

UFOs and Ancient Astronaut Theorists

An Oregon MUFON Presentation

by

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Road Map I

- My Approach: Scholarly
- Standard Academic History and Criticisms of Ancient Astronauts Theories
- AA Theories and Themes
- The “Spiritualist/Materialist” Spectrum
- Some Prominent Spiritualist and Materialist AA Theorists
- A “Responsible” AA Critic
- Some modern AA theorists
- Conclusion

My Approach to UFOs

- My approach is the scholarly approach. I believe in rational methodologies for generating sufficiently good knowledge.
- Scholars are experts in the humanities. They are historians, jurisprudence experts, literary critics, art historians, archeologists, religious studies experts, linguists, philologists, philosophy professors, etc.
- In the last 300 years, scholars have evolved methodologies leading to established facts in their areas of expertise.
- These various methodologies are not perfect but over time generate a body of reliable facts and even principal findings in the broad area of the humanities.
- Authors in the area of Ancient Astronaut (AA) theories have **not** always followed these established methodologies. So, in general, their “knowledge” is suspect, *but may still include valuable insights*.

AA Theory not UFOs in History

- Ancient astronaut (AA) theories are *not* the same as the history of UFOs or UFOs in history.
- Many AA theories assume that UFO aliens are real and then go on to elaborate alternative histories of humanity on the assumption of UFO alien intervention/participation in history.
- UFOs in history is the treatment of UFOs using standard historical techniques and assumptions about history. The purpose of UFOs in history is to inquire whether we can see evidence of the UFO phenomenon in the earlier (standard) history of humankind.
- *However, there is a need for AA theories because of the very nature of UFOs. All ufologists believe that genuine UFOs are strongly associated with an intelligence apparently superior to humankind's. So, potentially the UFO intelligence is not a "standard" player in human history since it might affect historical events in practically unimaginable ways.*

History and Speculative “History”

- Historical knowledge taught in major universities assumes that no “miraculous” or anomalous agencies created events in the past. Broadly, there is no assumption of any agency acting in the past besides ordinary human activity and natural world occurrences as understood by modern science. So, no spiritual or UFO/ET agencies!
- But, outside the world of academia, there are three “non-rational” areas of ideas about “miraculous” agencies producing change in the natural world: (1) religious agencies acting in the past and today, (2) occultist assumptions of spirits acting in the past and today, and (3) past beliefs about supernatural agencies based on ancient mythologies and legends.
- Despite this, mainstream scholars and scientists never speculate about or think in terms of past events based on the idea that religious, occult (“New Age”), mythological, or legendary ideas about real, existent agencies or about UFO/ETs are true. *This is not true of many AA theorists. All assume miraculous or UFO/ET agencies.*

Problems with AA Theories I

- Three basic areas of problems arise in the AA literature: (1) use of flawed academic methodologies, (2) use of assumptions of factual knowledge not acknowledged by mainstream scholarship and science, (3) use of theoretical knowledge invented by the AA theorist as if it were true when it is only loosely connected to mainstream academic knowledge.
- (1) *Flawed Methodologies*: Most AA theorists do not have adequate training in standard academic methodologies.
- For example, an ancient pictograph that shows large-eyed beings does not necessarily mean the artist was thinking of our gray alien beings.
- Using morphology to draw conclusions about meaning is dangerous unless done very judiciously. A detailed knowledge of the cultures of concern helps prevent misinterpretation.

Problems with AA Theories 2

- Another problem is having an inadequate understanding of the language being translated. For example, scholars have criticized Zecharia Sitchin for this.
- (2) *Assertion of Non-standard Facts*: For example, Von Daniken has been criticized extensively for the outright assertion of questionable facts in the discussion of the context of a supposed alien artifact of some kind.
- (3) *Assumption or Invention of Non-mainstream and Questionable Theoretical Ideas*: For example, Richard Hoagland, famous for his Mars face work, has created some ideas about a “hyperdimensional physics” that he then incorporates into an elaborate scenario involving humans and an ancient alien race based on Mars in the past.
- Generally speaking, most AA theorists are not careful researchers or scholars and this, coupled with their treatment of an academically “taboo” subject, prevents their work from gaining much attention in the mainstream academic establishment.

Standard History of World I

- Humankind evolved through natural world forces from ape-like ancestors starting in Africa around 5 million years ago down to 500,000 years ago.
- *Australopithecus afarensis* (“Lucy”), *Homo habilis*, and *H. erectus* were transition forms to *H. neanderthalensis* and *H. sapiens sapiens*, which is us. We hunted and gathered and lived in tribal communities toward the end.
- About 100,000 years ago, humans are found in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Australia and North and South America seem to have been inhabited a little later.
- From 100,000 to about 35,000 years ago, the Neanderthals and modern humans became a single species. Evidence of burials with ritual objects, of sea crossing to Australia, of pictographs and cave paintings, of stone tools all made their appearance.

