a highly respected anthropology professor at the University of Michigan and curator of the university’s museum. A bit desperate for an explanation, Greenman argued that man reached the New World from Europe by canoe.... Greenman (who had a detailed knowledge of both Paleo-Indian artifacts and the artifacts of Europe) was startled by the many similarities he discovered between Paleo-Indian and European artifacts. This led him to postulate the theory that during Europe’s Upper Paleolithic cultural period (35,000 to 12,000 years ago) men from France and Spain traveled to North America by crossing the Atlantic in “Beothuk,” unique deep-water skin canoes.... He proposed Newfoundland as the point of entry, with subsequent migrations to the southwestern United States, including portions of Mexico.61

More recently, there have been straight-faced suggestions that initial migration occurred via water travel across the Pacific, with entry points posited in various localities along the North American coastline from British Columbia to southern California, and at points as far southward as Peru.62 Ideas accruing from less “reputable” quarters have been that Indians are actually remnants of the populations of the so-called Lost Continents of Atlantis or Lemuria (or both),63 that American Indians are among the “Lost Tribes of Israel,”64 that the migration came across the Atlantic from sub-Saharan Africa,65 or that Indians are accounted for, at least in part, by the arrival of extraterrestrials on earth at some time a few thousand years ago.66 In the end, one theory makes about as much sense as another since proponents of the alleged “Polynesian Route” cannot account for the fact that, while places like Australia and New Guinea were occupied by humans as long as 50,000 years ago, Hawai’i—the Pacific archipelago most proximate to the Americas—has been inhabited for only about 2,000 years.67 (For an overview of the proposed migration routes, see Map III.)

Turning the Footprints Around

Evidence from a number of archaeological sites distributed in the western part of the hemisphere from the Yukon into South America now indicates a minimum possible date of 40,000 years for the earliest entry of man into the North American continent.

Ruth Gruhn, 1977

Given a theoretical vacuum left by the shaking of traditional archaeological ideas and conventions, we must seek new ideas, concepts, and their theoretical integration with reference to how the world is put together at different times and places, and how we may understand recognized patterns of changes and diversity in organized human behavior. Only to such theories may the scientific method be properly addressed. Thus, today’s challenge is in theory building, and thus far little progress has been made, although many persons have seen the challenge and accepted it.

Lewis R. Binford, 1984

The fact of the matter is that none of this can be made to work out, nor will it ever. There is no evidence available to support the Bering Strait Hypothesis and related theories, nor has there ever been. Quite the opposite, when the late German anthropologist Werner Müller began to investigate Greenman’s contenions during the mid–1960s, he quickly discovered that all evidence of shared transatlantic material cultural characteristics indicated that by far the oldest datings accrued from eastern Canada, not Europe.68 Intrigued, he examined the evidence linking western Canada and Alaska to Siberia. The result was the same: the datings at Old Crow and Blue Fish Lake in particular predate the oldest site in Siberia, at Lake Baikal, by at least 17,000 years.69 After two decades of exhaustive study, Müller concluded that there was solid evidence of very early migration outward from the North American Arctic region into both Asia and Europe.70

These findings would do much to explain things which are otherwise currently inexplicable. For instance, there is the sudden and mysterious appearance—it is usually likened to an “invasion”—of Cro-Magnons in Europe during the Upper Paleolithic.

One of the most hotly debated topics of research in the past decade has been that surrounding the first appearance in Western Eurasia of hominids that can be considered anatomically and culturally modern. Between 50,000 and 30,000 years ago, the Neanderthals and Mousterian [Middle Paleolithic] industries were replaced, from the Near East to the Atlantic seashore, by physically modern humans whose culture showed significant innovations, many of them never seen before on earth. These included graphic representations, true blade technology, personal ornaments, complex weapon and propulsion systems, long-distance procurement of durable raw materials, subsistence systems based on strategically organized use of the landscape over the course of the year, rapid and continual technological change through time, and cultural systems that vary greatly from region to region.71

The problem with this formulation is that such things had been “seen before on earth.” When one considers that the oldest known projectile points of the type used in Europe during this period have been consistently found in
North America, not in Spain or France, the likely source of the influx of modern humans to the “Old World” begins to clarify. 72

While the ancestral forms of the European projectile points have not been found on the Eurasian plains as prehistorians believed would be the case, ancestral forms for the American projectile points [dating from the same time] have been found. The Clovis point from Lewisville, Texas, which has been dated to over 38,000 years, shows that these projectile points were first invented in the Americas. The projectile points from geographically diverse sites such as Meadowcroft, Pennsylvania; McGee’s Point, Nevada; and Tlapacoya, Mexico, support the validity of the Lewisville point. In fact, by the end of the Pleistocene epoch there were a number of different point types and cultural traditions extant in the Americas, demonstrating that a great range of technological diversity had already been developed. 73

