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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Clark and ETH

From: [clark@mn.frontiercomm.net](mailto:clark@mn.frontiercomm.net) [Jerome Clark]  
Date: Thu, 04 Dec 1997 12:26:29 PST  
Fwd Date: Thu, 04 Dec 1997 17:43:25 -0500  
Subject: Re: Clark and ETH

> From: [DevereuxP@aol.com](mailto:DevereuxP@aol.com) [Paul Devereaux]  
> Date: Wed, 3 Dec 1997 23:43:45 -0500 (EST)  
> To: [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
> Subject: 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.

And what about your apology, Paul? For me to accept it, which I  
will do happily, it must first be offered. Don't condescend to  
me, and I won't condescend to you. It's 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.

To most of us, a distinction without a difference, but I'll let it go. As I've said more than once before, you are in serious need of a new rhetorical style.

> 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.

I also think that people like Isabel Davis, Ted Bloecher, Walter Webb, Donald Keyhoe, Aime Michel, James McDonald, Dick Hall, and other pioneers of ufology -- who sought to bring rationality to UFO research and who all championed, in one way or another, the ETH -- were also heroes. Whether the likes of you and me are heroes, Paul, is for history, not you and me, to decide.

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

Yeah, right. I hope that "proof" is better than that little anecdote you offered on a recent posting -- your much-vaunted, predictably anticlimactic meeting with what you characterized as an alien. Please tell me what this has to do with the abduction phenomenon. It certainly wasn't apparent from your account, even as you were making, inevitably, huge claims for it.

> >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.

I look forward to reading your book, of course. Still, my point remains. The best abduction cases, usually those involving multiple witnesses and suggestive physical evidence, are more reasonably interpreted as event-level experiences and interactions with nonhuman entities. Which is not to say that such an interpretation is solidly proved. It's just that the other explanations, including yours, don't seem up to the task. Given society's fierce resistance to the idea of ETH visitation on any but a trivial level (as fodder for fringe groups, scary movies and TV shows, and stand-up comics), it is little wonder that even with ufology people seek earnestly, even desperately, for other, less disturbing explanations. It is, of course, defensible to look at all possibilities. It is not defensible to reject the ETH out of hand or to employ ad hominem rhetoric against its more serious advocates.

> 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.

An "apologist for abduction literalism"? Since everything I have said on the subject has been far more qualified and modest than anything I've ever seen you pronounce on the subject, that is a strange remark indeed. If I am apologizing for anything, it's for open-minded consideration of the evidence. If you're apologizing for anything, it seems to me, it's dogmatism and self-righteousness in favor of beliefs you hold very strongly.

> >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?

I'm glad that you have all the answers, Paul. Most of the rest of us, alas, are still searching.

> <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.

It would have been to me, if I'd been expecting more, which I wasn't.

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

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

Get off the mountain, Paul, and try viewing the history and dynamics of ufology through something other than a narrow-focus lens. As I have written elsewhere recently, if ufology weren't so obsessed with non- or anti-ETH approaches, we would be hearing a lot less about Keel and Vallee (and maybe even Devereux) and a lot more about the RB-47 and other hard-evidence cases of the sorts that underlie the scientific case for ET visitation.

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

Again, guy, remove the narrow-focus lenses. You've been living on the Devereux planet too long.

> >>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.

Not even remotely close to the truth. In my recent book I discuss at length, in three separate entries, the intellectual history of UFO theory. I show how the ETH came to be eclipsed in the mid-to late 1960s, primarily by occult theories, and then by psychosocial speculations. You have a distorted view, I suspect, because of your antagonistic view, repeatedly expressed, of ufologists. Your mind is made up about who they are and what they think, and so you don't listen to them. You have an unfortunate habit of not listening to those who disagree with you; instead, as you did recently with Chris Rutkowski, you accuse them of being full of "hate", or something comparably unworthy.

Personally, I wish the ETH were a larger force in UFO theory. I wish there were a large body of serious, informed writing on the subject, comparable to that Mike Swords (whose excellent work you continue to ignore), Edward Ashpole (a rare SETI specialist conversant in the UFO literature), and a handful of others have produced. Instead, ETs get linked to Dark Side conspiracy theories and contact lore, providing you, for example (not to mention Klass and other debunkers), with yet another strawman to beat up.

> >>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.

