ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

SCIENCE

Feral Species
Charles Orange
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Four Stars (out of Five)

"Something within us may be feral to this planet." Such is the basic premise behind Charles Orange's theory that humanity, or at least a sliver of our DNA, "was planted here from beyond." This "missing link emanating from beyond this planet," he postulates, "perfectly explains our own otherwise unexplainable uniqueness."

Orange is not saying that ancient astronauts visited Earth to spread their seed or alter the genetic structure of early hominids. He is saying that it is possible, perhaps even probable, that something of that nature occurred. In *Feral Species*, he presents twenty-three essays to support his theory. Unlike other writers who are certain (and even offer supposed proof) of extraterrestrial visitation, Orange simply wants his readers to keep an open mind and to consider that such events might have happened.

The essays are short, well-structured arguments that support Orange's basic argument. Each essay poses a question such as, "Why Do Babies Cry?" or "Why Do We Think Sunglasses Look So Cool?" The questions, like the answers, provide both entertainment and food for thought. Will his answers to "Why Do We Rear Our Young So Long?" or "Why Are We Obsessed With Flight?" convince readers of the validity of his case? Perhaps, or perhaps not. Orange's work here is merely to suggest that an extraterrestrial hand could have essentially played God on Earth.

Orange does discuss both God and religion, and, being more a man of science than of faith, he takes some well-deserved shots at organized religions for being "far better at pitting divergent beliefs against each other" than at uniting people. While postulating that ancient visitors may have once used religion "to create human slaves," he also concedes that religion may have "morphed into a mission to guide us to a spiritual awakening."

Orange writes with every intention of inciting controversy. He does not, however, presume to be right; he only asks that readers consider his explanations for the mysteries of mankind and the universe. The thirty-something New Yorker thinks like a scientist but writes

like an essayist, making him a member of a truly rare literary club.

In the end, this slim collection may not convince all who read it that mankind has extraterrestrial origins. There is much here, however, to encourage the reader to consider that we may indeed be a “feral species,” a virus consuming the host that is Mother Earth.

Mark McLaughlin