

UFOs and Religion

An Oregon MUFON Presentation

by

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Road Map I

- My approach to subject.
- Academic background of approach.
- Some definitions.
- Transpersonal experiences (UFOs, religious experiences, and more).
- UFO researchers discover paranormal and transpersonal worlds.
- How academics treat UFOs and religion.
- Survey of major religions and UFOs.
- Where “new age” spiritual ideas come from and how they relate to UFOs.

Road Map 2

- UFO religions per se.
- UFO abduction scenario and religious/spiritual aspect.
- UFO abductees and NDErs strangely similar.
- Abductee spirituality.
- Some transpersonal treatments of UFO subject.
- Summing up and what you should believe.

My Approach

- I am not an adherent of any religion or spiritual tradition. My understanding of religions and spirituality is derived from what scholars and scientists have to say.
- Specifically, scholars and scientists who explore and teach concepts in transpersonal psychology and the related fields of parapsychology, NDEs, OOBs, reincarnation, cryptozoology, ufology, alternative physics, etc.
- Some people are Stanislav Grof, Charles Tart, Arthur Hastings, Dean Radin, Richard Broughton, Kenneth Ring, Michael Sabom, Robert Bruce, Robert Monroe, Michael Newton, Helen Wambach, Ian Stevenson, Brian Weiss, Loren Coleman, Jacques Vallee, J. Allen Hynek, John Mack, Robert Jahn, Claude Swanson, William Tiller, Hal Putoff, Michael Murphy, Russell Targ, Jule Eisenbud, et al.
- These scholars and scientists have created the most systematic and coherent set of ideas about ultimate realities, which are commonly addressed in the areas of religion and spirituality.

A Context for UFOs and Religion I

- In 1885, the American Society for Psychical Research was founded. The ASPR is dedicated to scientific research into parapsychological phenomena such as telepathy, ESP, precognition, etc.
- In 1902, famous professor of psychology William James published *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, in which mystical experiences were explored.
- In 1959, Carl Jung, the famous psychologist of the “collective unconscious,” published his *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*.
- In 1966, professor of psychiatry Ian Stevenson published *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*. The first of his many case studies books.

A Context for UFOs and Religion 2

- In 1968, C. E. Green published *Out-of-the-Body Experiences*, the first popular, scientific survey of the OOBEx. In 1971, businessman and OOBEx experimenter published his matter-of-fact *Journeys Out of the Body* book.
- In 1972, humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow and psychoanalyst Stanislav Grof and others founded the Association for Transpersonal Psychology.
- In 1981, the International Association for Near-Death Studies was formed to study scientifically the phenomena surrounding an experience of nearly dying and reviving.
- These events illustrate the gradual acceptance of study of paranormal phenomena by scientists and scholars leading to systematic academic ideas about the paranormal.

Some Definitions

- **Paranormal.** Those human perceptions/stimuli/feelings that are considered outside of “normal” 21st century psychological and physical reality bounds. Examples: NDEs, OOBs, precognition, UFOs, bigfoot, some crop circles, cosmic consciousness, etc.
- **Transpersonal world.** An idea created by modern day scholars/scientists working with the paranormal/psychic side of human experience. The transpersonal world is the “home” of intelligent “beings” having occasional paranormal and/or spiritual contact with humans. The transpersonal world is known or assumed to be a reality by all spiritual systems of thought and practice whether major religions, cults, occult groups, native shamans, ancient world cults, etc.
- **Spirituality.** A generalized feeling about/approach to mostly the more positive influences/experiences originating in the transpersonal world.
- **Religion.** An organized system of worship about transpersonal world beings and/or realities. Usually includes rites, rituals, dogma, doctrines, etc., based on thought about and experience of these realities.

Grof's Transpersonal List

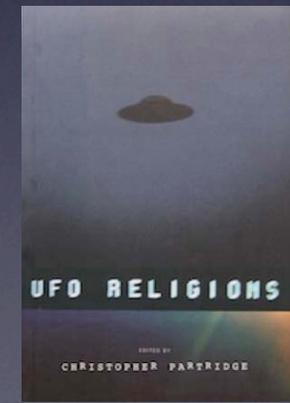
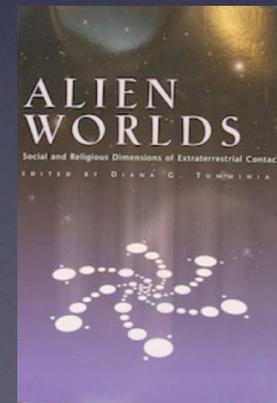
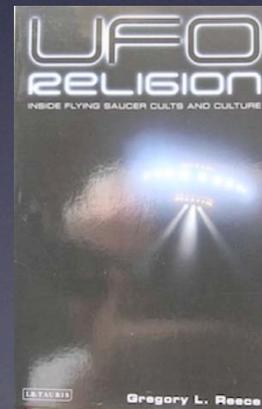
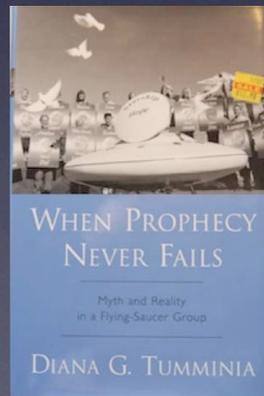
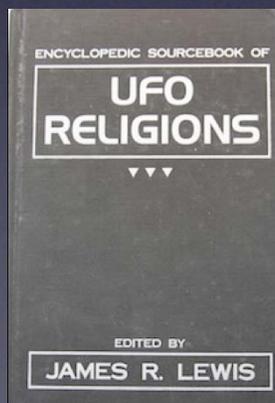
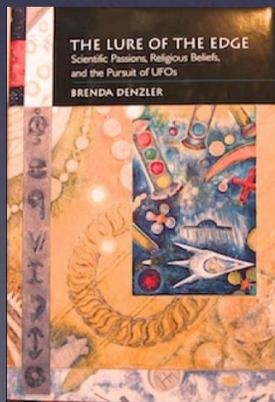
- In *The Adventure of Self Discovery*, Stanislav Grof published a list of transpersonal experiences. Note the range and breadth of this list. It covers all psychic and religious experiences and even some “psychoid” ones, i.e. “real world”-related ones. Some involve consensus reality (CR); some beyond consensus reality (BCR).
- Here's a selection of “altered consciousness states” experiences:
 - (1) CR: ID with other persons, ID with animals, ID with all creation, planetary consciousness, ET experiences, ID with physical universe, etc.
 - (2) CR: reincarnation, ancestral experiences, fetal experiences, planetary evolution, cosmogenetic experiences, etc.
 - (3) BCR: mediumistic, encounters with spirit guides, visits to other universes, mythological, universal archetypal, cosmic consciousness, “metacosmic” experiences, understanding of universal symbols, etc.
 - (4) Mixed (“psychoid”): synchronistic links between matter and consciousness, supernormal physical feats, physical mediumship, ghosts, poltergeists, UFOs, abductions, bigfoot, ceremonial magic, miraculous healing, siddhis, psychokinesis, etc.