You're ducking the question, guy.

> >> 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)?

What you know, Paul, you know. What the rest of us know,  
we only believe. It appears that the answers have eluded  
everybody but you. What a lucky man you are.

> >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.

I certainly don't pretend to know everything, but I do know, it  
appears, rather more about the intellectual history of ufology  
than you do. This is not a flaw in your character, but it should  
discourage you from making the sorts of sweeping generalizations  
you are wont to launch into rhetorical space.

> <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.

Paul is simply out to lunch here. Whether UFOs are alien  
spacecraft or not, their presence is not a priori impossible,  
according to many strands of SETI theory. Nor is the humanoid  
appearance of their occupants particularly surprising; many  
theorists would say it is to be expected. Again, Mike Swords,  
whom Paul dismisses with a wave of the hand, cites chapter  
and verse on the lack of conflict between exobiological theory  
and the ETH. Anyone can verify Swords' assertions (richly  
footnoted for those who want to follow the literature) by  
reading SETI theory.

SETI theorists who reject UFOs as spacecraft seldom show any  
serious knowledge of the UFO literature. Typically, UFOs are  
dispatched with a reference to Klass, Menzel, and/or Condon.  
I've never seen any of them mention Devereux's "heroic" work.  
by the way. That doesn't necessarily say anything bad about  
Paul, but it doesn't put him in the scientific mainstream,  
either.

> >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, obviously)...

> 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 though 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.

As someone who has written the longest social history of the UFO controversy ever attempted (the second edition of the Encyclopedia comes to more than 1000 pages of small-print text alone), I find the above absurd and even boorish. No one has written more about "rumor and extremist thinking," or criticized it more harshly, or made more of an effort to understand it, than I have. I know of "rumors and extremist thinking" that Paul's never heard of. I know the deep historical roots (often grafted onto to ufology or saucerianism from outside sources, such as Theosophy or political conspiracy theory) of current rumor and extremism, and I document them in my book.

The excesses are, of course, precisely what one would expect to encounter in a subject that has been relegated to the fringes. Paul's knowledge of ufological history is so dim, however, that he would have us believing Isabel Davis and George Adamski are essentially indistinguishable or that NICAP could have been a branch of the Aetherius Society, simply because these individuals and organizations thought of UFOs as having an ET origin.

As a UFO historian I find especially fascinating the long struggle between sober ufologists and the extremists (contactees, Dark Siders, et al.). Paul, conveniently oblivious to this major and recurring theme in ufology, resorts to cartoonish caricature and insult. This is a man obsessed -- a guy whose "heroic" work has brought the truth to light, only to be scorned by un-believers and infidels, all suffering from delusions of a sort he is able to diagnose. It's hard for me to trust Paul when he's discussing something I don't know about. When he's talking about something I do happen to know about, it's distorted beyond recognition. Given the fierceness, even fanaticism -- certainly the absence of modesty or of nuance or, at times, even of common courtesy -- in his rhetoric, it is tempting to wonder if we are dealing here with some species of true believer.

(It is interesting, by the way, to note the rhetorical trick Paul is engaging in here. He wants ufologists to argue as much from their worst "evidence" -- the nut stuff -- as from their best. Even Phil Klass understands that it is the best, not the worst, evidence that is at issue. Maybe this tells us something about the weakness Paul senses in his own case. After all, if there is no essential difference between, say, the Socorro CE2/CE3 or the Nash/Fortenberry case on one hand and channelings from the Ashtar Command on the other, what possible hope could there be for the poor sap trying to make the argument against Devereux?)

Paul, allow me to offer some advice:

Can the self-righteous act and start acting more like a colleague. There's plenty of room for reasoned discussion and debate in ufology. Ufology is a pluralistic universe in which many intelligent inhabitants with a wide range of views reside. The insults, caricatures, and bombast of the Devereux style are not only tiresome but self-defeating. The rest of us aren't stupid, Paul. If your arguments, beneath the posturing and the victimology rhetoric, have merit, they'll be heard. At the same time, I hope you will learn to start listening to the rest of us instead of lecturing us. All of us, including you, have much to learn. Ufology is in its infancy, and your grand

pronouncements notwithstanding, there are far more questions than answers out there. In the meantime, reasonable persons are going to disagree, reasonably.

Trying one more time,  
Jerry Clark

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