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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Failure Of The 'Science' Of Obergian Debunking

From: Ed Stewart <ufoindex@jps.net>
Date: Mon, 05 Oct 1998 16:33:09 -0700
Fwd Date: Mon, 05 Oct 1998 22:21:51 -0400
Subject: Re: Failure Of The 'Science' Of Obergian Debunking

>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>From: Jerome Clark <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
>Subject: Re: Failure Of The 'Science' Of Obergian Debunking
>Date: Sun, 04 Oct 98 22:52:06 PDT

>>Date: Sun, 04 Oct 1998 13:43:29 -0700
>>From: Ed Stewart <ufoindex@jps.net>
>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>>Subject: Re: Failure Of The 'Science' Of Obergian Debunking

More treats provided from Jerome Clark's ufological wisdom maintaining the high ufological standards which have become known throughout ufology:

>Ed Stewart is wrong, no surprise here. Even Jim Oberg, with whom >I corresponded on the subject at the time, did not dispute that >the judges were all UFO skeptics. I remember remarking at the >time that a pro-UFO paper had about as much chance of winning >this rigged contest as does a camel to pass through the eye of a >needle.

Just because you say so? Just because you say you remember? You have shown on this list a total disrespect for factuality even going to the extent of writing Robert Todd's contributions out of your history book and encyclopedia. That is as low as an individual can commit themselves. You certainly don't have to agree with somebody's contentions, but to erase any mention of their contributions in an alleged historical/subject encyclopedia shows a total disrespect on your part for anyone that shells out \$140.00 for your product. You have shown yourself to be intellectually dishonest omitting facts on one hand and creating facts on another and you do it again on your latest missive here which I will show.

>Stewart may have his virtues (not necessarily apparent in recent >postings), but a firm sense of UFO history is, alas, not one of >them.

The history you have fabricate yourself? You are right. I rely on source material as much as possible, and not in your contrived reality, never in what you say or write. You have shown yourself to be unreliable.

>>Very eloquently written, making many predictions as to the >>future of the science of ufology, but unfortunately none of >>which have come true in the two decades since Ron Westrum's >>paper. As a matter of fact, Ron Westrum Himself apparently is no

>>longer active in UFO matters in the last few years since his
>>co-authorship of the Roper Report.

>Ron Westrum remains interested in the UFO phenomenon and over
>the years has written a number of splendid papers on the
>sociology of science as it relates to controversies surrounding
>anomalous phenomena. These have appeared in refereed academic
>books and journals. It is probably safe to assume that Ed
>Stewart has read none of them, sad to say. It's probably safe to
>say he's heard of none of them.

Again we see a total lack of intellectual integrity here on
Jerome Clark's part. Prior to the Roper Report, Ron Westrum had
many papers in the UFO field and some in the refereed academic
literature. But Jerome Clark knows as well as I do that since
1992, there has been a dearth of UFO related papers from Ron
Westrum both in and out of the UFO field. Of course he can shown
me wrong by giving us an example of Ron Westrum's contributions
in the social sciences refereed journals on UFO topics from 1993
to 1998? The ones Jerome Clark claims I never read. Well, save
thyself from your intellectual dishonesty and provide a source
reference 1993-1998 for what you have dishonestly claimed I have
never read? You can't do it, can you?

I checked the following multidisciplinary indexes which are
available also to anyone willing to search:

General Science Index, 1988 -
General Science Abstracts, 1993 -
Index to Legal Periodicals, 1988 -
Humanities Index, 1984 - Feb 1994
Readers Guide Abstracts, 1990 -
Social Science Index, 1983-1993
Social Sciences Abstracts, 1994 -

Guess what? NO papers since 1992 by Ron Westrum. That makes
Jerome Clark intellectually dishonest once again on this list.
The point here is not what Ron Westrum has/has not done since
the Roper Report related to UFOs. The point is that I stated he
hasn't written about the UFO field since 1992 and Jerome Clark
had decided to manipulate a response as if Westrum has remained
active all this time. That is an example of Clark's intellectual
dishonesty, lack of integrity and apparent low disdain for the
readers and his apparent compelling need to rewrite UFO history
as he pleases trying to pass it off to the rest of us. Of
course you can call Ron Westrum directly. Maybe he has written
something that is not in any of those multidisciplinary indexes.
His office hours are tuesdays and thursdays, 1:30 to 3:30 pm and
fridays 2:00 to 4:00 pm. His office number is (734) 487-1073.
Ask him, for what he has published 1993-1998?