UFOs and Transpersonal World

- In 1950s and 60s, American UFO researchers came from technical, military, and scientific backgrounds mostly. They treated UFOs as a technical, scientific, and engineering mystery.
- In 1970s and through 1980s, UFO beings and UFO abductions came to be understood and accepted by UFO researchers.
- Gradually, also, the psychic and paranormal aspects were acknowledged.
- By 1990s and into 2000s, scholars and scientists outside the UFO research community came to acknowledge the reality of the UFO and incorporated it into their transpersonal world ideas.
- UFO researchers themselves have, over time, come to understand UFOs more and more in the context of the best of the scientific and scholarly research into transpersonal world realities.
- Religion (and especially spirituality) is one important aspect of UFOs and in 1990s and 2000s, a few UFO researchers have treated the subject.

Religious Studies Academics

- A small number of religious studies academics in the field of the psychology/anthropology/sociology of religion have studied the UFO subculture.
- Their books always take the stance that genuine UFOs do not really exist, so UFO beliefs are based on deception, illusion, misinformation, confusion, cultural malaise, psychopathology, etc.
- As always, if academics treat UFOs as real, they put their continued good standing in academia at serious peril. UFOs are dangerous!
- Examples: All in 2000s. Denzler, Lewis, Tumminia, Reece, and Partridge.



Christianity I

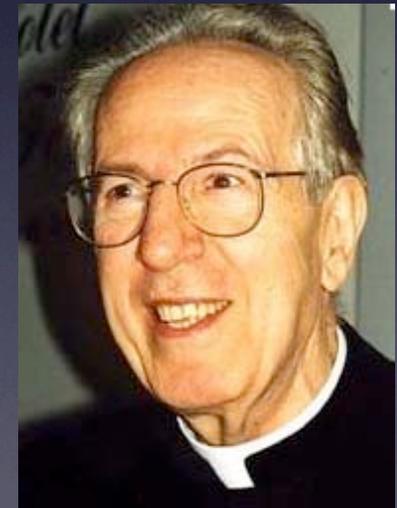
- **Catholic (and Orthodox) Christianity.** Central authority; ritual/tradition important; widespread; relaxed coexistence with science.
- **Protestant Christianities.** Bible text important; in Northern Europe and English-speaking countries; wide variety of interpretations.
 - **Liberal Varieties.** Tend to value: academic knowledge and “positive” Bible values; compassion; good works. Examples: Episcopalians, Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Quakers, Congregationalists, Unitarians, LDS (some), etc.
 - **Conservative Varieties.** Tend to value: “biblical knowledge”; righteousness; personal salvation. Examples: Southern Baptists, non-denominationalists, fundamentalists, many evangelicals, many pentecostals, many charismatics, Jehovah’s Witnesses, LDS (some), etc.
- Attitude to UFOs depends on whether liberal or conservative Christian.

Christianity 2

- No official **Catholic Church** pronouncements about UFOs. Only occasional Catholic officials speaking in *at most* semi-official capacity make positive statements about UFOs. Reality of UFOs does not figure in any official way in Catholic liturgy, rituals, dogma, theology, etc. (Same for Greek Orthodox Church.)
- José Funes, Director, Vatican Observatory. Occasionally official pronouncements are made *about SETI type, supposed ETs*. Funes in interview in 2008 speculated about SETI (not UFO) ETs.
- Corrado Balducci, theologian, exorcist, Prelate. Wrote books on satanism and UFO extraterrestrials. Talked often on Italian TV about *UFO ETs, not speculative SETI-type ETs*.



