

# **Are They Evil, Mad or Possessed?**

## **A Method for Investigation**

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### **Abstract**

Are the crimes of serial murder, serial rape and paedophilia the acts of evil people, the psychologically disturbed or are they perpetrated by people who have no conscious control of their actions? Prior to the scientific age of enlightenment, it was believed that people who committed acts of evil were possessed by the devil and were exorcised under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. In today's secular society these ideas and practises have been superseded by scientific logic and the gulf between science and religion has widened. Ideas of possession and exorcism remain in the realm of superstition, and understanding why perpetrators of heinous crimes behave the way they do has become the prerogative of the psychiatric community. But still the mystery remains. In recent years a new synthesis between spirituality and scientific enquiry has been emerging. New ideas in the nature of consciousness are beginning to throw some light on some of the mysteries that have previously eluded scientific enquiry. This paper highlights how previous investigations have neglected important data due to an epistemology that is fundamentally physical and rationalistic, and advocates an alternative empirical epistemology for investigating the causes of human evil by using known psychological principles but with a radically different methodology grounded in an alternative conceptual framework.

## Introduction

In his forward to Tony Neate's book on spiritual communication, *Channelling for Everyone* (1997), Dr. Andrew Powell of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, writes about the difficulties of contemporary science when faced with the phenomena of spiritual energies. He describes the problem with an analogy of trying to hold water in a clenched fist. He writes about communication at these subtle levels [the spiritual] as being subjective, but he does offer a solution for the scientific community in its attempts to recognise the reality of these phenomena, and it is a surprisingly simple one. He writes, 'Validation takes on a new meaning, because it cannot be measured with tools, only by its effects' (Powell, 1997, p. ix).

Powell is the founder of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the *Royal College of Psychiatrists* which was formed in 1999 and now has over one thousand two hundred members.<sup>1</sup> In his paper to the *College of Psychic Studies* in London, Powell (2002) gives a broad outline on the development and application of spiritual principles in the practice of psychiatry. Included in his paper Powell identifies the need for formal training and the development of spiritual skills for all psychiatrists. He also recognises the principles of *Spirit Attachment* and *Spirit Release* (2005), the modern clinical terms of what were once known in religious language as *Possession* and *Exorcism* (Naegeli-Osjord 1988; Amorth 1992).

In support of the initiatives now being taken by individual members of the *Royal College*, and to argue the case for scientific enquiry into the validity of Spirit Attachment and Release, this paper takes a necessarily simplistic view of a very complex problem by highlighting mistakes made that originate from an inappropriate conceptual framework and epistemology, and then offers an invitation to participate in truly objective scientific enquiry with an alternative epistemological conceptual framework that could answer not just one but two persistent questions. Firstly, can scientific enquiry identify any reality in the spiritual realm? And secondly, can a cause and a cure be found for humanity's most violent criminals?

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing (May 2008). <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/specialinterestgroups/spirituality.aspx>

## Crimes, Mental Disorders, or Demonic Possession?

### The Case for a Revised Epistemology

The example of an inappropriate conceptual framework used here to illustrate how mistakes can be made in analytic enquiry is in the work of Dr Helen Morrison (2004), a forensic psychiatrist working in the field of understanding serial killers. To argue her case in support of her hypothesis that serial killers have a defect in the physical brain Morrison writes:

As a forensic psychiatrist with a law degree, my job is grounded in careful science and in reasoned theory. After speaking at length to more than eighty of them, I have found that serial murderers do not relate to others on any level that you would expect one person to relate to another. They can play roles beautifully; create complex, earnest, performances to which no Hollywood Oscar winner could hold a candle. They can imagine anything. They can appear to be complete and whole human beings, and in some cases are seen to be pillars of society. But they are missing a very essential core of human relatedness. For them, killing is nothing, nothing at all. Serial murderers **have no emotional connection** to their victims. That's probably the most chilling part of it. Not only do they not care, but they also **have no ability to care** (ibid, p.3).

Over a period of more than thirty years, and after analysis of extensive interviews with more than eighty serial murderers, Morrison concludes that the reason these people commit these crimes is to be found in the organic brain. Morrison also concludes that answers are contained in our genetic material.

Morrison is clearly a positivist, rational scientist, and could be described as the archetype of the biomedical psychiatric practitioner. In other words her epistemology is grounded in the physical sciences, and her conceptual framework is that all behaviour is epiphenomenal, or the product of neurological activity. In her introduction she states that, 'each fact or datum becomes a part of a monumental puzzle' (ibid, p.4). However, if we study Morrison's work from a different epistemology it becomes clear that, although she sees herself as an objective scientist in search of facts, she is very selective in the data she chooses to interpret and include in the final picture that makes up the puzzle.

