worse than putting it in...’” (Mack, *Abduction* 133)

Thus the female abductee experience commonly involves unwilling intercourse with a male alien being or the manual fertilization of eggs and harvest of embryos by a male alien being. The female experience is similar to the male abductee experience, in that they are both centered around the creation of hybrid beings.

During these experiences, initially both male and female abductees feel humiliated, violated, and terrified. But once the abductees have undergone these procedures with the alien beings, their emotions about and understanding of the experience are often dramatically transformed. The abductees feel that sex with their alien partner is different if not more fulfilling than sex with their Earthly partner. One female abductee's "experience of human/alien mating, though ecstatically pleasurable, is 'very different' from human mating. 'I think it's done with vibration' rather than mainly genital stimulation. It is 'more than just a localized orgasm, or even a full body,' she says. 'Your cells start to vibrate...with the universe, and it's wonderful. It's not like what we do here.'" (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 126) A male abductee stated, "I felt sex [but] there was this intense feeling all through me, and then peacefulness, and I felt loved. It was different than sex with a human being, physical sex. It was more...like having spiritual sex. It wasn't just on the outside. It was more internal...I just felt, 'Thank you.'" (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 251-252) This more erotic, spiritual union often leads to feelings of love and sensual longing. Mack states that "at the core of the transformational process is an expansion of [the experiencers'] loving capacities, which paradoxically includes the emergence of a profound emotional connection between the experiencers and the beings themselves." (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 213) A female abductee called alien-human intercourse "the most erotic experience I've ever had." (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 68) Strieber said of his female counterpart that "she was undeniably appealing to me." (Strieber 105) Strieber recalls that as the female alien's gaze deeply entered him, he found it to be a "curiously sensual" experience and was filled "with the deepest longing I can ever remember feeling." (Strieber 107) One abductee captured the erotic mystical union with the alien beings, saying that during alien intercourse, "you expand everything, and it goes into the universe, like enlightenment... [the male alien's] heart came into my heart, and I loved it." (Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos* 257)

### **Gender Analysis of Alien Abductions**

In alien abductions, the abductee almost always unites with an alien of the opposite gender. Strieber confirms this, pointing out that "[p]eople who have had the experience often felt that they were familiar with one of the visitors, and usually perceived this person to be of the opposite sex."

(Strieber 105) The gender of the alien is determined “by an intuitive feeling that abductees find difficult to put into words.” (Mack, *Abduction* 37)

We have already established the mystical nature of human and alien. The fact that this union is heteroerotic is crucial. In most mystical traditions, the paradigmatic mystical union involves a male mystic uniting with a male deity. In alien abductions, however, we have either a male or female abductee uniting with an alien of the opposite gender. The heteroerotic union of human and alien can be seen as a replacement for the traditional male homoerotic mystical paradigm. This traditional paradigm has always posed a problem for heterosexuals, and the alien abduction offers a solution to this problem. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the majority of abductees had a Roman Catholic upbringing. Six out of the nine accounts (in which the abductee’s religion is mentioned) in Mack’s *Abduction* had a background in Roman Catholicism. Strieber also had a Roman Catholic upbringing. This is significant because, as we learned in class, Roman Catholicism is notorious for its male homoerotic mystical standard. For mystically inclined, heterosexual Roman Catholics, the alien abduction offers a long-awaited escape from this standard.

The traditional male homoerotic paradigm has also posed a problem for women. Most mystical traditions tend to erase the female experience. Alien abductions are more inclusive, in that in them both men and women are able to find mystical union. This is supported by the fact that eighty percent of abductees are women. (Whitmore 81) Within the abduction framework, women’s experiences are validated, whereas in the patriarchal Judeo-Christian structure their experience would be deemed less valuable.

### **Alien Abductions as Archetypal Experiences**

Jungian archetypes are “part of the indestructible foundations of the human mind...always they return, sometimes in the strangest guise...continually reproducing themselves in new forms representing the timeless truths that are innate in man’s nature.” (Jung, “A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity” 130) When viewed as synchronistic phenomena, alien abductions can be understood to be the resurfacing of two archetypes: the mandala or circle and the triad.

In virtually all of the abduction accounts incorporated into this paper, the abductees were transported into circular rooms onboard circular UFOs. The circle also manifests itself in other ways in abduction accounts. In one account, an abductee under hypnosis trying to recall an abduction was confronted with the image of “black circles surrounded by golden light.” (Mack, *Abduction* 252) Another abductee found herself compelled to “draw three circles on her leg” (Mack, *Abduction* 166)

to remind her to try and communicate with the aliens about their written symbols. The association of circular spaces and objects with aliens is thus undeniable.

