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Religions, Landscapes and Other Uncertain Boundaries

The Spirit of Fear

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Abstract

Medical science, psychology and zoology see fear as a defence mechanism in response to a threat of imminent danger. To the practitioners of Spirit Release Therapy (SRT) fear is seen as an emotion that emits an energy frequency that attracts negative spiritual entities who feed on fear as their source of power and control. This very idea breaks the boundaries of scientific thinking and prompts the secular mind to label the idea as preposterous and its proponent as either a religious lunatic or worse – mentally ill. However, these boundaries in secular thinking need to be dismantled with the aid of hard evidence coupled with a determined effort to synthesis at least three epistemological foundations, namely physics, psychology and religion. This presentation seeks to introduce the concept of fear from the religious perspective as a form of energy that feeds ill health and provides the power that can destroy human love and humans as creative beings.

The Spirit of Fear

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (I John 4:18).

Fear as an Emotional Energy

This quotation from the New Testament suggests that fear is the opposite to Divine Love. The quotation from I John states categorically that ‘there is no fear in love’. When we ponder this carefully and compare our experience of love in personal relationships we can see that what we often perceive as love is in reality the personal attachment, or emotional possession of another human being. We know from experience that the love we feel for a newborn baby is different from the love we have for the mother who birthed it or the father that sired it. The love a child has for its parents is different from the love that an adolescent has for the object of sexual desire. We therefore do not need to analyse the differences in a variety of forms of love in our human relationships. We are also aware of the difference between the emotional characteristics of the different kinds of love in human relationships in comparison with the power of Divine Love as a religious concept according to the teachings of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 13:1-13). The word love, as we use it in the English language presents us with serious interpretative problems because this single word has so many different meanings.

Experience teaches us that to love unconditionally is virtually impossible. There are always conditions when we love according to attachment, and the most common condition is that the love we have for another is reciprocated. Our wish, when we love another is that they will love us in return. This is conditional love formed from attachment or possession of another. When we love another, whether it be a child, a lover, husband, father, wife, there will be fear attached to the relationship in the form of a fear of loss, abandonment or bereavement. When we lose a loved one, for whatever reason, there is always grief, and it is the fear of grief and the fear of loss that often compels us to hang on to those we are attached to, even if that relationship is not beneficial to either party or the cost of sustained medical treatment is

inhibitory. If the love is of the unconditional kind then there is no fear of loss. Unconditional love is freely given without fear of abandonment or betrayal. If it is in the best interests of the person who is loved to go their own way and follow their own path, or even to die then, according to Christian teaching, it is the duty of the one who loves them to set them free.

In human relationships love can be altruistic, compassionate, romantic, protective, caring, passionate, sexual. Ask anyone, 'what is the opposite to love?' and the answer will invariably be, 'hate'. When love turns to hate is when passionate love is rejected or betrayed, and the richness of human experience would be duller without the poetry of Petrarch and Byron, the tragedy and drama of Shakespeare and Homer and all the other forms of artistic expression of these powerful emotions.

The above quotation from the First Epistle of John is not about human possessive love, emotional attachment or passion, but refers to Love being the 'Spirit of God' that acknowledges Jesus being born into the world as the physical manifestation of God (I John 4:2). Verse 3 says that every spirit that denies that Jesus Christ is the physical manifestation of God is the 'spirit of anti-Christ' (I John 4:3). Verse 6 says that to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the human manifestation of God is to recognise the 'Spirit of Truth', and to recognise in those who deny Christ the 'spirit of error' (I John 4:6). Verse 8 declares that 'God is Love' (I John 4:8). This chapter of the First Epistle of John teaches that the fundamental principle that God sent his 'Son into the world that we might live through him' (I John 4:9) is an act of Love. John is teaching that God sent his Son to teach us to love one another as we are loved by God, and if we believe that God is Love then we are to love one another. It could be argued that this one chapter from John could be seen as the core of Christian teaching, i.e. love one another as God loves us. Verse 21 of this chapter is written as a commandment, 'And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also'. (I John 4:21). John teaches that knowing that one is loved by God, 'herein our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement' (I John 4:19) we have no fear of being judged. John teaches that fear has torment, but to love God without fear of judgement is to be perfect in love.

