

AN ALIEN LEXICON

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Since the end of the Second World War, both laymen and scientists have given a great deal of thought to the possibility, or probability, of intelligent life elsewhere than on the earth - on other planets of the solar system, in other star systems of the Milky Way galaxy, and in other galaxies scattered through the physical universe. As a consequence, a large and varied vocabulary of terms designating different kinds of otherworldly beings has come into use.

Very few of these terms have entered the domain of our dictionaries. Most of those accepted lexicographically have been defined without regard to current scientific knowledge and speculation, and without recognizing the sometimes subtle overtones or nuances conveyed by different terms. The almost total indifference displayed by dictionaries calls for the intervention of logology along its interface with academic language studies. The intrinsic interest of the vocabulary in question, and the fact that the human race is moving ineluctably toward encounters with living entities from other worlds, make logological action mandatory.

This article presents a glossary of those terms which have passed across my desk. I have, however, excluded terms limited only to some science-fiction novel or short story, and those designating robot entities. Familiarizing themselves with the terms listed below will enable readers to choose the designation expressing the precise shade of meaning they have in mind whenever they have occasion to speak or write about our competitors in the cosmos.

ALIEN A nonterrestrial being. The word suggests that the being is superficially somewhat similar to a human being - as compared, let us say, with an animal, vegetable, or mineral being - but that it is inherently different from humans, an outsider not of this world, and probably inimical to human life.

ALIEN BEING A fuller term of alien. The word conveys the alien's internal unity and its boundedness in spatial or other extent.

ALIEN CONTACT An alien with whom one or more human beings have established contact. The term implies that the alien is using the human or humans contacted to relay its messages, advice, or demands to a larger audience of humans, and views the human-alien relationship from the human perspective.

ALIEN LIFE FORM A term more inclusive than the word alien: it leaves the door open for the possibility that the alien is a form

of life utterly unlike human life, or even like any form of life found on the earth. The alien may, in fact, be representative of life in a form quite unimaginable to us.

ANCIENT ASTRONAUT One of a group of space travelers, from somewhere else in the Milky Way galaxy, hypothesized as having visited the earth in ancient times. Such groups, imbued with a desire to spread intelligent life through the galaxy, may have come here repeatedly. In their first visit, some 3.5 or 4 billion years ago, they seeded the earth with viruses and with the simplest forms of one-celled life, which they brought here from their own world. Five or ten million years ago, a group of ancient astronauts arrived here and subjected the early apes to selective breeding and genetic mutation, with human beings and human intelligence the result. In more recent but still prehistoric times, ancient astronauts appeared again, their mission this time being to bring culture and knowledge to primitive human societies. There is no scientific or other valid evidence either to support or to disprove the ancient-astronaut hypothesis.

ARCTURIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Arcturus, the brightest star in the northern constellation Böotes (the Plowman) and the sixth-brightest star in the heavens. Arcturus is a binary or double star.

ASTROBIOLOGICAL SPECIMEN An approximate synonym for exobiological specimen, placing the specimen's provenance among the stars rather than within our solar system.

ASTRONAUT An extraterrestrial being engaged in interplanetary and/or interstellar space flight. The word is sometimes extended to include human beings training for or engaged in such flight.

ASTRONAUTESS Among advanced forms of life exhibiting sexual differentiation comparable to that observed among human beings, a female astronaut.

CANOPAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Canopus, the brightest star in the southern constellation Carina (the Keel) and the second-brightest star in the sky.

CAPELLAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Capella, the brightest star in the northern constellation Auriga (the Charioteer) and the fifth-brightest star in the heavens. Capella is a ternary or triple star.

CENTAURIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Alpha Centauri, the brightest star in the southern constellation Centaurus (the Centaur) and the third brightest star in the heavens. Alpha Centauri is a ternary or triple star. One of its members, Proxima Centauri, is the known star closest to our solar system, facilitating travel between it and the earth. The distance involved is only about 25 trillion miles. Alpha Centauri is also known as Rigil Kentaurus (Al Rijl al Kentaurus), but no name for possible inhabitants of the Alpha Centauri star system is derived from that name because of likely confusion with

Rigelian, an inhabitant of the Rigel star system.

COSMIC BROTHER, COSMIC COUSIN, COSMIC SISTER A representative of extraterrestrial life as intelligent as, or more intelligent than, human life. The terms suggest the interrelatedness of life throughout the universe, its mutual friendliness and helpfulness, and the distribution of life throughout the universe. The words "brother" and "sister" imply a somewhat closer relationship than does the word "cousin," with the first two words distinguishing between extraterrestrials divided into two sexes, comparable to those of human beings.

