

R.S. 2811 - Introduction to UFO Spirituality

One of the most interesting aspects of contemporary spirituality is the burgeoning interest in extraterrestrials and UFOs as figures of religious significance. The contemporary UFO phenomenon is comprised of a surprising mix of popular culture, hard science, conspiracy theories, psychological theories, personal experiences, and spiritual messages. For this reason, different "factions" of the broader contemporary UFO movement do not mesh easily with one another. Proponents of the hard-science, UFOs-as-advanced-technology position are frequently scornful of the more "New Age"-oriented spiritual contactees and channelers of "space brothers." Channelers are frequently uninterested in the physical phenomenon of apparent UFOs. Abductees frequently articulate their conviction that aliens have only sinister goals in mind for humankind. Contactees and channelers, on the other hand, suggest that extraterrestrials are saviours come to help us as a species achieve our spiritual destiny.

Two Main Belief Systems

Because of this wide variety of opinion within the broader UFO movement, it is impossible to generalize about the worldview of all those who believe in aliens or UFOs. According to a recent Gallup poll, fifty percent of North Americans believe that UFOs exist, and further believe that UFOs are the space craft of technologically advanced extraterrestrials. This does not necessarily mean, however, that fifty percent of the population of North America must be included within the broader UFO movement. Instead, there seem to be two main belief systems represented within the UFO movement: the first is that held by those who believe UFOs are Alien technology, space craft built by extraterrestrials here to conduct secret reconnaissance of earth and some kind of biological or medical experiment on humans. These aliens are believed to be either in league with the governments of the world, or are at least known to the

governments, who are keeping this knowledge from the public. The second belief system within the wider UFO movement is that held by those who believe UFOs are either space craft or, more likely, some kind of psychic manifestation of extraterrestrials, that extraterrestrials are spiritual guides, visiting earth in psychic, astral, or spiritual energy form (although some might be here physically), here with a spiritual agenda to help us elevate our own spiritual state, and to encourage us towards peace and love for our fellow human beings.

Historical Influences and Precursors

Within both of these perspectives, there is often the sense that there are more than one group of extraterrestrials present on earth, some with benign agendas, some with sinister ones. These two perspectives are not entirely separate, and there is considerable overlap between them, but tension between them also. Supporters of each perspective tend to focus on quite different issues. For our purposes, it is the second perspective that is of most interest. However, given the overlap between these two perspectives, it is necessary to look at the historical factors that contributed to both emphases within the contemporary UFO movement.

Nineteenth Century Sightings and Contacts

The date usually given for the origins of the modern UFO phenomenon is 1947. The first set of historical precursors to the contemporary movement, however, are those instances of UFO sightings and contacts that took place prior to 1947. People have always seen remarkable things in the skies. Invariably, these remarkable things are described in the language appropriate to the people and times by which and in which they were witnessed. According to psychologist Carl Jung, strange objects in the sky are one psychological manifestation of the human propensity to see and/or experience archetypes. Whether these objects are understood to gods, angels, demons, or alien space ships, they are all expressions of the human religious impulse.

Although human beings may well have seen remarkable objects in the skies since time immemorial, one thing that has changed since pre-historic times is that these objects are now understood, for the most part, to be technological rather than spiritual in nature. There are nineteenth century precursors to both the UFOs-as-technology camp and the Extraterrestrial-as-spiritual-guide camp within the contemporary UFO movement. With reference to the first variety, it has been suggested that interpreting UFOs as technological creations is the result of our own increasing technological abilities. Prior to the industrial revolution, people would have been unable to articulate a mechanical explanation for an anomalous event. Now we can. And so we do. Interestingly, however, the technology we tend to see in the skies is technology that is conceivable (if not yet attainable), within the standards of our own level of technological achievement.

This point is supported by the first of the "modern" UFO sighting waves to be recorded in the United States. These sightings took place in 1896-1897, when people from Alabama to Michigan to California reported seeing "airships" in the skies. These sightings took place from Nov. 1896, and ended in May 1897. These airships were described as cigar shaped, with propellers and sometimes wings, brightly lit, with people inside. They often landed to make repairs in people's back yards, asked for things like water or wrenches, and claimed that their ships were powered by condensed electricity. They flew at speed estimated at 150 miles, against the direction of the wind, and could change direction, stop and start apparently at will. This set of documented sightings set the stage for the pattern of contemporary UFO sightings to be understood as technological in nature, and also set the pattern for the sceptical response to such sightings, for then as now, the mainstream scientists and mainstream news media rejected such sightings as hoaxes or delusions.

