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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: ETH [Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis] &c

From: clark@mn.frontiercomm.net [Jerome Clark]
Date: Mon, 24 Nov 1997 16:59:46 PST
Fwd Date: Tue, 25 Nov 1997 01:46:53 -0500
Subject: Re: ETH [Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis] &c

> To: updates@globalserve.net
> From: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
> Subject: UFO UpDate: Re: ETH [Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis] &c
> Mime-Version: 1.0
> Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

> Date: Sun, 23 Nov 1997 18:47:11 -0500
> To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
> From: Bob Shell <76750.2717@compuserve.com>
> Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: ETH [Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis] &c

> >From: clark@mn.frontiercomm.net [Jerome Clark]
> >Date: Sat, 22 Nov 1997 11:53:24 PST
> >To: updates@globalserve.net
> >Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Re: ETH [Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis] &c

> >> I don't like the terms "ET" or "alien", because both imply an origin
> >> somewhere other than Earth. Ultra Terrestrial comes close to being
> >> the right word, but I think we need a new one.

> >"Ultraterrestrial" comes nowhere near to being the
> >right word. It's John Keel's synonyms for "demon."
> >Ufology ought not to be an exercise in medieval
> >supernaturalism or occultism. I see nothing wrong
> >with the idea that UFOs originate "somewhere other
> >than Earth" (certainly a less extraordinary hypothesis
> >than one which argues the opposite [e.g., for the
> >hollow earth, the earth's etheric analog, or whatever]),
> >but I do feel that until we know more, we should
> >simply call UFO beings "entities" or "humanoids."
> >Phrases like "ET" should be left to purely theoretical
> >discussions.

> >Jerry Clark

> Jerry,

> Just because John Keel uses Ultraterrestrial as a synonym
> for demon, does not mean that Ufology has to connect to
> medieval mythology or occultism. Medieval mythology and
> occultism are just different attempts at understanding
> phenomena which we still do not understand today.

Bob,

If you're not endorsing John Keel's half-baked ideas,
you ought not to be using his vocabulary. Keel explicitly
endorses occult and demonological notions which no

post-Enlightenment thinker would find of any utility whatever in trying to make sense of what the UFO phenomenon is about. As I said, nobody endorses the use of theory-driven words (whether ET or ultra-terrestrial) in anything other than hypothesis-driven discourse. In any case, I would not equate scientific speculation about the possible nature of ET life with medieval speculation about demons, unless one believes late 20th century science is in no significant manner different from 12th century theology.

Jerry Clark

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