>>Ron Westrum lended his status as a social scientist and
>>co-authored a much publicised report and survey: 'Unusual
>>Personal Experiences: An Analysis of the Data from Three
>>National Surveys' conducted by the Roper Organization and funded
>>by the Bigelow Foundation and known by the short name of 'The
>>Roper Report' in 1992. Besides Ron Westrum, Ph.D., co-authors of
>>the report were Budd Hopkins and David Michael Jacobs, Ph.D.

>There is no such word as "lended." We may agree or disagree with
>the Roper panel's conclusion, but that is not the issue at hand.

No, the Roper Report was simply a case of bad science. The real
issue is whether or not Ron Westrum's paper "The Promise of
Ufology" has withstood the test of time or not since it was
offered in rebuttal to Oberg's paper.

>I cannot help noting that, rather than dispute the points
>Westrum makes in his reply to Oberg, Stewart tries to change the
>subject.

Sorry, the subject is still the same. What contributions has
ufology made to the real world?

>>1. Ron Westrum's paper written in 1980 "The Promise of Ufology"
>>has not lived up to what ufology has delivered since then. (And
>>that includes Ron Westrum himself).

>I am afraid I don't understand what point our friend is trying
>to make here. In the years since then, a lot of good things have
>happened to ufology, along with a lot of bad things. So?

So? You wish to defend ufology on the basis that it is not responsible for its own consequences, be my guest. That is exactly one of the positions Oberg's paper points out to as one of the reasons ufology can't seem to get up. The point is not what has/has not happened TO ufology. The point is what responsibility has ufology taken on itself for its own condition?

>The good things include the Sturrock panel (essentially validating
>the concerns of serious ufology), JUFOS (a refereed scholarly
>journal),

Mighty fine things as viewed by the ufological community. So, has there been any funding offered to the ufological community from traditional funding sources based on the Sturrock panel or is it too early to tell? I suspect it is too early to tell, Of course the Sturrock panel didn't validate anything that dealt with the ETH. As a matter of fact, it left the entire ET crowd out on the cold. Time will tell whether the UFO community will ultimately laud the Sturrock panel or view it as a wolf in sheep's clothing. Specially since time seems to stand still when it comes to ufological matters.

>Project 1947, serious, concerted international work on
>UFO history,

Major contributions here have been made by demon Robert Todd and his associate, Barry Greenwood, another of Jerome Clark's created demons. Anybody curious as to what I talking about, read Jerome Clark's own words in his "historical" encyclopedia on the CAUS and Barry Greenwood entry. Details at eleven! I am have very thankful that Barry Greenwood's friend Jan Aldrich of Project 1947 had/and has Barry Greenwood and Robert Todd as friends for much of the Project and thus became a beneficiary of real UFO history and not intellectually dishonest garbage passing off as history.

>psychological surveys of close-encounter claimants,
>the appearance of an unprecedented number of scholarly books and
>papers on our subject, the publication next year of a pro-UFO
>collection by a university press, the publication of Brad
>Sparks's seminal work on the RB-47 case, and more.

Yup, more books the merrier, especially pro-UFO books. What a fine thing!

>It appears
>that Oberg's claims have been falsified.

Must be so! Jerome Clark has proclaimed it so. Ufology has now been recognized as a legitimate science and succeeded to achieve equal stature with all the other legitimate fields of study and acceptance by the academia of the world. What a fine thing to happen! Ufologia has triumphed after all!

