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Possession in the Modern Age

A Jungian analysis of possession within the Anglican faith

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Abstract

This essay uses interviews to gather information regarding the experience and belief which exists in regards to possession within the Anglican faith. It also uses Jungian psychology to analyse these experiences and beliefs; this is interesting because even in the modern day of science, possession continues to be a phenomenon. It still occurs closer to home than we may think; a modern western country such as England, where Anglicanism is the state religion, have special ministries assigned to deal with this in every diocese. The information was gathered through interviews and literature, to give both a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. This essay presents a possible psychological explanation for the cases of possession as experienced within the Anglican faith, which provides an alternative to the distress these individuals are experiencing rather than assuming it necessarily is of a spiritual nature. It does not, however, seek to prove or disprove the possibility of a spiritual cause behind this phenomenon.

Key words: Jungian psychology, Jungian analysis, possession, Anglicanism, Church of England, deliverance, exorcism, the unconscious, archetypes, synchronicity, artificial synchronicity

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Introduction

In the western world today science and technology hold major influence over how we live our lives. We live in a secularised – or post-secularised – society; science seem to be the guiding star for many people and religion may feel outdated.

In a world governed by science, how does religion survive? What expressions can faith take, when science – such as psychology and neuroscience – seem to have all the answers? Can people still suffer from age-old spiritual “ailments” such as possession? If they can – why? These are all questions which led me to choose the topic at hand.

The purpose of the essay is to figure what behaviour and which symptoms are considered to be associated with possession within the Anglican faith, a state religion of England, as well as seeking a psychological explanation for said behaviour. Further, I will also analyse the Church and the clergymen themselves in an attempt to understand the world, and our relationship with this world as a society, in which concepts like possession still can exist. As a result of these thoughts, my two main questions can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ What is the view on possession – or experience of possession – within the Anglican faith, specifically within the Church of England?
- ◆ How can possession – as viewed and/or experienced within the Church of England and Anglican faith – be interpreted by Jungian psychology?

With these questions I seek to present one possible explanation for the reasons behind the experience of possession within the Anglican faith with the help of Jungian psychology. It is in no way meant to belittle the experiences or disprove the faith of the people involved, but merely meant to present one – out of several – possible reasons behind the phenomenon.

I have chosen to limit myself to “negative possession”; by this I am referring to possession by a negative entity, such as that of – what the afflicted person perceives to be – a demon. The reason I chose this particular form of possession is because the signs and behaviours associated with this type of possession may be more dramatic and noticeable, as well as it being quite common to associate the term “possession” with that of a demon or negative entity.

Disposition

The essay will use a layout and approach which best suits an empirical study. After this disposition, the reader will be able to learn more about the Anglican faith before moving on to the chapter

entitled *Theoretical Bases*, in which I present the theories that will be used to analyse the material obtained for this essay. This chapter will contain previous research, terminology as well as the Jungian theories which will be used; specifically, theories regarding the unconscious, archetypes and synchronicity.

After this chapter, the reader will find the *Research Material* in which I briefly present the main information gained from my research as well as the method used while acquiring it. In the two following chapters entitled *The Church* and *Possession*, the material will be utilised and analysed with the help of previously mentioned theories. The analysis will focus on the Church itself as well as the interviewees in *The Church* and the symptoms of possession as experienced by the interviewees, including an analysis and possible explanations for the possession phenomenon, in *Possession*.

The final two chapters – *Final Thoughts* and *Summary* – will present my own thoughts and discussion regarding the theories and methods used in this essay, both good and bad, as well as a summary to conclude the work. At the end the reader can find the sources which were used throughout my work with, as well as act as an inspiration for, this essay.

Anglican faith

Before the theories and material is presented in this essay, I believe I first must give some basic information regarding the Anglican faith to provide a basis for understanding.

Anglicanism – also called the *Anglican Communion* – is a faith which, by some, can be described as a Christian interpretation in between that of Protestantism and Catholicism. At the head of the Anglican faith is the Archbishop of Canterbury, of the Church of England; in a sense Anglicanism can be seen as a uniquely British interpretation of the Christian faith; however it does exist outside of the British isles today. It is a state-religion, where HM the Queen Elizabeth II holds the title “Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England”.¹

The Church of England describes itself and the faith as follows:

The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It worships the one true God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.²

Further, the Church explains that their faith originally came from the faith which is uniquely revealed in the Bible and set forth in the Catholic Creeds and thus admits the heritage of

¹ <http://www.royal.gov.uk/MonarchUK/QueenandChurch/QueenandtheChurchofEngland.aspx> 2012-05-28

² <http://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/being-an-anglican.aspx> 2012-04-19

Catholicism within their religion.³ As a result Anglicans uphold a Catholic and Apostolic faith.