Standard History of World 2

- From 33,000 to 13,000 years ago, humans made it to North and South America and all humans lived in definite tribal villages.
- Wild grain was gathered in the Middle East, but by 8000 BC humans were planting and harvesting it, and they lived in large multi-tribal villages and proto-cities.
- 5000 to 3000 BC saw the rise of civilization. Village complexes evolved into cities made routinely of mud brick, stone, and/or wood. Trade between cities expanded. Writing began. Temples were raised to gods. Domestication of animals was widespread.
- Sumer, Egypt, and the Indus Valley were all among the earliest of the early civilizations. Other early proto-civilizations arose along Peru's desert coast, in England around Stonehenge, and in isolated areas in Northern Thailand and Vietnam.

Standard History of World 3

- Mainstream history and pre-history sees in the massive amount of historical, archeological, anthropological, and scientific evidence only a gradual increase of more and more complex human communities.
- Academics see no serious “discontinuities” in the gradual progress of proto-humans to humans and then their gradual evolution of their cultures to essentially fill all the main “niches” around the world.
- Methodologically, academia does not pay undue attention to “outlier” artifacts, some of which have accumulated in the world’s museums over the last couple of hundred years of the growth of museums and collections concerning humanity’s past.
- Isolated problems such as the relationship between Neanderthals and modern humans are seen as eventually fully understandable without recourse to “wild” claims and theories such as those in AA theory.

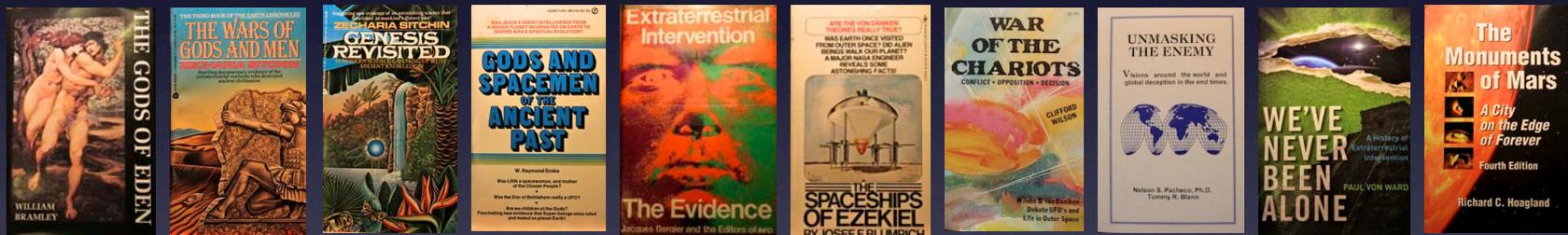
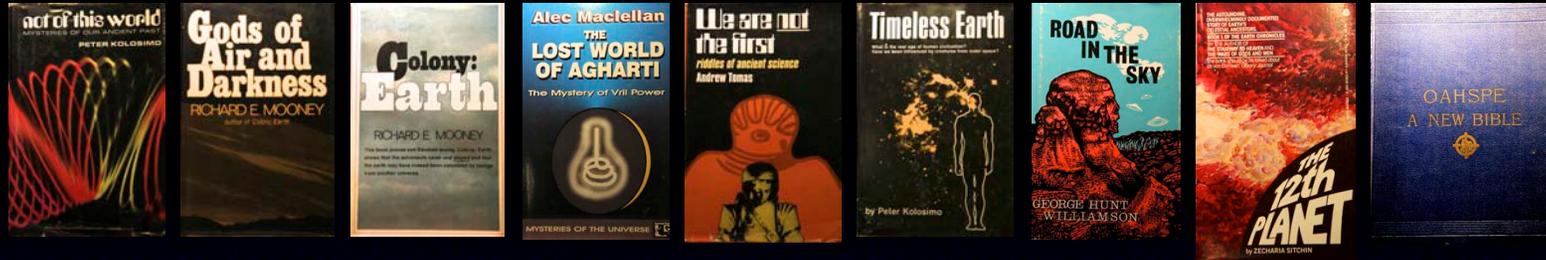
Definition: AA Theory

- Ancient astronaut (AA) theories are a complex mixture of three basic elements:
- (1) On the spiritual side: Information from ancient mythological and religious texts possibly in addition to information from the occult lore and practices traditions (texts and, essentially, channeling/prophecy/divination/etc. information).
- (2) On the spiritualist and materialist side: Information from UFO scholarship and lore.
- (3) On the materialist side: Information from archeological artifacts, history, and anthropology.
- AA theorists run the gamut from almost purely “Spiritualist,” such as the New Age channelers, to almost purely “Materialist,” such as the Face on Mars interpreters. And there are plenty of AA theorists between the two.