Oops! Wake-up call!

>>2. The objections raised by James Oberg in his paper are still
>>valid today. Even in the ufologists' condemnation of the Roper
>>Report, co-authored by Budd Hopkins, David Jacobs, Ph.D., and
>>Ron Westrum, Ph.D., they still employ old arguments that are
>>more appeals to the ufo gallery and readership than consist of
>>any real logic as pointed out in James Oberg paper.

>It's amusing to see Stewart, who just two or three postings ago
>was endorsing Waterboy Todd's listing as Mark Rodeghier as one
>of the great villains of ufology, citing as a responsible
>scientific authority.

Mark doesn't have the guts to clean his own house. That is what I said. He still employs you as editor of IUR after you have shown yourself to be intellectually dishonest and lacking in integrity by the way that you have attempted to re-write UFO history based, not on facts, but your own individual pettiness.

>Do I smell a whiff of hypocrisy here? Or
>more than just a whiff?

I don't know what you smell like, ask your associates.

>>Since this was written in 1980, what major involvement by
>>scientists is Westrum referring? Hall, Johnson and Rodeghier in
>>their debunking of The Roper Report pointed out just the
>>opposite, ufology has had trouble getting science to look at the
>>alleged evidence. Sounds like maybe wishful thinking by Ron
>>Westrum to allude to some "major involvement of scientist."

>Those who know more about UFO history than Stewart does will
>recognize what Westrum is talking about here, though I fear he
>was being unduly optimistic about the future. The 1970s, which
>saw unprecedented involvement by scientists, gave cause for
>future hope. For various and complicated reasons, not amenable
>to the simplistic demonology with which Stewart seems so
>strangely obsessed, things didn't work out. Whether anything
>will happen in the wake of the Sturrock panel's recommendations
>and conclusions remains, of course, to be seen. If Stewart were
>better read in writing on the sociology of science, he would
>understand that science's reluctance to take up UFO study is not
>necessarily a function of the failings of ufologists but has
>roots in the structure of science. Among other fine writers on
>science's difficulty in coming to grips with anomalous phenomena
>are Marcello Truzzi (Westrum's friend and colleague in the EMU
>sociology department), Henry H. Bauer, James McClenon, David J.
>Hufford, and others. Stewart would do well to step out of the
>provincial world of ufology and look at the problem from a
>larger perspective. All problems are not the result of demons,
>human or otherwise.

The question still remains unanswered. What "major involvement by
scientists" has ufology been blessed with? Just because you say so, and
especially because you say so, or Ron Westrum alludes to it, doesn't
make it so. You present yourself as if in full control of the problem,
fully understanding its ramifications, causes and effects, with a vast
understanding of UFO history which dwarfs the capacity of mere
individuals like myself and others. Even previously claiming that the
problem has already been solved with arguments presented otherwise
'falsefied'. I am afraid all you have shown again is a an overwhelming
ego, total arrogance, and a pompous contempt for the readers of your
missive.

>>Unfortunately, ufology cannot use Ron Westrum as a good example.
>>He has not lived up to the 'Promise of Ufology' as exemplified
>>by his co-authorship of The Roper Report.

>A dumb, cheap shot. Controversy and dispute are part of the
>process of science, as Ed would know if he were better read in
>scholarly literature. The simple fact that one's views have been
>criticized does not discredit what one has said in a particular
>paper, much less the larger body of that scholar's work, or mean
>that one is therefore wrong. Such criticism and debate are part
>of the process of truth-seeking. The most generous reading of
>Stewart's argument here is that he is extremely naive.

