

CHAPTER FOUR

CATASTROPHE & SUBLIMATION

One may dare to suppose that the Love Affair stands for a tragedy of humanity if there is borne in mind a larger theory, already considerably developed, even if not yet widely employed. The larger theory, the modern scientific theory of ancient catastrophes - quantavolution - functions as a kind of general engineering scheme to guide the reconstruction of the song of Demodocus. It is both chronological - telling *what* happened *when* - and analytic - telling *how* it happened. As a consequence of work done in quantavolution, many ancient and recent discoveries have come together, attracted as if by a magnet.

THE GENERAL THEORY OF CATASTROPHE

I state here the several components of the general theory of ancient catastrophes and quantavolution, shaping it to present needs to a degree, and illustrating it to the minimal extent required for its comprehension. Ample documentation and qualifications are to be found in the

"Quantavolution Series"¹ and other works - of a controversial nature, to be sure.

1. *Grave catastrophes have befallen the planet Earth.* The evidence of geology, oceanography, meteorology, paleomagnetism, and archeology are continuously bringing forward new evidence, and rediscovering old evidence, that in times past the Earth suffered repeated devastation by quakes, floods, fires and winds whose dimensions are fantastically beyond any historical experience of the last 2700 years. The surface of the Earth has been twisted and turned, sunk and raised, scoured and ploughed on a continental scale. The orbit of the Earth, the rotation of the Earth, and the axial inclination of the Earth to the plane of the ecliptic have changed suddenly, with frightful consequences.

2. *The catastrophes have been initiated in great part by changes in the solar system.* Planets have changed their orbits and other motions, nearly collided, acquired or discarded satellites, become heated and cooled, accumulated and discharged electricity, and, on some of these occasions, involved the Earth in their titanic activities. One planet, Venus, may even have been newly created out of Jupiter. The number of meteors that have struck Earth is large but responsible for only a portion of the catastrophic damage, since atmospheric, electrical, tidal and seismic disturbances can occur with or without body impact.

3. *Some catastrophes have had large effects upon mankind.* They have been allocated to past periods during which hominids and humans lived, whether these are traced back thousands or millions of years. The last ice age has been moved up to a point where *homo sapiens* is readily recognizable, and has been given by many geologists a huge, abrupt beginning and/or conclusion. All agree that, on occasion, as far back as the fossil record may carry and up to the dawn of history, many species were quickly and concurrently wiped out or reduced to a few survivors.

4. *Some catastrophes have occurred at times within the capacity of humanity to transmit their memories to successive generations.* All peoples have myths of chaos and creation, and of the destruction of civilizations and their recreation, in a set of cycles. As one moves from earlier to later catastrophes the linkages between oral (and transcribed) myths and factual reportage, recognizably modern in form, increase. Additional

¹ The reader is referred to the volumes of my *Quantavolution Series* (Metron Publications : Princeton, N. J., 1981-4), especially *Chaos and Creation* and its bibliography.

corroboration comes from the developing science of myth-analysis, contributed to by classicists, anthropologists, philologists, psychologists, and archaeologists. In addition, archeology has disclosed periods of total and simultaneous devastation of existing civilizations in areas stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to China, and from Mexico to Peru.

5. Wherever symbolic and linguistic evidence is available, and usually also where only oral traditions are preserved, *the catastrophes suffered on Earth and by humanity were attributed to changes in the celestial system*, and particularly to Ouranos (the Sky), the planets Saturn, Jupiter, Apollo (now transmuted beyond ready identification), Mercury, Venus, and Mars. The latest catastrophes are associated with the erratic and destructive behavior of Mars in the years 776 to 687 B. C., ending that is, 2662 years ago. These precise years, which Velikovsky initially proposed, cover the scenarios of this book, and in my view are generally acceptable.

6. Putting aside the sudden destruction of many civilizations in the course of thousands of years and granting that the sheer survival of these species was all-important, retroactively considered, and furthermore leaving to my book *Homo Schizo I* the question whether a highly significant mutation took place among proto-humans in a cerebral or endocrinal form that contemporary paleophysiology can barely recognize, *the greatest effect upon humanity of the catastrophes was their contribution to the making of the human mind and human nature.*

The *exceedingly heavy experience of disaster* from all forms of elemental turbulence, with its associated disruption and dissolution of human communities, caused widespread amnesia. As much as they could and as quickly as possible, surviving humans suppressed the memories of those times.