Nineteenth century Americans did not confine themselves to sightings of "airships" in their skies, however. Some claimed to have visited other worlds and to have spoken directly to alien beings. The most famous of these was a woman named Helene Smith. Smith was a spiritualist who, while in trance, experienced a journey to Mars. Smith's trance experience had a number of elements which were reflected in other such 19th and early twentieth century extraterrestrial contactee experiences: their journeys took place within our solar system, often as trips to Venus, Mars, or the moon; they took place through psychic/occult means, such as trance, astral travel or seances; spaceships were never used; communication with extraterrestrials was by means of telepathy; and the message of extraterrestrials was metaphysical, usually concerned with the need for love and spiritual evolution. This pattern of contactee experience has become the model for the contemporary contactee/channeling aspect of the UFO movement.

Kenneth Arnold Sighting

The second historical influence on the contemporary UFO spirituality movement is the sighting of UFOs by a man named Kenneth Arnold. Although not explicitly linked to spirituality, Arnold's sighting was central in popularizing a belief in aliens and UFOs. The Kenneth Arnold sighting, which took place on June 24, 1947, is often cited as the date on which the contemporary UFO movement began. Arnold was flying a private plane while searching for a downed aircraft when he spotted nine metallic-looking objects flying in formation over Mt. Rainier, Washington. At first concluding they were guided missiles or jets, he reluctantly changed his mind when he clocked their travel time from Mt. Rainier's peak to another nearby mountain peak at one minute, forty-two seconds. Because these two peaks are fifty miles apart, Arnold estimated their speed at an impossible (for 1947) 1700 miles per hour. He judged their

size as slightly smaller than a DC9 aircraft, and their formation as forming a five mile long chain of objects. The objects were in sight for approximately two and a half minutes.

Arnold reported his sighting to other pilots and airport officials in Yakima, Washington, who passed the word of his sighting along to others. When Arnold reached his destination of Pendleton, Washington, a crowd of people awaited to hear his story. The following day, he spoke to a reporter, and told him that the motion of the objects reminded him of "a saucer skipping over water." The reporter wrote a story that was picked up by the National news services, and the Arnold sighting became instantly famous.

According to historian David Jacobs, the Kenneth Arnold sighting is important in the history of the UFO movement for several reasons. First, Kenneth Arnold was a respected business man, air rescue pilot, and deputy sheriff. As a result, he was considered a reputable and reliable witness who was unlikely to have made up the story for publicity's sake. The story therefore received national news coverage that a less reputable witness would not have been granted.

Second, it was Arnold's description of saucers skipping over water that lead reporters to coin the phrase "flying saucer," a term which became instantly associated with UFO sightings. Having a label for their experiences therefore allowed future UFO witnesses to categorize their experiences. Instead of having to say simply, 'I saw something strange,' they could positively identify the object with a recognizable term. The term also implicitly suggested that these "saucers" were not natural phenomena - saucers, after all, are constructed objects. Reporting that you have witnessed a "flying saucer" automatically implies that you have seen something artificial, rather than a natural object such as star, planet, swamp gas, clouds, birds, etc. Furthermore, the term allowed people who had not seen a UFO to ridicule and dismiss the

experiences of those who had done so; after all, the very idea of a saucer that flies is ridiculous, and in using this term to identify their experiences, UFO witnesses left themselves open to dismissal.

Third, the national publicity associated with the Kenneth Arnold sighting encouraged other UFO witnesses to come forward with their stories. Many of these sightings had taken place before Arnold's, but had not been publicly reported or had been dismissed as crazy or fraudulent. Many others took place later in the year. A total of 850 sightings were reported in 1947. Some of these reports turned out to be hoaxes. Others remain unexplained.

Roswell, New Mexico

The third historical influence on the contemporary UFO movement is probably the most famous "unexplained" UFO sighting of all time. This is the 1947 Roswell, New Mexico sighting of a crashed UFO. Again, although not religious in nature, this story has become a central component of the current UFO phenomenon. According to most reporters on this incident, several townspeople sighted a bright glowing disk in the sky over Roswell and surrounding regions on the night of July 2, 1947. The following day, a rancher named William "Mac" Brazil found metallic wreckage scattered across one of his fields near the town of Corona, NM, about 75 miles from Roswell. He reported his find to military authorities, who sent Major Jesse Marcel to collect the wreckage. Marcel was a staff intelligence officer for the 509th Bomb Group Intelligence Office at Roswell Field. Among the wreckage recovered was several small beams with "hieroglyphic" writing, and some metallic-looking foil that could not be dented with a sledgehammer or burned.

