

Myths, Legends and UFOs

By *Lucius Farish*

Our contributor, who lives in Arkansas, U.S.A., searches for hints of the flying saucer mystery among the pages of an old account of the folklore and mythology of American Indians. Whilst entertaining, his findings are highly speculative, yet it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that they could provide a clue to help in the eventual solution of the problem.

WHEN a person delves into the background of Ufology, he quickly discovers that many of the myths, legends and folktales of various primitive peoples contain "bits and snatches" of information which may have considerable bearing on our subject. This data must be viewed through a "UFO lens" in order that its potential value may be seen.

As examples of the type of data to which we refer, let us consider the following examples from a book entitled *The Origin of Primitive Superstitions*, a treatise on American Indian mythology written by Rushton M. Dorman, and published in the year 1881.

On page 24 of his book, Dorman gives the following story: "Aisemid was a famous aerial spirit of the Western tribes, who carried a curious little shell, and could become visible or invisible as he chose." You will note that the *aerial* spirit, Aisemid, displayed the same perplexing ability as do some of our modern UFOs, the ability to disappear at will. We might speculate as to whether the "curious little shell" he carried gave him this ability.

Scorched brush in Socorro, New Mexico, burnt rings on the ground in Kentucky, Pennsylvania and other places. Mute evidence of UFO landings. Perhaps in former times, a slightly different interpretation was placed on similar evidence. On page 29 of the same book we read: "The Peruvians had devils who frequently put in an appearance . . . One of these devils, called Huarivalca, is worshipped to this day, although he has disappeared and not been seen lately. There were spots which they said showed evidence of his presence."

Those familiar with the writing of the late M. K. Jessup will be aware of his theories concerning the problem of "little people". He mentioned the Andaman Islanders' legend of their god Puluga who lived in the sky in a stone house with a green wife. Turning to pages 46-47 of Dorman's book, we find a story which, we think, would have delighted Jessup no end: "A curious tradition among the Crows relates to the incarnation of Storm Child. Black clouds gathered in midwinter: the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed, while

strange noises alarmed the Crows. An inky cloud covered the peak of their mountain, and from its midst reached two long arms that deposited an infant on the earth. Soon the mysterious child which was given disappeared in the vapour. An old squaw, who had not borne children for years, stood looking on. No sooner did she see the child disappear in the vapour than she felt herself seized with violent labour pains, and was delivered of a female child, perfectly green, like grass. The Indians all said it was the same child that had been in the cloud, and that the mysterious hands had no sooner deposited it than it was transferred to the woman. The squaw persisted that it was not the child of a man, though she was married. The Indians named it the Storm Child". Here we have an example of what Jessup termed a "controlled storm", coupled with the reference to "their mountain". As many readers will know, the tops of certain mountains were sacred to the Indian, for here his gods dwelled, as also did the Greek gods dwell on Mount Olympus. Perhaps the reader will also note a similarity between the above narrative and certain Biblical passages.

Certain "supernatural" happenings in the Bible are paralleled by beliefs of various Indian tribes. As examples of this, consider the following from Dorman's book: page 74—"Many Mississippi tribes say the first man ascended into heaven and thunders there . . ."; page 76—"Montezuma appears to have been worshipped by the New Mexican tribes. They extoll his miraculous powers. He planted maize at night which in the morning was grown and ripened. He was immaculately conceived by a drop of dew falling on the exposed breast of his mother as she lay asleep in a beautiful grove . . ."; page 76—"The Arawaks had a culture hero, named Arawanili, who appears in their traditions to have been the discoverer and founder of their system of sorcery. . . . Arawanili was translated without death. . ."; page 88—"Gard is the name of the culture hero of the Yuroks. . . . He was also ancestral god of the Hopas. . . . He was translated, according to their myths, in a thick cloud of smoke, which floated to

the land of spirits.”

The familiar theme of help from friendly space beings is once again accented by the following tradition: “Another prominent figure (among the Caribs) was Oubekeyeri (man from above), who introduced agriculture and house building.” This from page 77 of Dorman’s book.

