

At the Threshold is written in a clear accessible style, free from jargon and free from any obvious agenda to debunk UFOs or prove they exist. Moreover, because *At the Threshold* covers most major UFO-related issues, it makes a fine introduction both to the content of the field and to its sociology. Emmons has done a commendable job of placing ufology in a social context that takes its researchers and discoveries at face value.

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Minds in Many Pieces: Revealing the Spiritual Side of Multiple Personality Disorder by Ralph B. Allison, M.D., with Ted Schwarz, 2nd ed. Los Osos, CA: CIE Publishing, 1998. 208 pp. ISBN 0-9668949-0-1.

The author of this book is probably the most experienced and honored investigator of Multiple Personality Disorder in the world, and certainly in the United States. His foundational papers on the topic were published in the 1970s, when Dr. Allison started a tradition of giving workshops on the diagnosis and treatment of Dissociative Identity Disorders at meetings of the American Psychiatric Association. Discoveries and conclusions of the last 20 years are featured in the current edition of this work. Certain tentative opinions on some borderline or parapsychological issues followed from Dr. Allison's research.

Since the topic is, even today, not widely studied in clinical and therapeutic medicine, Allison's account of how he became interested, and of early vicissitudes and later conflicts, deserves careful attention by borderline investigators.

There is a fairly standard aetiology to be discovered in most highly developed cases of multiple personality disorder. Very early trauma and continued conflict within the family would surprise no student of cases. Allison is most impressed by and offers detailed discussion of cases that are not typical. Some of those even suggest spirit possession or successive life histories of the same "essential" person.

Dr. Allison, himself, does not endorse either concept. He notes, however, that therapeutic methods suggestive of exorcism have been used, and sometimes were found effective in his own experience. The recommended attitude is pragmatic. If a certain procedure helps the patient recover unity of personality, it may be used before any conclusive interpretation of the forces or mechanisms involved. Some of the methods of exorcism are like those of monotheistic religions while others are more animistic in character. At one point in his career, Allison was investigated by the medical staff of an institution with which he was associated, but any suspicion of unprofessional practice was judged to be unwarranted and totally without merit. The pragmatic viewpoint

prevailed, and successful therapy was accepted on its own terms by a majority of the senior staff.

To the layman, the number of split-off or dissociated “personalities” in a given case is certainly surprising. Allison finds that once a major division has occurred, new temporary self systems may emerge or be constructed whenever the individual faces new stressful situations. In some cases, what emerges defies all expectations and may be bizarre or even terribly dangerous. For example, a small frail woman may become capable of combat with a few powerful security people; or again, a devoted puritan may become unspeakably vulgar in language and behavior; or a sober person may behave like one deeply intoxicated. Changes in the opposite direction also occur.

Allison finds that some dissociated systems may be malevolent or persecutorial, dangerous even to the single organism, while others are benevolent and may play a constructive role. In certain cases, Allison thinks, it is correct to postulate an Inner Self Helper. Some factor in the dissociated personality will emerge to serve as the most effective therapist. This idea came from one of Allison’s patients, whose recorded discussions seemed like a theatrical situation involving several actors, one of which was the Inner Self Helper, or prime essence of the patient herself. This has become a pivotal concept in Dr. Allison’s theory of the psychotherapeutic process.

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Earth Under Fire: Humanity’s Survival of the Apocalypse by Paul LaViolette. Schenectady, NY: Starlane Publications, 1997. 360 pp. \$25.95, (c). ISBN 0-9642025-1-4, starecode.aol.com.

Breakthrough understandings of reality axiomatically are derived from new perspectives—fresh mental frameworks that like the lens of a pair of eyeglasses allow the wearer to see the external world with a whole new degree of clarity. Most often, these new metaphors come from intellectual structures derived from some discipline other than the one being studied.

Machine age imagery, for example, became a common product of the industrial age, providing the architecture for the development of social organizational systems, economic theories, and even extraordinary new areas such as molecular nanotechnology. The principles of quantum physics are now working their way into business theory, and the understandings of the science of complexity are being explored as training metaphors for the military.

Although great new understandings have been derived from this approach,