



Courtney Brown's 'Cosmic Voyage' into Preposterism

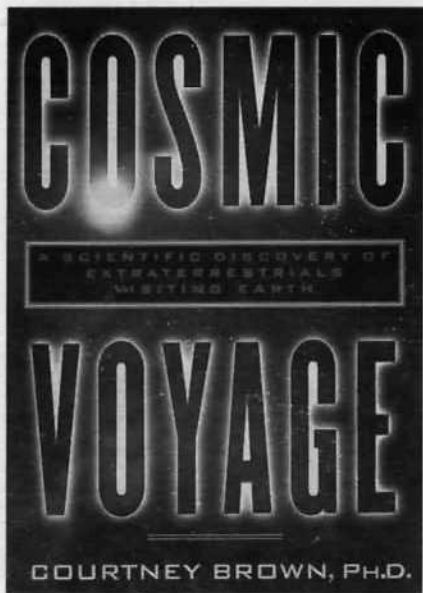
Cosmic Voyage: A Scientific Discovery of Extraterrestrials Visiting Earth. By Courtney Brown. Dutton, 1996. 275 pp. \$23.95.

My first reaction to this preposterous book was, "It's a hoax." But no, Courtney Brown actually exists. An associate professor of political science at Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia, he has written several books about social science and one on mathematics titled *Chaos and Catastrophe Theory*. A "Ph.D." follows his name on the front of the jacket.

On the back cover are two laudatory blurbs. One is by Whitley Strieber, author of many books about UFO abductions, including his own abduction. The other is by Harvard psychiatrist John Mack. Mack firmly believes that aliens from higher space-time dimensions are visiting Earth and taking humans aboard their spacecraft to perform on them unspeakable operations. His 1994 book *Abduction*, published by Scribner's, was a bestseller. Harvard can't get rid of him because he has tenure.

After TM (transcendental meditation) training—his wife is a TM instructor—Brown says he mastered the advanced

Martin Gardner's latest book is *Weird Water and Fuzzy Logic (Prometheus 1996)*, a collection of sixteen recent *SKEPTICAL INQUIRER* columns plus thirty-three book reviews.



TM-Sidhi Program, which teaches "Yogic flying" and other sidhis such as making oneself invisible and walking through walls. He highly recommends two books by the Maharishi. Brown next attended the Monroe Institute, in Faber, Virginia, where he learned telepathy and attained a high level of consciousness. He urges readers to obtain three books by Robert Monroe.

Brown's final level of training was by an expert in SRV (scientific remote viewing), a recent term for clairvoyance. He claims to have acquired not only the ability to remote-view distant spots on Earth, but also the abilities to see remote parts of the universe and witness historical events both in the distant past and in

the far future. Readers who want to develop similar powers are urged to contact Brown at his Farsight Institute, Box 49243, in Atlanta. For three thousand dollars you can take a one-week course in remote viewing, with follow-up courses for additional fees.

Cosmic Voyage is a record of staggering "facts" Brown uncovered in more than thirty SRV sessions under the supervision of a man he calls his "monitor" or "instructor." Brown never names him, but he is known to be Ed Dames, a retired army major, now president of a psychic research organization called Psi-Tech, based in Beverly Hills, California.

Before Brown became Dames's pupil, Dames was on record as an ardent believer in a Galactic Federation of aliens who roam the galaxy in advanced spacecraft. He believes that Martians are living in New Mexico, that there are alien sites on the moon, and that the stone "face" on Mars was carved by a Martian civilization. For a while he was associated with the ill-fated, ten-year research project Stargate, sponsored by the CIA to investigate possible military uses of remote viewing. After spending some twenty million dollars, the CIA closed down the project as a waste of taxpayer money.

Brown's remote viewing sessions, supervised by Dames, enlarged greatly on Dames's beliefs. Critics of remote viewing point out that the easiest way results can be contaminated is by what is

called "front loading." This means that the monitor, or the subject, sometimes both, knows in advance what the "target" is. In Brown's sessions, Dames always knew the target. The possibility of conscious or unconscious influence over the subject, by comments and leading questions, is obvious. Because Brown's sessions were front-loaded, even parapsychologists who believe in remote viewing consider his sessions worthless.

According to Brown, millions of years ago a race of hairless humanoids lived on Mars. They had big eyes, light skin, and telepathic abilities. A wandering comet or maybe an asteroid grazed the planet, severely damaging its atmosphere and rendering the red planet unfit for habitation. The Martians were forced to move into underground caverns where most of them still are today.