AA Theory Themes

- “Race(s)” of human-like beings exist apart from humanity and have variously interacted with us. The beings can be purely spiritual or purely material or a mixture.
- The Earth and humanity have a history involving interactions with the beings, and, thus, AA “history” has elements different from standard Western academic history and pre-history.
- The beings have a “culture” of their own different from humanity’s, and they are “superior” in many important ways. They are smarter; they know more; they can and do show us how to “improve” ourselves. They are responsible for human “advancement” over millennia.
- But the beings may want to do us harm either on a daily basis or due to a long-term project, such as interbreeding with us.
- *True human history cannot really be understood without acknowledging this alien presence.*

Ancient Astronaut Theorist Literature



- ...and there is lots more. Everyone likes to speculate!

AA Theorist Groups I

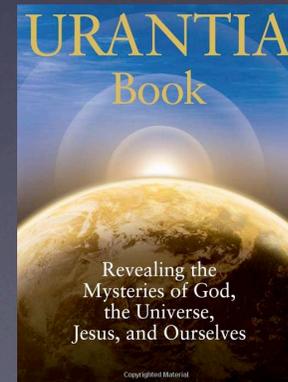
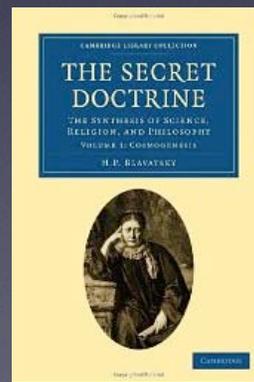
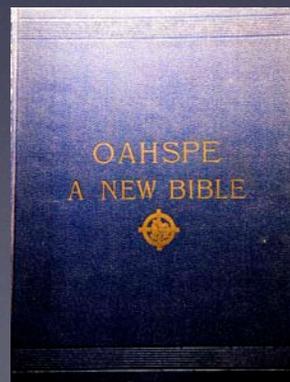
- Basically, *two groups* of ancient astronaut theorists exist: *Materialists*, who don't believe in spiritual world derived ideas, and "*Spiritualists*," who *do* believe in them, whether religious or occult derived.
- That is, Materialists tend to think the ETs/UFO aliens come from outer space and Materialists reject any kind of hidden dimension or "inner space" that they might originate from.
- Materialists by and large assume that history has happened the way mainstream historians say, but they know that historians have not included the reality of UFO aliens as a part of history.
- But Materialists may hedge their interpretations because they accept that UFO aliens seem to be very powerful. They seem to have mastery over time and/or space and they seem to know how to psychologically manipulate us covertly. This mastery may make it seem like another hidden dimension or "inner space" may truly exist.

AA Theorist Groups 2

- The Spiritualists believe in the truth of ideas originating in spiritual ways of gaining new knowledge. These are channeling, various meditation techniques, prophecy, reading and study of other Spiritualists' works or ancient religious and/or mythological texts, etc.
- So, Spiritualists believe that another realm of existence (“the spiritual world”) truly exists and UFO aliens and *a lot of other things* may actually be operative in human history.
- For example, ancient “mythological” earthly civilizations, such as Atlantis, Lemuria, and/or Mu, may figure into our history. Also, there may be constant guiding contact between us and them through history.
- Because Spiritualists believe such “speculative” ideas, they are inclined to range quite far from mainstream academic beliefs. Spiritualists tend to allow a large measure of UFO alien influence in human history and even make history a sub-genre of “alien cosmology.”