José Funes



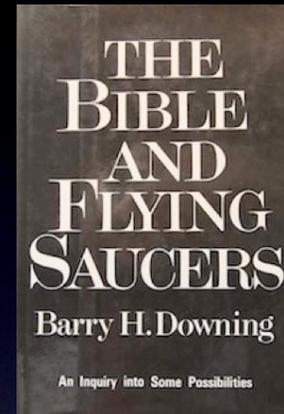
Corrado Balducci

Christianity 3

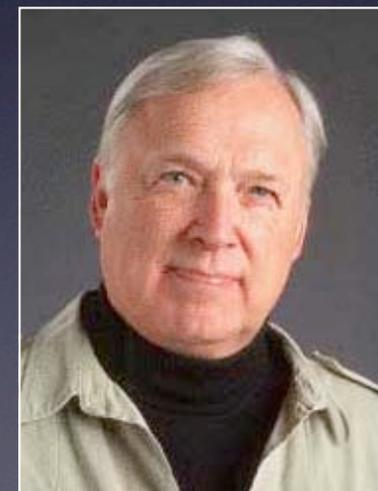
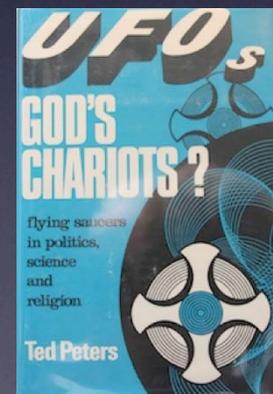
- **Liberal Christianities** tend to have church hierarchies. None of these hierarchies have made any official statements about UFOs whatsoever. UFOs are a non-subject to liberal Christianities.
- Why? Two reasons:
 - Liberal Christianities value and respect academic knowledge of the world. The ultimate standard of “real” knowledge is from the academic world. If there seems to be a factual conflict, Bible-derived knowledge takes second place.
 - Following academic thought, liberal Christianities de-emphasize the reality of a spiritual world where God, demons, angels, etc., exist so “miraculous” things in the Bible end up being minimized.
- Result is UFOs are only treated by maverick liberal Christian authors (not many) such as Rev. Barry Downing (Presbyterian) and Dr. Ted Peters (Lutheran).

Christianity 4

- Downing wrote a 1968 book *The Bible and Flying Saucers* noting the many instances in the Bible that could be compared to known similar characteristics in the UFO literature. E.g., Moses and the burning bush and pillar of cloud after the Red Sea crossing.
- Peters wrote a 1977 book *UFOs: God's Chariots?*, a general discussion from an academic point of view treating UFOs as a real “sublimated religious phenomenon.” Peters is speaking this year (2011) at the MUFON Symposium.



Barry Downing

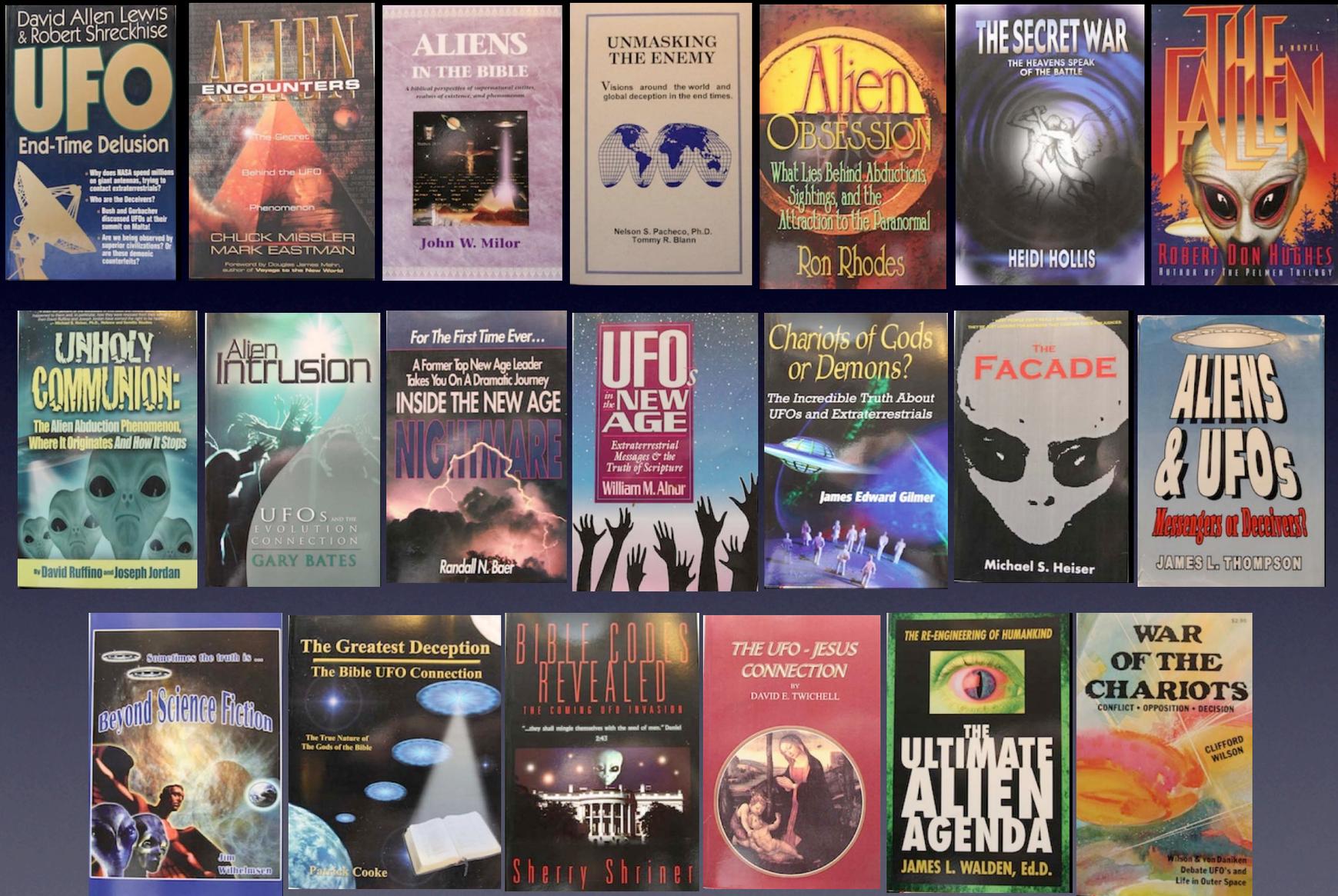


Ted Peters

Christianity 5

- **Conservative Christianities** tend to have no church hierarchies. The hierarchies that exist (Southern Baptist and LDS) have no official opinions about UFOs as a reality. But UFOs are a definite minor theme among some conservative Christians.
- Why? Two reasons:
 - Conservative Christianities value and respect “biblical” knowledge of the world. This includes the reality of God, angels, and demons in an independently existing spiritual world.
 - Conservative Christianities see their faith mostly in personal terms and seek to convert “lost souls” to the true faith. They see Satan and demons as battling Christ for souls.
- Result is UFOs are treated by hundreds of ministers and lay Christians as a reality to be warned about since UFOs are Satan’s work. So, the UFO literature contains about 50 titles specifically from a conservative Christian viewpoint. Liberal: less than five.

