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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### P-1947: Re: Critical Thinking - The Missing Element

From: Jerome Clark <[jkclark@FRONTIERNET.NET](mailto:jkclark@FRONTIERNET.NET)>  
Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998 11:31:25 PDT  
Fwd Date: Sat, 08 Aug 1998 09:46:32 -0400  
Subject: P-1947: Re: Critical Thinking - The Missing Element

>Date: Thu, 6 Aug 1998 12:15:30 EDT  
>From: Herb Taylor <[HerbUFO@AOL.COM](mailto:HerbUFO@AOL.COM)>  
>Subject: Critical Thinking - The Missing Element  
>To: [PROJECT-1947@LISTSERV.AOL.COM](mailto:PROJECT-1947@LISTSERV.AOL.COM)

> Greetings to the List:

>Recent postings by Dennis Stacy, Jan Aldrich, and Rod Brock,  
>serve to underscore the sad fact that ufology is in an awful  
>state of affairs.

>Claims and allegations that once would've rightfully been thrown  
>into the nearest garbage pail, are now given serious hearing (or  
>actually believed) by many in this rapidly deteriorating field.

As I said in my recent posting (which evidently Taylor hasn't seen), it is desirable to separate "ufology" from the "UFO scene." At some point, lest we do to ourselves what our critics habitually do, which is to lump everybody from the soberest investigator to the wildest-eyed loon into the same cracked pot, we need to distinguish "ufology" as a worthwhile endeavor based on investigation and analysis from the "UFO scene," which is everything else -- i.e., flying saucers meet popular culture, the marketplace, credulity, religious expectation, ridicule, dogmatic rejection, or whatever. Every silly or exploitative use of the concept of UFOs is NOT the fault of ufologists, and only a masochist would argue otherwise.

It is also necessary to keep things in perspective. Folk beliefs about anomalous (or any other) phenomena are only to be expected, and nothing in themselves to get alarmed about. What is alarming, in my judgment, is that the level of noise is now so deafening that it threatens to drown out the signal that ufologists are trying to hear.

>Without mentioning any individuals or groups, it is most  
>disturbing that those who should know better, are often the very  
>ones helping to spread the very manure they claim to oppose.

>The need to practice critical thinking in this field would  
>appear to be in disrepute.

These sorts of claims are so general that it's hard to understand what's being talked about here. Nobody on this list would hold "in disrepute" the need for "critical thinking." On the other hand -- and I can't believe this is Taylor's meaning -- "critical thinking" does not lead automatically to uniformity

of opinion over contentious issues for which no certain resolution is in sight. Nor should it.

Jerry Clark

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