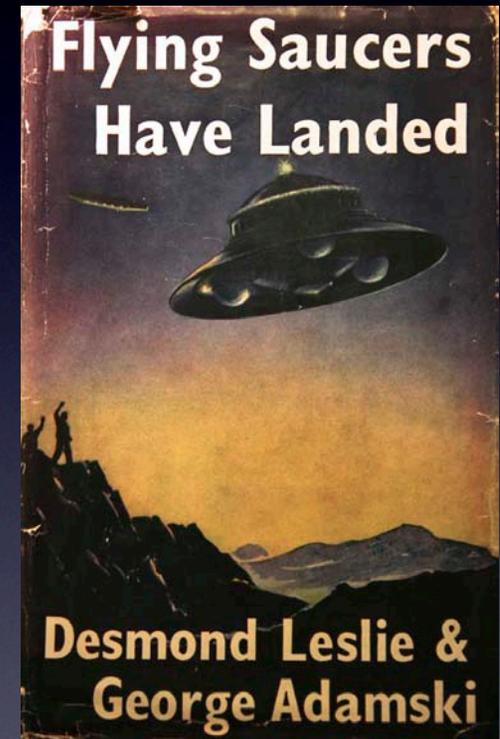
Modern Spiritualist Background

- All the old mythologies and religious texts of all ancient cultures have stories related to superior beings (gods, angels, demons, etc.) living near Earth but essentially in a different realm. Texts that describe these ideas (Vedas, Bible, Sumerian writings, Buddhist writings, etc.) might relate to “ancient astronauts.” These writings have been combed over for references to AAs by the Spiritualist AA theorists.
- Three late 19th and early 20th century occult works stand out as works providing lots of background information similar to many Spiritualist AA theorist ideas: Oahspe, Blavatsky’s theosophical writings, and the Urantia Book. All provide grand, overarching ideas of a metaphysical universe and humankind’s place in this grand scheme.



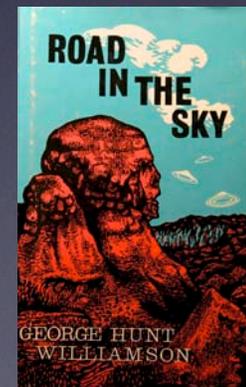
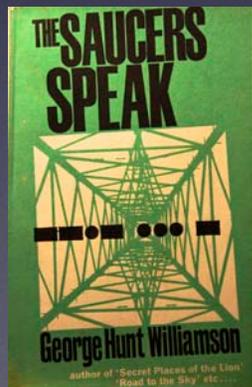
George Adamski and Desmond Leslie

- George Adamski (1891-1965) was an occultist since the 1930s having founded the Royal Order of Tibet, a typical organization disseminating standard occult-oriented Spiritualist ideas.
- When the saucers came along in the 1940s, he was prepared. He immediately connected them with his occultist spirit beings.
- He teamed with Desmond Leslie (1921-2001), a British writer, who supplied material from Madame Blavatsky's theosophy and other occult and religious sources to write *The Flying Saucers Have Landed*. Adamski contributed the last 50 pages detailing his contact experience.



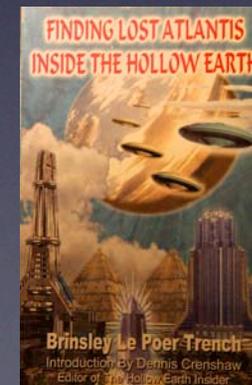
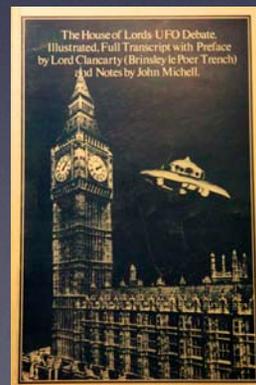
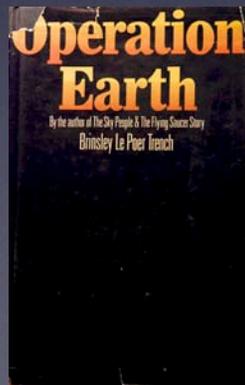
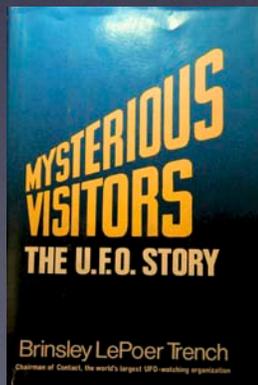
George Hunt Williamson

- George Hunt Williamson (1926-1986), like Adamski, was early into the occult. In the 1950s, after he heard about Adamski, he soon joined him and became enthused about flying saucers.
- Williamson was a “witness” to one of Adamski’s supposed physical flying saucer contacts. He and three other members of Adamski’s metaphysical group signed a notarized affidavit to that effect.
- Williamson later went on to combine his metaphysical ideas with speculative archeology in *Road in the Sky* and other books. These books included Atlantis, Lemuria, reincarnation, and other occult ideas.