Actually the only reading of my argument that is honest is the
true real one that accurately reflects my words. Not some
fabrication on your part creating positions and motives never
stated by me, but existing only in your imagination and mental
constructs. You keep alluding to a 'body of work' from Ron
Westrum, but there has been NONE since the Roper Report. The
fact is that Ron Westrum attempted to argue that there was good
ufological science and bad ufological science only to produce
himself afterwards only bad ufological science. So, you have
examples to share with us of good ufological science before the
1980 "Promises of Ufology", share them. You keep pulling
references, never stated by me one way or the other, of Ron
Westrum's work prior to the Roper Report and allude that I am
disparaging that work. Not so. You profess to know the English
language but you continuously have a compelling need to
disregard what the person is arguing and creating your own
renditions and distortions which makes you intellectually
dishonest and lacking the integrity necessary to be regarded as
a historian. Besides, if ufology has produced good science that
will stand up to the scientific community and provide compelling
evidence that ufology is to be seriously considered, then stop
arguing and produce the evidence. What's the matter? Got nothing
to show the real world that measures up?

>>>This assertion, while dramatic, merely demonstrates Mr. Oberg's
>>>lack of acquaintance with his subject matter.

>Well said, Dr. Westrum.

>>But the advent of time is showing Oberg's prediction to be
>>closer than Westrum's promises to the real world reality of the
>>failure of ufology as a science.

>>>To demonstrate the falsity of his contention one has only to
>>>open the UFO Handbook (1979) written by Allan Hendry of the
>>>Center for UFO Studies. Here one finds careful critical
>>>examinations of data, hypotheses tested -- sometimes verified
>>>and sometimes proven wrong -- and theories scrutinized.

>>One thing is for certain, no one can use Allan Hendry to support
>>the ETH. His name is invoked only when it selectively suits an
>>argument that ufology is a 'science'. If ufologists had taken
>>Hendry's lead in their own approach to UFO reports, ufology
>>would be more respected today. But, Hendry has for the most part
>>been ignored by the present day UFO community as an admirer of
>>Allan Hendry, none other than Phil Klass has pointed out in his
>>newsletter.

>My impression is that Hendry has most often been cited when such
>citation "selectively suits an argument" that ufology is a
>pseudoscience -- i.e., in the debunking literature and polemic.
>I knew Allan Hendry well. We were good and close friends when we
>both lived in the Chicago area, and I can tell you bluntly that
>Hendry detested debunkers and thought of "none other than Phil
>Klass" as a joke. See, for example, my article "Phil Klass vs.
>the UFO Debunkers," February 1981 Fate. (It's also posted on the
>internet on the Science, Logic, and the UFO Debate website.)
>Allan went out of his way not to include Klass's books (or
>Menzel's) in the recommended reading section in The UFO
>Handbook. He did not take Klass seriously in the way he took the
>best ufologists seriously.

Now that we have had some more input of historical commentary
and memory by Jerome Clark, it doesn't change, even if accurate,
the original statement that Phil Klass respected Allen Hendry.
As a matter of fact a couple of years ago I found myself at a
table with Richard Heyden, Eddie Bullard, James Moseley and Phil
Klass, a motley crew if there ever was one. I think we were
somewhat later briefly joined by Bob Girard. No demons, just
human beings showing mutual respect for each other. We
conversed, laughed, told jokes and had a merry good time for at
least four or five hours until we broke the session up. I have
other such sitdowns with Phil Klass and other ufologists, some
that are on this list and Project 1947. I bring this up to
affirm a strong point. Klass and other skeptics are not the
problem with ufology, nor the demons that are continuously
presented on this list by UFO illuminaries looking for something
to blame for their own problems. The problem is within ufology
and the people that have keep it wallowing in its present
condition by refusing to clean itself up. Ufologists can shoot
as many messengers as they want, shrug responsibility for its
woes and blame whoever they want for its paralysis, and in the
end nothing will have changed.

>>Here we are now two decades after the above was written. The key
>>word above is "may". What has been revealed by ufology in terms
>>of new natural phenomena? What leadership in this area has
>>ufology taken?

>There is, as Ed should know, a whole school of ufology arguing
>that UFOs are new or little-understood natural phenomena. A
>number of books argue as much in interesting fashion. I don't
>agree with their conclusions, but I certainly feel they are a
>worthwhile contribution to the ongoing discussion. I can just
>see my friend Paul Devereux tearing his hair out at Stewart's
>words.

