

# Dr. Eric H. Cline

## From Noah's Ark to the Ark of the Covenant and Beyond: Junk Science, Amateur Enthusiasts, and Irresponsible Documentary Filmmakers

Dr. Cline argues that the amount of pseudo-scientific nonsense that has been published on so-called "mysteries" of the Bible is appalling. The vast majority of this work has not been produced by professional scholars but by amateur enthusiasts. These enthusiasts--most of whom are self-trained and self-employed, and some of whom publish only, or primarily, on the Internet--all work outside of academia. As such, they are not held to the same standards of rigor, peer review, and scrutiny as professional scholars employed by colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher learning. Indeed, the work of such enthusiasts frequently meets the criteria of "junk science," especially when it "advocates a cause, pays little

attention to the investigative process, ignores contrary evidence, and advertises a high moral purpose." Dr. Cline will present, and debunk, examples of such junk science--especially as it pertains to topics such as the possible locations of the Garden of Eden, Noah's Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Ten Lost Tribes--and issue a call to arms for professional archaeologists, ancient historians, and biblical scholars to take back their fields from the amateur enthusiasts, pseudo-scientists, and irresponsible documentary film makers who have had, for the most part, free reign to do what they wish, without any regard to scientific method or an unbiased investigation for the truth.

**2 - 4 pm**  
**Saturday, Nov 10, 2007**

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DR. ERIC H. CLINE is Associate Professor of Classics and of Anthropology (Ancient History and Archaeology) and Chair of the Department of Classical and Semitic Languages and Literatures at The George Washington University, where he has won both national and local teaching awards. A former Fulbright scholar and award-winning teacher and author with degrees from Dartmouth, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania, he is Associate Director (USA) of the ongoing excavations at Megiddo (biblical Armageddon) in Israel as well as Co-Director of the ongoing excavations at Tel Kabri, also located in Israel. An award-winning author, he is perhaps best known for his books *The Battles of Armageddon: Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley from the Bronze Age to the Nuclear Age* (2000) and *Jerusalem Besieged: From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel* (2004). He has just published a new book entitled *From Eden to Exile: Unraveling Mysteries of the Bible* (National Geographic Society, June 2007). Dr. Cline has appeared on BBC-TV, Discovery Channel, National Geographic Channel, the History Channel, and NPR.



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## What Exactly IS Critical Thinking, and Why Is This Definition So Convoluted?

by Eugene W. Ossa

I've thought a lot about critical thinking. There are many books and websites with discussions about it. So, what is it? How would one define it? In my search I've found many similar definitions, but they evolve, always trying to include some element left out of the previous ones. In 1987 the American Philosophical Association asked Dr. Peter Facione to lead an effort to devise a definition of critical thinking agreed upon by experts [whatever "experts" means in this context] for purposes of college teaching and assessment.

The following definition cropped up many times as I researched "critical thinking." I hereby present it for your own assessment. Does it fit the mark? Would you use it yourself if someone asked you what you mean by critical thinking? Could you come up with a better, simpler definition? Be critical, and be skeptical:

"We understand critical thinking (CT) to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based. CT is essential as a tool of inquiry. As such, CT is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life. While not synonymous with good thinking, CT is a pervasive and self-rectifying human phenomenon. The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fairminded in evaluation, honest in

facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. Thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines developing CT skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society."

Huh?

## Michael Shermer Coming in January 2008

Michael Shermer will be featuring his soon-to-be released book on evolutionary economics, *The Mind of the Market*, at our January 12, 2008, event. Look for more information in upcoming *Shadows*.

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