The types of points involved here clearly indicate use of “complex weapons systems” such as spearthrowers and bows and arrows. With regard to graphic representations, there is a pictorially carved llama bone recovered from a site dated at 30,000 years or more at Tequixquiac, near Mexico City, 74 an engraved mastodon bone—also found in Mexico and directly comparable to the art of European Cro–Magnons—dating back at least 22,000 years, 75 and three massive stone carvings near Malakoff, Texas, dated at more than 30,000 years. 76 The remainder of the list, from personal ornamentation to cultural variation by region, is also plainly evidenced as having been present in the Americas at points as early as, and often much earlier than, was the case in Europe.

The idea that modern humans in the Americas predate those in other parts of the world also explains why agriculture seems to have emerged here rather than elsewhere. Although no wild form of corn has ever been discovered—meaning it is a plant type wholly dependent upon human hybridization for its very existence—fossilized grains of corn pollen were identified by Elsa Barghoorn, a Harvard botanist, in a drill sample taken from a depth of 200 feet below Mexico City in 1954. The interglacial date assigned to samples from that strata was 80,000 years. 77 Grinding technologies, associated with preparation of vegetal foodstuffs like corn, have been found in sites dating back 20,000 or more years on the Scripps campus, 78 at the Alice Boer site, 79 and elsewhere. By comparison, the Old World’s Mesopotamian “Cradle of Civilization” in the Euphrates Valley—dating from the first known cultivation of wheat and rye, circa 7,000 B.C.—is quite recent. 80

The same can be said for domestication of animals. While this “great leap towards civilization” supposedly occurred in Mesopotamia with the domesticating of dogs, pigs, sheep, goats, and finally cattle over a span running from 7,000 to 5,000 B.C. 81 evidence from the Old Crow region indicates that American Indians were keeping dogs many thousands of years earlier. As paleontologist Brenda Beebe remarked at the time of the find, “Our most surprising discovery is the jaws of several domesticated dogs, some of which appear to be 30,000 years old. This is almost 20,000 years older than any other known animals anywhere in the world.” 82 Certainly, there have been no remotely comparable datings on the east Asian lands. 83

Even the invention of pottery, another aspect of civilization long thought to have occurred in Mesopotamia somewhere between 8,000 and 9,000 years ago—a premise more lately superseded by the discovery of 13,000–year-old pots in the Fukuki Cave and Senfukuji rock shelter, both on the island of Kyushu, Japan—may well have occurred in Peru much earlier, the concept then carried into the Old World by migrating Indians. 84 Be that as it may, it is true, as Alan Bryan observed in 1978, that “diffusion from America to Japan would be just as possible as diffusion in the opposite direction.” 85

Indeed, such a direction of diffusion might explain why the Ainu, an ancient “Caucasoid genetic isolate” in northern Japan, shows a far greater degree of cranial similarity to the equally isolated Yayahos Indians of Peru, than they do to the cranial characteristics of any of their “Mongoloid” neighbors. 86 For that matter, it would explain why both the Yayahos and the Ainu demonstrate a much greater similarity in cranial structure with the Norse of northern Scandinavia than they do with anyone else, or why, to quote physical anthropologist Janice Austin, “the [earliest] Paleo-Indians demonstrate population affinities with Caucasians [rather than Mongolians] groups.” 87

It appears from Austin’s statistical analysis that the traditional anthropological classification of American Indians as a branch of the Asian Mongolians is all wrong. The traditional interpretation was highly subjective, based on the lumping together of physically diverse American Indian groups; it is supported by little metric data and no chronology. Based on the new datings and the new statistical data, the Paleo-Indians should be classified as proto-Caucasoids who evolved into various American Indian peoples, giving the modern-day American Indians their own racial grouping as separate from the Mongoloids or Caucasoids. On the other hand, European Cro–Magnons should be classified as a branch of the proto-Caucasoid Paleo-Indians who evolved into what we now describe as modern Caucasoids. Similarly, based on the many analogies noted between ancient Mongolian skulls and some ancient American Indian skulls, the first Asians should also be classified as a branch of proto-Caucasoid Paleo-Indians who became Asiatic Mongolians. 88

This conclusion corrects certain of the persistent and perplexing “anomalies” detected even by such hidebound racialist anthropologists as Carlton S
Coon, who has been forced to admit—without abandoning his commitment to orthodoxy—that overall differences in fingerprints, blood types, ear wax, and other "genetic indicators" have served to "drive a thick wedge between Asiatic Mongoloids and American Indians." There is also the matter of the "shovel-shaped" incisors shared by American Indians, the Ainu, and a portion of the northern European population.