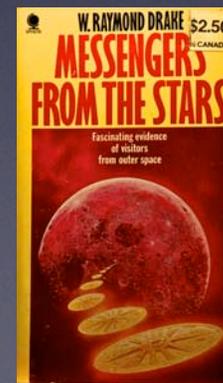
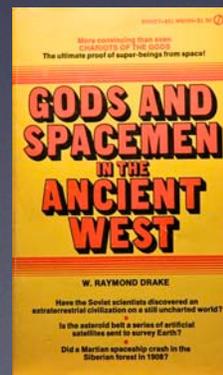
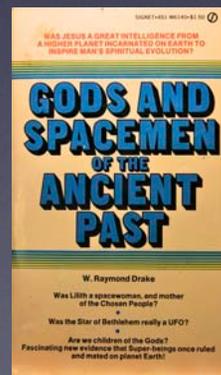
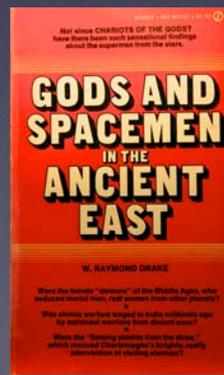
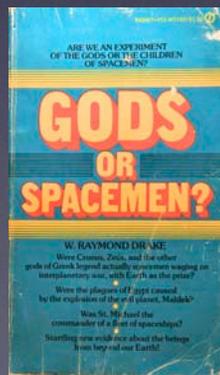
Brinsley LePoer Trench

- Brinsley LePoer Trench (1911-1995) was an early editor of the UK's Flying Saucer Review, the premier UFO publication for years. He wrote in a mixed Materialist/Spiritualist perspective.
- In 1975, when he became a member of the UK's House of Lords, he instituted a UFO Study Group and got a "Debate about UFOs" to take place there on January 18, 1979.
- LePoer Trench mixed Materialist and Spiritualist methods and ideas somewhat because he was a big promoter of the Hollow Earth theory, a mostly Spiritualist idea.
- He published seven books about UFO aliens in the 1960s and 70s.



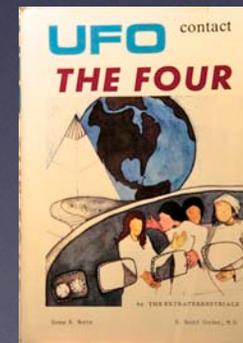
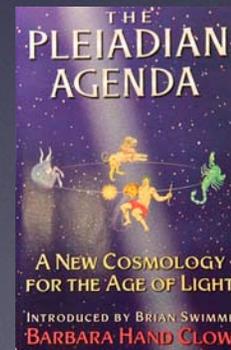
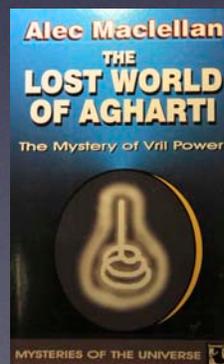
W. Raymond Drake

- British author W. Raymond Drake (1913-1989) published nine books about AA theory, all from a mixed Spiritualist/Materialist perspective.
- The first, *Gods or Spacemen?*, published in 1964, tried to answer the question: “We called them gods and worshipped them as our ‘creators,’ but were they really spacemen sent to colonize Earth?”.
- Drake sought to do for the past what Charles Fort did for the present. Fort combed newspaper reports for strange and anomalous occurrences that could not be explained by 20th century science. Drake combed ancient and medieval sources for evidence of an alien presence. He found it and reinterpreted standard history. But critics like Ronald Story pointed out Drake’s errors of scholarship.



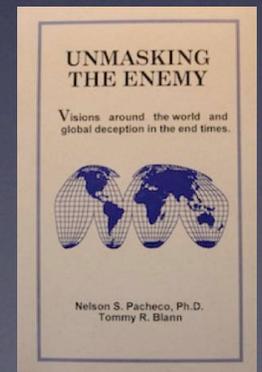
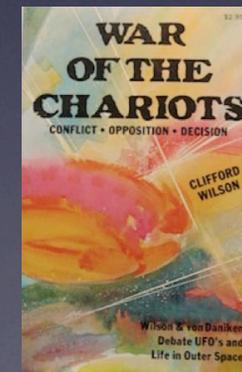
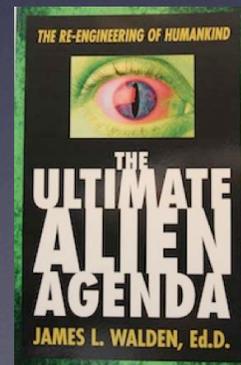
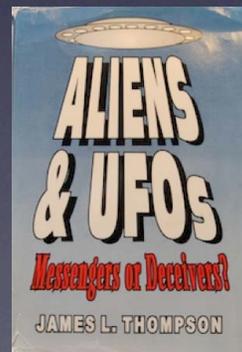
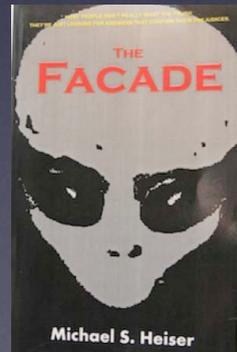
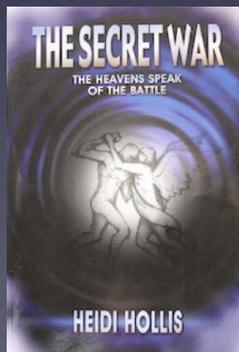
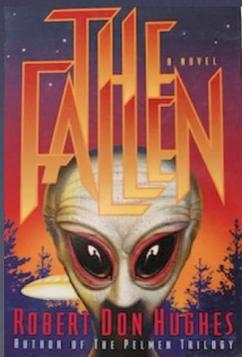
New Age AA Theorists