COSMONAUT An astronaut: the term of preference in the Soviet Union. It suggests intergalactic, not merely interstellar, travel.

COSMONETTE A female cosmonaut: a term applicable only to sexually-differentiated extraterrestrials.

ENDOTELLURIAN One of the hypothesized members of an intelligent race dwelling inside the earth; particularly, inside the earth conceived of as hollow. Endotellurians may be descendants of alien beings that originally came here from the stars. The term contrasts with tellurian, the member of an intelligent race dwelling on the outer surface of the earth. Human beings are the sole candidates for the latter classification. It also contrasts with the term exotellurian.

ET An abbreviation or initialism for the term extraterrestrial.

ETI An abbreviation or initialism for the term extraterrestrial intelligence.

EXO BIOLOGICAL SPECIMEN A representative of extraterrestrial life captured by human beings and brought to the earth for study and exhibition. The term implies an absolute superiority of humans over the extraterrestrial, coupled with an absence on the part of the humans of any kinship feelings for their quarry.

EXOTELLURIAN A learned synonym for the term extraterrestrial, derived from the higher-status Greek, not from the lower-status Latin. The term is indicative of its user's erudition.

EXTRATERRENE INTELLIGENCE, EXTRATERRENE LIFE FORM Synonyms, respectively, for the terms extraterrestrial intelligence and extraterrestrial life form, identifying their users as a cut above the average in scholarliness.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL, EXTRATERRESTRIAL BEING, EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE FORM Factual, neutral synonyms, respectively, for alien, alien being, and alien life form. They are equivalent to the "alien" terms in denotation but not in connotations, being free of the negative overtones attached to the latter.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL CIVILIZATION A collective term for a race of intelligent beings elsewhere in the solar system, Milky Way galaxy, or cosmos. The term is neutral, free of unfavorable connotations.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL CREATURE An extraterrestrial life form

either substantially inferior to human beings, regarded by them as on an animal level, or unqualifiedly hostile to humans, making it an enemy to be captured and/or destroyed.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE Intelligence of nonterrestrial provenance. The term implies that the intelligence in question may not require a physical medium through which to operate - it may be incorporeal or discarnate. Such intelligence would be, or is, on a much higher level than merely human intelligence.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE FORM See extraterrestrial, above.

FLYING SAUCERIAN An occupant or pilot of a flying saucer (a flying disk or UFO) - any of various disk-shaped and usually luminous objects reported as flying at high speeds and altitudes, performing maneuvers beyond current human technological capability. Some investigators believe that flying saucers are actually the product of hallucinations, mirages, or hoaxes; misinterpreted light, weather, or astronomical phenomena; or secret Soviet or American military planes, rockets, missiles, or satellites. If any of the flying saucers are authentic, they are visitors from elsewhere in space or in time.

FUTURE MAN Man evolved beyond his present level of intelligence and physical and technological capabilities. Future man, still residing on the earth, may develop the means to transport himself backward in time, visiting today's earth in vehicles that we perceive as flying saucers or UFOs. Such visits might be prompted by sheer curiosity, or as part of a search for a more habitable environment.

HELLIAN A learned synonym for the term solarian - it is derived from the higher-status Greek, not from the lower-status Latin. The term is indicative of its user's erudition.

HUMANOID A living, reasoning extraterrestrial, similar in at least some essential respects to human beings and residing on a planet other than the earth. Humanoids may be somewhat above, roughly at, or somewhat below the human development level.

INTRUDER An extraterrestrial visiting the earth with intentions assumed to be hostile to mankind. The term makes the negative connotations of alien part of its denotation.

JOVIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Jupiter. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on Jupiter are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it.

LGM An abbreviation or initialism for the term little green man.

LIFE FORM A distinctive physical or other form assumed by, or characterizing, a particular kind of living organism. The term is frequently made a part of terms describing nonterrestrial life, as in alien life form and extraterrestrial life form.

LITTLE GREEN MAN A whimsical term for a representative of intelligent extraterrestrial life - which may be neither little, nor

green, nor manlike. The term is not suited for use in serious writing or speech.

LUNARIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the earth's moon. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on the moon are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it. Neither has any evidence turned up for the presence on the moon of life as we do not know it. Because we may not recognize such life or even be physically capable of sensing it, the lack of evidence for it is inconclusive.

MAN FROM MARS An alliterative but informal synonym for the term Martian.

MAN IN THE MOON A masculine intelligence assumed to be immanent in the earth's moon and manifesting itself physically through the medium of the man's face suggested by the dark lines and spots on the surface of the moon, as seen from the earth.

MARTIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Mars. Scientific investigation of that planet has, thus far, been inconclusive. The two Viking spacecraft which landed on Mars in 1976 confirmed that all of the elements needed for carbon-based life were present there. Of the two experiments testing for the presence of life on Mars subsequently performed, one produced a positive result, the other a negative result. The positive result was probably the correct one (Fred Hoyle, The Intelligent Universe, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984, pp. 102-105).

MAVORTIAN A synonym for the term Martian.

MERCURIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Mercury. No space probes have landed on Mercury or entered its atmosphere, consisting largely of helium. Scientists believe that the planet is incapable of supporting life as we know it.

MOONMAN An informal synonym for lunarian; also, a synonym for man in the moon.

MUTANT A descendant of human beings who has undergone genetic alteration, rendering him or her significantly different from today's humans. Mutants typically reside on a distant planet colonized by the human race, but may also appear in some isolated area on the earth's surface. The term carries strong implications of hostility to humans. Mutants may have intelligence and powers either above or below those possessed by human beings.

NEPTUNIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Neptune. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on Neptune are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it.

NONTERRESTRIAL An informal synonym for extraterrestrial and, less accurately and commonly, for endotellurian.

OTHERS, THE A collective term for extraterrestrials, emphasizing the fact that we know nothing about them except the fact that they are other than we. The term creates an aura of mystery around

the extraterrestrials, also suggesting that they may represent a threat to our existence: there is something distinctly ominous about this designation.

PLANETARIAN A hypothesized inhabitant of a planet other than the planet earth. The term is useful for distinguishing such inhabitants from those of planetary satellites, asteroids, comets, stars, nebulae, and other kinds of astronomical bodies, as well as from the inhabitants of interstellar and intergalactic space.

PLUTONIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Pluto. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on Pluto are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it.

RIGELIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Rigel, the brightest star in the northern constellation Orion (the Hunter) and the seventh-brightest star in the heavens. Rigel is a binary or double star. Do not confuse Rigel with Rigil Kentaurus (Al Rijl al Kentaurus), an occasional name for Alpha Centauri.

SATURNIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Saturn. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on Saturn are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it.

SAUCERIAN, SAUCERMAN, SAUCER PEOPLE Terms for the occupants of a flying saucer (see flying saucerian, above). Saucerian is a general term for one such individual; saucerman visualizes a masculine extraterrestrial, distinguishing him from a feminine one; and saucer people is a collective term for the occupants of flying saucers.

SAUCER PILOT The pilot of a flying saucer (see flying saucerian, above).

SELENIAN A learned synonym for the term lunarian - it is derived from the higher-status Greek, not from the lower-status Latin. The term is indicative of its user's erudition.

SELENITE A synonym for lunarian. The term is an unfortunate one, because it also designates a salt or ester of selenious acid, and a particular variety of gypsum.

SIRIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Sirius, the brightest star in the southern constellation Canis Major (the Greater Dog) and the brightest star in the heavens. Sirius, also known as the Dog Star, Canicula, the Star of Autumn, or the Nile Star, is a binary or double star.

SOLARIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the sun. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on and in the sun are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it.

SOULMATE FROM SPACE A synonym for cosmic cousin which goes even further in the direction of emphasizing the spiritual kinship

of human beings and other life forms in the cosmos. The term excludes any possibility of hostility between humans and extraterrestrials.

SPACE ALIEN A fuller form of the term alien, differentiating it from other meanings of the latter.

SPACE BROTHER A synonym for cosmic brother placing less emphasis on the distribution of life through the entire universe. The term is more suited to a merely galactic distribution of life.

SPACE COLONY A self-contained, self-supporting colony of extraterrestrials which its civilization has established on a large, artificial satellite in space - for additional living space, for scientific research and exploration, as a way station for spaceships on interstellar trips, as a military post, or for other reasons.

SPACE EMISSARY A nonterrestrial acting as the agent or representative of an advanced extraterrestrial civilization, sent to the earth with the mission of contacting the human race, broadening its vistas regarding its place in the cosmos, and inviting it to join the mainstream of intelligent life in the universe.

SPACEFARER An extraterrestrial engaged in space travel. The term, which conveys overtones of adventure, peril, and unutterable loneliness, is sometimes extended to include human astronauts and cosmonauts - woefully limited as their spacefaring has been.

SPACEMAN An extraterrestrial visitor to the earth from outer space. The term underscores the fact of the visitor's travel through the vast reaches of space, as well as his membership in a sexually-differentiated race.

SPACE SISTER A synonym for cosmic sister, placing reduced emphasis on the universal distribution of life. The term is, instead, better suited to a merely galactic life distribution.

SPACE TRAVELER A more matter-of-fact synonym for spacefarer: one shorn of the emotional overtones attendant upon the latter word.