Acceptance of the growing weight of evidence that American Indians didn't "come from somewhere else" would address a few other matters as well. These begin with confirmation that we are, and always have been, literally correct when we've insisted that we come from here, from this land, that we are truly indigenous to the hemisphere. And, if our Origin Stories are thus verified as accurate, it follows that the rest of our "legends" are deserving of reconsideration for being exactly what we've always said they are: our Histories. A revision of the chronology of human occupancy in the Americas backwards to, say, a quarter-million years would, to take a salient example, have the effect of making the "Foe Worlds" chronicle of the Hopi—a saga in which the people's habitat is destroyed by volcanic fire at one point, by flooding at another, and by ice at still another—entirely plausible.

The destruction of the Hopi's third world by water may correspond to the inter-mountain basin damming and flooding that took place about 25,000 years ago in the [San Francisco Peaks area of Arizona]. The destruction of the second world by ice could represent the glacial activity that took place in the peaks approximately 100,000 years ago. And the destruction of the first world by fire could represent the volcanic activity that took place in the mountains approximately 250,000 years ago.

It is their very plausibility, however, which precludes acceptance of such things by the anthropological establishment, bound up as it is in the construction supporting the imperatives of the broader eurocentric status quo. There is not a preoccupation with truth, knowledge, or science. Rather, it is, as it must be, academic subterfuge: the careful orchestration of the illusion of such virtues in support of the prevailing hegemony of eurosupremacism. Ideologically, and therefore canonically, it must be held as true that the first modern human came into being on the soil of Europe and that s/he was of "Caucasoid stock." From there, it can and must be held as true that all that has been humanly worth saying, doing, or thinking was first said, done, or thought by representatives of the Caucasian persuasion. And, from there, all the classic arguments of European imperialism emerge, reducible for all their sophistry and variation to the basic proposition that being first signifies superiority and that superiority implies an intrinsic right to dominate the lives, lands, and resources of the "inferior."

To discard or abandon the Bering Strait Hypothesis, absent some viable replacement serving the same purpose, would be to jerk a cornerstone from beneath the whole ideological edifice of white supremacy. Hence, the Brahmins of anthropology—and any who aspire to become such—have little choice but to continue their engagement in the theory's defense, nibbling importantly at their pipe stems as they pronounce their deeply "responsible" skepticism with regard to the valid, pontificate in their avid embrace of the ludicrous, reward those who toe their line while seeking to destroy the credibility and careers of those who deviate, striving all the while to indoctrinate yet another generation with their distortions while guarding their indefensible land bridge viciously and to the last gasp, even as it sags, buckles, and begins to sink beneath their feet.

On the Matter of mtDNA

Objectivity is not an unobtainable emptying of the mind but a willingness to abandon a set of preferences when the world seems to work in a contrary way.... Good theories invite a challenge but do not bias the outcome.... We say, in our mythology, that old theories die when new observations derail them. But too often, indeed I would say usually, theories act as straightjackets to channel observations toward their support and to forestall data that might refute them.

Stephen Jay Gould, 1992

...comes now geneticist Douglas Wallace and his colleagues, the subject of Tim Friend's story in USA Today, to resuscitate the dying doctrine of Bering Strait migration. Their technique is to rely upon the esotericism of their topic and the technical nomenclature they use to describe it to mystify those who might otherwise be critical, all the while peddling the same old bill of goods: by tracing "DNA Footprints," Wallace is quoted as saying, they are demonstrating "beyond reasonable doubt" that humans did indeed move into the New World from the Old "as long as" 40,000 years ago (i.e., across the second most recent Beringian land bridge).