Several days later, on July 8th, the commander of the Roswell base, named Colonel William Blanchard, issued a press release stating that the military had recovered the wreckage of a

crashed flying disc. However, the commander of the entire 8th Air Force, a man named General Roger Ramey, later issued a retraction of this first press release, and issued another one stating that the wreckage was from a crashed weather balloon. The weather balloon story was revised in 1994 by the American government, who issued a press release declaring that the crashed object had really been a balloon-launched nuclear blast detector.

Alien Bodies

Although the finding of the wreckage at Corona and the subsequent press reports out of Roswell represent the core of the Roswell incident, the story becomes more complex when two additional incidents are factored in. These are the sighting of alien bodies by Barney Barnett on July 3, 1947, and the discovery in 1984 of the MJ 12 Document, allegedly written in September of 1947. These two accounts are primarily responsible for popularizing the image of extraterrestrials as small, grey, big-eyed beings. The Barnett sighting took place about 120 miles from Roswell. Barnett reportedly discovered the wreckage of a crashed UFO, in which the bodies of four alien beings were found. The bodies were described as:

three and a half to four feet tall. They were slim in stature and hairless, their heads having no eyebrows, no eyelashes, and no hair. Their heads were pear-shaped and the top of the head was larger. Their uncovered hands had four fingers.¹

UFO researchers into the Roswell incident suggest that the wreckage found at Corona might have been debris from the crashed UFO discovered later that day by Barnett. This suggestion is further supported by the contents of the MJ 12 document.

Operation Majestic-12

The MJ 12 document (MJ-12 stands for "Operation Majestic-12), is reputedly a top secret government document, prepared for President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower, about a top-secret organization called Operation Majestic-12 founded in 1947 on the orders of President Truman. This secret organization was founded to study extraterrestrial contact, and to hide the existence of such contact from the American people. The MJ-12 document records an investigation into the matter of a crashed UFO in the Roswell region. A role of film with a copy of this document was delivered anonymously to a documentary producer named Jaime Shandera in December 1984. The document states in part:

On 07 July, 1947, a secret operation was begun to assure recovery of the wreckage of this object for scientific study. During the course of this operation, aerial reconnaissance discovered that four small human-like beings had apparently ejected from the craft at some point before it exploded. These had fallen to earth about two miles east of the wreckage site. All four were dead and badly decomposed due to action by predators and exposure to the elements during the approximately one week time period which had elapsed before their discovery...Civilian and military witnesses in the area were debriefed and news reporters were given the effective cover story that the object had been a misguided weather balloon.ⁱⁱ

Despite controversy surrounding this document (mainly focused not on the details of the document itself, which appears extremely genuine, but on the recipient - a documentary film producer), it has become linked with the Roswell crash incident and the Barnett sighting in such a way that the three stories are no longer really distinguishable. The Roswell story is now the story widely cited to "prove" the reality of UFOs and extraterrestrials, and the reality of a

government conspiracy to keep knowledge of these things from the public (although a few UFO believers do argue that the Roswell incident is not a very good one to base their convictions on.) This aspect of the contemporary UFO movement is very strong, as witnessed in the popular television show The X-Files. It has become a major thread within the spiritual contactee aspect of the UFO phenomenon also.

The Contactee Phenomenon

The fourth major historical influence on the contemporary UFO movement is that of the contactee phenomenon. Three of the most famous contactees were men named George Adamski, Daniel Fry, and Billy Meier. Contactees are those people who claim to actually have met, and spoken to, extraterrestrial visitors to Earth.

George Adamski

Adamski claimed to have seen and photographed UFOs in 1947, and to have made contact with extraterrestrials in 1952. Adamski was born in Poland in 1891, and was active in the occult scene in California in the 1930's. According to Adamski, on November 20, 1952, he and some friends were driving in the desert when they witnessed the landing of a UFO. Adamski, who had two cameras with him, took numerous photographs, but only one of them turned out. Adamski believed that the craft had deliberately attempted to make contact with him. When he reached the craft, a blond-haired human-looking man from Venus spoke to him, using a combination of telepathy and sign language. According to Adamski, the Venusian visitors were here because they were concerned about nuclear testing and humankind's warlike ways. He wrote about this experience in a book titled Flying Saucers Have Landed (by Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, 1953.)