Divine Love is unconditional, meaning it is given freely without expectation of a reward or reciprocation. It is therefore very, very different from what we normally associate with the word 'love', and it is this fundamental difference that defines its opposite. Christian teaching

tells us that to have faith in Divine Love is to be without fear, and to have fear is to be not perfect in Divine Love, or perfect in one's faith in God or the Divine nature of unconditional love. Testimony to this principle is given in the documented transcription of a therapy session where the patient regressed to what has become known as 'the life between lives' (Newton, 2004). In this transcription, the therapist, Dr. Irene Hickman is conversing with the patient in a hypnotic trance.

Dr. H. You wanted to come back?

B.E. I *had* to. No, I didn't want to. I had to because I couldn't go where I wanted to go until I was through.

Dr. H. Where did you want to go?

B.E. (A note of annoyance in her voice) With God.

Dr. H. But you couldn't go there until you were through?

B.E. No.

Dr. H. You knew this?

B.E. (Scornfully) Of course! Everyone knew it. That's why everyone is so anxious to get back and get it over with.

Dr. H. Was there still something you still had to do or to learn?

B.E. Oh, a lot of things.

Dr. H. What were some of them?

B.E. To become spiritually perfect, *as I was originally created*.

Dr. H's comment: This concept of having been created spiritually perfect is in complete harmony with the best of theological teachings.

Dr. H. Did you have any understanding of why you were not spiritually perfect?

B.E. Yes.

Dr. H. Can you tell me what that understanding is?

B.E. Regardless of any of the circumstances, I should have had faith and I didn't. I should have had faith above all, and no fear. The reversal of fear is faith. (Hickman, 1983, pp. 34-35)

Hickman's work is a precursor, not only to her progression into Spirit Release Therapy¹, but also as an introduction to the later works of Newton (2004), Zukav (1990) and others (Lucas, 2000) who had similar experiences with patients regressing to previous lives and the life between lives.

In healing ministry Divine Love is the power that heals and fear is that which is healed, or that which is in direct conflict with health.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (II Timothy 1:6-7).

This quotation from the *Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy* refers to the laying on of hands to 'stir up the gift of God' (II Timothy 1: 6). Without elaboration this quotation declares that the spirit of fear is the opposite of [Divine] power, love and a 'sound mind' (II Timothy 1:7). The laying on of hands is a practice of spiritual healers, deliverance ministers and exorcists when helping those afflicted with demonic possession. In this context this quotation from II Timothy is taken literally to mean exactly what it says, that the spirit of fear is the opposite of divine Love and is to be removed by the laying on of hands. There is documentary evidence that this works in deliverance ministry (Perry, 1987), (Prince, 1998), (Cuneo, 2001) and the laying on of hands is included in the Roman Catholic Church's rite of exorcism, the *Rituale Romanum*. However, we in the modern world don't believe in demonic possession or any influence from the spirit world do we?

Let us hypothesize that emotions operate on a frequency, in a similar way that different radio or television programmes are transmitted on a given frequency and can be received if our radio or television receiver is tuned in to the correct frequency (Lorimer, 2001).

¹ Hickman originally described her spirit release work as 'remote deposal' (Hickman, 1994).

Both Emanuel Swedenborg (1758) and Allan Kardec (1857) gave their own empirical evidence that spirits are attracted to the plane which resonates *energetically* with their own spiritual development, and that there are many such planes in a multi-dimensional universe. Similarly, in life we attract spirits to us according to our *vibration*, since the connection is based on sympathetic resonance - like attracts like. Birds of a feather flock together as do alcoholics and drug addicts. All great spiritual masters have taken the path of unconditional love and the spiritual nourishment they receive reflects their virtue. According to psychiatrist Andrew Powell (2006) mediums dedicated to working with 'the Light', receive help from Spirit that is uplifting and inspiring. Prayer, likewise, brings an infusion of peace and love. However, where a person's mental state is fragmented or in disarray, then the door is open wide to influences of a disturbing or even dangerous nature.