The Church states that they have a worldwide family of churches, which some stem from colonisation. The Church also writes that worship is at the very heart of Anglicanism:

To be an Anglican is to be on a journey of faith to God supported by a fellowship of co-believers who are dedicated to finding Him by prayer and service.⁴

Thus the Anglican faith can be seen as a Catholic faith which branched off and evolved within the UK and its empire; a faith which is focused on prayer and activity within the faith itself.

Theoretical Bases

In this chapter I will present the various theories from Jungian psychology which I have used throughout my research.

The Jungian theories have been gathered from literature written by, or edited by, Jung. I tried to remain as close to the original sources as possible throughout my work as to leave room for my own analysis and interpretation using the original theories.

The books *Man and his symbols*, written and edited by Jung, as well as *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal* – also by Jung and edited by Roderick Main – are the two main sources for these theories. I have, however, also read *Ondska – individuell och kulturell projektion* (Eng. “Evil – individual and cultural projection”) by Febe Orést, to get some inspiration for my own analysis and approach to writing this essay.

To decide which books to use regarding the Jungian psychology, I did a quick search on Google and Adlibris.se to see which books were available. I picked out the books written and/or edited by Jung himself; these books may have had other co-author or editors on the side, but they all have been written or at least edited by Jung himself. This is because I, like mentioned above, prefer to use material which is as close to the source – in this case Jung – as possible as to get the theories in their base form, allowing me to attempt my analysis independently. Thus, books such as Sara K. Duppils book “*Haunted? Place-Bound Entity Continuity: an Interpretation Based on Psychology of Religion*”, a book similar to the subject at hand in this essay, were not used as Jung himself have not edited nor directly written these books. In the case of Duppils specifically: despite her notable contribution to the subject in Sweden and Europe I did thus decide not to use her book as a source

³ Ibid.; Shepherd Jr & Martin 2005: 349

⁴ <http://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/being-an-anglican/anglican.aspx> 2012-04-19

for this essay. Another reason I made this decision is because she seem to focus more on the belief in entities at large, especially those which are place-bound – as implied by the name – whereas I specifically focus on the phenomenon of possession by negative entities within a certain faith.

The reason I limited myself to Jungian psychology is partly because of necessity – without limitations the page-count of this essay would not be manageable – and partly because I personally tend to prefer Jungian psychology when analysing religious phenomena. Jung's theories are the most commonly used psychological theories in regards to religion, and for good reason; Jung himself did a lot of work in regards to religion and the so called paranormal himself.

Previous research

There seems to be quite a bit of research in regards to possession from a psychological perspective. Jung himself seemed quite interested in the unexplainable and treats the alleged paranormal in his gathered works which can be found in *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal*, edited by Roderick Main. Further, there are research such as that of Sara K. Duppils, *Haunted? Place-Bound Entity Continuity: an Interpretation Based on Psychology of Religion*, which treats the phenomenon of experiences with entities through the means of psychology of religion.

The Growing Evidence for Demonic Possession: What Should Psychiatry's Response be?, written by Stafford Betty for the Journal of Religion and Health, is another example. *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives* by Bettina Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson also analyses general possession based on Jungian psychology in their section *Jung and Freud on the Psychology of Possession* in chapter 5, in the book *Analytical Psychology and Spirit Possession: Towards a Non-pathological Diagnosis of Spirit Possession*.

I have not read all of these books in-depth but rather have come upon them as I was researching the subject at hand, before I decided to settle on first-hand sources written or edited by Jung himself. However, the general consensus in all these books seems to be that possession can be explained by various psychological theories, in particular that of Jungian psychology – especially using archetypes and the unconscious.

There's also been a few articles concerning exorcism and deliverance within the Church of England written by news agencies such as BBC. These do not seem to focus on explaining the underlying workings of the phenomenon, but rather give an insight into the world of possession within the Church of England. I think it is important to remember to maintain a level of scepticism when trying to find information regarding something like this in media due to the subject being quite controversial and therefore quite an appealing subject to exaggerate for the sake of entertainment.

In conclusion – specific study of possession and deliverance within the Church of England, from a psychological and sincere perspective, seems scarce since most of the studies focus on possession in the general sense without any consideration for the particular nuances in various faiths and cultures associated with the varying religions. This essay strives to thus give a more comprehensive account than some of the previous research as I choose to focus on the phenomenon of possession within a particular faith, using material gathered from clergy within the faith.

