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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Terminology

From: [btbmag@ro.com](mailto:btbmag@ro.com) (Michael Malone)  
Date: Tue, 31 Dec 1996 14:37:17 -0600  
Fwd Date: Wed, 01 Jan 1997 12:54:56 -0500  
Subject: Re: Terminology

>From: [SGBConsult@aol.com](mailto:SGBConsult@aol.com) <Steve Bassett>  
>Date: Tue, 31 Dec 1996 00:22:40 -0500  
>To: [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
>Subject: Terminology

>In a message dated 96-12-30 21:51:58 EST, Greg Sandow wrote:

>> >Dunno about "alleged," though. That also sounds negative to me. The more  
>> >I think about this terminology business, the more I'm inclined to go  
>> >with "experiencer." It only says that someone has had this experience.  
>> >We can use the term with respect, while reserving judgement on exactly  
>> >what the nature of the experience is.

>Michael Malone replied:

>> Perhaps the problem is with the term abductee. What we need is a new term  
>> that is defined as "one who honestly believes they have been abducted by  
>> sentient non-human beings and believe that these beings are either  
>> extra-solar, or extra-terrestrial in origin."

>> I've struggled to make the "definition" as natural as possible, without  
>> being obscure. Can we even agree on a definition?  
>\_\_\_\_\_

>Terminology has the power to self-generate epistemology.

>As historical evidence prior to the modern era (1947-1996) is gathered, the  
>spectrum of encounter experiences continues to broaden. In this time period  
>three terms have been most prevalent: contactee, abductee, and experiencer.

>"Contactee" as a basis for consensus was weakened by its use during the  
>"space brother" period and with other later extreme fringe reportage.

Contactee is too loaded.

>"Abductee" has a substantive lineage which gained strength after the Hill  
>case and further developed with the work of Budd Hopkins and other early  
>investigators.

Abductee is too loaded.

>"Experiencer" is a much more recent nomenclature which emerged from  
>support groups with impetus from group members dissatisfied with  
>"Abductee". It has been particularly embraced by Dr. John Mack's Program  
>for Extraordinary Experience Research, one of the most prominent research  
>and support organizations in the field.

Experiencer might touch more closely on the emotional aspect of the  
situation, but does little to denote the scientific attempt by a minority

of people to produce evidence that the situation does/does not exist. By and far, that is a slim minority, and while those of us in that minority will never dictate what is accepted in "mainstream" ufology, we would like to be able to converse with words that aren't loaded, either emotionally or definitively, so that we can share what we know without worrying about being politically correct in our speech.

It is impossible to go to a meeting of UFO groupies and talk about alleged alien abduction or self-claimed abductees, unless you've got a death wish. You will be labeled as uncaring, insensitive, and lacking understanding. Yet there is still no true evidence that these "experiences" exist. The best line offered is, "I know what happened to me." Perhaps in my latest forced absence from the net the suspected alien implants (Is that politically correct?) have been proven to be true evidence of alien life. If so, I haven't heard about it.

*>Not uncharacteristically, these terms have created lines of debate. This >debate is exacerbated by the personal and emotional involvement of the >participants in much of the developing evidence.*

To true. To true. Yet to the "experiencer" the emotional involvement is the pivotal point of the issue. I often wonder if some of the "big names" in this field remember that. I am deeply troubled that there may be researchers who are abusing their relationship with people who honestly believe they have been abducted.

*>Not enough is known about this phenomenon to rely upon narrow nomenclature, >however comforting. Motivations are ascribed to entities not yet >conclusively proved to exist, for conduct as yet not understood, within >contexts completely outside consensus reality.*

narrow nomenclature is the current problem. We need a more general definition that correctly portrays the scientific problem. As to the Motivations and Conduct of these alleged alien beings, I'll wait until a proven, working model of the abduction is theorized and exhibited before I entertain such notions.

*>The wave/particle conundrum in subatomic physics is a good model. Until more >evidence is in, a beneficial course might be one of hoping for the specifics >while expecting a protracted period of generalities.*

I think the only "specifics" we need to be hoping for is some definitive proof that the abduction exists.

*>Unlike most fields of scientific research, certain aspects of this sub-field >of ufology place exceptional demands on the education, experience and >personal values each investigator brings to the work. As such, this pivotal >field of study is both complicated and well serviced by the diverse range of >approaches represented by Sims, Smith, Jacobs, Carpenter, Boylan, Hopkins, >Mack, and others.*

The personal values are a detractor to this field, IMHO. The egos of those you mention often get in the way of real research, and the proprietary approaches and distinct lack of information sharing is disturbing. Importance is placed on what is remembered and not what is known.

*>The likelihood that any one camp is precisely on target, given the >extraordinary elusiveness, complexity, and paradigm challenging nature of the >unfolding evidence, is slim.*

The likelihood that any one camp is precisely on target is slim to none, and slim just left.

*>There is a painful need for tolerance at this point. The community of >ufology is still building the formal structures for ordered investigation and >peer review. The field has struggled against the effects of advanced >speculation and theorizing running well ahead of the evidence.*

Tolerance is needed on both sides. Tolerance from the minority of scientifically minded individuals for the heavy emotional burdens this field carries, and tolerance from the majority of emotionally motivated individuals that the scientifically minded individuals aren't attacking them personally.

*>Of course, the involved participants have a powerful need to put language to >these encounters - to find some solid ground upon which to stand. Each must >cope in their own way. There is, however, something to be said for an >intrinsic nimbleness - a readiness, given the huge potential for >unprecedented intellectual quakes in our very ground of being, to set down on >that piece of earth still intact when the shaking is over.*

We need a language just so that we can talk to one another without the current confusion and insults.

Michael

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Michael Malone

Kilo Foxtrot Four Mike Yankee X-ray

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