

The World of Spirit Influence

As it Relates to the Paranormal Investigator

To this point, we have discussed the haunted place, the people who interact with those spirits and the nature of the spirit's psychology, as well as the technology at hand. But any discussion of these elements has to come full circle, to a place we commonly refer to as "Spirit Influences." Modern culture tends to see such influences involving younger children, simply because it is more dramatic than characterizing the phenomenon in relationship with mature adults; nevertheless, adults are more likely to come under such an influence, due in part to their own developed personalities and predilections.

Some colleagues will argue that spirit influences are more common with places, rather than people, with a fine line of distinction between the truly "haunted" house and one that is simply influenced by spirits. After years of consideration, I have to disagree, although the subtleties at work all too often mask the true nature of human interaction.

Let's create a logical scenario; a perfectly normal home that has been recently purchased by a family. One member of the family truly loves the house, embraces it as an individual "promised land," that can give them true happiness. It does not matter if the subject is male or female, there is just something there that offers a unique promise for the future. At first, the interest is subtle, growing as time passes until suddenly other members of the family and friends note that the subject would prefer staying home to polish the silverware over other activities they once loved.

As time passes, the subject is less and less likely to choose to leave the home, except perhaps to drive to the local home improvement store to buy something for the house. The subject spends less and less time with friends and family, except when they are at the house. The subject's subtle interest in the new home slowly becomes an obsession. In some cases the interest is limited to one room, a workshop, garage or attic, in others the entire building, but it soon becomes obvious to those closest to the subject that the relationship between house and subject is much greater than one might normally expect.

Of course, psychologists will suggest that this obsession has nothing whatever to do with the place or any spirits that might be found there, logically looking at the individual's history, rather than that of the property. That is a wholly proper assumption, except that in many cases the subject might well be under the subtle influence of an outside personality. Note, I am not talking about the house, but rather some spirit in it, not an infestation, which would suggest a demonic presence, but a spirit or "ghost" who is influencing the subject, to the exclusion of all others, in most cases. In theory, the spirit sees the subject as a tool to continue his or her earthly work and the subject is not at all aware of the manipulation, believing instead that they are only taking on the work at hand of their own volition, without anyone else's will at play. Suddenly, the kitchen has to be cleaned to a degree never before suggested by the subject or every tool in the toolbox has to be in sequential order.

The World of Spirit Influence

As it Relates to the Paranormal Investigator

The concept of spirit influences has a long history, but possibly the greatest single reference comes from the confines of Christian theology, where it is believed the earliest activities of the Apostles after the death of Christ was controlled by the Holy Ghost. It is a part of the theology of most Christian sects to believe that the Holy Ghost influenced the actions, activities and writing of these church leaders and suggest that the unified theology that came from that period is proof of spirit intervention. Acceptance of these tenants therefore presupposes that such influences are possible secularly as well.

It is important to stress that we are talking about spirit influences and not simple hauntings. In theory, the latter should not be possible to influence living beings, beyond the human response of fight or flight, etc. It is also important to stress the marked differences between influence and possession, the latter being demonic by nature, which is not the case in influence cases. So, if all of this is so common, why don't the run of the mill Ghost Hunters differentiating between simple hauntings and influences? Well, most specifically, the differences are subtle and easily misread; this really is higher theoretical research. There are both passive and active influences for one thing, each with varying degrees of recognizable activity, not to mention the obvious distinctions between the subtle haunting and the active influences of a spirit. The distinctions could fill library collections and for most, the feeling is that we would just be splitting hairs; but these issues must be mentioned, if only in passing.

How do you recognize the signs of a spirit influence? Most people report feeling extreme anger at those around them and seemingly for no apparent reason. Their actions are of a paranoid nature, their dreams are frightening or depict horrible events with people they love. People seem to lose interest in the things they loved, their behavior changes, and distinct mood swings are certainly common. For many it can seem like a depression or a bi-polar sort of state. The bottom line is that in all cases the person being affected is clearly not themselves, their thoughts are not their own and their actions and the things they say are reportedly very out of character.