Christianity 6



Conservative Christian UFO Titles

Other Major Religions I

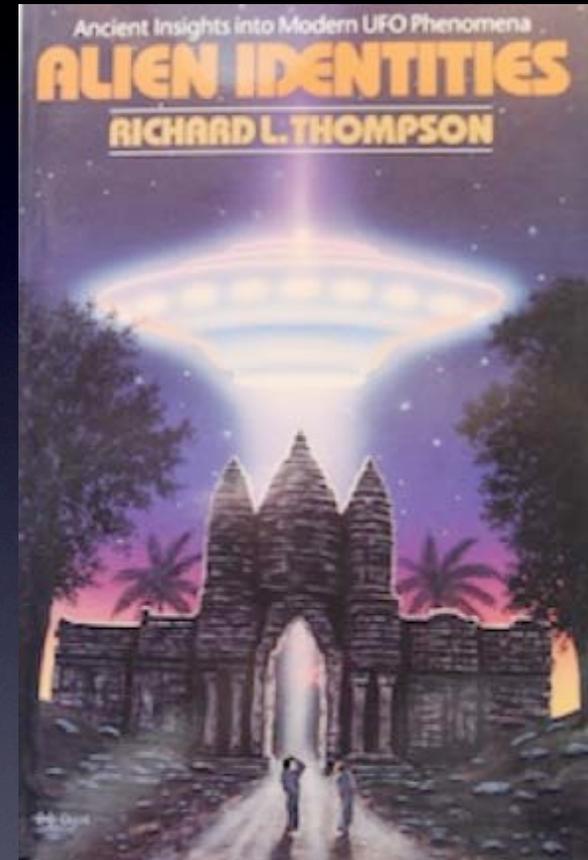
- **Judaism.** It has no central governing body. There are movements in Judaism: Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Hasidism, etc. Essentially, no Jewish authorities have anything to say about their religion and UFOs.
- The Talmud (commentary on the Jewish holy books) apparently has some discussion of other worlds and beings who might live on these other worlds. Esoteric Judaism (Kabbalah) delves deeply into spiritual world subjects and mentions “merkabah vehicles.” Some New Age authors have conflated merkabahs with UFOs.
- **Islam.** It has no central governing body, just two main sects: Sunni and Shia. Islam is just as much a full culture as it is a religion. Islamic scholars have not treated the question of UFOs, only individual author/adherents have.
- The Koran mentions a class of beings called djinns (“genies”)—similar to Christian demons—who may have some relation to UFO beings.

Other Major Religions 2

- **Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism.** None of these religions are governed by a hierarchical religious body. None have anything in particular to say about UFOs except possibly through individual author/adherents. But they readily accept UFO beings as spirits.
- **Shamanic Religions.** Some Native American elders have participated in New Age conferences that include UFO presentations. A few Native American author/adherents have much to say about UFOs, though other adherents around the world are essentially silent. But UFO beings are readily accepted as “sky people” or other spirits.
- **New Age Spiritualities.** The last half of the 20th century saw the rise of “New Age” religion/spirituality in the U.S. and Europe. This occult/self-help psychology/parapsychology-based movement has no hierarchy or set doctrines and no official representatives. Individuals and small groups/cults find sympathetic ideas in all other major religions. Many New Age practitioners have incorporated UFO facts and beliefs into their “systems of thought.”

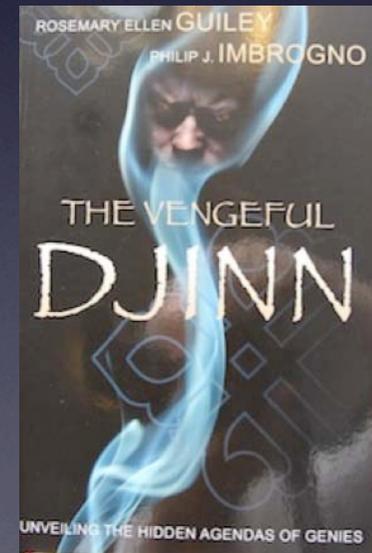
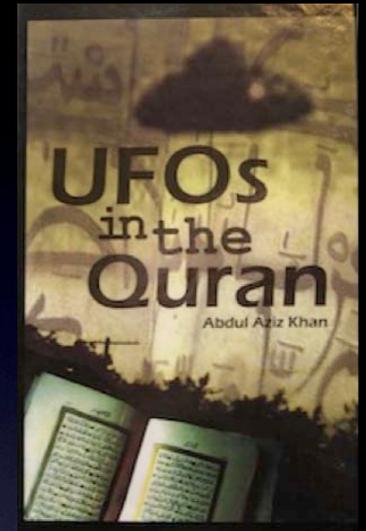
A Hindu Interpretation

- In *Alien Identities*, author Richard Thompson, a mathematics Ph.D. who has worked for NASA among others, shows how ancient Hindu Vedic writings compare very favorably to modern UFO stories.
- The *Bhagavata Purana* and *Mahabharata* texts are used. These Hindu accounts talk of invisibility, levitation, abduction, paralysis, hypnosis, “robots,” “airplanes,” aerial “cities,” ET beings, vimanas (=UFOs), etc.