Below are selected quotes that Morrison appears to have chosen to ignore, probably because they don't fit her own conceptual framework and are therefore missing from the complete picture as she sees it.

In generalising all serial killers interviewed, Morrison describes what she finds as 'a dark, barren core' (ibid, p.3). The term 'dark, barren core' is not a term that one would expect to find in the language of objective science unless the context was one that relates to inanimate matter. In the context of human experience it is however a term that one would associate with the spiritual or the emotional. This use of language by Morrison therefore gives us our first clue in our investigation of her interpretation. Morrison's own language in the above quotation is essentially spiritual and not physical.

Of her description of the serial killer Richard Macek, Morrison writes 'Macek wanted to be more than he was' (ibid, p.17). In this quotation there is a contradiction with her previous observations that serial killers have a dark barren core and that they are unable to connect emotionally with their victims. Richard Macek knew that he should have been more than he was. It was his 'humanness' that told him that there was something missing, and it could be hypothesised that the dark, barren core that was the serial killer in Macek was not the human being that he should have been. This observation suggests that there was a duality in Richard Macek, one personality that was human and one that wasn't. The implication that something was missing may also find sympathy with the Shamanic principle of 'lost soul parts' (Lewis, 2003).

Richard Macek was one of Morrison's earliest serial murderers interviewed, and she, with the aid of a hypnotist, attempted to use hypnosis to access Macek's unconscious mind. Without first establishing adequate safety measures, Morrison's attempt resulted in Macek suffering severe emotional and physical trauma and the session had to be terminated. This one clumsy attempt at using hypnosis set the seal on Morrison never using it again. In her own review of this attempt at the use of hypnosis in uncovering lost memories in the experience of a serial killer, she writes:

... there was something going on that was completely out of the realm of what I had learned or had ever experienced. We were trekking into the unknown, and **it was not safe to be there**. I did take consolation in something Sigmund Freud wrote in 1905:

No one who, like me, conjures up the most evil of those half-tamed demons that inhabit the human breast, and seeks to wrestle with them, can expect to come through the struggle unscathed (Morrison, 2004, p. 28).

Three important points must be raised here on the safe use of hypnosis. Firstly, when confronted with something or someone who is dangerous we have a natural reaction to retreat and protect ourselves. For the practitioner whose job it is to investigate the nature of violent criminals it is essential that they know how to protect themselves without the defence of strategic withdrawal. Protection doesn't just mean protection from physical assault, but more importantly protection from the possibility of very real and potentially traumatic emotional harm. Practitioners who are acquainted with the very real dangers of communicating on these levels of human experience are very careful with their measures to protect themselves from spiritual and emotional harm (Fortune, 2001; Ashworth, 2001; Baldwin, 1995; Hickman, 1994).

Morrison was indeed trekking into realms totally unknown to her, and it would appear that the hypnotist who aided her was just as naive and uninformed as she was.

The second point about protection is with regard to the criminal being investigated. It must always be assumed that the recovery of memories that have been hidden from the conscious awareness of a perpetrator will always be traumatic. The sudden realisation that one has perpetrated an evil act can, and often does result in the impulse to self-destruct in order to escape the unbearable guilt. This would explain why perpetrators of serious crimes are unable to acknowledge their own guilt, and when they eventually do they commit suicide. Denial and projection of blame onto others are their own self-protection mechanisms. Unfortunately it is not within the scope of this paper to discuss these concepts in any detail, as they are worthy of in-depth analysis elsewhere. Suffice it to say that dissociation, alter egos, multiple personality and the use of altered states of consciousness are all concepts that are to be clearly understood in any investigation where an inability to acknowledge responsibility for one's own actions are a significant factor.

The third point on the use of hypnosis is concerned with the method. It is well known that Freud tried hypnosis without success. The reason he failed was because he tried what has become known as 'direct suggestion'. It is unfortunate that the followers of Freudian psychoanalysis still generally believe

hypnosis to be of no value. However, following the pioneering work of Milton Erickson, others do use hypnosis successfully by following a completely different approach known as 'indirect' suggestion (Hickman, 1983; Zeig & Lankton, 1988). The skilled hypnotherapist also knows how to put in place effective defences against the possible abreaction to guilt resulting from the recovery of hidden memories.

Morrison's decision to never use hypnosis again prevented her from discovering what really lay in the hidden memories and motivations of those she interviewed, and she concluded that 'you can never get to the unconscious, according to theory' (2004, p. 29). The theory that she uses to explain that you can never get to the unconscious is not elaborated on by Morrison, and we can only assume that Freud is responsible for the theory.

