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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Dec](#) -> Re: Clark and ETH

## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Clark and ETH

From: [DevereuxP@aol.com](mailto:DevereuxP@aol.com) [Paul Devereaux]  
Date: Wed, 3 Dec 1997 23:43:45 -0500 (EST)  
Fwd Date: Thu, 04 Dec 1997 02:27:47 -0500  
Subject: Re: Clark and ETH

Jerry Clark wrote:

>From: [clark@mn.frontiercomm.net](mailto:clark@mn.frontiercomm.net) [Jerome Clark]  
>Date: Tue, 25 Nov 1997 11:15:49 PST  
>To: [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
>Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Clark and ETH [Solved Abduction Cases?]

>> From: [DevereuxP@aol.com](mailto:DevereuxP@aol.com)  
>> Date: Fri, 21 Nov 1997 23:48:44 -0500 (EST)  
>> To: [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
>> Subject: Solved Abduction Cases?

<snip>

>...I do, however, appreciate the more moderate and thoughtful  
>tone of the current posting, and on my end I apologize for past  
>responses that may have sounded flippant or disrespectful...  
<snip>

I appreciate the more moderate and thoughtful tone of the current  
posting, Jerry, and I accept your apology. Be polite with me, and  
I'll be polite with you. It was always that simple.

<snip>

>>A small number of us have been doing a heroic job in raising  
>>funding for field and other research, have involved mainstream  
>>science, have already produced more than anecdotal results, but  
>>instead of that being acknowledged, we are almost automatically  
>>criticised or even derided...

>I will leave aside the issue of whether or not you are a  
>"hero," except to say that most would feel this is for others,  
>not you, to decide...<snip>

I love your technique, Jerry: even when you are not being openly  
rude and hostile, you still keep wheedling away. I said the  
effort was heroic (as indeed it has been), like a sculpture can  
be heroic, not that I was a hero. Differing statements, old pal.  
But having said that, I do happen to think people like Erling  
Strand are indeed heroes. And, for that matter, people like Hal  
Puthoff, in carving days out of a horrendous schedule to spend  
time accompanying me on fieldwork.

>> THE ETH AS THE DOMINANT PARADIGM IN UFOLOGICAL THINKING.

<snip>

>>... I do not think it is an explanation for any, but if the

>>evidence should amount to proof in some cases, I will have no  
>>problems accepting it. I think there are definitely:

>> Psychological UFOs  
>> Sociological UFOs  
>> Geophysical UFOs

>> I'd add the ETH to that list as a possibility. But as someone  
>>who has seen anomalous luminous and dark aerial objects, and on  
>>one occasion a craft, I can say in total honesty I have not  
>>found it necessary to invoke the ETH to cope with any of them.

>And of course others, including scientists and other trained  
>observers, have felt otherwise... <snip>

Of course. And many, many, many more who have seen sweet F.A.

<snip>

>>... a study of alien abductions without recourse to the ETH  
>>reveals evidence amounting to proof as to what the "alien  
>>abduction" experience actually is.

>Again, a matter of continuing discussion. The ETH has to be  
>considered as one possible reasonable interpretation of a small  
>number of well investigated, multiple-participant cases. Other  
>explanations simply lack compelling explanatory power in these  
>instances.

Not true (as far as the abduction experience goes). The evidence  
that the alien abduction experience is a mind-experience and not  
a physical experience is overwhelming. (And that's all I am  
saying - I have explicitly stated that the ontological status of  
the abduction experience has to be further defined.) And a case I  
describe in the forthcoming UFOs & UFOLOGY book demonstrates that  
even multiple-experient abductions do not have to mean a  
physical, literal abduction has taken place.

The tabloid end of ufology will hang onto a literalist  
explanation for alien abductions for years to come, but there is  
no excuse for scholars such as yourself, Jerry, to buy that  
approach any longer. While it is important for us to be looking  
into the ontology of the experience, that cannot happen within  
ufology until leading lights such as yourself admit that there is  
no future in being an apologist for abduction literalism.

>At the same time, as I have stated repeatedly, there  
>is no reason to hold a dogmatic stance at this early stage of  
>the discussion/investigation... <snip>

It is later than you think. And is it still dogmatic to say that  
the world is round? When does convenient intellectual  
laissez-faire run its course?

<snip>

>>...(I am amazed that I have already made this deliberately  
>> provocative statement without there being the least ripple of  
>> interest by either Jerry or, apparently, more than a couple of  
>> people on this list.)

>Somehow I have the sense that we're being set up here for a big  
>anticlimax, but go ahead, tell the story, and let the rest of  
>us judge its relevance.

Geoff Price got in ahead of you, Jerry. (See also my response to  
Sean Jones.) I'm sorry if you think research is "a big  
anticlimax". I guess that's why ufology is what it is at present.  
I can tell you that the experience itself was no anti-climax.