One of the best-known personages in Indian mythology is Hiawatha. In the account given on pages 86–87, we find references to activity which easily lends itself to Ufological interpretation: “Many of the characters in the Iroquois pantheon have assumed the human form, or, in other words, are ancestral. Hiawatha is one of the most prominent. He taught the Six Nations arts and knowledge. He taught them to raise corn and beans. His wisdom was great, and the people listened to him with admiration. . . . He erected his lodge, planted his field of corn, and selected a wife. Here he was resorted to for advice and instruction. Soon there arose a great alarm at the invasion of a ferocious band of warriors from the north. . . . A great council of all the tribes was appointed to meet on an eminence overlooking Onondaga Lake. Three days had elapsed, and there was a general anxiety lest Hiawatha should not arrive. Messengers were dispatched for him. . . . The messengers urged him to come, and he put his magic canoe in the water, and it moved without paddles. His only daughter took her seat in the stern. . . . The great council saw the well-known canoe approaching, and sent up shouts of welcome as the venerated man landed in front of the assemblage. As he and his daughter ascended the banks, a loud sound was heard in the air, and a dark spot was discovered descending rapidly. Terror seized the Indians, and they scattered in confusion to escape the impending calamity. Hiawatha’s daughter was the doomed object. A white bird with a mighty swoop crushed the girl to the earth, and not a human trace of her could be discovered. Not a muscle moved in the face of Hiawatha. He passed on to the head of the council. His advice was given and adopted, and Hiawatha’s mission was accomplished. He went down to the shore, and assumed his seat in his mystical vessel. Sweet music was heard in the air, and, as its cadence floated on the ears of the wondering multitude, an apotheosis was taking place. Hiawatha in his magic canoe rose in the air higher and higher, and vanished from sight. Thus was this great and good man translated, according to the traditions of his people.” A “magic canoe” that moved through the water with no visible source of propulsion and moved upward into the air with a melodious sound. Have we not heard similar stories recounted in UFO literature?

On page 89, in a piece about the Nootkaus

tribe, we find a similar story. “Huge images, carved in wood, stand in their houses, intended to represent the form and hold in remembrance the visit of a god in the guise of an old man who came up the sound long ago in a copper canoe and instructed them in many things. The Nawloks are fabulous beings, part human, with whom their sorcerers are supposed to commune and obtain their prophecies.” Can you imagine an ordinary canoe made of *copper*? Surely this speaks of contacts with beings possessing an advanced science totally unfamiliar to the Indian tribes.

The following quotation from page 91 will be of interest to the Ufologist: “The Acagchemen races of California appear to reverence an ancestor by the name of Ouiot, who was a great warrior and ruler of the early day. He grew old, however, and useless. As was their custom, they poisoned him, and he died, and was succeeded by a greater, named Ouiamot, who came dancing among them when assembled for some purpose, and entered into league with their medicine-men and confirmed their power. He then returned to the stars whence he came.”

Speaking of the South American tribes, Dorman says, on page 95: “Tezcatlipoka, the persecutor of the great priest of Tulla, became the greatest god adored in these countries. Creator of heaven and earth, recompenser of the just and the unjust, his name means shining mirror. According to tradition, he descended from heaven by a rope made of spiders’ webs.” Would not a primitive Indian tribe describe a brilliant silvery disc as a “shining mirror”? Would they (as well as more modern savants) not proclaim our mysterious Angel Hair as “a rope made of spiders’ webs”? Such are the questions inherent in attempting to assimilate this mass of legend.

As we have already noticed, many legends of culture-heroes have an element of the mystical about them, particularly concerning the birth and/or death of the hero. Consider the following examples:

“Izona, who appears to have been called the father of men, and was probably an early historical character, was an object of their worship. He had a son Bacab, who attained divine honours. He was divinely begotten, for, according to the traditions, he was born of a virgin Chibirias, who was the daughter of Ixchel, the Yucatee medicine-goddess.” (page 106).