Morrison's own fear of the unknown, supported by Freudian thought, was to be a significant factor in her deviation from objective scientific enquiry. Rather than overcome her fear and learn more appropriate hypnotic techniques, she allowed herself to be drawn even deeper towards her final conclusion that a defective brain was the creator of a serial killer.

In the case of John Wayne Gacy, a serial child killer, Morrison was invited by Gacy's attorney to give evidence for the defence of insanity. Gacy's younger sister, Karen, in an interview with Morrison stated:

I remember that once he passed out at the top of the stairs and didn't remember who he was when he came to. He was like someone who was drunk, but he wasn't drunk. Something in his voice was different. **It was not his voice** (ibid, p.82).

This evidence offered by Gacy's sister suggests that Gacy had either an alter-ego according to Pierre Janet's dissociation theory (1976) or was possessed by an entity other than his own, and, together with many other significant clues as to what motivated Gacy, was either ignored or overlooked by Morrison.

Morrison's interviews with Gacy stretched over a period of fourteen years, and on May 9<sup>th</sup> 1994 he was executed. Morrison was invited to assist with the autopsy and witnessed the removal of Gacy's brain. She writes:

As I assisted, the pathologist carefully opened Gacy's cranium with an electric Stryker saw and removed the calcarium. There, then, was his grey matter, the 1,300 gram organ that caused such misery and grief for so many (ibid, p.123).

At the end of the chapter on Gacy, Morrison concludes:

In reality, there is no current body of scientific research or psychiatric literature that truly explains the exact nature of the serial murderer. I expected that nothing would change this, not any time soon. Unlike other diseases, no one, not the state or the federal government, not a private national or international institution would set aside the funds for serious discovery. Even if they did, the law would not allow anyone to examine a serial killer properly and extensively while he was still alive. ... And yet through this quagmire, which grew deeper and deeper, I had hope that things would change. In fact, it was even more than a hope; it was an expectation (ibid, p.125).

Morrison's hope that research into brain function would solve this mystery will never bear fruit because, putting it simply, the answer is not to be found there. Recent research into the nature of consciousness provides compelling evidence that rather than the brain being the source of all thought and behaviour, the brain is the instrument that enables the consciousness to communicate and exercise control in the material world (Lorimer, 1998, 2001, 2004). The implications of this reversal of the relationship between the brain, consciousness, thought and behaviour are not to be underestimated in how scientists look at human behaviour, and those scientists now looking at the nature of human consciousness are taking these implications very seriously (Targ, 2004; Tart, 2000; Radin, 2006).

To give Morrison due credit, her own education and training did not adequately prepare her for what she encountered, and if she had been made aware then she would have seen that her own research notes from her interviews hold all the answers. But her training and the conceptual framework of a positivist scientist prevented her from seeing what was in fact staring her in the face. Here is a small selection of quotations from Morrison's book that offer the possibility of an alternative hypothesis:

While no one is safe from a determined serial murderer because his violent determination is **anything but human** (Morrison, 2004, p.128).

This clue as to what possesses the serial killer strongly suggests that it is not human.

Often he appeared **frightened for no reason**, and his eyes darted about the room; he rarely looked anyone directly in the eye (ibid, p.132).

The above quotation invites a fascinating investigation into the nature and power of *Fear* that can only be satisfied by its own in-depth analysis as it may be hypothesised that Fear is the origin of all human suffering in all its myriad forms. In the context of the serial killer it may be suggested that the perpetrator of these kinds of murder is living in fear of what possesses him and that in order to overcome his fear he must become Fear itself. Further evidence of the power of fear as a significant factor is provided by the following quotations:

Bobby Joe so frantically feared, feared so much he'd run into the closet to hide (ibid, p.150).

.... dreams that were laced with fears (ibid, p.161).

It could be argued that at a deep unconscious level all serial killers are terrified of what possesses them, and an understanding of how we all protect ourselves from something mysterious and terrifying would shed much light on why some people become serial killers. To put this principle into ordinary every-day life it is known that the bullied often becomes the bully.

Experience from spirit release practitioners tells that spirit entities other than ourselves can influence us in several different ways (Baldwin, 1995; Naegeli-Osjord, 1988; Modi, 1997; Wickland, 1924). Should we be inclined to look for it we can easily find a wealth of qualitative evidence from a variety of reliable sources to support the hypothesis that we are all susceptible to influences from the spirit realms, or an 'Unseen Reality' as William James described it (1902), either for good or ill, and a study of mystical experience offers us all a glimpse of how we may be influenced. The work of William James is a good start for many serious students of the subject. Manifestations of spirit influence can vary between subtle compulsions to take a particular course of action without any conscious



comprehension of how we are influenced, to the terrifying intrusion of loud voices in the head giving instructions; as reported by Morrison:

...he heard a voice, a compelling, humbling voice that thundered in his head, echoing loudly (Morrison p.134).