- The New Age movement since the 1970s has increasingly adopted UFOs and ETs/aliens as a reality. Many New Agers channel information from “entities” they believe are actually from UFO-related ET races: “Pleiadians,” “Zeta Reticulans,” “Arcturians,” “Lyrians,” et al.
- Their story: Various physical and “spiritual” universe denizens created us and helped us spread civilization on Earth, and they continue to interact with us and tell us about themselves primarily through special channeling contacts. They want to help us to evolve into spiritual beings like them.
- Interestingly, the New Age channelers do not seem to have a connection to the traditional occult groups like the 1950s contactees did.



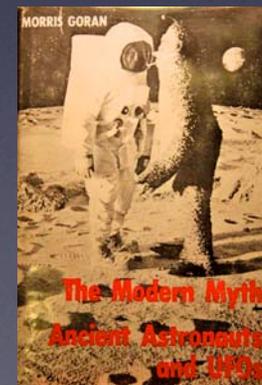
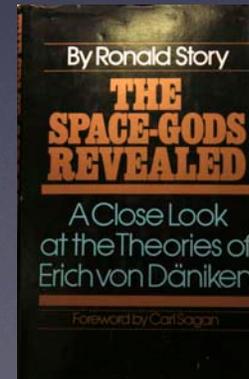
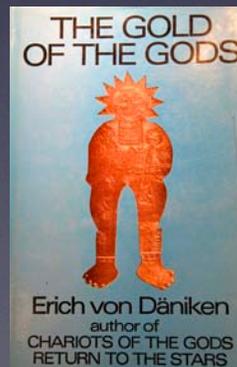
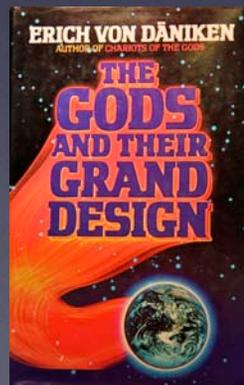
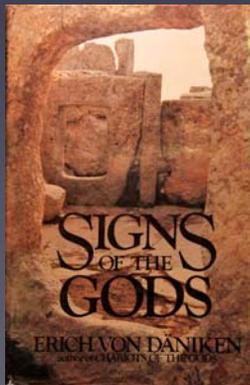
Christian AA Theorists

- Recent conservative Christian critics of UFOs could be considered another form of Spiritualist AA theorists. Their Spiritualist ideas, of course, are completely based in their interpretation of Biblical texts.
- Instead of promoting the idea of another “race” of beings essentially creating and interacting with humanity, they believe that a supreme being is solely responsible for creating humanity and that both good (angels) and bad (demons) spirit-based beings are constantly interacting with humanity along with God/Jesus Christ/Holy Ghost in their spiritual forms.
- UFOs are interpreted as a demonic (evil) influence on humanity.



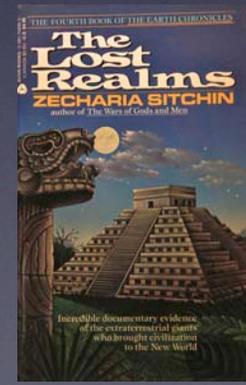
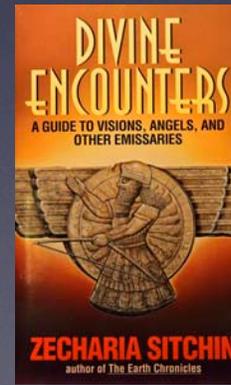
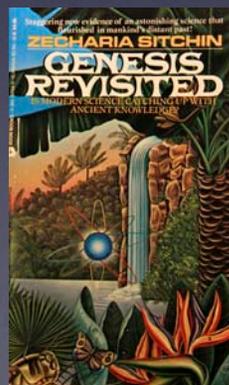
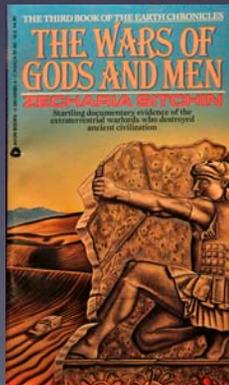
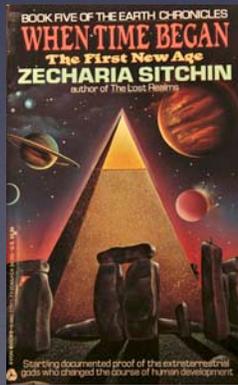
Erich von Däniken