Although Friend carefully casts the impression that this represents a sort of "revolution" in anthropological thinking, it is not. Wallace is merely engaging in a Kroeber-style revision of American anthropology's most bedrock tenets. A certain amount of chronological ground is given up in order to contain and absorb accumulated counter-evidence, with the result that the main premise of the status quo—the Bering Strait hypothesis itself, and the concept of Old World primacy over the New which comes with it—can be not only maintained, but reinforced in the public mind once again. As Wallace himself has elsewhere announced his intellectual alignment, "Traditional anthropological analysis has confirmed that American Indians came from Asia ... across the Bering land
bridge when it was exposed during an episode of glaciation [emphasis added]."98 His job is to prove it, or to create a popular appearance that he has. In pursuing this objective, Wallace assembled a lab team at Emory University to conduct restriction analysis sequencing maternally inherited genetic material in samples taken from selected groups of Asians and American Indians. They then catalogued the diversity found in the mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) genome of each group in order to chart transmission over time from one locality to the next. What the team expected to discover, according to its own published material, was evidence indicating a diffusion of genetic traits from southeast Asia northwards, across Beringia and into America. What they found instead was precisely the opposite: four distinct mutations which are very rare in southern Asia, somewhat more common in northern and central Asia, and occurring at "surprisingly higher frequencies" among American Indians.100

To avert the obvious conclusion that the source of such genetic traits would be where they are most prevalent, a matter indicating diffusion from America to Asia, Wallace's team, in a performance worthy of such earlier exemplars of scientific racism as Morton, Coon, and Earnest Hooten, hurriedly cobbled up a whole new genetic theory which they dubbed "The Founder Effect."101 In this odd concoction put together on no more discernible evidentiary basis than the rest of the Bering Strait theory, those Asians who supposedly first came to America did so in such small groups and, unlike the relatives they left behind, stayed so completely isolated until so recently that they experienced a "genetic bottleneck" which preserved their peculiar mtDNA characteristics in ways which proved impossible in Asia itself.102

It is this blatant display of facts tortured into conformity with reactionary postulation that USA Today opted to trumpet as a "radical" breakthrough in anthropology. And what of the mass of countervailing evidence: dating, for instance? It is handled in kind: the Old Crow site is described as being "30,000 years old" instead of more than 40,000; Monte Verde is treated in the same manner, and so on. Newer finds, such as Scotty MacNish's discovery of 40,000-plus-year-old human hair in the Pendejo Cave in New Mexico,103 and the Pedra Furada site in Brazil, as old as 40,000 years,104 suffer the same fate. Other, even more inconvenient data, such as that embodied in the existence of the San Diego and Black Box skulls, are left entirely unmentioned.

Still less does Friend acknowledge that the conclusions drawn by the Wallace team are flayed contradicted by the findings of the bulk of geneticists involved in comparable studies of mtDNA transmission. A team headed by University of Utah researcher Ryk Ward, for example, studied a single tribal population in the Pacific Northwest, the Nuu-Chäl-Nulths, and arrived at some rather less theoretically strained positions in a 1991 study published by the National Academy of Science.105

Ward's analysis shows that: 1) minimum estimates indicate that the tribe is over 60% of the mitochondrial sequence diversity observed in major Old world groups such as Japanese or sub-Saharan Africans; 2) the magnitude of the sequence difference between this tribe's lineage clusters suggest that their origin must predate the supposed Pleistocene colonization of the Americas; and 3) "since a single Amerindian can maintain such intensive molecular diversity, it is unnecessary to presume that substantial genetic bottlenecks occurred during the formation of contemporary groups or, in particular 'Dramatic Founding Effect' resulted in the peopling of the Americas."106

Ward and his associates have also pointed out that "preliminary analysis of sequence data for the same mitochondrial segment from other Amerindian tribal groups indicates that a majority of tribes are as diverse as the Nuu-Chäl-Nulths and that only a small subset of the lineages found in one tribe are shared with others."107 In other words, there is substantial evidence that American Indians long ago achieved "mutational drift equilibrium" or "steady-state genetic distribution," a matter which militates strongly against Wallace's "founder effect thesis."108 This is all the more true since, as the Wallace team's own data suggests, no such drift equilibrium has as yet been achieved in Eurasia.109 The upshot is the so-called Eve Hypothesis in which it is argued that American Indians are responsible for their limited mtDNA commonalities with Asians, and not the other way around.110 More broadly, it is easily arguable that such evidence bolsters archaeological data suggesting a rapid influx of humans from America into both Asia and Europe at some point around 50,000 years ago.111

All in all, then, the material produced by Douglas Wallace must be assigned its rightful place among the welter of anthropological/historical myths—for instance, that North American Indians numbered "not more than a million nomadic Stone Age hunters and gatherers" in 1492,112 that most of us "inadvertently died of disease" after the arrival of Columbus,113—which have been so persistently fabricated and utilized in pseudo-scientific support of Euroamerica's overarching sense of its own intrinsic superiority and corresponding "manifest destiny" to dominate all it encounters.114 His conclusions are not counter to those of the status quo, but rather synonymous with them. The extraordinarily cordial treatment extended to him by "McPaper" should, if nothing else, be proof enough of that.115
Toward a New Understanding

Certain errors are stations on the way to truth.