With reference to the case of Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, Morrison writes:

There is no doubt that Peter Sutcliffe used the idea of commandments from God just to kill people (ibid, p.139).

Psychiatry assumes that hearing voices is a symptom of schizophrenia and treatment usually involves the prescription of drugs to control the symptoms (APA, 2004; World Health Organisation, 1992). However, those psychiatrists who are familiar with *Spirit Release* techniques such as Alan Sanderson (2003) and Andrew Powell (2005) are aware that the cure for internal voices may not be in medication but to release the invading spirit from the patient. However, the following quotation from Morrison gives a clear and unambiguous message that she believes that the voices are the creations of a diseased mind:

When these killers hear voices from God, what they're really hearing is only their own inner voice, imagined permutations of what's in their own minds (Morrison, 2004, p. 124).

The above statement by Morrison suggests that she had come across this concept many times with many serial killers, but had chosen to ignore it each and every time.

One hundred years ago, William James, Pierre Janet and Frederic Myers sought to answer the question, 'Who speaks', or more accurately in the case of automatic writing, 'Who writes?' (James, 1889; Janet, 1886; Myers, 1884). Where Janet insisted that all sensory hallucinations are pathological, in contrast James and Myers argued that whoever speaks or writes through the patient (or medium) can either be a consciousness that is a self-created alter ego or the consciousness of an entity other than the subject, and that each case should be investigated uniquely by its own merits. The above statement is a false assumption that is based on Morrison's own beliefs. It is not objective or scientific to make such

statements, and suggests very strongly that the scientific investigations of extremely wise and gifted scientists such as James and Myers of a hundred years ago are still being ignored.

An example of what could be described as 'automatic writing' is provided with Morrison's case of Bobby Joe Long in Florida:

Then suddenly he wrote, 'I am Darkness. I always have been' (Morrison, p.150).

Morrison continues by saying:

Using darkness with a capital D as he did, he must have pumped himself up to believe he was evil incarnate, like some ram-horned devil out of the Exorcist, as if some immortal power lived inside him. Whilst he may have been trying to achieve some effect with his words, I had seen too many of these people already to be disturbed by what they write on a piece of paper (ibid).

Morrison's own view is that Bobby Joe Long was writing as if he saw himself as evil incarnate according to her own ideas gleaned from her experience of seeing Blatty's film *The Exorcist* (1973). It is unfortunate that whilst the media of cinema is used for dramatic entertainment the fact that this film and others within the genre including *The Exorcism of Emily Rose* (Scott Derrickson, 2005) are based on factual events; and the true accounts are published as a source of important information for our collective guidance and education in such matters (Allen, 2000; Ebon, 1974; Goodman, 2005).

To adopt the philosophical principles of William James's 'Pragmatism' (James, 1907), we would ask the question that James, Janet and Myers asked, namely, '*Who writes?*', and with an open mind our investigation could provide an answer that the 'rational' scientist would be very hard pressed to accept. If Morrison had been able to accept what Bobby Joe and others wrote on a piece of paper then she would have been very disturbed indeed. Perhaps she was as much in denial as her subjects were as a form of unconscious self-protection from an unseen reality.

Further clues that offer an alternative hypothesis to the cause of serial murder are offered by the following quotation:

... like other serial killers, he was emotionally a very young child. Who, other than an infant, feels like he is controlling not just the world, but the universe around him? Who else but an infant feels so important that he thinks he is the centre of the universe? And who else but a child would think in this way for no particular reason, not for wealth, not for power, not for human domination, but just to maintain and protect his own personal cosmos? (Morrison, p.135).

Who else indeed? This is an important question, but it can only be answered by asking the perpetrator himself and then finding ways to validate the answer. To reject the answer according to one's own beliefs is not objective or scientific. To fail to ask the question is a missed opportunity at the very least. The clue is in the observation of emotional immaturity. In the published works of psychiatrist M. Scott Peck (2005) and Malachi Martin (1976), an exorcist and Peck's mentor, are true accounts of possession where the emotional development of the subject was impaired by the possessing entity. The subjects were not able to grow emotionally and reach their true potential until they had been relieved of the possessing entity.