Following this incident, Adamski claims to have met other "space people" from Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter. These people invited him aboard their space ships, and took him for flights through the solar system. Here, too, he met wise, beautiful people, who told him of their concern over human's nuclear tests, and of their intent to save humans from their own folly, and thereby save the universe from the danger that humans represented. Adamski published accounts of these incidents in a book titled Inside the Space Ships (1955.)

The George Adamski material is generally considered a hoax today. The photographs are considered unbelievable, and the stories even more unbelievable. Nevertheless, in the 1950's Adamski had a lot of followers, and despite criticisms of his stories right from the start, many people were excited to think that alien visitors were here, and were concerned about the possibility of our nuclear self-destruction.

Daniel Fry

Daniel Fry's experiences with extraterrestrials were similar. Fry saw his first UFO on July 4, 1950, at White Sands, New Mexico. According to Fry, the UFO landed near him, and when he approached it, he was warned by a voice not to touch it, for it was "still hot." The UFO turned out to be an automated ship, which took him for a ride to New York City and back in 30 minutes. The voice that Fry heard belonged to A-lan, an extraterrestrial, who was aboard a mother ship in orbit. A-lan told Fry that he was concerned about human nuclear testing, and wanted Fry to tell the world about the dangerous path humans were following. He also told Fry that the solution to our problems was to foster greater understanding: learning to understand each other more fully would lead to peace and love, and end war. Fry published his experiences in a book titled White Sands Incident (1954.)

Billy Meier

Eduard "Billy" Meier, like George Adamski, is famous not only for his contactee experiences, but for his photographs of UFOs. Like the photographs taken by Adamski, most serious UFO buffs today argue that the Meier photographs are clearly fakes. Perhaps the most famous of these photographs today is the one that is featured in the "I Want to Believe" poster displayed prominently in the office of "Agent Mulder" in the television show "The X-Files." Despite scepticism regarding Meier's photos and stories, however, Meier himself continues to insist, to this day, that his experiences and photographs are genuine. His story, like that of Adamski and Fry, has been fundamentally central to the UFO movement.

Billy Meier claims to have been contacted by extraterrestrials telepathically in January of 1975. Although this was his first adult contact, he also claims to have had lifelong contacts with extraterrestrials since childhood. The 1975 telepathic communication instructed him to drive from his home in a small town in Switzerland to an isolated location, where he witnessed a UFO. He was called to various isolated locations repeatedly following this initial experience, where he was able to take numerous photographs and some film footage of flying UFOs. He also met, and spoke with, the pilot of one UFO. The pilot was named Semjase, spoke in German, claimed to be from the Pleiades, and looked like a beautiful human woman. He was occasionally teleported onto a UFO, and flown on journeys around the earth and through space. Several friends and acquaintances of Meier also witnessed UFOs in his presence, as well as perceiving related phenomenon such as "landing marks" and electronic-like sounds that came from the sky.

As with other contactees, Meier was told that the earth was soon going to experience major catastrophic changes such as earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, and climate changes. The Pleadians were here to watch over humans, who were their genetic descendants. The leader of the Pleadian contingent was named "Ptaah", and he was the father of Semjase. These

extraterrestrials were mentioned in the Bible, and were the responsible for the birth of Jesus as well as the birth of Adam. Their contact with Billy Meier was part of a wider contactee movement, intended to bring human beings into the cosmic brotherhood of races.

Other Contactees

In addition to Adamski, Fry, and Meier there are three other famous contactees, all from the 1950's. Truman Bethurum claimed to have met a space-woman named Aura Rhanes from the planet Clarion, which was in orbit around our sun, on the opposite side from earth, and so went undetected. Aura was here to help prevent our moral and physical self-destruction. Aura and her colleagues were described by Bethurum as "very religious, understanding, kind, friendly and... trusting."ⁱⁱⁱ Orfeo Angelucci met a "space brother" who claimed he was here to document the spiritual evolution of humanity. Angelucci later experienced a week of "missing time," during which he later realized he had journeyed to another planet where he met loving, kind, beautiful people who told him that he too had been a space man in a previous life, and that he was destined to be one again. Howard Menger had his first contact with an extraterrestrial as a child. Later, as an adult, he had another contact, when he was taken on a spaceship and given a tour of the moon. He was told that he was a reincarnated being from Jupiter, put on earth to help mankind.