Robert Musil, 1972

Aside from the endemic condition of eurocentrism which presently afflicts both the public and academia, any notion that modern humans may have evolved in the Americas first, spreading eventually across Eurasia, is considered problematic because of an ostensible absence in this hemisphere of a place from which humans might have sprung. This presumption is, however, not necessarily true. To begin with, the exact nature of humanity’s simian ancestors is not presently known. Second, even if it were, the evolutionary progression culminating in Homo sapiens sapiens is anything but clear. For more than a century after the initial discovery of fossilized European hominids in 1856, canonical wisdom wrongly held that the Neanderthals were part of this chain.

There is now a near consensus among students of evolutionary biology that the origins of our own species, Homo sapiens, is somehow intimately linked with the first intercontinental ancient hominid, Homo erectus. However, neither the transformation of erectus to sapiens nor the transformation of ancient (archaic) populations of Homo sapiens to their anatomically modern successors (H. sapiens) are matters of agreement in this scientific fraternity. In fact, there is no consensus.

Louis Leakey, for one, believed that evolutionists were following the wrong line, and that Homo erectus represented an “evolutionary dead end” of the same sort as Neanderthal. He also felt strongly that Homo sapiens might well have originated in the Americas, and he died with the expectation that modern human remains would eventually be discovered in this hemisphere dating back one–half million years or more. Although Leakey, posthumously, has come to be the target of frequent criticism by the anthropological establishment, the record amply demonstrates that he was much more right than wrong, and his critics just the reverse.

Nor does he stand alone in his “eccentricity.” In adopting his view of a possible “American Genesis” for humanity, Leakey joined a distinctively able minority of scholars running back to the sixteenth-century priest, Bartolomé de Las Casas, and later flowering amidst the scientists of the late nineteenth century.

One such apostate was Alfred Russell Wallace (1823–1913). In 1887, Wallace examined the evidence for early man in the New World, and like the German anatomist Julian Kollman (1834–1918), who three years earlier had made a similar survey, found not only his evidence of antiquity for available specimens, but also a continuity of type through time. In an effort to explain this, Wallace suggested that once man had become morphologically differentiated from his apish kin (during the mid–Tertiary period), he remained physically stable.

In the 1880s and 1890s, these pioneers were joined by Frederick Larkin, Charles C. Abbott, William Henry Holmes, and, after 1910, by both the eminent British naturalist Sir Arthur Keith and Florentino Ameghino, founder of Argentina’s National Museum. The 1920s saw the addition of Charles F. Lummis, founder of the Southwest Museum of Archaeology, and geologist/paleontologist H. J. Cook to the ranks. More recently, there have been George Carter, Jeffrey Goodman, the late Bruce Kammersch, and Alvhak Hicks.

Scotty MacNeish, Paul Mellars, Lewis Binford, Bruce MacFadden, Eric Delson, A. L. Rosenberger, Christopher B. Siager, Nelson Eldridge, Ian Tattersal, and a number of others have lately hinted that their thinking is, from various standpoints, moving in more or less the same direction.

The work of the last six is particularly interesting insofar as they have been steadily chipping away at the alleged “primate barrier” preventing autochthonous emergence of Homo sapiens in the Western Hemisphere. As MacFadden has put it, there is “good reason to lament the fragmentary record that must be used to decipher the evolution of ... New World primates. It can truly be said that the paleontological record of New World platyrhines [prehumans] is indeed the weakest of the lot. There are several reasons for this, but these mostly stem from the fact that, with the push to find human ancestors, emphasis has been outside South America.”

Ongoing assessments of Platyrhini (ancient New World) primates have depicted them as unmistakable members of the order “Haplorhini,” a monophyletic taxon encompassing both New and Old World anthropoids. The sources for the Eocene (55–32 million years ago) presence of both New and Old World primates must be an earlier common ancestral form. Perhaps the North American and European Adapidae, the earliest of the known pre–primates, is the progenitor of today’s higher primate groups [including humans].

The question hinges, according to Hicks, upon “what constitutes acceptable evolutionary terms for investigating the earliest archaeological remains of mid–Pleistocene man in the Americas. The present effort is to distinguish compatible analogies that might instigate a change in paradigm and allow us to reconsider the antiquity of the modern human anatomy and to bring in New World considerations as to whether today’s humans were ever ‘linked’ to Homo erectus.” Or, to put it another way, “Could the Western Hemisphere have spawned its own distinct hominid form, the indigenous Native American and, in turn, his fully modern human contemporaries of the Old World Pleistocene