Another clue in the above statement is in the observation that the subject feels he is the 'centre of the universe'. Feeling that one is the centre of the universe can be a sign of emotional immaturity if we consider the principles of *Object Relations Theory* (Fairbairn, 1952); Gomez, 1997; Gomez, 1997). However, if we allow ourselves the prerogative of considering religious texts then we are offered the alternative of the archetypal 'Adversary' to God. Even Freud, a self declared atheist, did acknowledge the mystery of the 'evil' child and suggested that they be forgiven and understood due to their 'small size' (Freud, 1991).

Yet another line of enquiry is offered by the following quotation from Morrison when writing about Peter Sutcliffe:

Instead he spent time in the chamber of horrors, which featured the likes of Jack the Ripper and other murderous criminals of English history. He didn't mind the mouldy smell of the place or the rain that dripped from the ceiling. Peter didn't notice because he was mesmerised (Morrison, p.136).

Either Morrison is using the term 'mesmerised' to describe Sutcliffe's 'fascination' with serial killers like Jack the Ripper and the sensations he experienced from this association, or she used the word in its original meaning as a description of an altered state of consciousness. Mesmerism, or animal magnetism, is a term that is often used as a precursor in the historical development of hypnotism. All of these terms may be used to infer altered states of consciousness, as are Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD), and Hysteria, the term used by Freud and Janet. An examination of the phenomena of hypnosis, mediumship, dissociation and all other forms of altered states suggests a common link that Myers and James described as 'automatisms' (Myers, 1885; James, 1901-1903), but now, in modern scientific investigations come under the collective term 'psi' phenomena (Radin 2006).

Experience of working with people with DID tells us that it is extremely difficult to tell whether a person has multiple personalities or is the victim of other forms of consciousness that are not of the self.

One of the earliest medically trained practitioners whose practical experience led him into understanding the relationship between multiple personality disorder and possession was the clinician Dr Hans Naegeli-Osjord (1988). In his treatise on possession and exorcism he writes:

Drastic, abrupt changes in personality are frequently encountered among patients receiving psychotherapy or psychiatric care. The behaviour patterns of these patients change so abruptly that many mental health professionals now use the term multiple personality disorder (MPD) to describe this phenomenon. Clinical case records often reveal histories of repressed anxieties, fears and hostilities which can be traced back to traumatic experiences, such as physical and sexual abuse and molestation, buried in the subconscious. From this it is hypothesized that one or more distinct, alternate personalities have been created by the patients to cope with their traumatic experiences.

---this phenomenon should not be viewed exclusively as possession or multiple personality, but that some cases may be a result of dissociated personalities, while others are more likely to be cases of harassment by the spirit of a deceased person.

...both multiple personality and harassment should be considered when viewing the entire range of such disorders. My own clinical experience has also caused me to conclude that the role of external entities should be considered. I know that the trauma of abuse and other shocking experiences results in scars on the psyche which are generally suppressed and emerge later in unusual disturbed behaviour. In cases of weakened ego and / or extreme stress, external entities may invade or harass the person to the point where counselling or treatment is indicated to enable the patient to return to a normal state. Unfortunately, those clinicians who cannot conceive of a post-mortem existence limit their diagnoses of such abnormal behaviour (ibid, p.135).

In a letter to Morrison, Bobby Joe Long wrote of a dream he had:

He asked me if I believed in God and I said, "No." He asked me, "Why not?" But before I had a chance to speak he started laughing. He went hysterical, pointing at me and laughing (Morrison, p.162).

One of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most prolific writers on spiritual matters was C.S. Lewis who is best remembered for his children's fantasy, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.<sup>2</sup> Much lesser known, Lewis wrote an excellent book entitled *The Screwtape Letters* (1942) which is a tongue-in-cheek series of written correspondence between a demon by the name of Screwtape and his apprentice nephew who has been assigned the job of disrupting the life of a man who was undecided about his belief in God. Screwtape tells his nephew that the best defence he has of being discovered was his subject's disbelief in him or God. In the above quotation regarding Bobby Joe's dream if we allow ourselves the privilege of taking the work of C.S. Lewis seriously we can perhaps see how Bobby Joe's demon had justification for his hysterical laughter. Bobby Joe in his rejection of a belief in God was in no position to have a belief in demons either, rendering him helpless and defenceless and holding himself responsible for his crimes. In defence of his ego it would have been disastrous for Bobby Joe to accept his own guilt. This placed him in an impossible dilemma. If he had allowed his own conscience to condemn him he would self-destruct, and if he believed in God then his own conscience would prevent him from asking God's

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<sup>2</sup> Full publishing history of C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* is available on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Chronicles\\_of\\_Narnia#Books](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chronicles_of_Narnia#Books)

forgiveness. Escape from the dilemma can only be affected by denial which is demonstrated by emotional detachment. However, Morrison writes:

Had there been an emotional connection between Bobby Joe and his dreams, it would have been completely outside anything I had seen previously. I wish it were the case, but all data doesn't result in a "eureka moment" (Morrison, p.162).