Some afflicted individuals can acknowledge that they are not right, that something is terribly wrong; others can't make this determination and find it hard to understand those around them who are trying to help or informing them about it. Of course this often adds fuel to the fire. If this sort of negative influence is not caught early enough, the individual often spirals out of control down and away from all who love them. Family and friends are often left watching as nothing they have been able to do has helped; no logic, no talking, no distraction has helped. Not wishing to steal a page from our healing practitioners, it is noteworthy that the earliest notes on the subject fall back on the "Mikvah" approach, not that Jewish priests have any more control over such situations than any other religious; nevertheless, the prescribed treatment for a person so afflicted 3000 years ago was a mineral bath with sea salt added to the bathwater. Whether it works or not does not enter into my field of expertise.

Returning to the world as we know it, spirit influences are intrinsically linked to "attachments," and their power comes through that link. Attachments are not necessarily evil, but they can be

The World of Spirit Influence

As it Relates to the Paranormal Investigator

misleading. This very point is a sore spot with our brothers in science who maintain that: “Spirit influences over force, motion and matter result in quantitative measurements in science being unreliable, unless verified through several lines of evidence. This problem is more serious in physics than the biological sciences. It's the reasons why energy is misdefined and why relativity is supposedly proven fact in conflict with logic.”

What is an attachment? Well, unlike your run of the mill haunting, an attachment is most likely a confused spirit, probably unaware that he or she is dead, who latches on to a willing host in a place that is familiar or comfortable to both. The spirit may have suffered a traumatic or sudden death, and has a fear of going to “hell” thinking himself to be evil. In many cases, he or she develops a feeling of love, or sometimes better put, “lust” for the host and will act out if anyone attempts to upset that situation. He or she might also have had a strong attachment to their own bodies and had an addiction to drugs, alcohol, sex or food and has been seeking someone with similar leanings. A second group of spirits who might form attachments are children who were lost in childbirth, aborted or not properly buried or otherwise laid to rest.

In the common haunting, the team enters a location, tests for a presence, interviews the subject and of course, has ample historic data and research at hand. In an attachment, where there is spirit influence, the interview takes on a new dynamic, simply because the subject may not be aware of the influences inherent to the location, thus giving misleading answers to relatively simple questions and changing answers from one interview to the next in many cases. The most important aspect facing the investigating team is to ascertain the possibility of an attachment, spirit influences and discern the difference between such behaviors and the less likely infestation or possession criteria. In many cases this is only possible through thorough research in an ongoing case; it is extremely unlikely that even the best investigators will come into a case with the presumption of spirit influences and attachments. The team must rule out all the more mundane possibilities before jumping to such a conclusion. Like the possession case, they are far more rare than expected, thanks to the negative media publicity surrounding such alleged cases, although once identified they can pose extremes not found in the “normal” haunting case.

The course of action once you have proven the possibility of such a case is easy to outline, our scientific brothers, notwithstanding. The objective is the same, except that we are now telling the client that not only are they living in a toxic environment, but that they have been infected. The job at hand is to clean the area of the toxic substance and then do the same for the effected individuals. But that scenario has at least one major setback. A subject who is truly being influenced by a spirit in such a case is far less likely to wish to resolve the situation in reality. While they may say that they want the problem gone, they are less likely to participate in the solution. To that end, we enter the world of the counselor, whose purpose is to enlist the whole-hearted involvement of the person being influenced, while remembering this is a true case of attachment.

Many will argue there is no difference in resolving these issues, thus no real propose beyond

The World of Spirit Influence

As it Relates to the Paranormal Investigator

the academic for discussing them. I have seen many cases where the field team has accepted that logic and many have failed miserably. I think that rejection of these points has more to do with the lack of preparation by some teams, who find they are out of their depth when attempting to counsel the subject. Granted, this is not a quick fix solution, but it is the only one that offers a real resolution, whether the team does the counseling themselves or “farms” it out to members of the religious, professional psychologists or a local soothsayer! Attempts to bring the case to the desirable end can only be accomplished when the subject is in touch with the reality at hand.

It is important to stress that a proper investigation and resolution requires all the elements normally associated with all cases; there are no shortcuts. In many of these cases there are secondary factors, relatives, partners, etc. who will work to lessen the influences of the team, not because they are themselves “attached” in the paranormal sense of the word, but rather dismissive of such phenomenon or truly attempting to shield the subject. Unless you do all the steps; research, physical manifestations, spirit psychology and active counseling, attempts to completely resolve the issue will most likely fail. In some cases, the subject simply moves on at the urging of those concerned, but that is not always simple, especially when the subject owns the property or family members are rooted in the community, therefore the successful resolution has to be found in the basics, even though the overall expenditure of team energy and time is far greater than we find in the “normal” haunting!