>>What lead has ufology taken since this paper was written?
>>Ufology has not supported independent researchers looking at
>>phenomenon not associated with the ETH. They have been
>>vehemently attacked, even on this list by none other than Jerome
>>Clark. It is hypocritical of Jerome Clark to present a paper to
>>this list pointing out what ufology could do, but that he has
>>been personally and vocally violent against.

>In fact, there are a whole lot of anti-ETH ufologists out there.
>They have criticized pro-ETH ufologists, and pro-ETH ufologists
>have criticized them back. So what? Nope, sorry to disappoint
>you, guy, but except for you and Todd, none of us has felt the

>need to call those with whom we disagree Nazi equivalents,
>propagandists, con men, liars, religious zealots, charlatans, or
>comparatively nasty and unwarranted names. We leave that sort of
>rhetorical violence to the likes of you and your pal Todd.

I have called you intellectually dishonest and I DO so again by your above statement. It is so intellectually lazy and dishonest of you, which you seem unable to stop, to lump me and associate me with expressions which I have never called you. The above is a blatant appeal to the gallery on your part and above all it must be very sad for that gallery to see that you, one of the ufological illuminaries, constantly must stoop so low to blatantly spew out his intellectual dishonesty over the internet. How many years have you been doing this to your target demons? You came on this list attacking John Keel of all people, without provocation on his part. As far I know, he is not even on the internet. I don't recall a thread you have participated in that hasn't resorted to exchanges in ad hominem attacks. On another list, PROJECT-1947, I have seized participation after you resorted to a disparaging attack on my mother on the thread and the administrators failed to do anything. On this list, I don't have to worry. Such attacks won't get past the administrator before they get posted. What is your problem? Is your position so weak that you have to resort to your levels of intellectual dishonesty on the hopes it will will convince someone of ufological reality? Whatever that is?

>>Ron Westrum in his eloquent paper goes on with a continuing
>>appeal of what ufology could be and promises to the future.
>>Well, we are now almost twenty years into that future. Has
>>ufology changed any since Oberg's paper? Has the promise of
>>ufology been kept since Westrum's paper?

>See some paragraphs above. As in the real world, there is good
>news, and there is bad news. UFO sightings continue, and ufology
>continues. Let's see what the future brings, and let's hope that
>those who stay with it keep their heads about them -- as the Ed
>Stewarts, who make themselves part of the problem and not,
>sadly, part of its solution, appear unable to do.

And the beat goes on...

>>Did ufology pay attention? Nope, it is still conjuring up demons
>>for its woes, demanding special dispensation for the rules of
>>scientific evidence, pointing ever greater conspiracies against
>>ufological reality, and failing to take responsibility for its
>>problems in continuous appeals to the gallery for sympathy and
>>support.

>Again, so much foaming at the mouth. In ufology, as in all areas
>of controversy and dispute, it is the best research, the best
>evidence, and the best arguments that are at issue, not the
>worst. I am afraid that where this last is concerned, Ed Stewart
>and Bob Todd, who have let their emotions (and, it seems, their
>hatreds and resentments) cloud their reason. Too bad. Ufology
>needs all the help it can get, and people like these are only
>making our problems worse.

Right On! It is all demon Robert Todd's and Ed Stewart's fault.
Jerome Clark has spoken. Ufology would just be able to stand up
and get on its feet if it wasn't for the likes of Todd and
Stewart.

There we have it: "The Promise of Ufology" by one of its active
present day ufological wisdom commentators eighteen years after
Ron Westrum tried to predict where it was headed.

Ed Stewart

Ed Stewart ufoindex@jps.net | So Man, who here seems principal alone,
There Is Something | Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown.
Going On! ,>'?'<, | Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal,
Salvador Freixedo (O O) | 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
-----oo00-(_)-00oo----- Alexander Pope, Essay on Man -----

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