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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Solved Abduction Cases?

From: Mark Cashman <mcashman@ix.netcom.com>  
Date: Thu, 4 Dec 1997 22:43:07 -0800  
Fwd Date: Fri, 05 Dec 1997 10:13:32 -0500  
Subject: Re: Solved Abduction Cases?

> From: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>, on 12/4/97 2:06 AM:  
> From: DevereuxP@aol.com [Paul Devereux]  
> Date: Wed, 3 Dec 1997 23:00:43 -0500 (EST)  
> To: updates@globalserve.net  
> Subject: Solved Abduction Cases?

> I don't think anyone is suggesting ufology is alone in this  
> respect - the difficulty is getting ufologists to realise that  
> they are dealing with folkloric processes at all! Mention  
> folklore, and there is this huge outcry. It is as if ufology is  
> to be thought as being above folklore.

I think that what generates the objection are contentions that the UFO phenomenon itself should be considered folklore.

The point I was trying to make was that the presence of a folklore does not in any way reduce the objective existence or importance of the underlying phenomenon.

And we could get into classifying the different kinds of folklore that are generated around the objectively existent UFO phenomenon, but that probably is a discussion for another day or possibly another list.

> >However, the odd thing about good UFO cases when we try to view  
> >them as folklore... <snip>

> >There is, nonetheless, a "UFO culture". Actually, there are  
> >several UFO cultures...<snip>

> Yup. Agreed. It's called ufology.

Here's where we part ways. Ufology is not the UFO culture. It's important to be clear about definitions. Ufology is not UFO culture any more than astronomy is the culture of astronomers or climbing is the culture of climbers.

Ufology is the study of UFOs. UFOlogists participate in UFO culture. That to me is the difference and the essential distinction.

> At least consider the possibility, Mark, that there may only be  
> chaff in many instances (I assume you are thinking of folklore as  
> "chaff").

This would be incorrect. Folklore is not the subject of Ufology. The experience of the witness as related by the witness, plus any objective scientific measurements, are the subject of UFOlogy. The "chaff", such as it is, are the misperceptions of aircraft,

birds, balloons, etc. as UFOs.

I think that the generation of folklore around a case does tend to reduce the value of the case to the extent it embellishes the original account. This is the reason historical research going to original sources is so essential. For instance, on the neighboring Kenneth Arnold thread, we can see that it is easy to neglect the core facts posed by the original reports and drawings produced by the witness, at which point all sorts of absurd theories become easy to support.

> And it is a matter of opinion as to whether the likes  
> of Kottmeyer are "distorting their data". For all I know, some  
> of the "researchers" you refer to whom you might consider as  
> paragons of truth may be those I would consider as distorting  
> their data to fit their own pet theories and beliefs. It is all  
> such a shaky business, y'know.

Actually, it's not. That's why we have the original account. Any theory posed by anyone, pro or con UFO, must use all of the reported features with the same emphasis provided by the witness unless specific counter-evidence exists. An assertion that the witness is a liar or can't distinguish between a near flock of birds and a far flashing metallic object that shines on a plane from the direction of a snowfield, or an assertion that a witness can't tell the difference between a grounded hot air balloon and a large egg shaped object which indents the soil and burns bushes, or an assertion that a hoax kite with flashing lights present in the early hours of the morning in a rural location is the cause of a UFO report without the demonstrated presence of such a kite - none of these are sufficient. In short, we can tell if someone is distorting the data by looking at the data as presented by the witness and the data as presented by the theorist, and if any of the data from the witness is omitted, changed, or devalued by the theorist, then, unless the theorist can present a specific and valid reason to support such a change, the data is being distorted.

> I think it should be pointed out that the presence of folklore as  
> a binding element within ufology is not in itself necessarily a  
> negative factor. I wasn't thinking of folklore as somehow being  
> negative or as explaining anything away when I gave this present  
> round on the subject its spin. What \*is\* important, however, and  
> this is the point I was initially trying to make, is to recognise  
> that it is there, and the role it plays. And not to be in denial  
> about it.

Yes folklore exists in UFOlogy, it's no big deal except when we confuse it with the recorded facts of real UFO events.

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