

“What’s on the earth is in the stars; and what’s in the stars is on the earth”: Lakota Relationships with the Stars and American Relationships with the Apocalypse

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How is colonialism connected to American relationships with extraterrestrial beings? This commentary analyzes contemporary and founding US mythologies as constant, calculated attempts for settlers to obtain indigeneity in this land stemming from a fear of the “unknown.” From Columbus’s arrival to the Boston Tea Party, from alien and UFO fervor to paranormal experiences, spiritualism, New Age, and American Wicca, American mythology endlessly recreates conspiracy theories to justify its insatiable desire for resource extraction. I examine the US American mythology of extraterrestrials from two directions: the Oglala Lakota perspective of spirits born through a constellation of stars, and the “American” perspective of extraterrestrials born out of settler futurities. Manifest Destiny goes so far as to take ownership over time and reconfigure it into a linear, one-way street that is a progression towards apocalypse. For American Indians and other peoples targeted by the United States government, conspiracy theories prove true. Those who are targeted, Native and otherwise, understand as the violence of American mythology pours across the continent—abduction and assimilation, or death. How can Indigenous nonhuman ontologies orient settler ethics for the future?