Terminology

This essay may contain some theories and terminology to which the reader may be unfamiliar with, or which have various meanings. I will present these with a short explanation of the meaning which I associate, and therefore imply, with the term. These terms won't have a chapter of their own as I may only mention them fleetingly while analysing my material, yet I believe it is necessary to include these explanations for the sake of the reader.

- *Possession* – The act in which a person gets overpowered by an outside entity, which in turn will control the person's body and mind, as well as causing the individual to experience various symptoms.
- *Oppression* – The act in which a person gets oppressed by a spirit; this is different from possession. In possession, a person's body and will becomes possessed, whereas in oppression, the person is tortured by an outside entity without having them “inside”.
- *Archetypes* – Primordial images which live on within modern man as dynamic factors; archetypes are images and emotions which are connected.⁵
- *Symbol* – a symbol is a term, name or picture that's familiar to us yet carry a meaning, or association, which is uncertain, unknown or hidden from us.⁶ It can be regarded as the language and the “people” of the unconscious in Jungian psychology.⁷
- *Psychosis* – A psychosis is any of several major mental illnesses that can cause various symptoms, such as delusions, hallucinations and a loss of the sense of reality. It can also harm the sense of judgement and other cognitive processes.⁸
- *Neurosis* – A neurosis causes anxiety, depression and other feelings of unhappiness and/or distress which are out of proportion relating to the individual's life and circumstances. However, unlike during a psychosis, the individual does not lose a sense of reality.⁹
- *Somatiform disorder* – This is an umbrella term which describes a group of conditions in

⁵ Jung 1964: 67, 76, 96

⁶ Jung 1964: 20

⁷ Jung 1964: 12

⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica, entry word: Psychosis

⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica, entry word: Psychoneurosis

which an individual experiences physical symptoms without any evidence of a physiological cause. The symptoms are considered to be unconscious manifestations of very real emotional suffering; the emotions may be repressed into physical symptoms.¹⁰

An example of a somatoform disorder is the so called *conversion disorder*. Symptoms of conversion disorder are seizures which are not noticeable by an EEG, the inability to move limbs or walk, etc. The name stems from the conversion of a mental, psychological or emotional issue into a physical one, something which often happens when a person is under extreme stress.¹¹

Another somatoform disorder is *pain disorder*, in which a person experiences pain without any apparent physical cause.¹²

- *Dissociative disorder* – Dissociation is when one or more mental processes such as identity are separated from the rest of the psychological apparatus so that their function is lost, altered or impaired. The symptoms displayed are seen as the mental counterpart of those seen in conversion disorder.¹³
- *Cognitive dissonance* – Cognitive dissonance refers to a situation in which a person experiences two thoughts, ideas, interpretations or opinions which conflict with each other. A highly popular example of this is the case of smokers; you smoke despite knowing the risks, and despite not wanting to take those risks. A usual response to this is through rejection or reduction of the contradictory thoughts/ideas/opinions.¹⁴

The unconscious

Jung states that we are exposed to various influences which may affect our behaviour, especially in cases which deal with extroverts whom lay all the emphasis on external objects, or individuals which feel insecurity regarding their own, innermost personality. He writes:

In our conscious life, we are exposed to all kinds of influences. [...] Such things seduce us into following ways that are unsuitable to our individuality.¹⁵

The more the consciousness of the person is influenced and affected by prejudices, errors, fantasies and so called juvenile wishes, the more they will become conflicted and detached which could lead

¹⁰ "The Gale Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health", p. 2504-2506

¹¹ Encyclopædia Britannica, entry word: Conversion Disorder

¹² "The Gale Encyclopedia of Nursing and Allied Health", p. 2504-2506

¹³ Encyclopædia Britannica, entry word: Dissociative Disorder

¹⁴ Aronson, 1969: 3

¹⁵ Jung 1964:49

into a neurotic dissociation and a – more or less – artificial life.¹⁶

Further, “cues” or “triggers” can cause a person to experience neurotic symptoms, or positive memories, when a sight, smell or sound causes them to recall something from the past.¹⁷

Jung points out the unconscious consists of two parts: the *personal unconscious* and the *collective unconscious*.¹⁸

The *personal unconscious* consists of the personal mental content which has been forgotten during an individual's lifetime. It also contains all subliminal impressions and/or perceptions which have too little energy to reach the conscious mind; it further contains ideas that are still too weak or vague to become known. The personal unconscious also stores all the content which does not match the individual's conscious attitude. In short, it contains anything which has been repressed from the conscious, not yet gained enough energy or is compatible enough to be a part of the conscious.¹⁹

An example: an individual whose conscious is controlled by emotions may have repressed their reason, rationality and/or certain ways of thinking into the personal unconscious.