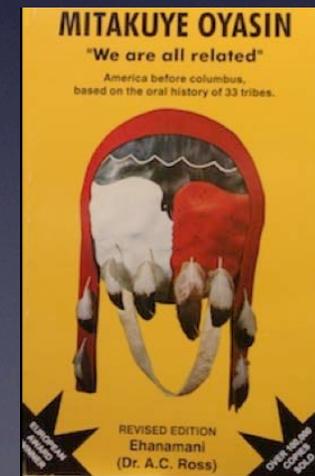
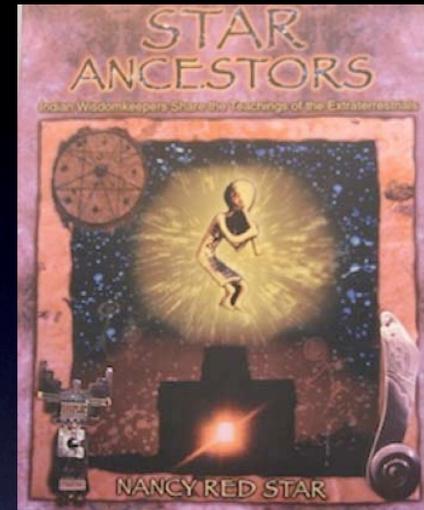
An Islamic Interpretation

- In *UFOs and the Quran*, Abdul Aziz Khan, a television journalist, points out verses having UFO interpretations in the Koran and Hadeeth (writings about Mohammad's life).
- The Koran assumes three types of beings: humans, angels, and djinns. The latter are roughly equivalent to Christian demons. Khan thinks descriptions of djinn activities compare favorably with UFO being activities.
- In *The Vengeful Djinn*, UFO researcher Philip Imbrogno also points out similarities between UFO activity and djinn descriptions from Islamic scripture and lore.



Native American Ideas

- In *Star Ancestors*, Native American and visiting prof at Bard College Nancy Red Star presents stories from Native American tradition and lore that have many points of similarity with UFO activity. Psychic powers, “star seed,” and ETs from other worlds are discussed.
- In *Mitakuye Oyasin*, Native American elder Ehanamani (Dr.A.C. Ross) compares Native American lore and stories to conclusions in some parts of UFO literature. Human origins from star people and paranormal activities of spirits and UFO beings are described.

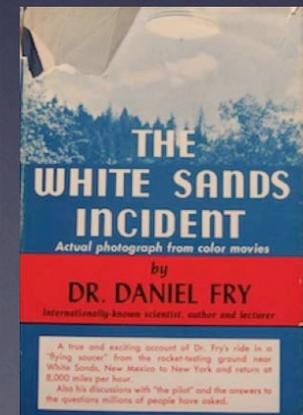
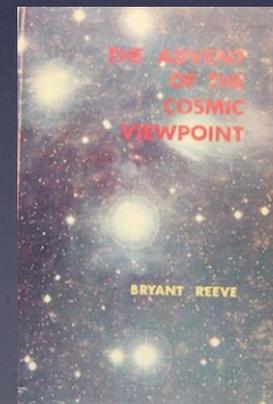
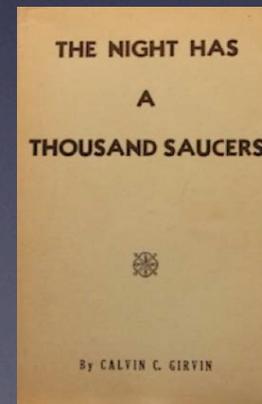
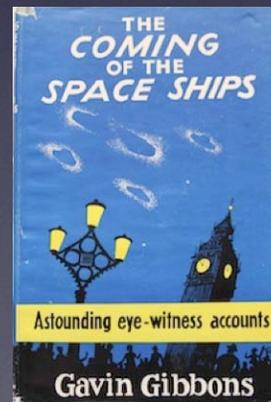
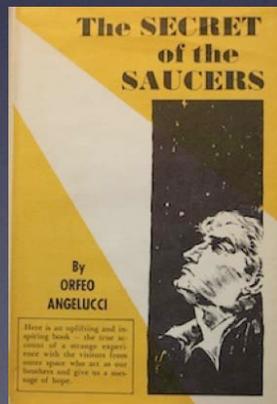
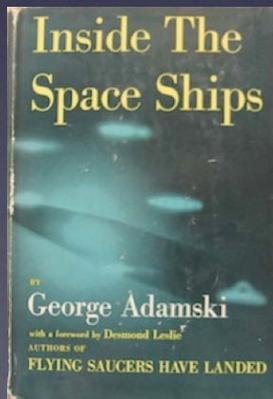


New Age Spiritual Ideas I

- The most accepting religious system by far of UFOs is the amorphous set of beliefs: “New Age spiritualism.”
- This complex of beliefs has origins in the hermetic philosophical/spiritual/religious beliefs of Hellenistic Greece and Rome. The Hermes Trismegistus body of beliefs arose in Hellenistic Egypt.
- Hermetic writings from early CE were rediscovered in the European Renaissance and formed some of the early inspiration for modern science. Hermetic writings emphasized astrology, alchemy, and sacred geometry.
- English, German, Italian, and French 16th and 17th century adherents formed secret societies to preserve and promote hermetic philosophies and practices. All modern religions have esoteric groups with beliefs that are similar in many ways to hermetic groups.