This is yet another example of a missed opportunity. Morrison incorrectly assumes that there is no emotional connection between a serial killer and his dreams. If she had been able to make the connection then she would have shouted 'eureka' many times over. In his dreams, the soul of the serial killer is expressing his fear and screaming out for help. But even without his written report of the content of his dreams, Morrison had more evidence as to the secrets of Bobby Joe's affliction.

On April 10<sup>th</sup> 1985, Bobby Joe Long frantically wrote to me about Albert De-Salvo, the Boston Strangler: (Fleischer, 1968).

The second time I saw it. It was the most scary f\*\*\*\*\*g movie I ever saw. It was like watching ME in action. .... I remember him tying one to a bed and she started fighting. I had been through the same thing. I knew how the guy felt. Like a mirror. I swear (Morrison p.165).

Long constantly complained about his once-injured head and the way it felt. It was not an ache exactly; if Long was to be believed, the formerly injured part had a kind of **life of its own** (ibid, p.165).

Long said that something in his head and even in his body changed when someone close to him, in this case his former wife, did him wrong (ibid, p.166).

It's similar to before I used to get into a fight, or just before I'd bust somebody's face. The anger. The blank thought. It's like I was void of thought. **Like I left for a little while, then came back after** (ibid, p. 167).

Bobby Joe was increasingly confused, angrily confused, writing:

IT'S NOT A GOOD FEELING TO KNOW MY LIFE IS OVER. TO KNOW THAT AT THE VERY BEST I'LL BE LOCKED UP LIKE AN ANIMAL THE REST OF MY LIFE. ALL BECAUSE I KILLED A BUNCH OF SLUTS AND WHORES AND I **DON'T EVEN KNOW – WHY?** (ibid, p.168).

Bobby Joe was not motivated to kill – so who was?

The above quotes are a very small sample taken from Morrison's book, which in turn can only be a very brief glimpse from the long hours of recorded interviews over many years. Even so, almost every page of Morrison's writing contains similar remarks and statements. These pieces of evidence, to the trained eye, simply jump out of the page and say '*why don't you look at this?*'

#### **Epistemology: Rationalistic, Empirical or Constructivist?**

Morrison's selection of quotes from her interviews and letters from serial killers is aimed at convincing the reader of her case for scientific research into the malfunctioning of the brain. However, viewed from an entirely different perspective, it is a catalogue of missed opportunities and mistakes that are based on false assumptions and mistaken beliefs or as Morrison herself puts it, 'reasoned theory.' The reasoned theory that Morrison uses is the reasoned theory of an epistemology of physics and rationalism and bears no relationship with the reasoned theory of William James' *Pluralistic Universe* (1909) or the empirical evidence provided by other scientists and mystics including Emanuel Swedenborg (1758) and Edgar Cayce (Cayce & Cayce, 1971), together with the clinical experience of Naegeli-Osjord (1988) Carl Wickland (1924) William Baldwin (1995) Irene Hickman (1994) and many others. This clinical evidence, although technically not empirical in the experimental sense, is still empirical when we shift our epistemology from the rationalistic to the radical empiricism of the emotions and qualitative experience of the subject.

## Pragmatism and Radical Empiricism

Objective scientific enquiry has no beliefs. It is emotionally detached and disinterested in either proving or disproving something. Science looks at the facts and reports them as they are. It is only the deductive reasoning, underlying assumptions and interpreted meaning that colours scientific enquiry. If Morrison's transcribed audio recordings were to be analysed by objective qualitative methods then a more unbiased appraisal of the accumulated evidence could be made. Only then could the results be debated and conclusions drawn, but only if the conceptual framework was to include all possible hypotheses. The history of scientific enquiry shows us that science challenges all previously held beliefs and assumptions, and if we are to avail ourselves of the truth then nothing can be excluded especially if our subjectivity tells us different. In other words; just because we don't like it or don't believe in it is no reason to reject it.

The beliefs and assumptions made by Morrison are only one example of how our collective rational view of the world in which we live has coloured our approach to scientific enquiry. However, experience has something else to teach us. My own personal experiences have prompted me to research not only the scientific and academic literature on why some people perpetrate acts of evil, but also the experiences of others in the therapeutic community who have encountered similar experiences. This body of experience is too vast to be ignored, and the work of Hans Naegeli-Osjord and Alan Sanderson are worthy introductions to this body of evidence. Sanderson's work in particular gives an excellent bibliography that would save any researcher of the literature valuable time and effort.