The *collective unconscious*, on the other hand, contains a shared content between a group of individuals, such as a nation or even all of mankind. Unlike the personal unconscious, this does not contain personal content such as repressed personalities, ideas, memories or feelings. Rather, the collective unconscious contains natural and unlearned content. It is a result of our biological ancestry and the deposit of the mental functioning of the whole human race.²⁰

To better explain: a child is born without any previous experience, memory or taught information. Yet they are born with an organ – the brain – which is ready to work in the very same way it's done for humans throughout history.

According to Jung, the brains instincts are preformed and primordial images which have also been a basis for mankind's thinking; he calls it the “treasure house of mythological motifs”.²¹ These images show up during our dreams or can be seen in cases of mental disorders, such as schizophrenia. Jung states that insane people constantly produce a combination of ideas and symbols which can not be traced to personal experience, but rather is based on the history of the mind.²²

Jung likens these two areas of the unconscious – the personal and collective – to our “primitive”

¹⁶ Jung 1964; 49

¹⁷ Jung 1964: 36

¹⁸ Jung 1920/1948: 55-56

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Jung, 1920/1948: 56

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

relationship with the human soul and the foreign spirit. The belief in the soul is necessary for the belief in the spirit as two opposites yet related phenomena. The spirit consists of the strange – the foreign – which does not belong to the ego; it is dangerous and uncanny. The soul is the opposite; it belongs to the individual and the ego. In the so called “primitive” faiths we can thus distinguish two main causes of illness: a loss of a part of the self expressed through a loss of the soul or the experience of something alien expressed through possession by a spirit.²³

When any complex which should be associated with the ego is repressed or is moved from the conscious to the unconscious, the individual will feel a sense of loss – like in the case of the lost soul. When these lost complexes are returned to the conscious – from the personal unconscious – the individual will feel an increase of power.

In the same way, when a complex of the collective unconscious raises to the conscious and becomes associated with the ego, it feels strange, uncanny and yet fascinating. According to Jung it also always produces a feeling of dissociation and alienation because we become aware of something which should be unconscious and separate from the ego. Only when this content is removed from the conscious does the individual feel a sense of relief and normalcy again.²⁴ Jung writes:

What happens within oneself when one integrates previously unconscious contents with the consciousness is something which can scarcely be described in words. It can only be experienced.²⁵

Ergo, the collective unconscious seem foreign to us; it's seen as something which comes from the outside – yet it can trigger quite an emotional experience once we become aware of it. Jung thus hypothesises that spirits are complexes of the collective unconscious which either are pathological fantasies or new but yet unknown ideas.²⁶

Further, Jung states that all things which are repressed can become “demons”:

Even tendencies that might in some circumstances be able to exert a beneficial influence are transformed into demons when they are repressed.²⁷

²³ Jung, 1920/1948: 55

²⁴ Jung, 1920/1948: 56-57

²⁵ Jung, 1963: 135-136

²⁶ Jung, 1920/1948: 57

²⁷ Jung, 1964: 93

I interpret this as meaning that if we repress something for long enough, it will eventually find a way to express itself and “haunt us”.

Archetypes

There are a wide variety of archetypes within the human mind, which all express themselves through various means. Primordial images – a mixture between image and emotion known as archetypes – are dynamic factors that manifest themselves in impulses which are just as spontaneous as the instincts. This mixture of image and emotion gives the image numinosity or psychic energy.²⁸

They can cause a sudden change in a person by being at work for a long time in a person's unconscious, arranging circumstances that eventually lead to a crisis. Certain dreams, visions or thoughts can suddenly appear, but Jung states that no matter how carefully you investigate the cause of these reactions you cannot find them; this does not mean that there is no cause, and archetypes may play a central role in this.²⁹

Archetypes can create myths, religion and philosophies which influence and characterize whole nations and epochs in our history. Further, the energy of the archetypes can be focused, through acts such as rituals, to move people into taking collective action.³⁰

Unconscious factors owe their existence to the autonomy – or self-rule – of archetypes; modern man, however, refuses to see his own split state.³¹