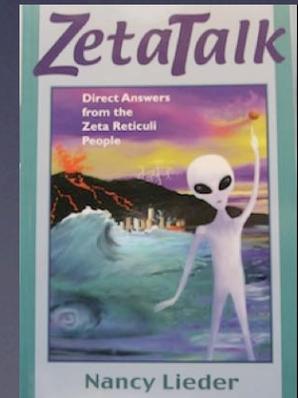
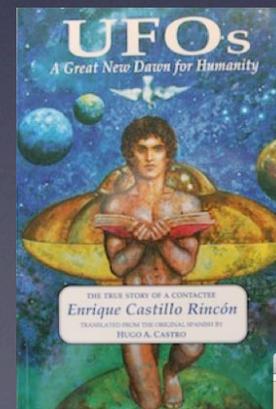
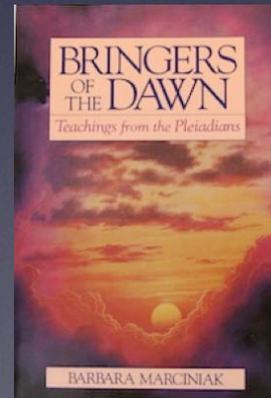
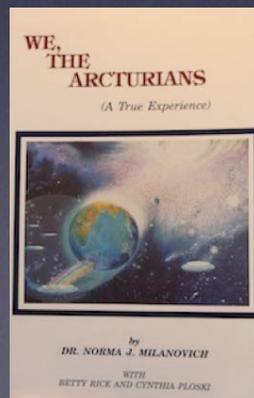
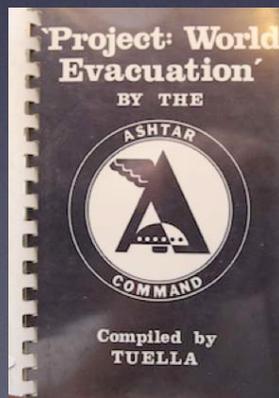
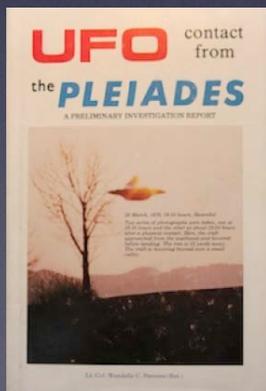
New Age Spiritual Ideas 2

- In 19th century Europe and America, Hermetic beliefs and practices mixed with spiritualism and Eastern religious ideas and philosophies to eventually become the New Age movement in America and Europe.
- Early UFO contactees nearly all had prior experience with one or more New Age/occult groups. Their personal stories mixed claimed UFO experiences with various New Age/occult ideas as explanatory schemes for the origin and purpose of UFOs.
- Early examples: Adamski, Angelucci, Gibbons, Girvin, Reeve, and Fry.



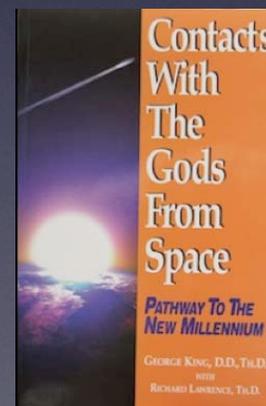
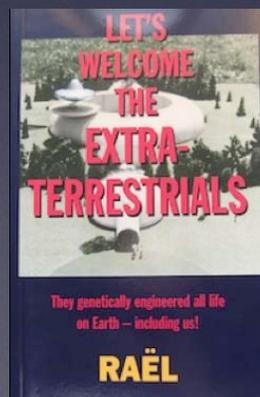
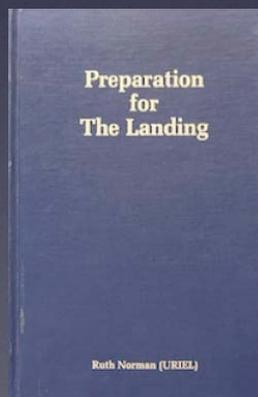
New Age Spiritual Ideas 3

- In the 1960s America, the New Age movement re-emerged (again) and this time went mainstream—its ideas “infiltrating” many aspects of American culture. Today, modern, industrialized nations have a small but growing culture of New Age believers and practitioners who are frowned on by academia but thrive nonetheless.
- New Age authors increasingly incorporate ideas from ufology and UFO lore into their spiritual ideas. The acceptance is uneasy, however, because UFO-related evidence is sometimes unpleasant (especially cattle mutilation) and the New Age wants to be “positive.”
- Examples: Meier, “Tuella,” Milanovich, Marciniak, Castillo Ricón, and Lieder.



UFO Religions

- UFO religions do exist. They have rites, rituals, and written “doctrine.” They originate with people who have traditional occult/metaphysical organization experience and not with UFO abductees. These religions do not relate materially to the UFO phenomenon.
- Academics love to study UFO religion groups because they are “obviously bonkers” so the UFO reality question is not a worrisome factor.
- Examples are George King’s Aetherius Society, Ruth Norman’s Unarius Academy of Science, and Claude Vorilhon’s Raelian Church.

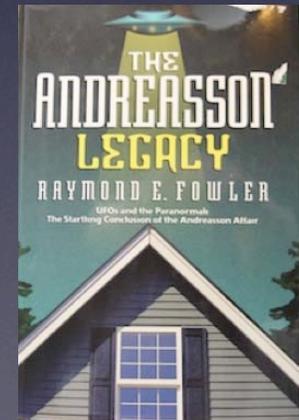
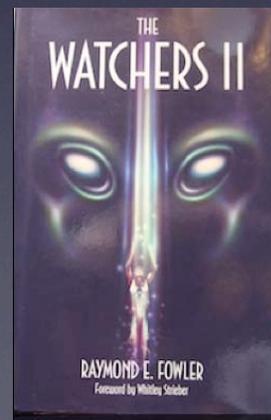
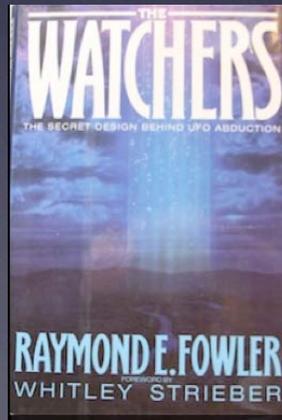
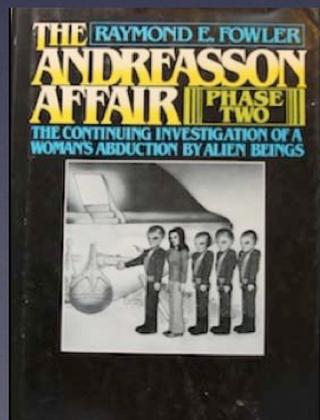
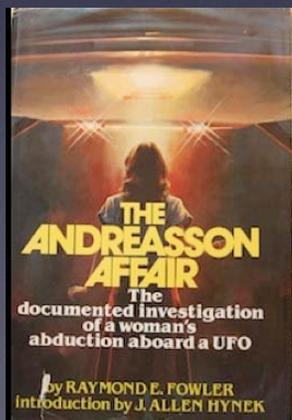