A Galactic Federation of superbeings dispatched to Mars a rescue team of altruistic humanoids called the Greys (because of their color). The Greys had earlier been forced to abandon their planet after carelessly allowing its environment to degenerate, much as we are now allowing ours. Their culture's collapse was facilitated by a mysterious evil dictator who suffered from "low self-esteem" and may have been none other than the biblical Lucifer.

Before the Greys lost their homeland, they lived mainly on fish. Their sex drive was then much stronger than ours, although their "genitals were quite small by human standards." The Greys are short, with heads shaped like a praying mantis's and huge black eyes. They communicate by telepathy and have a lifespan of two hundred years.

These benevolent superbeings have spacecraft capable of going galactic distances at speeds faster than light and of moving back and forth in time. They can alter matter, permitting their ships to fly right through mountains, just the way they did in Spielberg's movie *Close Encounters*. The Greys are slowly evolving into still higher beings and eventually will "merge with God."

In recent decades several hundred Martians have been transported by the Greys to a spot north of Santa Fe, New Mexico, where they live in caverns

beneath the mountain called Santa Fe Baldy. Their technology is 150 years ahead of ours. They are no longer bald. Thanks to their genetic engineering they are beginning to look like us. They have their own spaceships, which soon will be helping the Greys to bring more Martians to Earth. Indeed, the base at Santa Fe Baldy will eventually become an immigration processing center for Martian refugees.

Another group of Martians has been taken by the Greys to an unidentified village in South America, where they live disguised as native Indians. The Greys were able to alter Martian genes so they can withstand Earth's stronger gravity and breathe our atmosphere. Both the Martians and the Greys are much concerned over how rapidly we are destroying our environment. They are eager to help mend our ways but are unwilling to contact us until we make the first move of letting them know our desire to contact them.

Brown somehow discovered *The Urantia Book*, a mammoth tome purporting to be written by celestials under the supervision and editing of Dr. William Sadler, a well-known Chicago psychiatrist who died in 1969. Brown buys *The Urantia Book's* claim that living among us, doing their best to aid us, are invisible beings called Midwayers (because they are on a plane midway between us and angels). "The discovery that the Midwayers actually exist," Brown writes, "was a shock that reverberated through the consciousness of the military's SRV team for quite a few years."

Brown believes that *The Urantia Book* is mostly accurate in its cosmology and its elaborate hierarchy of billions of higher entities and gods, including Jesus. His main objection to *The Urantia Book* is its failure to recognize reincarnation. Brown considers us composite beings. Our physical body grows old and dies, but a spiritual entity or "soul"—Brown persists in calling it our "subspace"—is immortal. After the human body dies, the soul travels upward forever, as *The Urantia Book* teaches, to inhabit more advanced bodies on other worlds. Thus Brown and *The Urantia Book* agree on

endless reincarnation after death but disagree on our having had incarnations before birth. (For more than you may care to know about the Urantia movement, see my *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*, published by Prometheus Books in 1995.) At the moment, Urantians are divided over whether Brown's book is good publicity for their bible, or whether it is bad publicity because of Brown's other wild beliefs.

In remote-viewing sessions with Dames, Brown visits both Martians and Greys many times, entering their minds to learn their deepest secrets and motives. He interviews a translucent Jesus whose hair seems made of light. Jesus is friendly and has a great sense of humor. Brown also visits the Buddha and Guru Dev who was the Maharishi's mentor. He remote-views President Clinton in the Oval Office. Dames tells Brown, "I could have had you go into his head, but that would have been an invasion of privacy." I found this the funniest line in Brown's book.

Brown moves back millions of years to view the desolation of Mars after it was damaged by the comet or asteroid. He goes forward three hundred years to witness the tragic plight of humans on Earth after our environment has hopelessly deteriorated. He contacts members of the Galactic Federation. He visits a world in the Pleiades star cluster where he sees bewildered Americans who have been taken there by the Greys to preserve their genetic stock. The planet has two suns, one large and yellow, the other a smaller white dwarf. Brown believes some UFOs may be piloted by humans from our future. "It sounds weird," he told a reporter, "but I suppose you could be watching a ship fly by and you, as a future human, could be in it."