The shadow is not the whole of the unconscious personality. It represents unknown or little-known attributes and qualities of the ego — aspects that mostly belong to the personal sphere and that could just as well be conscious. In some aspects, the shadow can also consist of collective factors that stem from a source outside the individual's personal life.³²

Perhaps one of the most widely known archetype is the above-mentioned *Shadow*. The shadow – just like the name implies – is the “dark side” of our mind and unconscious personality. Unlike the *persona*, the face/mask we show to the world, it is “hidden” inside of us. It contains all the traits and “sins” which we deny or belittle within ourselves, yet which are a part of us. It contains aspects and

²⁸ Jung, 1964: 76, 96

²⁹ Jung 1964: 76

³⁰ Jung 1964: 79

³¹ Jung 1964: 83

³² von Franz through Jung 1964: 168

content which may as well be conscious, as mentioned in the quote; however it can also consist of collective factors which have their basis in a source outside the individual's own life. I interpret this as meaning such things as society, culture and religion.

For example egotism, cowardice and unreal fantasies may all be traits we despise or belittle within ourselves; it makes us think: “it doesn't matter because no one will notice these traits in me, and at any rate, other people have these traits too”.³³ When confronted with these traits, specifically when seeing it in another person or brought up in discussion and pointed out by another individual, you may feel a sense of anger or aggravation.

Further, the shadow does not only hide in the unconscious but does come through in certain impulsive or accidental actions; when we “speak before we think” we may deliver a callous or mean comment which has its basis in our shadow.³⁴

The shadow is also more prone to get affected by the collective – more exposed to the so called “collective infection” - than the conscious personality.³⁵

We also tend to project our shadows on our enemies, putting our own least liked traits and behaviours onto them as a form of scape goat. Yet, at the same time, we tend to constantly and involuntarily act behind our own backs to support this opposing side/enemy without realising it. The shadow thus contains a staggering amount of power of irresistible impulses.³⁶

The shadow is not nearly the only archetype or part of the unconscious mind:

If the dreamer is a man, he will discover a female personification of his unconscious; and it will be a male figure in the case of a woman. Often this second symbolic figure turns up behind the shadow, bringing up new and different problems.³⁷

The archetypes mentioned above are two other possibly well known archetypes: the *anima* and *animus*.

The *anima* is the “woman within”; it is the female personification within a man. According to Jung, the anima contains the typical feminine psychological tendencies which concern emotions, prophetic hunches and spirituality, receptiveness to the irrational, love as well as feeling for nature. It can be the man's inner priestess or inner femme fatale; it can thus express itself either positively through spirituality and positive emotions or negatively through irrationality, unreal dreams of love and happiness as well as a tendency to devalue everything.³⁸

³³ von Franz through Jung 1964: 168-169

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ von Franz through Jung 1964: 173

³⁷ von Franz through Jung 1964: 177

³⁸ von Franz through Jung 1964: 177-179

The *animus* is the opposite of the *anima*; it is the “man within” - the male personification within a woman. The animus is not often an erotic fantasy or mood, like its feminine counterpart, but more often a hidden “sacred conviction”. Much like the *anima*, the animus can be expressed both positively and negatively. It does not believe in exceptions and can express itself through obstinate, cold or inaccessible behaviour; yet it can express conviction and strong will. The animus can be portrayed as a beautiful stranger, a pagan father-image or god-image. It can also take the role of a robber or a murderer. Regarding behaviour, it can be expressed through semi-conscious, cold and destructive reflections expressed a woman, especially in times where she failed to realise some obligation or through an escape from reality.³⁹

Both the *anima* and the *animus* can be portrayed as “a demon of death”, and the *anima* is often influenced by the person's mother whereas the *animus* is influenced by the person's father.⁴⁰

Both these archetypes can take possession of the mind; only after the possession has fallen away does the individual realise, horrified, that they acted against their own real thoughts and feelings; that they have been prey of an outside force, an alien psychic factor.⁴¹

The *trickster* archetype is yet another one of Jung's archetypes which can be seen in mythologies and our own mind. The trickster can be interpreted as a sub-archetype belonging to the *animus*. This trickster expresses a very selfish behaviour; there's a focus on the physical needs and desires. The trickster does not have any other purpose or goal other than trying to satisfy his primary needs, which leads to cruel, cynical and unfeeling behaviour. The trickster often manifests in an animal form, but tends to become more human-like as it goes through one mischievous exploit after another.⁴²

Simply put, the trickster is a very primal, animal and amoral character which can express not only the desire to fulfil our basic and physical needs, but also the “unfair” and harsh side of nature.