The UFO Abduction Scenario

- In the 1980s, Ph.D. folklorist Eddie Bullard did a comprehensive analysis of UFO stories. He concluded they are either real accounts of real events or a completely new kind of folkloric category of story.
- He found that the abduction accounts contained a consistent, invariable sequence of episodes (with recall percentage): Capture (100%), Examination (69%), Conference (42%), Tour (20%), Journey (25%), Theophany (9%), Return (66%), and Aftermath (71%).
- The theophany episode included a journey to meet spiritual beings and/or have a spiritual epiphany experience.
- So far, most documented abduction stories are from a Christian perspective because most are from America. Some stories in the Theophany episode have some Christian content. However, the UFO beings also talk about spiritual things in apparently non-Christian contexts.

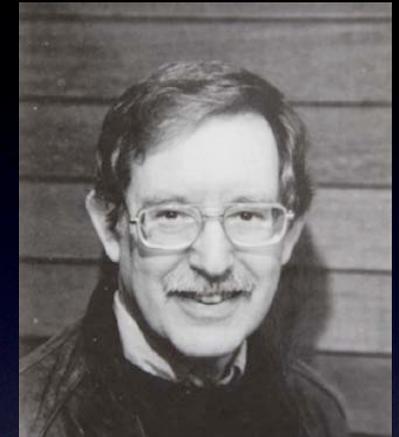
A Christian Abductee's Story

- In UFO researcher (and liberal Christian) Raymond Fowler's series of books on the Betty Andreasson Luca abductions, Betty mentions speaking with her UFO abductors about Christianity.
- They mentioned religious and even Christian ideas like "hypostasis" and they created a dying phoenix experience for her, which has a Christian connection (but "pagan" also).
- However, Fowler in *The Andreasson Legacy* says that "in Betty's preteen and teenage UFO abduction experiences, her accounts [during hypnosis] are nonreligious in nature." Only after age 24 does she start mentioning Christian ideas from the UFO beings and reactions/ideas from her.

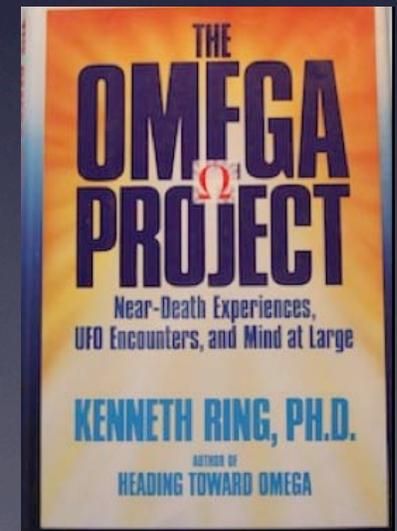


Similarity of Abductees and NDErs

- In *The Omega Project*, NDE researcher Professor Kenneth Ring compared UFO abductees and NDErs.
- The Religious Beliefs Inventory, a standard psychology inventory, assesses changes in a person's "universalistic spiritual" beliefs and "sectarian religious position" beliefs. Does a person lean more one way or more the other?
- Both NDErs and UFO experiencers/abductees showed a marked increase toward belief in universalistic spirituality and away from a sectarian religious position. Generally speaking, from being religious to being spiritual. Adhering to a specific religion was of less concern to both NDErs and abductees. They adopted more the idea that "the essential core of all religions is the same" than "in order to live a truly religious life, a [specific] church or ... other organized religious body is an essential."

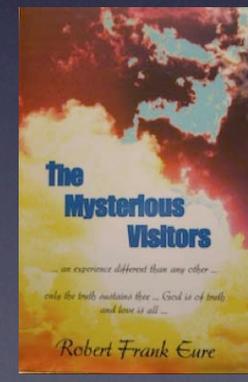
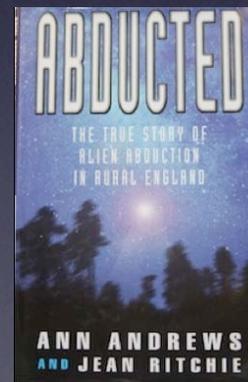
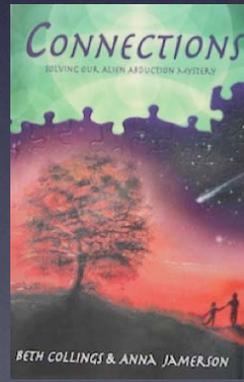
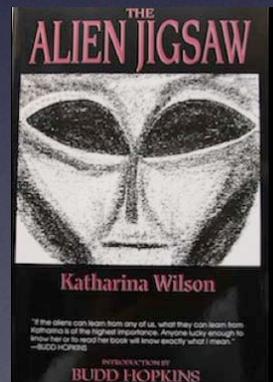
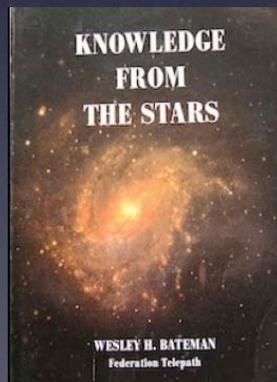


Kenneth Ring



Abductee Spirituality

- Most abductees and deep UFO experiencers seem to favor spirituality over religiosity as Ring's studies show. Abductees—whether Christian or presumably any other organized religion (data is sparse here)—seem to move away from strong association with any particular religion
- Or they move toward New Age spiritual ideas probably because of the New Age movement's greater tolerance of beliefs and practices.
- Examples of modern abductee accounts: Bateman, Wilson, Collings, Andrews, Redfield, and Eure.