Our hopes of surviving the dark days ahead depend on how soon we decide to meet and cooperate with the Martians and Greys. Brown has not the slightest doubt that our government knows all about these aliens and their frequent abductions of humans so they can

FRINGE-WATCHER
continued on page 54

mined those that were included. If many potential outcomes were considered, random selection alone could have produced statistical significance. The report says that pain measured at day three was significantly reduced by TT ($p=0.038$). What are we to conclude about any of the other five days? Nor does it provide any evidence that statistical adjustment for multiple comparisons was considered.

While the Visual Analogue Pain Estimation Scale (VAS) showed no statistical difference in subjective pain perception between the TT and sham groups, the results were significant when measured by the McGill scale, both measured on day one versus day six. It is possible that this inconsistency can be attributed to random positive results for the McGill scale due, once again, to multiple comparisons without proper statis-

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FRINGE-WATCHER

from page 15

experiment on us to find out how to improve our genes. He is convinced, so help me, that the Greys have been invading the sleeping minds of writers who produce scripts for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. These writers are totally unaware that their clever ideas are designed by the Greys to accustom Earthlings to the reality of extraterrestrials eager to transform our culture.

The time is growing short. Brown urges our government to abandon its stupid policy of secrecy and openly seek contacts with the Greys and Martians.

The only earlier book about UFOs I can think of that is nuttier than this one is George Adamski's *Inside the Space Ships* (1955). As an abductee aboard a UFO, Adamski describes bustling cities on the far side of the moon. Adamski, of course, was a charlatan, whereas Brown actually believes what he writes. Both

tical adjustment. Otherwise, it is unclear why two measures of the same effect produced different results.

The original design called for 150 burn patients, each randomly assigned to either the TT or sham group; only 131 were actually recruited. Additionally, ". . . not all of these subjects actually remained in the study for the full six-day period." Who dropped out and why? What was the distribution between the TT and sham groups? Were the clinical characteristics of the dropouts from the two groups comparable? No charts or tables are included in the final report, thus precluding any independent evaluation of complete data. This information is crucial as it is essential to know whether the experimental and control groups were balanced regarding relevant clinical variables. For example, did one group or the other not contain more seriously ill patients? The inadequacy of the report underscores a lack of understanding of experimental design required to demonstrate validity of an hypothesis.

In our article, we raised concerns about the use of "mimic TT as a control." Since the intention to heal is held

out as a vital component of TT, we raised the question, "What if the mimic TT practitioner feels compassion for the burn patient and accidentally performs actual TT?" Since the human "energy field" (presumably manipulated by TT) cannot be objectively quantified, there is no independent means to assess when manipulation is occurring. The final report states: "The greatest lesson learned from this process is that the inclusion of a true control group in addition to a sham and treatment group is required because a strong placebo effect occurs from the special attention given to patients in the 'sham' treatment." This observation is correct in its characterization of the placebo effect on patients participating in any such experiment. No practitioner or test of TT has shown that anything other than the placebo effect is taking place. The UAB study continues to support this assertion.

(To obtain documents of the proposal and its final report refer to the following web site: <http://www.parascope.com/articles/1196/touch1.htm>. Other documents are also available at rmscentral@aol.com.) □

books read as if they were efforts at science fiction written by a ten-year-old.

Emory University must be enormously embarrassed by having Brown on its faculty. Like Harvard's problem with Dr. Mack, they can't fire Brown because he has tenure, and Emory's president believes in academic freedom for its teachers. (See "A Statement about Professor Courtney Brown" by Emory president William M. Chace, in the Forum section, this issue.) The editors at Dutton, who know that Brown's book is pure baloney but are hoping for huge profits, should be, but probably are not, deeply ashamed of their greed.

In a recent interview in the *Kansas City Star*, Brown said that if NASA's planned Martian probes fail to show evidence of a Martian civilization, his career in higher education will be kaput. The 1994 probe that vanished a few days before it was to orbit the red planet to take pictures, Brown is convinced, was shot down by the Martians, who

don't want to be observed!

"All the prestige that I've got is resting on whether there is anything in this," Brown told the reporter. "I'd be crazy if I went public with something like this without being certain about what's going on. . . . I'd be dead as an academic. I couldn't even get a letter published in *Dear Abby*."

It is a sad story of an intelligent, sincere man who has turned himself into a gullible dunce. It will be amusing to see how he reacts a few years from now, after the Martian probes find no traces of an advanced Martian civilization.

(See also the Forum column "The Courtney Brown Affair and Academic Freedom" by Scott O. Lilienfeld, this issue.)

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The promised part 2 of Martin Gardner's column about Koran numerology will appear in our next issue.