- Swiss author Erich von Daniken (1935-) has published at least 15 books about AA theory, all from a Materialist perspective.
- The first, *Chariots of the Gods?*, in 1969 became a bestseller and influenced many people in Europe and America and around the world thanks to translations.
- Von Däniken's method is to point out real archeological artifacts that he says have better explanations as being created by or influenced from ancient visitors from outer space.
- His notoriety has encouraged many critics including Ronald Story and Morris Goran. They point out Von Däniken's sloppy scholarship.



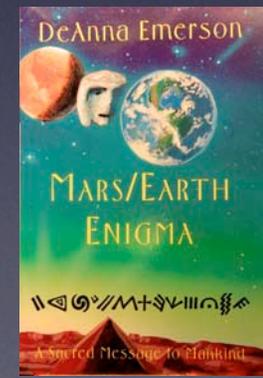
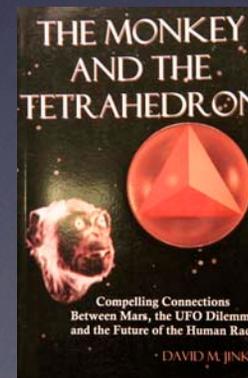
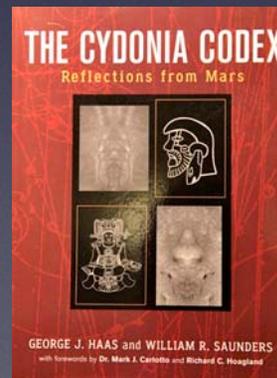
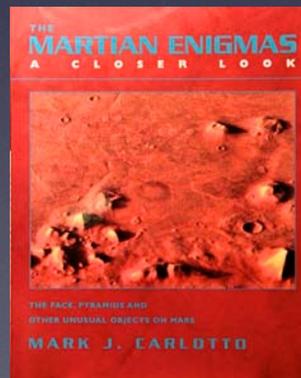
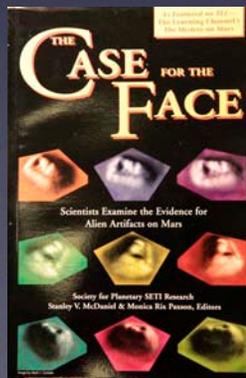
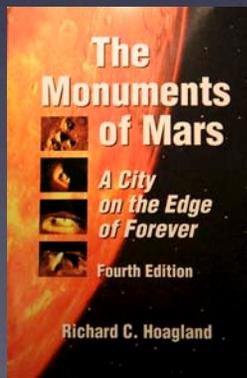
Zecharia Sitchin

- Foreign born American author and journalist Zecharia Sitchin (1920-2010) published 14 books about AA theory, all from a Materialist perspective.
- The first, *The 12th Planet*, published in 1976, laid out his basic thesis. He postulated a large unknown planet (Nibiru) having an eccentric orbit that caused catastrophic effects on Earth. ETs (the Anunnaki of Sumerian myth) lived on Nibiru but needed earth's resources. They created humans to extract minerals and gold. Etc.
- Sitchin based his ideas on his own translations of Sumerian writings. But a few scholars and others have pointed out problems with his scholarship leading to much over-reaching and speculation by Sitchin.



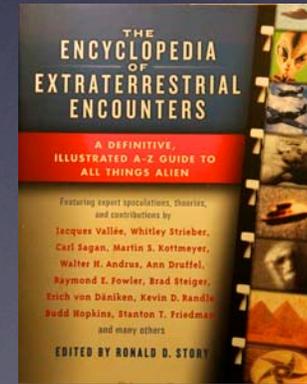
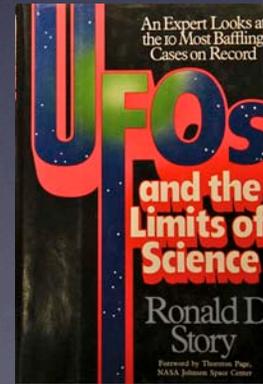
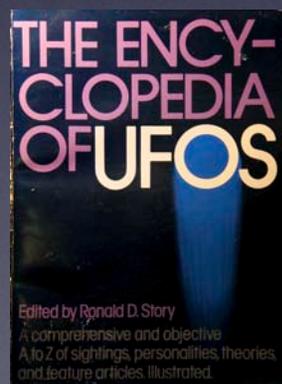
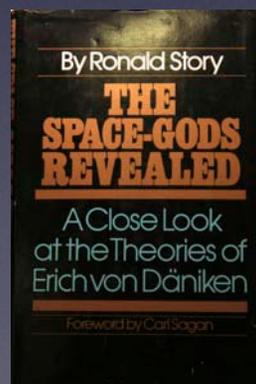
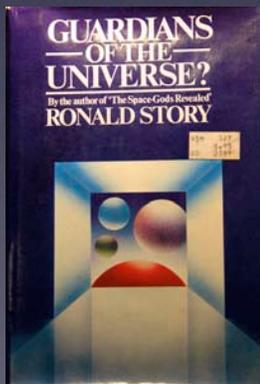
Mars Face AA Theorists