The pattern of each of these six men's experiences (or claims) follows that of the nineteenth century contactees, with one exception. Rather than journey to the planets via astral travel, Adamski, Fry, Meier and the others claim to have journeyed on space ships. In all cases, however, the primary focus of the meetings were not on the technology of the space ships (although Fry was more interested in this than Adamski and the others), but instead on the metaphysical message of cosmic love. All six men met people from planets free from war,

poverty, and unhappiness, and were given missions to help humankind save themselves from nuclear self-destruction. In their emphasis on benevolent aliens here to save us from our own folly, the Adamski, Fry, Meier, Bethurum, Angelucci and Menger stories represent clear precursors to the contemporary extraterrestrial channeling/contactee "camp" within the broader UFO movement.

Abduction phenomenon

The fifth major historical influence on the contemporary UFO phenomenon is that of abduction phenomenon of the 1960's to the present. The most famous abductees are a couple named Betty and Barney Hill, who were apparently abducted on the evening of September 19, 1961. According to their story, the Hills were returning from a trip to Niagara Falls when they noticed a bright object overhead. This object approached their car, and they noticed what looked like windows, through which beings of some kind could be seen. When they reached home, they remembered the sighting but nothing else. However, they discovered that they were missing two and a half hours worth of time - somehow, the trip had taken that much longer than it should have. Shortly afterward, Betty began to have nightmares about being forced on board a UFO. Barney began to suffer symptoms of acute stress, and developed ulcers. Finally, in December 1963, they sought relief from their symptoms by going to a hypnotist. Under hypnosis, conducted with Betty and Barney separately, by a sceptical hypnotist who still does not believe in UFOs, the couple recalled identical details of an abduction experience.

According to this account, Betty and Barney Hill had been forced to drive to a deserted country road by some kind of telepathically projected compulsion. There, they were taken on the UFO and subjected to medical exams, which seemed to focus on human anatomy and particularly on reproduction. When Betty felt pain during the exam, one of the aliens put its

hand on her head, and the pain stopped. The aliens themselves, described in detail by Barney Hill, are the classic "grey aliens" well known within the contemporary UFO movement: they had grey skin, no hair, large, slanted eyes that seemed to wrap around the sides of their heads, slits for nostrils, and a mouth that was just a horizontal line. Grey aliens, and other alien "types," will be discussed in more detail next week.

Details of the Hill abduction were not released until 1966. At that time, they shocked the UFO community, for the story was hard to dismiss. The Hills were a well respected, interracial couple. Betty was a social worker and Barney a postal worker and volunteer with the U.S. civil rights commission. Neither had a desire to become a figure of public scrutiny and scorn. They had not consciously recalled the event, nor were they happy when physical, mental and emotional symptoms of stress finally forced them to a psychologist. They did not announce their experiences publicly - it was only when an investigator discovered the story and published a book on it titled The Interrupted Journey (by John Fuller, 1966) that the event was made public.

As with the Kenneth Arnold sighting, the publication of the Hill abduction opened the door for other people to come forward with their tales of abduction by extraterrestrials. The stories have developed an amazing similarity, telling of telepathic communication, medical exams, and interest in human reproduction. Many abduction accounts are retrieved via hypnosis, which makes them somewhat suspect, but many are consciously recalled. Abductees, like the Hills, often suffer from stress related disorders. This stress is so acute that one psychologist has argued it must be treated as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. She further notes that PTSD has never previously been observed in individuals who only imagined that they had been under stress, and suggests that psychiatrists take the stress as a genuine result of some unexplained

trauma, rather than as a symptom of a mental disorder manifesting itself as a delusional abduction fantasy.

Ancient Astronaut Theory

The sixth major historical influence on the contemporary UFO movement is the impact of Erich von Däniken's ancient astronaut theory. Unlike the contactees, who draw spiritual conclusions from their contact with extraterrestrials, von Däniken's theory suggests that the world's religions are based entirely on a misinterpretation of past contact between humans and aliens. For von Däniken, gods, angels, and demons are simply primitive labels applied to extraterrestrial beings. These visiting extraterrestrial beings are just as flesh-and-blood, fallible, and technologically dependant as you or I. All religious accounts which record contact with supernatural beings are therefore really just factual accounts, written in the supernatural language of the times, of close encounters with aliens. Religious faith, therefore, is based on a misperception of the truth. The goal of UFO research should therefore be the investigation of these prehistorical contacts between human kind and aliens. This kind of research is referred to as paleo-SETI research.

