

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,

at the highest level, there is an intrinsic shortcoming to this mental mechanism: It is unidimensional and essentially linear. It provides only a single intellectual structure for making sense out of a puzzling new situation. It is not multidimensional...not a *systems* approach.

This is important, because unlike the structure and process of modern science of the last couple of centuries—one only ventured into the sacred space of other disciplines at the risk of certain professional assault—the future will evolve at the intersection of diverse disciplines. The trend is clear: The indicators abound, but it seems it will be some time before physicists, chemists, and biologists see themselves as colleagues observing the same reality from different perspectives, rather than warriors in the service of defending their own hierarchical scientific fiefdoms.

Earth Under Fire is a significant though perhaps flawed attempt to weave together the threads of a number of disciplines into a fabric that provides a picture of a possible near-term future for the earth—one that is laden with disaster. If he is right, Paul LaViolette has done us all a profound service. If he is wrong, well, this is still a beneficial work, for it certainly pushes out our horizons and further provides a very practical example of how difficult it is to know something about a lot of things and make them all work together seamlessly. This is particularly so with disciplines as diverse as astronomy, geology, paleontology, climatology, astrology, and messages from the tarot. This list may be enough for many potential readers to summarily discount the book, particularly the last two sources. But first consider the underlying hypothesis; it might get your attention.

The basic notion of this book is that there is evidence from various sources that suggests that every 26,000 years (plus or minus 3,000), a huge blast emanates from the center of our galaxy, sending our way a high intensity “super-wave” shower of cosmic rays followed by a giant cloud of cosmic dust. Sometimes this happens on a 13,000-year cycle. The cloud sets up an abrupt change in global weather that generally wipes most things out (*i.e.*, human and animal life). This might lead you to ask when the next cycle is due. Well, any day now, LaViolette suggests. For me at least, that was reason enough to work my way through the book. Think of it as insurance; you never know.

I was not disappointed. Not yet convinced, perhaps, but certainly provoked. In my business of professionally thinking about the future, this would be called an “early indicator” of a low probability, high impact “wild card” event. It might not turn into anything, but if it does, it would be big.

If the above hasn't piqued your attention, then probably nothing more that I could say about LaViolette's argument and its shortcomings would persuade you to dip into this volume. But if you are one who is now intrigued, then a couple of additional comments are in order.

There are as many perspectives through which to view the future as there are scientific disciplines. If you add in nonscientific sources such as astrology and elements of tarot cards, then immediately the rigor that one assumes would accompany a science-based argument quickly begins to erode. In this book, that

problem shows up in the first few pages. The zodiac, *LaViolette* contends, contains a couple of important explicit messages from our ancestors. Starting with Taurus, each of the signs in sequence stands for a specific component of subquantum creation. The key to how everything physical was created is apparently in the night sky. Ah, but there is a problem. A couple of the signs are out of order, we are told, and if you rearrange them “correctly,” then they tell the right story. A bit of a reach, it seemed to me.

That same kind of logic continues with the assertion that “these six pairs of celestial bodies map out a temperature gradient extending from Leo (the Sun) at the warmest end to Aquarius and Capricorn (Saturn) at the coolest end.” But there is another problem. “Although the Moon is cooler than Mercury, it is, by far, much brighter, so this minor exception to the rule may be overlooked,” writes the author.

Then the zodiacal message from the past also supposedly references the center of our galaxy as the source of regular extraordinary explosions because (among other things) Sagittarius is shooting his arrow straight toward the point that is the center of the Milky Way, our galactic home. Yes, but it really does not point directly at the center—kind of in the general direction of the hub of our spiral neighborhood. It would have been closer 18,200 years ago, but how does one even know that there is any symbolism in the direction that the archer is pointing his bow?

But it gets better—really. The geology and climate chapters are quite compelling. Careful assessments of beryllium-10 deposits in ice corings in Antarctica (presumed to be the product of cosmic ray showers) show that the earth was washed near the end of the last ice age and on several earlier occasions—times that correlate with other indicators of a superwave event.

LaViolette does an admirable job of linking various ancient myths with physical and geological indicators that suggest that the solar system has experienced major conflagrations from solar outbursts throughout its past. He relates these possible events with historical changes in the meltwater discharge from the Mississippi River by looking at cores in the Gulf of Mexico. There are other signs. The rates of disappearance of large and small mammals in North America over the eons line up. Destructive floods called glacier bursts or glacier floods also show up at the same times. The rather famous Siberian mammoths that died and froze so suddenly that they still had grass in their mouths and stomachs were not enclosed within ice, but within frozen silt, “or in other words, within glacial flood sediments.”

Because grass cannot grow in that part of the world now because of the cold climate, it is fair to posit that the climate changed suddenly. This theory has been offered as the basic evidentiary argument for magnetic pole shifts, when the earth’s crust becomes temporarily unclutched from its molten core, but it can also be supported by the notion of glacier floods.

It is only in recent years that a great deal about our geological, geographics, and climatological past has been learned from the Greenland and Antarctica

ice corings. Rapid change climate, for example, did not seem like a realistic possibility until a decade ago. It is now, therefore, provocative to think about other events signaled by minute deposits that remain after years.

I do not pretend to understand, let alone believe in, astrology. I certainly do not know anything about the tarot. But that does not keep me from believing that someday we might learn something that puts these perennial pursuits in a more logical light. In the meantime, setting aside those aspects of the book, if one objectively looks at all of the evidence that LaViolette has collected from the traditional sciences, it is possible to come away saying, "This might be possible." That puts the future in a whole new light.

This is a book that is both fantastic and reasonable, soaring and detailed, and theoretical and practical. It promotes one of the biggest ideas in quite some time and therefore merits critical study by others in many disciplines.

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