On the topic of objective scientific enquiry Naegeli-Osjord writes:

In the Western civilised world, the majority of educated as well as uneducated people deny the existence of an ethereal world, since it supposedly contradicts modern 'knowledge'. However, this so-called knowledge is – to emphasise it again – a belief, which corresponds with dogmas of scientific authorities, accepted unconditionally. How differently C.G. Jung expressed himself! He used to say, "I do not believe in God [i.e. an immaterial form of being in the cosmos, (N.)], I know that He is". Jung arrived at his



knowledge not only through mediumistic inner experiences, but many areas of the liberal arts.

Let us examine the thinking of many psychologists and psychiatrists in relation to Jung's way of looking at the world. As an experienced practitioner, I can not help but judge the results of many psychological-analytical as well as psychiatric-chemotherapeutic methods of treatment as unsatisfactory, although I do not doubt they are sincere attempts to relieve the lot of the psychically ill person. However, they had to align themselves with the demands for exclusive rationalistic-materialistic thinking, which will never do justice to the complexity of the human soul. Nevertheless it is this thinking which is predominant in almost all university psychiatric clinics. It is known that successful scientists who have 'arrived' and are recognised in their own time, frequently reject new and pioneering impulses. Pioneering work almost always comes from academic outsiders. Not only do Freud, Jung, and Szondi come to mind, but also chiropractors and acupuncturists, whose early work was rejected by prominent scientists. Younger scientists striving for academic achievement usually learn to adjust to opinions of teachers and colleagues if they don't want to be side-tracked as a nuisance. This inhibits the ambition of the researcher and does not provide room for him to spread his mental wings, leading to conscious and unconscious adjustment to the predominant views of the times (Naegeli-Osjord, p.28).

William James' *Pragmatism* (1907) and *Radical Empiricism* (1912) take us into the second type of epistemology, namely the epistemology of subjective experience, which is in contrast to Morrison's epistemology of 'rationality' or what we have been taught by others to believe.

The philosophical principles of 'Pragmatism' and 'Radical Empiricism' were proposed by James when he was working on a new synthesis between religion and science at the commencement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1902; 1907; 1912). Broadly speaking Pragmatism is an approach that does not reject any hypotheses without having thoroughly tested them and then asks the questions, does it work? And, does it have any useful value? Radical Empiricism is different from non-radical empiricism insofar as it includes ALL experience including the subjective emotional which are disregarded in a rationalistic

epistemology. What this means is that no idea is rejected and all experience including the emotive subjective is to be included in the data to be analysed.

In addition to a shift in epistemological foundation from rationalistic to subjective experience we also have two more perspectives to help with our investigation into the reality or otherwise of the existence of evil as a force. One is the science of quantum mechanics (Powell, 2003; Radin, 2006) and the other is whether or not post-mortem existence is a reality (Fontana, 2005; Cardena, Lynn & Krippner, 2000).

Quantum mechanics has taught us that at the sub-atomic level the laws that govern the behaviour of matter break down and a sub-atomic particle of light can be either a wave or a particle and can be both at the same time and in two places at once. Quantum mechanics also teaches us that the observer has an effect on the observed. In psychological experiments we are already familiar with what is known as the 'experimenter effect' or 'observer effect'. However, with what we are now learning from quantum theory takes these principles to a new level where on the one hand we have to encompass them into a wider scope of possibility and on the other we have to be aware of the effect of our 'intention' on any possible outcome.

The implications are enormous. If we limit our investigation to the domains of rationalistic psychological theory alone then we limit the scope of our investigation into the nature of reality itself. On the other hand, if we can include the conceptual framework of the possibility of life after death and the existence of spiritual dimensions into our epistemological foundation, then our investigation must take on new dimensions. The possibilities of what we may encounter in our investigations now become limitless and we will be obliged to take stringent measures to validate our findings very carefully because there is a third epistemology that we will be led into investigating and that is the epistemology of 'Creationism'. With 'Creationism' or 'Constructivism' we would be asking the question, has what we are witnessing been created by us the investigators, by the subjects themselves or by some other external creator or creative force?