<snip>

>As I have said before, the ETH -- which I happen to like, by  
>the way...

Even though it isn't \*a\* hypothesis, and is so general it can  
only be called a motif?

>... has not been ufology's "dominant paradigm" since  
>the mid-1960s. Anybody can determine that for himself or  
>herself by reading this list... <snip>

I have to ask you what planet you are on, let alone what list!

<snip>

>...we've actually had to endure a long, tedious exchange on  
>whether Ken Arnold saw birds, for god's sake. One would like to  
>think this was all done tongue in cheek, but this is the sort of  
>thing that passes for thinking in influential corners of ufology  
>these days.

I fully agree with you about the geese! But spare a thought for  
what has to be endured by those of us who do not view the  
ETH/ETM in such a positive light as you do.

>> <snip>... Dealing with the latter possibility first, it is my  
>>contention, as I expressed in an early posting to you, Jerry,  
>>that it is indeed skewing several stands of research and  
>>inhibiting the disclosure of other possibilities. In this  
>>sense, it is acting like a self-fulfilling pattern of thought.  
>>As a matter of fact, I would go further: I think that within  
>>mainstream ufology anything that is not ETH-based in some form  
>>or other is viewed as non-ufological, and essentially of minor  
>>or no interest. Further still, if it was finally proven that  
>>the ETH is not the answer in ufology, I suggest that most  
>>people now attracted to ufology would go elsewhere and the  
>>subject would drop to a minor strand of intellectual curiosity  
>>within our culture, notwithstanding other important scientific  
>>and philosophical matters that might emerge in the ETH's stead.

>I would like to know of a funded mainstream science  
>investigation of UFOs and the ETH. I know the literature pretty  
>well, and I've never heard of one. I doubt that one exists.  
>The ETH has been the subject of hand-waving dismissal in the  
>mainstream scientific literature but never of balanced,  
>searching appraisal. One way to read your argument is that  
>science's neglect of the ETH justifies its continued neglect.

Forgive me, I'm not quite sure what this statement of yours has  
to do with anything I was saying.

>> ALIEN ABDUCTION: I think we could set about raising the data  
>> within ufology itself (it has already been raised outside of  
>> ufology) to demonstrate that the alien abduction experience,  
>> for example, is just one modest strand of a broader literature  
>> relating to an extremely deep-seated human experience as old  
>>as the human mind.

>So you believe. And others disagree. The discussion continues,  
>as well it should.

My statement is far more than a belief - it is demonstrable. We  
can provide more evidence that the abduction experience is a mind  
phenomenon than the literalists can that it is a physical one.  
But I fully agree with you that most people (within ufology - an  
important qualification) do not think that. That, really, is what  
I was trying to say: can we get the matter dealt with more  
broadly within ufology (for ufology's sake - the work will go on  
within or without ufology regardless)?

>> AERIAL PHENOMENA: In the case of things seen-in-the sky, while  
>> the ETH should stay on the table, it should not be as  
>>overbearing as it currently is and has been for nearly 50  
>>years. It should be given nothing more than equal weighting  
>>with social, psychological and geophysical UFOs - and perhaps  
>>UFOs of a type we haven't even thought of as yet...<snip>

>It is a myth that the ETH dominates ufology.... <snip>

If you truly believe this, you are either in denial or are not  
paying attention as to what is occupying the attention of  
mainstream ufology today. Even the "occult" and "conspiracy"  
folklore themes are attached to the ETH in one form or another.  
It may not be the old form of "the" ETH, but the ETM is there  
fully entrenched. It is not worth even arguing this point.

<snip>

>...it seems to me your dispute is with all scientists who think  
>ETs exist and could visit here, even if they happen to reject  
>the idea that it's happening now. The ETH is so consistent with

>many streams of exobiological/SETI theory that you ought to put  
>aside your unique obsession with ufologists and take on ETI  
>theorists in mainstream science.

No - this is a fundamental error that is often made. You are talking about the possibility of other life in the universe - exobiology. I am immediately open to that possibility(though with the cautionary thought that life might be even more precious than we think it is). This is \*not\* the same issue as whether a zoo-load of alien beings and variegated craft are visiting the Earth or not. As far as these present exchanges go, it is this latter issue I am addressing.

>> Also, a study of the history of ufology shows conclusively  
>>that there is not one, single hypothesis that can be called the  
>>ETH, as Dennis Stacy has pointed out in another posting. There  
>>is and/or has been a riot of manifestations of what should more  
>>properly be called the ET Motif, the ETM.

>Actually, I agree and write as much in my just published The UFO  
>Book. Only a small number of ufologists have formulated a  
>detailed, comprehensive ETH. Most writers have patterned their  
>ideas, and only sketchily, after speculations current in  
>current mainstream science (I here exclude contactees and other  
>extremists)...