But the fear and the anxiety produced now by one and then by another catastrophe could not be forgotten and surged repeatedly to the surface of consciousness. *The massive collective anxiety was displaced onto many different subjects, altered the ways in which these subjects were viewed and treated, until finally our modern human nature emerged, replete with a variety of sublimations, that is, the continuous and partly controlled discharge of the never-to-be forgotten experiences and fears of disaster.*²

² These matters are discussed at length in *Homo Schizo I* and *II*.

THE DISPLACEMENT OF AFFECTS

The sublimations of catastrophic anxiety diffused into three major areas: expressive communication; passive controls; and active controls.

In the area of expressive communication, the primitive language was expanded and grew more abstract and conceptual to describe the behavior being observed in the skies. The astral events were associated with prior experiences of the closest analogous types, especially sex and conflict, and humanized. The terrific visible sky-forces were understood then to be human-like but superhuman to the nth power. ("The Lord made the mountains skip like rams," recited the Hebrew psalmist.) All manner of recounting the events was called for; no matter which mode, it was bound to be loaded with anxious affect.

The different modes were sorted out, the most heavily charged from the less, the most denotative from the more connotative. Different formulas were worked out for handling the modes of expression; those that were the most direct or challenging to the superpowers had to be the most carefully licensed and regulated. Little by little, songs, ballads and fables were developed that could be granted more freedom of expression. So began the history of literature, both liturgical and profane.

Passive controls include the incorporation of catastrophic anxiety into prescribed conduct, whether personal or social. The governance of behavior by taboos, fixation of archetypes and stereotypes, and the performance of rituals alone and in crowds received so much impetus from the catastrophes and their aftermaths that they practically may be said to have sprung from them. If a word had to be chosen to represent the motivation for all of these passive controls, it might be an obsession, which may be defined as the inability to move one's conscious attention from the centerpiece of one's anxiety without enchainning the attention.

The greatest taboo of all is to forget the circumstances of disaster. One freezes like death, like the possum, like the soldier against a brilliant flare, like the humans who were turned into statues by the Greek gods, like the Judaic sect whose members immobilize at the first moment of the Sabbath, in the position of the moment, until the Sabbath passes. A great proliferation of ideas and customs can come from this attitude but they will all be deductively connected to the primeval chaos and creation. "Good" education comes to be making the young both as fearful and as

habituated as oneself. People think, "If I do something new, it, the thing, nature, god, will do something new" and therefore it isn't worthwhile; it is taboo in fact, to try to do so.³

The third great area affected by catastrophe governs human efforts at active control of other people and the environment. Here is included the sharp growth of the power motive (and corresponding ability) in individuals that start up the centralized kingdoms (and which prospers from the passive control behavior just noted). The urge to wage destructive warfare is enhanced, but also the proliferation of invention: all in imitation of the celestial forces who hammered, shouted, put on dazzling displays of light, showered down many types of materials and objects, and changed many species of animals and plants. "For the Spartans," wrote Lucian, "Lycurgus drew from the sky his ordering of their whole polity."⁴

The Love Affair is an example of the first area of sublimation, the expressive communication, and of one kind of myth, the holy dreamtime song. But, as has become already apparent, the words alone are an inadequate description of the event. It dwells upon what was the last or nearly the last of the great catastrophes. Every major element of the general theory of ancient catastrophe put forward above is represented in the song, its latent meaning, and its physical and social contexts. At the same time, every element of the general theory of catastrophe had happened before in earlier disasters, as in the case of the repeated incursions of Venus upon the Earth's orbit, which occurred between 1500 B. C. and the time of our story and which have been described in detail by Velikovsky, by the "Quantavolution Series," and in related works. And it all happened again and again before 1500 B. C., which is a vast and difficult history only now being told.

³ Cf., e. g., Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, pp. 6-7 et passim.

⁴ From "Astrology," p. 367, Vol. V of *Works* (Loeb ed., Harvard University Press, 1936).