Worth mentioning is also the *hero* archetype, yet another possible sub-archetype of the *animus*; the hero myth refers to a powerful man, god-man or demi-god which vanquishes evil – such as demons – and thus saves and liberates his own people from horrible events, destruction and maybe even death.⁴³

Synchronicity

Synchronicity deals with coincidences. Jung points out that the more coincidences pile up, the more

³⁹ von Franz through Jung 1964: 191

⁴⁰ von Franz through Jung 1964: 189

⁴¹ von Franz through Jung 1964: 193

⁴² von Franz through Jung 1964: 112

⁴³ Jung 1964: 79

unusual it becomes.⁴⁴ An example of a synchronistic event would be when a person has a dream about a horse, and then – throughout the day, after said dream – continuously end up in various situations where horses are referenced.

According to Jung genuine synchronistic events often occurs in connection to an archetypical situation such as death; an individual may experience the death of another person at the very same time the person actually passes away, in a nearly clairvoyant manner. He points out that time and space become relative in the unconscious mind; Jung himself describes an event of synchronisation where he proposes that he may well have perceived something which in reality was taking place elsewhere.⁴⁵

When an event occurs externally which coincides with a mental experience, without any casual or apparent connection, it is called synchronicity by Jung. He theorises that this proves that a content perceived by an observer can, at the same time or in a future occurrence, be represented by an outside event without any casual connection, which in turn insinuates that the psyche can't be localized in space or possibly even in time, or that space and time is relative to the psyche.⁴⁶

Research material

The information regarding possession is based on interviews with four individuals that either previously have, or currently are, working with the Church of England and have met – and worked with – people who feel that they are possessed. It reflects their personal beliefs and experiences rather than any official stance found within the faith or Church.

Questions

I only asked general questions, trying to respect the privacy of all people involved; one must remember that this deals with real cases and real people who feel that they are going through spiritual distress. As a result, I only expected general replies. However, it was quite hard for me to obtain the information from some of my interviewees – or even to find interviewees to begin with – as there seemed to be a general unwillingness to talk to an “outsider” about this.

All interviewees were asked similar questions. The very first question asked was regarding how anonymous they'd like to be. Most of the interviewees did not want their name disclosed or any detailed information given due to the controversial nature of this essay. Further I asked about their

⁴⁴ Jung 1951: 94

⁴⁵ Jung 1963: 77

⁴⁶ Jung 1951: 97, 101

experience with the church such as how long they've been ordained as to get an overview regarding how often they've encountered possession in comparison to the amount of time they've been with the church, etc. I then asked general questions about deliverances; how they are carried out, why and how often. Only in the end of the interview did I narrow my questions down to that of possession in particular, hoping that the interviewee would be comfortable enough to answer these questions at this time. All questions also helped to give an overview of the interviewee's personal view and interpretation of the Church and deliverances at large.

Worth pointing out is that it was quite difficult to get very extensive answers from most of the interviewees regarding this matter. At one point I had to go through a higher stated clergyman and prove my sincerity with this essay as to “not waste any time” in my interview with the clergymen he later put me in touch with. Thus, my information is quite limited. We must take into consideration that I sadly had quite a short time to investigate the matter, at least compared to how much time could be given to research like this. Further, I had to limit myself as to not gather too much information or to get carried away with various subjects and answers; I tried to remain focused on the main focus of this essay.

Collection

As mentioned, collecting my material proved to be a bit of a challenge.

At first I simply used the search engine *Google* to search for phrases such as “Church of England possession” or “Anglican exorcism”. It quickly dawned upon me that the Anglican faith refers to the act of expelling entities, amongst others, as a “deliverance” - the people working with deliverances often belonging to a Ministry of Deliverance – and so I refined my search using those terms. The only three dioceses which appeared in my search was Blackburn, Manchester and Newcastle – I attempted to contact all of these with mixed result in responses.

I then went to the Church of England’s homepage and decided to contact the diocese of London, due to it being the capital, as well as the church in Stockholm, belonging to the European Church of England. In one of these responses I was recommended to contact the Christian Deliverance Study Group – a page I had come across myself in my research as well – and contacted them as well.

The interviews, due to the location of the people in question, were performed mainly over email. One of the interviewees were interviewed over the phone and can thus not be quoted directly as I sadly only had the possibility of taking notes throughout the interview. The phone interview took approximately 30-40 minutes, whereas the email correspondence occurred over multiple mails. We can only assume that this long-distance form of interviewing the people in question also contributed to the withdrawn replies and attitude I met in some of the cases.

