Images of the Mind and Images for the Eye. An Iconographical Approach to UFO-Mythology

Mikael Rothstein
University of Copenhagen

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Abstract

In the study of contemporary new religions and popular religious or metaphysical notions, the iconographical sources are often sadly overlooked. In this article it is the intention to present an iconographical approach to one single, although significantly versatile, aspect of modern, non-traditional mythology, namely the notion of "flying saucers" or UFOs (i.e. Unidentified Flying Objects). The actual UFO-religions may be insignificant in terms of adherence, but the very concept of UFOs holds a strong position in contemporary metaphysics and spirituality, as we find it in the so called New Age movement and elsewhere. Starting with the very notion of strange circular phenomena in the sky, a vast and very differentiated mythology of “flying saucers” or UFOs has developed. As far as the iconographical presentations reflect the narrative structure(s) of the UFO myth, these pictures are integrated elements of the UFO story, and sometimes even agents of a further ufological development.

Keywords: Iconography, Unidentified flying objects, Religious movements, Popular, New Age movement, Narration, Idols and images, United States, Alien abduction, Esotericism, Media and religion, Raelian Movement, Science and religion
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Apollo: Apollo, in Greco-Roman mythology, a deity of manifold function and meaning, one of the most widely revered and influential of all the ancient Greek and Roman gods. The son of Zeus and Leto, he was the god of crops and herds and the primary deity of the Delphic oracle. Orestes being purified by Apollo after his acquittal by the court of the Areopagus, detail of a 5th-century-BCE Greek vase; in the Louvre Alinari/Art Resource, New York. Though Apollo was the most Hellenic of all gods, he derived mostly from a type of god that originated in Anatolia and spread to Egypt by way of Syria and Palestine. Traditionally, Apollo and his twin, Artemis (Roman: Diana), were born on the isle of Delos.