

# Immanuel Velikovsky : Quack or genius?

Bill Howell, very early stage draft 14May2012

## Summary

Velikovsky is probably one of the most controversial scientists of the last 100 years or so. He was repeatedly attacked and denigrated by entire scientific communities (geology, astronomy, physics, archaeology, paleontology, etc) over decades, including ORGANISED attacks (orchestrated as a debate, for example) by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Part of the problem relates to the seemingly outlandish concepts that he proposed (eg, that Venus was ejected by Jupiter within historical times), and another problem for essentially all scientists is that a great deal of Velikovsky's inspiration and data came from ancient mythology. I have read a substantial number of Velikovsky's books, plus books and articles attacking Velikovsky, plus analysis of the attacks against Velikovsky.

My own impression is that Velikovsky was brilliant in a manner that only a few people in a generation attain (I use the word "people" rather than "scientists", who are a tiny population – and very, very few of the world's brilliant people are in science). While he may often have been wrong, he was also very right over time on any contrarian, creative, and brave points that he made. He easily and regularly made fools of the world's greatest scientific experts in their own area of expertise. Perhaps partly because of that the attacks against him by individual scientists were HUGELY [dishonest and/or delinquent and/or dysfunctional and/or hypocritical and/or backstabbing and/or cowardly]. Collectively, the attacks exhibited ALL of those characteristics ("and" rather than "and/or") to extremes.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Status as of 14May2012 :

NOTE: This is simply a sketchy placeholder for now, with some ideas and references. It's creation was driven by the need to separate it from a document on the "Ark of the Covenant", which it complicates, and renders "dark". I felt it was better to pull this out as the nucleus of a new document on a "case study" of perhaps one of the greatest "backstabbing" campaigns by scientists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As such, it is extremely well documented and researched by others, and it provides an excellent case to support the general themes as currently outlined in the very-much unfinished document (or series of documents!) "Lies, Damned Lies, and Scientists". The target is the entire human species, from the "dark side" (an equivalent case can be made from the "Angelic side" or whatever other perspective one might care to take).

This isn't even a main interest of mine, although it is a great illustration of a BIG theme outside of the area of neural networks : how scientists (and people in general) think and behave. Why is it that things go so terribly wrong, seemingly unnecessarily?

endpage

\*\*\*\*\*

**Waiver/ Disclaimer**

The contents of this document do NOT reflect the policies, priorities, directions, or opinions of any of the author's past current, or future employers, work colleagues family, friends, or acquaintances, nor even of the author himself. The contents (including but not restricted to concepts, results, recommendations) have NOT been approved nor sanctioned at any level by any person or organization.

The reader is warned that there is no warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy of the information herein, nor can the [analysis, conclusions, and recommendations] be assumed to be correct. The application of any concepts or results herein could quite possibly result in losses and/or damages to the readers, their associates, and organizations. The author accepts no responsibility for damages or loss arising from the application of any of the concepts herein, neither for the reader nor third parties.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Copyright © 2012 Bill Howell of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**

Exceptions:

- All papers cited are the property of the publisher or author as specified in the books and papers.
- All information from conversations with other individuals are potentially the property of that individual, or of third parties.

**Permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify ONLY the non-third-party content of this document under either:**



The GNU Free Documentation License (<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/>); with no Invariant Sections, Front-Cover Texts, or Back-Cover Texts.



**[Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.](#)**

It is expected that users of the non-Springer Verlag content will:

- Acknowledge William Neil Howell and/or the specific author of content or images on this page as indicated, as the source of the image.
- Provide a link or reference back to this specific page.
- Allow any modifications made to the content to also be reused under the terms of one or both of the licenses noted above.

\*\*\*\*\*

endpage

## Table of Contents

Summary.....1  
 Introduction .....3  
 References.....4

## Introduction

Without going into huge detail, which is well covered by others, the criticisms by Stephen Jay Gould (no surprise there) , Carl Sagan, and Isaac Asimov (that hurt – as with many others, I still enjoy his science fiction) fit my severe critique above very well. With the possible exception of Isaac Asimov, their careers seem to have benefited from ideas for which they stabbed Velikovsky in the back, and for which Velikovsky had very clear and long-term prior results and claims :

- Gould – punctuated evolution,
- Sagan - ?I forget which now – perhaps radio signals from Jupiter, Venus atmosphere and temperature/pressure, modern theories and pictures of aligned astronomical bodies Obviously I should document this better.
- Asimov - unclear timing obscures whether or not his “Nightfall” short story was inspired and taken from Velkovsky, as it definitely resembles Velikovsky's work and that of followers much after Velikovsky and Asimov. Asimov published in ~1940 (I forget the origina scifi magazine), whereas Velikovsky's “Worlds in Collision” came out in 1950. However, Velikovsky had been working on his ideas since ~1920s if I am not mistaken. I have no notes pointing communications between the two over that 20 year period.

I could be wrong about some of the details above, but in any case the attacks were stunningly poorly based!

**Velikovsky repeatedly stated himself that not all of his ideas would prove correct over time, and indeed those who follow in his footsteps in areas largely created and/or inspired by him do not agree with a lot of what he said.**

Much more to come, as a case study...

## References

Note that I have purchased ALL of the following books out of my own after-tax wallet. The list below is far from complete as of 14May2012! Nor does it include articles, videos – just books.

1. Immanuel Velikovsky 1950 "World in Collision" Paradigma Ltd edition 2009, original Doubleday & Co., New York, 426pp ISBN 978-1-906833-11-4
2. Immanuel Velikovsky 1955 "Earth in upheaval" Paradigma Ltd edition 2009 unchanged, original Doubleday & Co, New York, 266pp ISBN 978-1-906833-12-1
3. Immanuel Velikovsky 1952 "Ages in Chaos I: From the exodus to King Akhnaton" Paradigma Ltd edition 2009, original Doubleday & Co., New York, 369pp ISBN 978-1-906833-13-8
4. Immanuel Velikovsky 1978 "Ages in Chaos II: Ramses II and his time" Paradigma Ltd edition 2010, original Doubleday & Co., New York, 299pp ISBN 978-1-906833-14-5
5. Immanuel Velikovsky 1977 "Ages in Chaos III: Peoples of the Sea" Paradigma Ltd edition 2011, original Doubleday & Co., New York, 303pp ISBN 978-1-906833-15-2
6. Immanuel Velikovsky 1982 "Mankind in Amnesia" Paradigma Ltd edition 2010, original Doubleday & Co., New York, 186pp ISBN 978-1-906833-??-?
7. Donald Goldsmith, editor 1977 "Scientists confront Velikovsky: Evidence against Velikovsky's theory of worlds in collision" WW Norton & Co, New York, 183pp ISBN 978-0-393-00928-6
8. Dale Ann Perleman, editor 1996 "Stephen J. Gould and Immanuel Velikovsky: Essays in the continuing Velikovsky affair" Ivy Press Books New York 795pp
9. Charles Ginenthal 1990 "Carl Sagan and Immanuel Velikovsky" Ivy Press Books, New York 359pp
10. Ruth Velikovsky 1995 "ABA: The glory and the torment, The life of Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky" Paradigma Ltd, revised edition 2010, 303pp ISBN 978-1-906833-20-6
11. Ruth Velikovsky 2003 "Immanuel Velikovsky: The truth behind the torment" Paradigma Ltd edition 2010, original edition Xlbris Corp, 189pp ISBN 978-1-906833-21-3

enddoc