## **A Methodology for Investigating the Efficacy of the Remote Spirit Release Method**

Sanderson's paper (2003) gives a potted history of what has now become known as Spirit Release Therapy (SRT). The paper outlines the historical perspective of spirit release methods, together with the theory of spirit attachment, phenomenology, diagnosis and treatment, and reinforces the need for objective scientific research. The body of evidence from the experiences of all of the published practitioners referenced above, together with many more that are not, can still be disbelieved and rejected as fantasy by devoted sceptics. But there is still the old fashioned scientific method of measuring cause and effect by experimentation, and, as pointed out by Andrew Powell's observation referred to in the introduction to this paper, it is the *outcome*, or the *effect* that is our unit of measure.

The clinical practice of 'Remote' Spirit Release provides us with an ideal methodology for testing our previously declared hypotheses, namely can science uncover evidence to measure the influence of the spirit realms and secondly can science offer evidence of a cause and a cure for the affliction of the serial killer, or any other human activity that could be described as 'evil'?

Remote Spirit Release is the practice of releasing attached spirits from a subject from a distance whilst not in physical contact or proximity to the subject (Hickman, 1994). It is markedly different from any method of intervention that has any contact with the subject in close proximity as in the case of 'Direct' Spirit Release when the therapist is in the company of the subject, or any other kind of traditional method.

The method requires a team of two people, one, the 'Scanner', who has the ability to enter into an altered state of consciousness and communicate with the subject in the spiritual dimensions and the other, the 'Facilitator' whose responsibility is to guide and protect the scanner and to ensure the safe return of the scanner's remote or 'dissociated' consciousness back into three dimensional time and space.

Because the intervention does not require any kind of direct relationship with the subject, Remote Spirit Release can be executed at any time, and the practitioners who are exercising the intervention can be in any location that is convenient to them or the experimenters. Additional advantages of the remote method include the elimination of the risk of iatrogenic contamination, false memory syndrome

or any other kind of suggestion either intentional or unintentional. This means that a subject can be psychologically and spiritually investigated, diagnosed and treated from a distance without any conscious awareness, experimenter contamination or resistance. In his monumental treatise on the discovery of the unconscious, Henri Ellenberger (1970) suggests that the 2,500 history of therapeutic intervention for psychological problems is a history of attempts to overcome the subject's resistance to change in contradiction to his desperation for healing. The Remote Spirit Release methodology offers a means of overcoming this resistance on the conscious level. It also tests the hypothesis that asks the question, 'Can a mind be influenced by another mind from a distance?' which in itself is a fundamental hypothesis to this domain of scientific enquiry.

### **Project Protocol**

The experiment would involve taking a group of perpetrators of a similar crime like serial murder, serial rape or paedophilia with a common psychological characteristic and measure that characteristic. This could comprise such psychological constructs as the subject's attitude to his crimes, his attitude to his victims or his sense of guilt. This gives us our base line variable data.

The group is then divided into an experimental and a control group by random selection.

We then introduce the experimental variable of a Remote Spirit Release intervention to the experimental group and see if there is a difference in the outcome between the two groups.

The fact that subjects and interventionists have no contact automatically provides the experiment with a 'double-blind' qualification.

Ethical considerations need to include protection measures for subjects, scanners, facilitators and all other experimenter personnel, together with all normal ethical considerations concerning anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, etc.

All experiment sessions are to be audio-visually recorded and transcribed into written documents.

Following the introduction of each experimental variable, the subjects are to be re-evaluated with a repeated measure of the base line variables that are to be presented as statistical data for comparison between the two measures and between the control group and the experimental group.

If the analysis of the data is carried out by statisticians who have no idea of what the data represents then the experiment can be said to be truly objective with an additional layer of experimenter bias contamination being removed.

If the relationship between cause and effect are statistically significant then the effect of the experimental variable will be verified. No one need know what the experimental variable is with the exception of the one who introduces it.

The above is a very brief outline for a project protocol that will require detailed consideration and careful preparation. Before this project is able to reach the experimental stages outlined above, each of the Remote Spirit Release practitioner teams will need to be evaluated for their knowledge and skill by testing the accuracy of their abilities to scan and diagnose with individual volunteer subjects.

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This paper was originally presented at a conference held at Bangor University in 2008 and was the only paper excluded from the published collection entitled, *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2010). It will continue to be presented at conferences until it is accepted and acknowledged as a contribution to the scientific examination of spirit possession. A detailed scientific project protocol is contained in the final chapter of *The Science of Spirit Possession* (2014).

Practitioner teams are currently being tested for their reliability and a pilot experiment is still in progress to test their efficacy in treating subjects who hear voices. Video recordings of live cases are available on You Tube and can be accessed by invitation only to bona-fide researchers and students for educational purposes. Two such cases are specific to the subject of this paper.

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<http://www.tjpalmer.org/research/research-proposals/>

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