Chariots of the Gods

Erich von Däniken was born in Switzerland in 1935. He became fascinated with archaeology, extraterrestrials, and religion in 1954. After travelling to Egypt and North and South America to search for evidence of extraterrestrial presence on earth, he wrote his first book, titled Chariots of the Gods?, which was published in 1968. Von Däniken is a controversial figure, because of his criminal record for embezzlement, and because of his sometimes shaky scholarly research. Nevertheless, his work had a tremendous impact in the UFO movement in the 1970's, because Chariots of the Gods?, and the film of the same name, became a huge

success in North America. His work still continues to be influential within the rather smaller confines of the ancient astronaut/paleo-SETI movement.

The argument in Chariots of the Gods? and two other works, titled Gods from Outer Space (1968) and Gold of the Gods (1973), is that the archaeological record contains evidence that extraterrestrials once visited earth, and that these extraterrestrials were mistaken for gods, or angels, or other supernatural creatures. Archaeological artifacts such as the Egyptian pyramids and religious texts such as the Bible are drawn upon to support this view. Von Däniken suggests that humans can trace their own genetic heritage back to the presence of extraterrestrials on this planet.^{iv} Von Däniken's theories were made even more popular with the release of a film titled Chariots of the Gods in 1973.

According to von Däniken, extraterrestrials came to earth following some kind of battle elsewhere in the universe. Upon arriving here, they genetically engineered (using their own DNA) a pre-existing primate species, with the end result that humans evolved. This genetic engineering was part of a controlled genetic experiment. As part of this experiment, the extraterrestrials then engaged in an intensive training program with the first human beings, first placing them in a protected biosphere, where they learned languages, ethics, agriculture and crafts; later releasing them to spread across the surface of the earth. Other genetic experiments were conducted, creating monster hybrid animals, that were later destroyed in a flood. Then, a power struggle broke out on the mother ship that had brought the extraterrestrials to earth, and the losers of the struggle were exiled to the planet. There they proceeded to interbreed with human beings, and thereby disrupt the genetic experiment that had been planned. The captain of the mother ship then either deliberately caused a flood, to wipe out the rebels and the tainted human beings, or else simply capitalized on a naturally occurring meteor strike that caused a

world wide flood. The "good" humans were saved, however, for the captain of the mothership sent them instructions on how to build a ship that would survive the flooding. Since that time, these extraterrestrials continue to maintain a watch over us, to see how their experiment eventually turns out.

Von Däniken argues that this theory of human origins, and of the presence of extraterrestrials on earth, is not intended to set up an alternate religion or theology. He writes,

My concern... is with a 'palaeo-seti' philosophy..., with a theory and edifice of ideas that illumines the sense or nonsense in religious views and beliefs, and opens a new path of thinking about these matters. My intention is certainly not to found a new religion nor, as my critics maliciously assert, a 'substitute religion'. Religion demands faith - which has no place in my investigations. Religions offer promises, even beyond death - I am not promising a thing. Religions build churches and temples where they worship their gods and holy ones - apostles, saints and prophets. In palaeo-seti philosophy there are neither temples nor worship.^v

Rather than set up an alternate religion, in fact, von Däniken sees himself as dismantling the superstitious practices of religious theology and religious faith. Having done so, he asks, what are we left with? Answer: "the mysterious accounts themselves... religious literature [which] retains a core, a nugget of truth."^{vi} For von Däniken, the history and religions of the world become on gigantic source of support for the idea that UFOs and extraterrestrials are real. Von Däniken's theory has contributed to the UFO spirituality movement despite his own rejection of such an emphasis. His arguments regarding prehistoric contact with extraterrestrials, his argument regarding our genetic relationship with extraterrestrials, and his argument regarding

the on-going interest of extraterrestrials in our evolution, have all become central elements in the UFO spirituality movement.

Endnotes

ⁱ Vern Maltais, friend of Barnett, quoted in Thompson, Richard L. Alien Identities: Ancient Insights into Modern UFO Phenomena. San Diego: Govardhan Hill Publishing, 1993, pp. 107-108.

ⁱⁱ Bryan, C.D.B. Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind: Alien Abduction, UFOs, and the Conference at M.I.T. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995, pp. 183-184.

ⁱⁱⁱ Quoted in Jacobs, David Michael. The UFO Controversy in America. Bloomington/London: Indiana University Press, 1975, p. 112.

^{iv} von Däniken, Erich. The Return of the Gods: Evidence of Extraterrestrial Visitations. Shaftsbury, Dorset/Rockport, MA/Brisbane: Element Books, 1997, pp. 135-136.

^v von Däniken 1997, p. 39.

^{vi} von Däniken 1997, p. 49.