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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Oct](#) -> **Re: ETH &c**

UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: ETH &c

From: clark@canby.mn.frontiercomm.net [Jerome Clark]
Date: Fri, 31 Oct 1997 13:18:44 PST
Fwd Date: Fri, 31 Oct 1997 21:41:43 -0500
Subject: Re: ETH &c

> Date: Thu, 30 Oct 1997 21:29:27 -0500
> From: Peregrine Mendoza <101653.2205@compuserve.com> [Peter Brookesmith]
> Subject: ETH [Extra Terrestrial Hypothesis] &c
> To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>

> >From: clark@canby.mn.frontiercomm.net [Jerome Clark]
> >Date: Thu, 30 Oct 1997 11:35:04 PST
> >To: updates@globalserve.net
> >Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Re: Questions for Abductees

> Here we go again. Before you judge the expression on my face that
> you cannot even see, please answer the question. And (hard tho' it
> is to break the habit of a lifetime) with specific answers and
> attendant arguments, not a bibliography or a list of authorities,
> unsubstantiated appeals to which do not impress. In unkind
> moments I think of it as a form of the higher hand-waving.

Hard as it may be for you to believe, Duke, I have a life to lead
and, what's more, paying work to attend to. If you think I am
going to write journal- or even book-length responses to you,
you're off in dreamland, and I don't mean the one in Area 51.
And, actually, I don't think you think that, either. I think
you're just posturing -- and being unamusingly disingenuous.

I will continue to refer readers to treatments of the ETH in
which the subject is treated with diligence and care, and at the
length this complex question deserves. Again, I refer interested
and open-minded readers to Mike Swords' writings, appended to
which is a bibliography of journal papers to which the inquiring
mind can go for further information. I refer also to my essay on
"Extraterrestrial Hypothesis and Ufology," which also has a
bibliography, and also to Edward Ashpole's The UFO Phenomena
(1995).

> >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.

> Is this a rhetorical trick, or just stale? Is it a rhetorical
> trick to describe the ETH as "reasonable" (etc) without giving
> reasons and then declining to do so when asked? Is it what Ed
> Stewart would call "ufological wisdom"? Is this a put on? Is it
> one of the boys in the office again? Or is it just bluster and
> pomposity and finger-wagging? In other words:

Is this what they call "anti-ufological wisdom"? Sound, fury,
nothing signified. Again, read the literature. And see below.

> Please cite where I say or even pretend to say that the ETH is
> outrageous or absurd. (And you needn't get oversophisticated
> about the guffaws, btw.)

Please cite where you have said that the ETH, though you reject it, is a reasonable hypothesis which a reasonable person, even if ultimately mistaken, can hold. I've always heard you treat it, with the Ameriphobia that always seems to permeate such discourse, as some sort of American disease (e.g., your colorful unConvention lecture in 1995; see also David Sivier's interesting discussion of your views in the current Magonia). You're not being helpful here, Duke, though I hope all this venting makes you feel better..

> >>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.

> You please answer the question, Jerry. The reasons I asked it
> were twofold: to see if you *could* answer it, and because this
> is a public forum. Strange whisperings that I cannot explain give
> me a powerful impression that I'm not the only one in the world
> or even on this List who'd like to know the answer.

It's hard to imagine any response that doesn't involve some variant of the adjective "disingenuous" here. If Duke is the naif he's pretending to be here, one can only ask how he came to write books on UFOs and to hold such strong opinions on the subject. Moreover, if he really does believe the ETH not to be outrageous and absurd, why is he even arguing with me? I wasn't even making the claim that the ETH is correct (though of course I think it could be), simply that it is a reasonable reading of the UFO evidence, for reasons outlined at length in papers and books he apparently doesn't want to confuse himself with by reading.

What is Duke alleging here? That there is no scientific writing on UFO cases, statistics, landing traces, radar/ visuals, photographs, the abduction phenomenon? Does this sort of cuteness -- or rhetorical desperation -- merit a response? Is there anybody out there who thinks there is not a body of scientific literature of UFO study? Raise your hands. No, you've already voted, Duke. And without yours, I suspect that leaves us with no votes.

> Which is not to say I won't read your book when it hits these
> shores (an ISBN would help with our enquiries, BTW) and will very
> likely enjoy it.

I enjoy your books, too, though I confess that sometimes it's hard to believe they were written by the individual who signs himself

> Pratincole D. Mockingbird
> Air Drummer.

Cheers,

Jerry Clark

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