Choice of interviewees

The reason I chose to use qualitative methods to investigate the religious aspect of this essay is because I personally feel that religion is highly subjective and therefore best can be understood through the direct explanations and answers by a follower of the faith, rather than second-hand recounts of the faith from sources such as literature. I decided to interview clergymen within the Church to get a perspective from someone who “lives the faith” and have worked with, or studied, several cases of possession. This would give a better overview of the behaviours and signs associated with possession than merely interviewing the individuals who themselves feel that they have been possessed.

The reason I chose to limit myself to the Anglican faith – specifically that of the Church of England – are several. Part of it is because England – and Britain at large – is much less secularised than Sweden, the Church of England still being a state church. Further, the population in Britain far exceeds that of Sweden and thus the chances of finding someone who have performed any form of deliverance – or at least have some knowledge in the matter – may be much greater.

I also chose the Anglican faith due to its unique nature, claiming ancestry within the Catholic faith yet having evolved to a branch of its own.

Furthermore, my choice of interviewees came down to whoever was willing to be interviewed out of the people and dioceses I contacted regarding deliverances within the Anglican faith.

Description of the material

I did manage to get some basic information – despite the general unwillingness I encountered – where the interviewees described the layout of the Ministry of Deliverance or group they worked with, the meaning of deliverance as well as some of the symptoms and behaviour of the people seeking help regarding possession.

All interviewees have been given fictitious names to protect their privacy, and only when I have the permission from the interviewee themselves will I disclose which diocese or specific church they are associated with. Other than that, I will disclose no other personal information, with the exception of an approximation of how long they've been working with the Church.

Most of my interviewees come from a varied background within the Church. I got in contact with Peter through the Christian Deliverance Study Group. This group is devoted to providing resources for the training of Advisers for the Church of England's Deliverance Ministries but is not a part of the Church, strictly speaking. Peter worked as a Bishop's Adviser for Deliverance for 10-15 years. Dave and James both have been working with the Church for approximately 40 years, but Dave is the Director of St Marylebone Healing & Counselling Centre, London, and Chaplain and

Clinical Director of the Guild of Health whereas James works with a Ministry of Deliverance. John, on the other hand, has been with the Church for approx. 24 years and have not been working with deliverances but rather participated – mainly as an observer – in deliverances earlier in his time with the Church.

Out of my four interviewees, three were very focused on psychology rather than religion and spiritual causes. Half of my interviewees – two people – believed in demon possession being possible, and only one feel that they actually had experienced true possession in a few of the people they've worked with. The other two expressed a belief in the possibility of a person being controlled or even possessed by “outside forces”, such as circumstances in their life or negative events.

True possession is rare. Dissociative disorders are easily confused with possession. [...] I believe true possession is possible. It can arise from occult practice [sic] where a person surrenders their own will to an alien spirit (Peter).

I do believe that we can be possessed or controlled by external, non-physical agencies. Just think of the power of fear, rumour or suspicion to modify people's thinking and feelings about each other. Parents can also put their prejudices into their children. Or, one child may be unconsciously selected to be the bad or problem child in a family and made to carry the tensions and conflicts which should be being carried by the family as a whole (Dave).

John, in turn, feel that there are range of circumstances affecting the individual; he has never personally felt that power being a demon. He also pointed out that it's not simply psychological either, but sometimes physical.

There seems to be a disagreement regarding the steps the clergy would take within the Church before acting upon a deliverance as well; in some of my interviews, such as that with Dave and Peter, it was made clear that the Church investigates whether or not there may be a psychiatric reason for why the person may feel possessed. However, when asked whether or not the Church takes this step, both James seem to disagree.

It might be fairer to say that we always bear this possibility in mind ~ and in the case of troubled houses we would be aware of natural causes of the trouble. One of my colleagues often jokes that a former colleague of his used to carry a radiator key, to cure "knocking sounds" and "cold spots" in a house. Most often, however, the people we are asked to help have already thought of all those explanations and believe that they are not adequate (James).

John seem to stick to a middle road, stating that one may introduce the possibility of other interpretation, but that he'd personally take the personal belief of the troubled individual very

seriously without necessarily confirming their belief.⁴⁷ John also points out that the Church does not really have any distinct policy regarding deliverances, which leaves room for interpretation. He also points out that few people would jump to the conclusion that there's something demonic involved.