Ellenberger's exploration into the ancestry of dynamic psychiatry (1970) reveals that one of the world's most ancient traditions, Shamanism, is still practised in what we would describe as primitive cultures. Ellenberger cites anthropologist Frederico Sal y Rosas (1957) who from 1935 to 1957 discovered 176 cases of '*susto*' (the Spanish word for 'fright') in the Quechua Indians of Peru. Sal y Rosas emphasised that *susto* is not merely a superstition but a medical condition that can be understood scientifically. According to Sal y Rosas the Quechua Indians believed that the soul or part of it can leave the body or be forced out of it by fright. The *susto* disease can occur in one of two ways; either the soul is frightened by something in the environment, like a loud clap of thunder, or it can be forced out by a malevolent spirit. The cure for *susto* is soul retrieval by the Shaman.

Ellenberger provides a simple table to illustrate the main features of primitive 'disease theory' based on the categories defined by Forest E. Clements (1932).

Clements table of primitive disease theory

Disease Theory	Therapy
Object intrusion	Extraction of disease object
Soul loss	Find, recover and restore the lost soul part
Spirit intrusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exorcism b. Mechanical extraction of intruding spirit c. Transference of intruding spirit to another host
Breach of taboo	Confession, propitiation
Sorcery	Counter-magic

Where Sal y Rosas was an anthropologist, Alberto Villoldo is a contemporary clinical psychologist who has learned from modern shamanic healers the art of shamanic journeying, and Fear as a source of suffering is the first emotion mentioned in Villoldo’s work. Even before the volume gets under way fear is brought to the reader’s attention in the preface:

Among Hispanic and Native American communities throughout the U.S., when children suffer from *susto* (fright), they are taken to a special place to retrieve part of their soul that was lost or taken from them (Villoldo, 2005, p. xi).

The concept of losing soul parts through fear is analogous with the findings of research into Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) (Haddock, 2001) (Hunter, 2004). Where modern clinical practice does not recognise the concept of soul loss, dissociation is the term used to identify the phenomenon of ‘*depersonalisation*’ (Holmes, 2005), or personality fragmentation.

Research into DID by psychologists began with William James (Taves, 2004) Frederick Myers (1889) and Pierre Janet (1976) a hundred years ago when it was hypothesised that consciousness can fragment or be vulnerable to permeability and influence of spirit entities. Janet’s view was that dissociation is pathological and the consequence of trauma, which fits

with the shamanic explanation of Sal y Rosas and Villolo, but James and Meyers hypothesised that the healthy-minded can dissociate and expand their consciousness to perform acts of clairvoyance and other psychic phenomena. Meyers hypothesised that the mind is fissiparous and permeable and therefore vulnerable to fragmentation or spirit influence. The work of these pioneers into the nature of consciousness has been largely ignored for the past hundred years and recent work into dissociative disorders has seen the concept as being completely devoid of any spiritual significance by secularist psychology (Putnam, 1989). However, questions remain unanswered by orthodox psychology and there is a growing awareness of spiritual significance creeping into more recent clinical practice (Phillips & Frederick, 1995; Verrier, 2003; Cook, Powell & Sims, 2009). When the characteristics of soul loss according to shamanic practice are compared with the characteristics of DID according to modern clinical research it isn't difficult to see the similarity. There are obvious differences in the use of culture-bound language and religious beliefs regarding the soul, however, with the emergence of neo-shamanism and Spirit Release Therapy (SRT), coupled with a revised conceptual framework to accommodate the anomalous characteristics of DID it is possible to differentiate between soul-loss and dissociation, and between and multiple personality and spirit attachment.