- The Face on Mars was discovered in a photo taken by NASA Mars orbiter Viking I in 1976. Soon other strange landforms were seen near the Face in the Cydonia region. After a few years, an elaborate “city” complex was evolved and argued for.
- Richard Hoagland, Mark Carlotto, Stanley McDaniel, Vincent DiPietro, John Brandenburg are all scientists or technical people who are essentially Materialists and present their material according to scholarly norms, though their ideas are highly contentious.
- DeAnna Emerson, David M. Jinks, and George J. Haas followed with more popular interpretations linking the Face to much AA speculation.



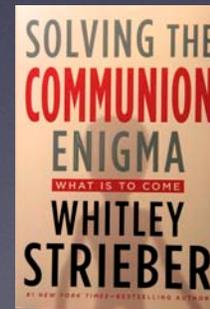
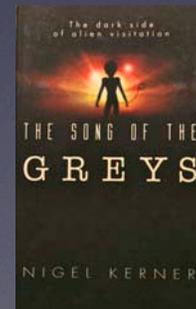
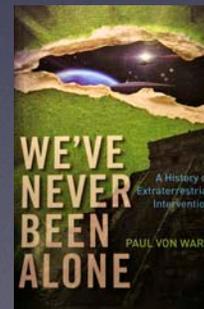
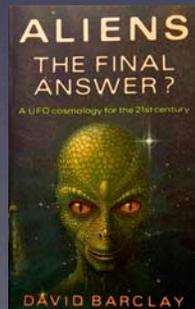
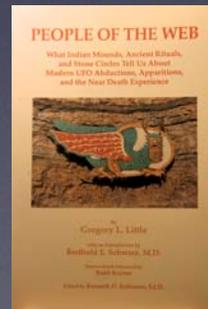
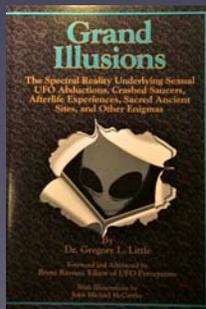
Ronald Story: A Responsible Critic

- University of Arizona philosophy graduate Ronald Story got an early interest in UFOs and first wrote a critical book, *The Space Gods Revealed*, about von Däniken. His critique used academic principles and showed that most of von Däniken's claims wouldn't stand up in academia.
- Story went on to edit *The Encyclopedia of UFOs*, the standard work in the field till Jerome Clark wrote *The UFO Encyclopedia*.
- Unlike other skeptics, Story definitely acknowledged the reality of a genuine UFO phenomenon. He simply wanted standard scholarly and scientific methods to be followed, but he found the AA theorists didn't measure up.



UFO-based AA Theorists

- Another area of AA theory uses primarily UFO-based knowledge along with mostly standard scholarship and science methodologies. These researchers are well-versed in ufology.
- They are a mix of Spiritualist/Materialist, but their Spiritualist side is mostly forced on them by a deep consideration of the UFO evidence. They acknowledge that UFOs and UFO aliens apparently possess a “super science” and a “meta-technology” so that their appearances in human experience are many times “miraculous” to us.
- This area of AA theory has grown up since the 1980s as ufology has matured in its understanding of the full extent of the UFO presence. There are no final answers here—just informed speculation.



Conclusion

- All areas of AA theory are rejected by mainstream scholarship and science. But the AA theorists differ in how closely they try to follow standard scholarly and scientific methodologies. Some don't care one wit; others try very hard so they can appeal to academic orthodoxy.
- In the wild and woolly area of AA theories, you can take your pick of completely Spiritualist speculation or entirely Materialist speculation.
- This presenter prefers the methods of science and scholarship but not the irrational rejection of UFO evidence by the academic establishment. In any new area of knowledge I examine, I prefer to find the researchers who have established academic credentials. This extends to the paranormal, too, of which UFOs and probably AA theory is a part. So, I prefer the Materialists who also acknowledge some form of probably Spiritualist realities driven by UFO evidence.
- But seek out whatever you feel comfortable with because it's UFOs and you never know ...

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