



POLTERGEIST IN BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA

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Abstract : Various streams of interpretation of the poltergeist are analysed how the pressure exerted by the environment can lead to vicious conclusions in evidence.

In the First Part I will present three cases of poltergeist in Argentina which I was asked to intervene. In the Second Part I will analyse the cases presented in the Third International Congress on Psychotronic Research, held in Tokyo.

1° The three cases in Argentina developed in environments socially and economically different. a- The first case took place in a middle-class family, P.B., lived in the city of Cordoba, in 1973. The father was a qualified worker in a factory. The phenomena consisted in the familiar falling of stones, objects moving around without being touched by human hands, appearance and disappearance of money, clothes and so on, levitation of objects, spontaneous fire. These abnormalities lasted for over a year and was studied by a team of Psychiatrists, Physicians and psychologists from the Institute for Parapsychology of the Catholic University of Cordoba. A proper psychotherapeutic treatment both of the stressed twelve-year-old who was adopted and the family put an end to the phenomena. They experienced a great stress but they knew how to keep calm, and being catholic, they gave a thing a correct interpretation. There were no visual or audible hallucinations, seeing or hearing strange beings.

b- The second case took place in Santa Fe city, in 1975 and it lasted for over a month. The family A.M. had a lower income; the father was a traveling salesman of food products. The phenomena consisted in the spontaneous appearance of bloody religious images. First, this occurred with an image of Our Lady, about 15 cms. tall, flowed between her hands joined over her chest, as if praying. The other images were two crucifixes made of plastic, about 10 cms. tall. Blood appeared where the nails were and ran down the arms and feet. On one occasion the phenomena took place while the Biochemists Dr. E. Molina and Dr. C. Zapata were holding the crucifixes in their hands in order to get samples of the blood and analyse it. The source was a twelve-year-old girl who worked in the house as a maid. She was sent to a school for behavior control, and there the phenomena repeated with other images. It was possible to prove that the blood type taken from the images and the girl's was the same. The phenomena might have been caused by a state of great stress experienced by the girl's family because of the illness and operation of the youngest child, and by a similar case in other town. The girl had pseudoperceptions of seeing and hearing

several times. There was no other kind of phenomena occurred in a religious environment.

The third case developed in 1978 at a small village of Covunco Abajo (Neuquen) in a very poor home where L.B. a boy aged 12, lived with his grandparents. He never met his father and his mother had left him there when he was very little. The circumstances were as usual: pieces of furniture moving by themselves, mattresses and blankets falling, stones thrown by nobody, handfuls of soil hitting them on their heads. These events aroused fears in the family and neighbours. The Priest of the town, Santiago Sarriegui, and the Psychologist Alberto Arias, calmed them down and the boy's mother disappeared. There were no hallucinations of any kind like seeing demons, spirits or dead people.

The cases presented by some investigators in Tokyo show almost identical phenomena, but they are given a different interpretation. This interpretation reveals the Japanese atmosphere, fear of magic, witchcraft, occult powers. Offerings to the devil are observed in public places on Friday night; there are thousands of Umbanda ceremonies and meetings (Brazilian spiritism, a mixture of primitive African religions, Christian spiritism-superstitions). There are stalls displaying coloured candles, ribbons, incense, soils, waters and so forth, at every body's hand. These objects are supposed to be effective to dominate the forces of nature and spirits. Once they have been dedicated, their power can be used at will in rituals which are believed to be and accepted as black and white magic. One can also see and buy images of African gods, the with horns, legs of goats, tail, dark fur. These shops stand everywhere, visited by children and grown-ups, and what they sell can be frequently seen in homes. This atmosphere exerts a permanent psychological pressure on the population at all social levels. Therefore one should not be surprised if the interpretation given of poltergeist is as the one presented in Tokyo: "Some evidences of evil are observed at a distance induced by means of magical procedures" (7), "by macumbeiros (black sorcerers) that can be found in terreiros de quimbanda (a place specialized in magical procedures) in Brazil" (7). The authors explain that there are various reasons why people resort to these procedures: threats, love and elimination of enemies etc. They finally say: "the consequences are usually terrible" (7). Thus the authors themselves spoil the presentation and interpretation of the data with their credulity and acceptance of the cause originating the phenomena: the threat by an enemy and attendance to the Macumba in order to use its magical procedures. They do not stop to analyze objectively and quietly other possible causes of the poltergeist: RSPK, suggestions and the contradictions exposed in the papers. They accept as also the disturbances ceased after a Candomblé group (Afro-Brazilian religion) performed exorcizing rituals in the home. Some mediums and sorcerers confirmed that the phenomena were being provoked by terreiro procedures... (7). They do not study if the cessation was due to a real and objective action of exorcism or if, considering the environment the people live in, it was a psychological conditioning that put an end to the phenomena. They even accept the actual existence of a being created by popular folklore to which they attribute characteristics which are contradictory. They speak of an incorporeal agent that obeys the sorcerer" (7). But on the other hand, they claim this incorporeal agent has been described by several witnesses as: "semi-human beings having dark fur, claws and horns, fetid smell" (7). How can an incorporeal agent (no body!) have corporeal characteristics at the same time? We might be dealing with an evident eidetic projection, hallucination, of the images of "exus" (devil) they