SPACE VISITOR An extraterrestrial visiting the earth, as distinguished from those arriving here with intentions of subjugating, deporting, or destroying the human race and/or of colonizing the earth with the possibility of despoiling it of its natural resources. The term implies a certain civility and restraint on the extraterrestrial's part.

SPACEWOMAN The female correlative of the term spaceman.

STARCHILD An extraterrestrial from another star system, regarded as an offspring of the stars, as the product of a universe dedicated to the evolution and thriving of life. The term is a sentimental or romantic one, betokening youthful wonder and an ebullient quest for the meaning of life, exploring its unplumbed potentials.

STARFOLK A collective term for extraterrestrials from other star systems. To a significant extent, it has the same associations as

does starchild, but it views the extraterrestrials from a fully mature perspective.

STRANGERS FROM THE STARS Another collective term for extraterrestrials - those who have arrived on the earth as visitors from civilizations in other star systems. The term is an alliterative, poetic, romantic one, considering the extraterrestrials in a respectful, positive light.

SUPERINTELLIGENT LIFE FORM An informal term for an extraterrestrial on a substantially more advanced developmental level than is the human race.

"THEY" A collective term for extraterrestrials, or extraterrestrial civilizations. The term underscores the fact that we know nothing about them. It also suggests that "they" are markedly different from "us" and implies subtly that "they" may pose a threat to our existence.

TIME TRAVELER An extraterrestrial who journeys through time rather than through space, arriving on today's earth either from the past or from the future. Such a traveler may be either a human being from another point on the earth's timeline, or a representative of a more highly evolved future terrene life form.

TIME-SPACE TRAVELER An extraterrestrial who combines travel through space with travel through time, arriving here and now either from the past or from the future of some other world.

TRIFFID A huge extraterrestrial assuming the outward form of a walking plant, and given to attacking human beings - an unequivocally hostile alien life form (Clarence L. Barnhart, Sol Steinmetz, and Robert K. Barnhart, *The Second Barnhart Dictionary of New English*, Bronxville, NY, Barnhart/Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980, p. 479).

UFO BEING, UFONAUT The hypothesized extraterrestrial occupant or pilot of a flying saucer or UFO (unidentified flying object).

UFO PILOT The hypothesized extraterrestrial pilot of a flying saucer or UFO (unidentified flying object).

UFO VISITOR An extraterrestrial visiting the earth who has arrived here in a flying saucer or UFO (unidentified flying object).

URANIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Uranus. Scientific investigation has established that physical conditions on Uranus are incompatible with the existence of life as we know it.

VEGAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of a planet revolving around Vega, the brightest star in the northern constellation Lyra (the Lyre) and the fourth-brightest star in the heavens. The word Vegan is a heteronym: pronounced "Vee-gan," it has the definition just provided; pronounced "vedge-an," it becomes vegan, a strict vegetarian who consumes no animal food or dairy products. We do not know whether Vegans are vegans. Astronauts have recently found evidence of something around Vega: if not planets or aster-

oids, then fine particles of some sort. This finding raises the specter of particle people, a hitherto unknown life form. Similar evidence has, still more recently, appeared for Fomalhaut, which is the brightest star in the southern constellation Piscis Australis or Piscis Austrinus (the Southern Fish) and the eighteenth-brightest star in the heavens. No name for residents of this star system has yet become firmly established, but it would be logical to call them Fomelhautians - another race of apparent particle people.

VENUSIAN One of the hypothesized inhabitants of the planet Venus. Based on the information obtained by unmanned spaceships which both the United States and the Soviet Union have sent to that planet, scientists have concluded that Venus is incapable of supporting life as we know it. That conclusion is demonstrably false, since it is based primarily on Venus's surface temperature of 869 degrees Fahrenheit and on its unearthy atmosphere. Scientists choose to ignore the fact that they have discovered organisms on the floor of the Pacific Ocean, at hydrothermal vents in rift zones, without sunlight, in waters with temperatures as high as 700 degrees Fahrenheit. These organisms - vent bacteria or archaeobacteria - convert an inorganic sulfur compound (hydrogen sulfide) into usable organic compounds (Cheryl Simon, "Life under Pressure: Vent Microbes Grow at 250°C or More," *Science News*, 11 June 1983, p. 372; Shannon Brownlee, "Bizarre Beasts of the Abyss," *Discover*, July 1984, pp. 71-74). It follows that, with little or no adaptation, such organisms can also thrive on Venus, opening the door to the development of more complex life forms on that planet: the Venusians. Logological foresight in providing a name for them has thus been vindicated.

There are, inevitably, a good many more names for extraterrestrials that I have overlooked. Readers are invited to submit my omissions to the editor of **Word Ways** for future publication.