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Cydonian Imperative: Hoagland's Claims Analyzed

From: **Mac Tonnies** <macbot@yahoo.com>
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Subject: Cydonian Imperative: Hoagland's Claims Analyzed

Science Fiction and Possible Alien Artifacts on Mars:
Richard Hoagland's Recent Claims Analyzed

by

Mac Tonnies

The latest 'conspiracy' to hit the Net concerning possible suppression of space-science knowledge is author Richard Hoagland's recent 'revelation' that a set of View-Master reels depicts a leaked agenda of Mars 'secrets'. Such a claim deserves to be looked at; given NASA's incomprehensible reticence to 'come clean' with their agenda re. the Mars Global Surveyor's mission objectives, it's not completely unreasonable to look for possible 'leaks'. Given the Kafkaesque circumstances, it's only natural to turn to sources other than NASA for confirmation of our suspicions.

However, Hoagland has looked in the wrong place. The reels he cites as evidence of a secret Cydonian indoctrination program are segments from a serialized science fiction adventure series from 1955--decades before the Viking mission discovered evidence for the anomalies under investigation. So it would appear Hoagland's claim is decidedly 'fringe' from the start; it's predicated on the assumption that NASA (or some other space agency) has not only been aware of the Cydonian enigma for much longer than history would allow, but is confident enough in its estimation of the mystery to begin a pop-cultural indoctrination, plugging specific ideas at the science fiction-reading demographic of 1955 in hopes of steering our psychosocial acceptance of artificial structures on Mars (and elsewhere).

Hoagland's reasoning is exquisitely absurd. In the View-Master slides he enthusiastically referred to at his recent fund-raiser, a team of plastic astronauts voyages to the Moon and discovers a pyramidal artifact containing a scale model of the planet Mars. Hoagland maintains that this is beyond coincidence, and that the symbolic references to Mars and pyramids (specifically tetrahedrons, which many argue are inferred by mathematical alignments at Cydonia) prove a hidden, behind-the-scenes knowledge of the features at Cydonia, as well as a roughly triangular crater on the Moon documented by Hoagland several years ago during his investigation of alleged "crystalline ruins" visited by the Apollo astronauts.

Alien artifacts on the Moon and Mars are nothing new in science fiction. It comes as no surprise to me that there once existed a series centered around the discovery of "Mars-like" artifacts on the Moon. Arthur C. Clarke's famous short story "The Sentinel" describes a very similar situation, complete with pyramidal overtones. It should be noted that Hoagland, in his increasingly desperate quest for evidence, completely overlooks 'The Sentinel'--and the movie based upon it, "2001: A Space Odyssey."

One wonders right away why Hoagland would devote any time at all to an obscure View-Master drama when "2001", with its lavish detail and illustrious cinematic history, is so near at hand. I suspect ignoring "The Sentinel" as 'evidence' for Hoagland's pet theories is because citing a well-known movie would immediately make him look foolish. (After all, science fiction is generally based on science fact--even if loosely--rather than the other way around.) But the View-Master reels are just obscure enough that Hoagland can feel relatively comfortable "discovering" them, and in so doing creating the albeit tenuous illusion that he's 'onto something'.

A close look at the purported 'symbolic parallels' between the View-Master reels and the real mystery at Cydonia, however, makes it quite clear that Hoagland is onto nothing at all. The science fiction genre is littered with references to pyramids on other planets, a theme that achieves a certain romantic aura since we tend to think of the Pyramids of Egypt when we hear the word "ruin". Pyramids are the archetypal "ruin", and as such lend themselves nicely to stories of extraterrestrial discovery.

I personally own a copy of an obscure, long out-of-print paperback called--get this--"Puzzle of the Space Pyramids." Its cover features an astronaut wandering the sands of Mars with enormous pyramids looming in the background--a 'parallel' that outdoes any of the alleged symbolism in Hoagland's Martian odyssey. I have little doubt that, if faced with "Puzzle of the Space Pyramids" and some ancient View-Master reels about finding artifacts on the Moon, Hoagland would have sprung for the former to back up his fragile, nonsensical claims.

("Puzzle of the Space Pyramids" isn't the only story I can think of that features pyramids on Mars. Another well-known story is Stanley Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey." And as long as we're being paranoid, why not include Ray Bradbury's "The Martian Chronicles" as part of the conspiracy? After all, Bradbury's Martians built sprawling, glass cities suspiciously similar to the "highly geometric glass ruins" hyped to the point of inanity on Hoagland's "Enterprise Mission" website. But why stop there? Let's add "Total Recall," which featured an alien pyramid on Mars, any number of "Star Trek" episodes, all the Tatoine sequences from "Star Wars" that look vaguely Martian... Hoagland has created a "conspiracy" that knows no bounds, and threatens to constitute the whole of Space Age pop-culture if taken to its logical extreme.)

Michael Bara, writing on his Lunar Anomalies site, depicts Hoagland's delivery of the "View-Master Chronicles" as a mesmerizing and awe-inspiring event never to be forgotten, and goes on to challenge the skeptics to "explain this one!"

Not to pat myself on the back too hard, but I think I just have.

Mac Tonnies

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