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are used to seeing.

In another paper presented by them it is easy to detect the atmosphere of: in mind the various approaches given by other authors or streams of analyses, sive fear in which people lives with all the psychological consequences brought about by the belief of invisible beings who try to do harm, to destroy them for kes made during their past lives about which they know nothing. Before accept all these serious matters, they should prove them through evidences. But this is done; everything is taken for granted. They feel submitted by powers to such an extent that those who suffer them can not overcome them. These are conditionings disposing toward all kinds of suggestions, illusions, hallucinations, fears. In the paper it is said that: "some members of the group displayed a behaviour that suggests the presence of foreign personalities. These personalities were induced by black magic procedures to influence and/or create trouble to the patients, hate them and referencess to a relationship with them in past lives" (7). That is to say, in a typical spiritist meeting where one talks with dead people and try to persuade to give up their destructive action. There are a series of contradictory suppositions as incorporeal beings suffering headaches, stomach-aches, having sexual desires, so on. It is necessary that everything be proved to be true, and not merely taken granted (7).

In another case there are a number of hallucinations provoked or favoured in this atmosphere of fear, exorcisms and credulity of a very special community, typical of Brazil. Here they see an "animal similar to a gorilla" during the disturbance. Other times they only see parts "like a hand of a monkey" etc. (7) The authors refer to the conclusion: "as the majority of RSPK, this poltergeist suggests the influence of evil action at a distance, induced by means of terreiro rituals (black magic) sessions of animal-shaped beings". (7)

Discussion. Having analyzed the cases presented and compared them with the above bibliography on the subject, A.R. Owen (1), W. Roll (2), G. Pratt (3), L. Rhine (4), H. Thurston (5), E. Novillo Pauli (6), we come to the conclusion that the more primitive or older the case, the more its interpretation attributes the phenomena to demons, spirits, ghosts etc. The cases presented by the authors above mentioned, tell and analyze phenomena which are very similar to those in Brazil, but their interpretation is notably different: the source is the human being himself. They develop within another cultural background and the way they are focused agrees with the cultural level of the community. W. Roll says in his book: "If poltergeist phenomena say anything, is not about spirits, demons or ghosts but about human personality" (2).

When referring to voices, communications etc. A.R. Owen asserts: "There is not one case in which the spiritist hypothesis has been proved" (1).

For these authors as well as for psychiatrists, the fact that the supposed spirits succeed one another when the medium communicates, would prove that we are dealing with splits of his (her) personality and his (her) unconscious creations. His (her) dramatized ideas convey concepts of the environment in which he (she) lives.

In addition to the stress provoked by the conflicting situation with the environment or with himself, feelings of real or imaginary guilt, which would be the cause of the poltergeist phenomena, the interpretation given by those who intervene their hallucinations and supposed messages from spirits, make the problem even more acute, thus creating a vicious circle.

Conclusion. In order to study and elucidate poltergeist cases, it is necessary to in mind the various approaches given by other authors or streams of analyses, instead of merely considering one aspect and interpretation of the problem.

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