“The Mijes, a Maya nation, surrounded the birth and death of their hero Condoy with the mystery preceding an apotheosis. . . . Condoy, in their traditions, had no mother or father, and disappeared as mysteriously as he came. They cherished his memory, and thought he had been

translated among the gods." (page 107).

"Gacheta is a famous virgin who conceived and brought forth Garanchaca, a famous chief who ruled over them (the Chibchas). She declared the sun to be the father of her boy. This is another case of immaculate conception." (page 113).

"In the mythological lore of the Manacicas of Brazil, their culture-hero, born of a virgin, after spending a life in benefiting his people, soared away to become the sun." (page 126).

On page 111, we find another curious tale of a woman who was worshipped as a goddess, and who manifested strange powers. "The principal goddess of the natives of the province of Cerquin, in Honduras, was Comizagual, a woman who came among them from other parts, according to tradition. She was skilled in the art of magic, and came into their province flying through the air. She had three sons without being married, and, according to the usual traditions in these cases, without knowing man. After ruling with equity, she was translated in the following manner: she ordered her bed brought out of the house, when there came a great flash of lightning with thunder, and Comizagual was never seen more."

When we consider our final bit of data, one cannot help remembering George Adamski's description of the Venusian he claimed to have encountered on the California desert in 1952. This is neither the time nor the place to go into those claims for the "umpteenth" time, so we will merely give our mythological reference with no further comment. In speaking about the worship of the planet Venus, which was a common practice with several tribes, Dorman says: "Chasca, however, the Peruvian Venus, was always propitious, and was a youth with long and curling locks."

Perhaps none of the data we have quoted in the above narrative will prove any definite connection between various myths and legends and our more modern enigma, the UFO. Nevertheless, we do find, in almost all mythologies and folktales, references to beings who came from, and returned to, the sky. Are they all merely stories or will the reader perhaps wonder, along with us, if so much "smoke" cannot mean at least some fire. At any rate, it is a most interesting study, and one which could provide some small clue to the solution of our aerial mystery.

MAIL BAG

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

Russian Wall Painting

Sir,—May I comment on Mr. Creighton's article which appeared in the July/August issue of the REVIEW, page 11.

When judging Russian views about ancient drawings of possible space men, one should bear in mind that due to the ideological climate in the USSR, every rational explanation of myths, religious beliefs, etc., is more likely to receive promotion than any other view.

On the other hand I think one need not be too fanciful to regard the Tassili drawing as the representation of a space man (Fig. 1). As I was told by a student of archeology, experts hold the opinion that the drawings of this type very probably do depict masked demon dancers.

Now, if this should be so, those experts have yet to explain why demon dancers bear such a striking resemblance to space men. Could it

not have been, that the demon dancers themselves were nothing but old memories of early contacts or perhaps even conflicts with extra-terrestrials?—Luis Schönherr, Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria.

The Mars Photographs

Sir,—Having read Donald E. Keyhoe's, "The Flying Saucer Conspiracy", and, more recently, seen the rather meagre issue of photographs taken by the Mar's probe, I feel I must draw your attention to a point which may have been overlooked.

The "canals" of Mars were discussed in the book, and all the evidence (which included observations by observatories like Mount Palomar) confirmed the presence of such markings.

When these few photographs were released by the U.S. authority responsible, the brief announcement

was also made that "no sign has been found of any canals"!

Since then, we do not appear to have seen or heard any more about Mars (and it was certainly an historic occasion!); could it be that more was discovered than meets the eye, and that once again, the public will not be allowed to know more than what is deemed to be good for them?—B. C. Jones, 410 Church Road, Frampton Cotterell, Bristol.

Bases in Brazil

Sir,—I am surprised to find that Mr. Creighton has become so upset over my conjectures regarding the "A.V.B." case—If he has calmed down a little now, and will read my letter again, he will find that I did *not* say I believed it was an earth-craft.

I said I was *not sure* that it concerned an "outer space" craft, and gave a *few* of my reasons for considering such a possibility.