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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Questions for Abductees

From: [clark@canby.mn.frontiercomm.net](mailto:clark@canby.mn.frontiercomm.net) [Jerome Clark]  
 Date: Thu, 30 Oct 1997 11:35:04 PST  
 Fwd Date: Thu, 30 Oct 1997 13:19:45 -0500  
 Subject: Re: Questions for Abductees

> Date: Wed, 29 Oct 1997 09:01:35 -0500  
 > From: Peregrine Mendoza <101653.2205@compuserve.com> [Peter Brookesmith]  
 > Subject: Questions for Abductees  
 > To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

> The Duke of Mendoza presents his compliments.

> >From: [clark@canby.mn.frontiercomm.net](mailto:clark@canby.mn.frontiercomm.net) [Jerome Clark]  
 > >Date: Tue, 28 Oct 1997 11:35:07 PST  
 > >To: [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
 > >Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Re: Questions for Abductees

> >In fact, there is a great deal to support the ETH. So far it is  
 > >the most reasonable -- or, as Michael Swords has it, "natural" --  
 > >provisional hypothesis which seeks to explain the hard-core  
 > >evidence: i.e., the stuff that emerges from CE2s, independently  
 > >and multiply witnessed cases, and so on.

> "In fact". This enquiring mind would appreciate knowing of what  
 > such facts may consist. "Reasonable" in what form of logic?  
 > "Natural" in what sense?

C'mon, Duke, stop the complacent smirking. It's a tired act by now. The amount of solid writing on the ETH, unfortunately, is fairly slight, but an excellent literature exists and is growing. (In my new book there's a history of the ETH in ufology. There I show that most mainstream writing on the subject in the literature is not crazy, simply naive, though perhaps not notably more so than that of many astronomers of the 1950s [when the ETH was in full flower]; as late as the 1950s, for example, scientists such as Donald Menzel still thought it possible that Venus harbors intelligent life.)

Mike Swords has written eloquently on the subject in a series of essays which critics of the ETH like to pretend don't exist. Right now I'm reading Edward Ashpole's very interesting *The UFO Phenomena*. Like Swords, like in fact anybody who bothers to read SETI literature, Ashpole observes that the UFO data are perfectly consistent with what we could reasonably expect from spacefaring aliens. In other words, the ETH cannot be rejected a priori, even before the evidence is examined. (Ashpole thinks the evidence is intriguing.) He says astutely that "most rational people who think UFOs are a lot of nonsense are unaware of the scientific rationale for SETI." In any event, most of what could be said critical of the ETH could be said of SETI theory, except that (as historian of science Michael J. Crowe once observed) ufologists, unlike their SETI counterparts, are dealing with actual evidence.

The ETH may be right, or it may be wrong, but to pretend that it is outrageous and absurd is simply to engage in the stalest of rhetorical tricks. That sort of posturing doesn't get any of us anywhere, and it certainly makes me disinclined to listen to whatever genuine insights Duke and his cohorts may have to offer. Or maybe they are more interesting in feeling superior to us benighted souls than in persuading us.

> >Vallee is simply wrong when he suggests that the UFO question  
> >is beyond science. Here he betrays his occult -- even anti-  
> >rationalist -- sympathies. In any event, how would he know?

> I vaguely recall that the witch-doctor Jacques did his level  
> best to apply some scientific principles in "Challenge to Science"  
> and "Anatomy of a Phenomenon". Not much anti-rationalism there.  
> Can it be that Magic Jacques reached his conclusion through  
> frustrating experience?

More likely through the influences of the '60s counterculture and his longtime fascination with occultism.

> >For one thing, science has barely addressed the question. The  
> >best cases, however, are eminently investigatable by traditional  
> >scientific method;

> And \*why\*, do you suppose, has science barely addressed the  
> question?

Good question, and the product of a considerable literature by sociologists of scientists and scientists themselves. I urge you to read it. As Allen Hynek succinctly observed, science is not always what scientists do. Scientists have always had a hard time dealing with anomalies, especially extraordinary anomalies, and that fact alone has generated a bunch of interesting writing by a range of interesting writers: Hufford, Bauer, Westrum, Truzzi, Mauskopf, McClenon, Hess, Sturrock, Rodeghier et al. -- not to mention, of course, Kuhn and, more radically, Paul Feyerabend.

> And perhaps Jerome could demonstrate just which parts of  
> the scientific method have been applied - scientifically - to  
> which cases? Or even one? I am especially looking forward to  
> reading about all those repeated and independently verified  
> experiments that burden the pages of the scientific or even  
> the ufological literature.

Read the literature, Duke. And in this specific regard, let me here put in a plug for the forthcoming second edition of *The UFO Encyclopedia* and a particular entry of particular importance.

Cheers,

Jerry Clark

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