Spirit entities can be attracted to a host in a variety of ways, and one of them is by the energy frequency of intense and powerful emotions as we have seen in cases of *susto*. Practitioners of spirit release therapy (Baldwin, 1995; Hickman, 1994; Fiore, 1987; Wickland, 1924; Naegeli-Osjord, 1988) identify emotions as having an energy vibration that is transmitted from the individual like an unseen beacon.

The unseen energy vibration can be clearly understood by the principle that animals can sense fear in others which triggers their own fear response mechanism and causes them to either attack or flee. When we walk into a room occupied by another person or group of people we can often sense an atmosphere even when no word is spoken. We can sense whether a person is fearful, angry or happy just by the atmosphere in the room. This energy transmission cannot be read or measured by scientific instruments but we all know it is there. The best possible instrument for detecting subtle shifts in spiritual energy is the essential spirit of the Self.²

² Identification of the 'spirit Self' is the subject of theories discussed at length by Meyers (1903) and others.

Different emotions emit a different energy frequency or vibration, and according to what have become known as the *Universal Laws of Attraction* (Hicks & Hicks, 2006)³ an energy transmission will attract others with a similar vibration. According to this theory like attracts like and this can be seen in social relationships where people of a similar persuasion will group together.

Practitioners of SRT encounter energy forms that manifest themselves as the spirits of deceased people whose spirit has remained earthbound after their physical death and other non-human forms that cause harm in a variety of ways (Sanderson, 2008), (Powell, 2006). Investigations into the nature of these spirit attachments and the reason why they become attached reveals a similarity in the emotional energy between the attached and the host. The earthbound spirits of deceased alcoholics attach themselves to living alcoholics for example.

Experience in spirit release remedies suggests that where fear is the emotional attractant those that become attached are those that need the energy vibration of fear to sustain their existence, and to survive in their spirit realm. It could be hypothesised that survival of the attached entity is dependent on keeping the host transfixed in fear by influencing and guiding the host into fearful situations or planting ideas that provide the 'imagined' fear.

Spirit Release procedures for dealing with these dangerous unseen spirit entities is very different from traditional religious exorcism where the demon is cast out or ordered to leave. One SRT practice is to ask the offending spirit why it is interfering with the host. A non-human entity may have been ordered to occupy or interfere with a host by a more powerful *master*. When the offending entity is discovered and then reminded that the master will punish them for being discovered this knowledge puts fear into the invading entity and the spirit release practitioner then offers them the opportunity to escape from the threat of being punished by the master. It is usually learned that they have been taught to fear the Light. When it is demonstrated to them that at the very core of their being there is a spark of Divine Light they realise how they have been deceived and are then willing to experience the transformation from dark to light without fear. This is how demons are exorcised with compassion and transformed into angels.

³ Universal laws of attraction and other non-material cosmic laws are examined at length elsewhere in this thesis.

Conclusion

Explanations for these experiences can be couched in religious, psychiatric or anthropological language. In our modern secular society religious beliefs have become synonymous with superstition, and no longer do people believe in gods and devils. Whether gods and devils are the creations of a disturbed human mind or not they are significant realities in the subjective experience of a great number of people, and there is a growing mountain of evidence to support this from a very wide variety of reliable sources listed in the bibliography below.

We may debate the relevance of religious beliefs and their influence on our culture-bound understanding and meaning in personal experience. But what modern psychiatry and psychology, as scientific disciplines are learning through the application of Spirit Release Therapy is that there is meaning and significance in the application of religious thought to psychological experience. Attitudes in psychiatry are slowly changing (Cook et al., 2009), but there remains real danger in ignorance of these subjective experiences. Mainstream psychiatry still has trouble with the concept of religious, spiritual or mystical experience and it is easier to diagnose mental illness when the reality could be soul loss or spirit attachment. How many people are consigned to a lifetime of medication or hospitalisation when release from their predicament could be facilitated by a shaman or a practitioner of Christian deliverance or the emerging synthesis of spiritual and psychological healing under the cloak of Spirit Release Therapy?

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<http://www.transpersonalpsychologist.net/Research.html>

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