Why exclude them? They have been an essential part of ufology's history. I see nothing more "extreme" being postulated than the notions flying around within ufology now! This is hindsight sanitisation. What you might think reasonable now, we may both agree in our bath-chairs was "extreme". The trick is to see what's going wrong \*at the time\*. In this, you are kicking and resisting all the way. Ufology is \*not\* what you and few mates in the upper mid-west think -- it is a rampant bed of rumour and extremist thinking. That is what the bulk of ufology \*is\*. The first step in attempting to enlarge the influence of moderation, and an expansion of thought in ufology is to accept that the problems exist. It is no use pretending it is just a handful of nutters on the fringe of ufology. While most ufologists might be nice enough people, they nevertheless bathe in the culture that we call ufology.

<snip>

>As I have said more than once in this space, the finest writing  
>on the ETH is by Michael D. Swords. ETH-bashers ignore him to a  
>man or woman. Tellingly, I should think.

I've read some of Swords' material, and have listened to him at length. His thoughts on exbiology may (possibly) be fine, but, as I say, this is not the issue. It is jumping from such speculations to the ufological ETH/ETM that crosses the logic gap. And it is a logic gap whether one jumps across it with two heavily-booted feet, or does a fancier Swords dance.

<snip>

>I have never said your ideas are not "worthy of discussion."  
>I have said the contrary. I just happen to think you're  
>wrong -- though interestingly so, which is more than I can  
>say for many UFO theorists.

How can you say I'm "wrong"? And about what? And how can we broaden the thinking within ufology if people like you put a label \*on what you don't like\* that says "wrong"?

<snip>

>>... So, as a preliminary test, I took the first 100 postings of  
>>the list in my electronic in-tray... <snip>... This is what I  
>>found.  
>> My UpDates sample of 100 postings started on 11/04 and ended  
>>11/08.  
>> ETH/ETM-related: 62%  
>> Not ETH/ETM related: 38%

>An imaginative reading, I should think. Most posters don't  
>refer to specific theories about UFOs, The exchanges usually  
>are about specific or general issues. The ETH receded in power  
>and influence in the mid-1960s...

Then you are mistaken. There was nothing "imaginative" about my survey. That 62% (actually 67%) related to the ETH/ETM in one way or another. If anything, I cut out postings that should have been included. As I said - explicit \*or implicit\*. RELATED. My point was and is that the ETH/ETM is so insidious that it sets the agenda for most discussion, thought, approaches and beliefs within ufology. It sets the agenda, even when the discussion might ostensibly be about something else. No one is saying that the cyber-waves are full of erudite debates about the ETH/ETM. It is far, far more insidious than that. And that is precisely my point.

Here I am, determining what is on this list by a reasoned approach and not mere opinion, and you airily dismiss it! (I expected as much - but then scolded myself for pre-judging you.)

Jerry, as I have said - you are in denial. Honestly.

>I confess I don't understand your particular  
>obsession...

Or don't want to, perhaps. It is a pity that my call that we look at a set of problems gets labelled by you as being obsessive. If I speak out of line, it seems, I am "wrong" and suffering from an "obsession". There's not much hope if you continue to think like that, Jerry.

>...Keyhoe and Lorenzen (to more than a few, barely remembered  
>historical figures).

Their legacy lives on, for sure.

<snip>

>Lighten up, Paul. Ufology's universe strikes me as  
>more pluralistic than your own.

Yes, it is pluralistic, but the ETH/ETM is the bass note behind most of ufological concern and involvement. It is the dominant drone.

>I also encourage our readers to spend not just 14 days but 365  
>of 1998 in following their thoughts where logic and evidence  
>take them. If we're to take 14 days off, let us take them off  
>from credulity, dogma, and sloppy thinking -- errors that are  
>hardly the sole property of proponents of the extraterrestrial  
>hypothesis.

My suggestion was to try to forge some new pathways of thinking, without the crutch of the ETH/ETM. This is a biological factor, you know. When we think about something, the neurons fire in certain patterns. Once such a network has fired, the cells along the way are "kindled", primed, so to speak, to fire again with less resistance. This is the way habits are formed. This is why repetitive tasks can come to be "second nature", and drop more or less beneath our conscious threshold, even though they occupied our attention when we were learning them. The same thing happens with habits of thought. I am suggesting that recourse to one manifestation or other of the ETH/ETM is "second nature" in most of mainstream ufology. My idea of a 14-day break was to give the old firing patterns a rest, to make us more conscious about what we assume, and to perhaps fashion some tentative new firing networks inside our little noddles. Maybe the UFO enigma is bigger than we think, and we need to make more effort.

In this, as in so much, Jerry, it seems my points pass you by. But I try to get through.

Kind regards,  
Paul Devereux

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