Jung asserted that the circle, or mandala, “is an archetypal symbol of perfection” (Saliba 47) or “totality” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 19). The circle can also be understood as expressing the totality of the individual, as “a symbolical representation of the self...the totality composed of the conscious and the unconscious.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 21) The old saying that “God is a circle whose center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere” captures God as a totality symbol “*par excellence*, something round, complete and perfect.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 21) Thus, circular objects and symbols in alien abductions “are impressive manifestations of totality whose simple, round form portrays the archetype of the self.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 21) The surfacing of this archetype, always a union of the apparent opposites of the conscious and unconscious and an expression of salvation, from the unconscious background is due to the condition of our society, in which “rationalistic enlightenment predominates” and we are “empty of all metaphysical hope.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 22) According to the technological-mindedness of our time, the archetype “now takes the form of an object, a technological construction, in order to avoid the odiousness of mythological personification.” (Jung, “Flying Saucers” 22)

Following this unitive archetype of the circle, another unitive archetype, that of the triad, also surfaces in modern abduction accounts. The triad involves the coming together of opposites – the One (human) and the Other (alien) – resulting in the creation of a unitive third (the alien-human hybrids). To elaborate this idea, Jung states, “[t]here arises a tension of opposites between the One and the Other. But every tension of opposites culminates in a release, out which comes the ‘third.’ In the third, the tension is resolved and the lost unity is restored.” (Jung, “A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity” 119) In the case of the Trinity, the third (Holy Spirit) “continues the work of redemption in mankind at large.” (Jung, “A Psychological Approach to the Dogma of the Trinity” 136) Thus, the third also offers salvation. It has already been established that human encounters with aliens are numinous encounters with the Other. Looking at the sexual aspects of abductions, we can also see that “the abduction phenomenon is in some central way involved in a breeding program that results in the creation of alien-human hybrid offspring.” (Mack, *Abduction* 414) This program is for the salvation of humanity. Thus the archetypal triad is literally embodied in the relationship between human, alien and hybrid.

Besides manifesting itself in the human-alien-hybrid form, the triad also arises more subtly in triangular and pyramidal symbols in abduction accounts. Mack describes an abductee who as a child

had a recurring dream of a flying pyramid that he associated with his abductions. The triad also manifests itself in occurrences of the number three. For example, aliens almost always first approach the abductee in groups of three.

The triad most prominently figures in Strieber's account. Strieber points out several occurrences of the number three and triangular symbols in his own account as well as others. For example, he found triangles inscribed in his forearm one morning after an abduction. Also, the screen memory that concealed his memory of his female alien counterpart was of an owl, which is associated with the Trinity. A physician in France "had a triangular rash appear around his navel after his experience." (Strieber 251) Strieber says that the appearances of these symbols mean that "something is out there, and it wants in." (Strieber 242) That something is the archetype of the triad rising out of the unconscious, struggling to enter the conscious mind. At one point when describing his alien female visitor, he says "I bore toward her the same feelings of terror and fascination that I might toward someone I saw staring back at me from the depths of my unconscious." (Strieber 105) This supports the idea that when staring into the eyes of the aliens, a human is really staring into rising unconscious forces. Strieber goes on to talk about the triad as "an expression of a series of emanations. The third force emerges when the first and second forces come into balance, and when all three are in harmony they become a fourth thing, an indivisible whole." This idea immediately calls to mind a vision Strieber's alien female presented him with: "They're abstractions, like triangles and circles and things. And they're fitted together in order. The triangle with the circle in it and the square comes around it and it moves all very smoothly..." (Strieber 152) Here we see the duality of the opposites, united in the symbol of the circle, which emanates the triad, united in the symbol of the triangle, which in turn emanates "the fourth thing" – the indivisible whole of the harmonized triad. To Strieber, the harmonization of the human-alien-hybrid triad is crucial to understanding the abduction phenomena in that it is symbolic of the tripartite nature of the human being – mind, body and heart – which is also in desperate need of harmony in today's world. He believes the real purpose of the alien abductions is the elevation of consciousness, which "will cause the triad to cease to be a collection of parts and become a solid." (Strieber 280).

## **Conclusion**

Throughout Whitley Strieber's book, he emphasizes that above all, the aliens "seek communion." (Strieber 15) The religious connotations of this statement and the title of the book are obvious. Communion is a sacrament that both symbolizes and effects the union of Christ with the

devout. Alien abductions essentially involve the union of the alien and the human and the symbolic union of the divine and the human. This union will give rise to a new race of beings who are spiritually, emotionally, and physically complete, a perfect amalgamation of the One and the Other. Strieber says that “out of communion there emerges transformation.” (Strieber 283) There is no doubt that abductions are mystical experiences that transform human consciousness. In the modern world, many people have become “alienated” from the spiritual self. The predominantly scientific, objective mindset of today allows little room for metaphysical exploration and spiritual enlightenment. Our unconscious need for a relationship to the divine is violently manifesting itself in the form of abductions, literally “dragging people out of bed like rapists in the night.” (242) These experiences offer human beings a way of reintegrating their bodies, minds and souls, so that they can become more fully human. Ultimately, it is the human being who seeks communion through the abduction – a communion with all aspects of the self and the universe as a whole.

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