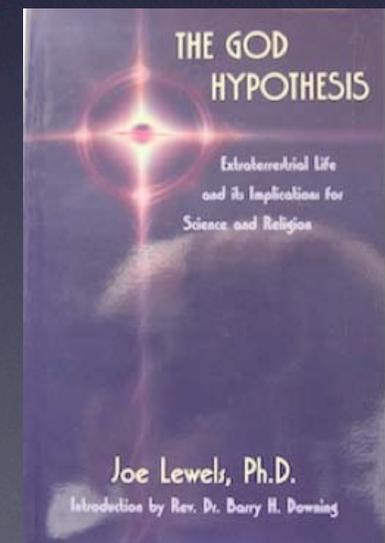


UFO Researcher on Religion

- In his 1997 *The God Hypothesis*, former professor of journalism Joe Lewels with a special interest in religion wrote a general book addressing the implications of UFO reality for religious thought and organized religion.
- His perspective is a “generalized” Christian point of view. He treats questions about Jehovah and Jesus in the UFO reality context.
- He believes that science and religion will be “reconciled” through research in the UFO and paranormal fields someday.

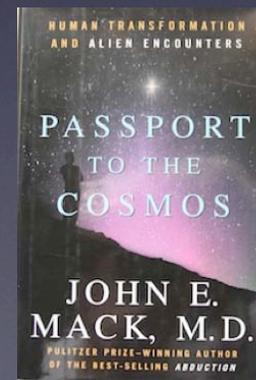
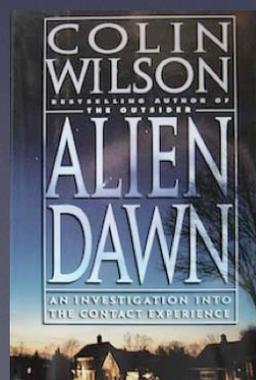


Joe Lewels



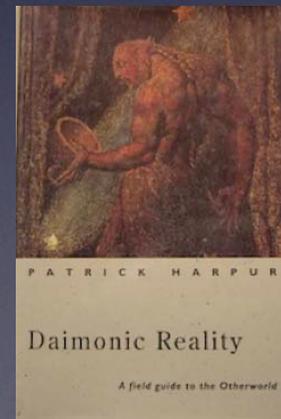
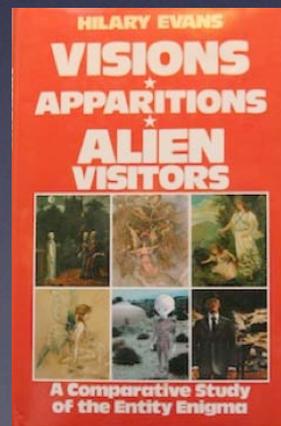
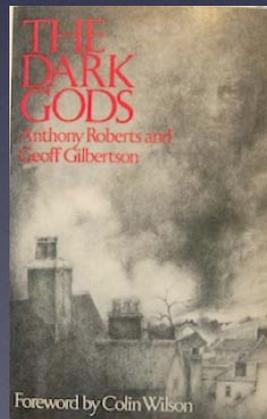
Transpersonal Treatments

- In his 1959 *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth*, Carl Jung, the famous first transpersonal psychologist, treated UFOs in general. He cautiously acknowledged the physical reality of UFOs but spent much of the book on the mythological dimension.
- In his 1998 *Alien Dawn*, author Colin Wilson surveyed UFO abduction from a broad understanding of the “other world,” which is more or less the transpersonal world of the academics. It is a general survey of related areas of knowledge.
- In his 1999 *Passport to the Cosmos*, Harvard psychiatry professor John Mack fully understood transpersonal psychology and put abductees in that context. He came to transpersonal psychology in the 1980s.



More Transpersonal Context

- In their 1980 *The Dark Gods*, Roberts and Gilbertson presented the idea from an academic point of view that some UFO contactees were actually dealing with the more negative spiritual world forces.
- In his 1984 *Visions, Apparitions, Alien Visitors*, Hilary Evans, a UFO and paranormal researcher, pointed out the commonalities in all spiritual world beings.
- In his 1994 *Daimonic Reality*, Patrick Harpur, an author with interests in the paranormal, wrote his wide-ranging survey of UFO and other world beings and experiences.



What is Going On?

- Fact: UFOs definitely exhibit paranormal and psychic aspects.
- Fact: UFO abductees sometimes recall spiritual experiences while on board the saucers.
- Fact: Sometimes even specific organized religions are mentioned (but rarely) by UFO beings while abductees are on board UFOs.
- Explanation?: Probably UFO beings know all about UFO abductees/deep experiencers including their religious and spiritual preferences. Probably they accommodate their activities and communications to the individual psychology of each human they interact with.
- Explanation?: The UFO intelligences probably are doing a combination of accomplishing their overarching goals (genetic mixing of us and them?) with educating us spiritually as an intelligence somewhat similar to them in the universe(s).
- Scientists and scholars studying the ultimate purposes question only have theories at this point in our understanding.

What Should You Believe?

- Examine your own best beliefs about how the world works.
- Figure out what context works best for you whether it is as an adherent of an organized religion or the amorphous “New Age” belief “system,” perhaps.
- Or, perhaps, a belief in the power and efficacy of the scholarly and scientific enterprise to generate sufficiently good explanations for how the world works.
- Since the scholarly and scientific approach tends to trump more restricted belief systems such as the organized religion systems when it moves into new areas of phenomena, it may be “safest” to adopt the academic approach unless you are deeply convinced that organized religion or “New Age” belief systems seem ultimately more explanatory.
- “UFOs and religion” is on the cutting edge of human knowledge at this time. Stay tuned for lots more knowledge, discovery, and revelation!

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