One thing all the clergy seem to agree on, however, is the practice of deliverances; it was very clear throughout my interviews that deliverances do not only focus on exorcisms and expelling spirits from people or houses, but rather holistically works with people who may feel they need to be delivered from anything that is obstructing their happiness or spiritual and physical health. It was also made clear that deliverances are quite undramatic and not at all like the rather extreme exorcisms people may be familiar with from Hollywood:

So by 'deliverance ministry' I understand trying to overcome whatever threatens to diminish people's lives, be that physical illness, unemployment, mental illness, fear, poverty, etc. etc. They are all one to me because I think God wants to deliver God's children from them. I think we get into big theological difficulties if we start to restrict deliverance ministry to evil spirits. We need to keep the big picture in mind all the time. In this sense, everything we do in our church lives is about deliverance (Dave).

We would work in an appropriate way for each person and each problem, and that might mean prayers for deliverance, casting away the evil in the person's life, or it might be a more low key prayer for healing of their memories, or their grief at a bereavement, or release of the spirit which is troubling them into God's love and mercy. I and my colleagues would all undertake this kind of thing, sometimes alone, sometimes together, and sometimes with the people who are not in the group but who have introduced us to the troubled person (James).

There was also a variety of descriptions regarding the behaviour of the person who may consider themselves possessed, as experienced by the clergy. I will however discuss this further in the chapter named "Possession".

My use of the material

Approaching this material, I have chosen to analyse both the interviewees and their own situation and circumstances in connection to the phenomenon of possession as well as what I found out about the people who believe themselves possessed. This allows me to not only interpret and analyse the faith and the world in which the phenomenon of possession still exists – and our society's relationship to this world – but also the individuals who themselves feel that they are possessed. I feel this will give an overview which may graze upon the question I presented at the beginning;

⁴⁷ John is not being quoted directly as his interview took place over phone and I thus lack full statements from him; the recount of his answers are based on notes and my memory and thus not word-for-word.

how can possession within the Anglican faith be interpreted with Jungian psychology. Further, it may also present some answers to the general questions I asked in my introduction: how does religion survive in this day and age of science and technology and how does it express itself?

The Church

In this chapter I will present and analyse the Church and the clergy which I interviewed. In order to fully understand the phenomenon of possession, I believe we have to consider both the clergy which works with this every day, as well as the people who seek out the clergy.

Society

As mentioned, I did encounter some unwillingness when I approached some of the dioceses regarding this issue. At one point I had to prove my sincerity by answering some questions; giving an interview myself, if you will. In other cases I did contact some dioceses through email without getting any response.

This unwillingness doesn't seem to be any secret, as Peter writes:

As you have noted the ministry is sensitive and private so it is difficult to disclose specific examples, but I hope this is of some help (Peter).

In two cases, I was also recommended to seek out the Churches official writing – in books and on websites – regarding the matter, despite my attempt of trying to gather information through the personal experiences of the clergy. This was quite interesting and intriguing to experience, especially since the Church seem to feel a need to have Ministries of Deliverance within their dioceses; they provide help with a matter which they are very reluctant to discuss.

If we consider this unwillingness to talk about the subject, we encounter an interesting contradiction. The clergy seem unwilling to discuss the phenomenon due to its controversy and most likely out of a fear of being judged or misunderstood, yet the unwillingness to discuss the matter makes the subject more controversial and leaves more room for fear and misunderstanding. It's a matter of: *if they have nothing to hide, then why are they hiding it?*

At first, this was my reaction as well. It was quite frustrating trying to get to the core of the phenomenon; not once did I get any in-depth information about specific cases – I even stated that I will not ask anything personal out of respect for privacy. However, even in response to my general questions did I seem meet some sort of unwillingness from some of the people I contacted. John –

the clergy whom does not work with deliverances first-hand – was the most willing to give out information and discuss the phenomenon of possession as well as the Churches actions and stances regarding it very openly; despite not being a believer of working with the matter, he gave me the most extensive information he could, without breaking any confidentiality. In contrast, Dave was very keen on pointing out that there is a huge focus on psychology; so much so that I personally felt that I wasn't interviewing a clergyman at some points. He states:

I have never encountered a case of demonic possession, pure and simple. There are always damaged, frightened, hurting people who are experiencing things they cannot understand. In 99% of the cases the underlying causes are mental illness, childhood abuse, or post-traumatic experience – the last two often lead to dissociation within the personality, so that when people feel that their ego is being afflicted or possessed they are actually encountering split-off aspects of themselves. These generally need to be engaged with, even if they cannot be integrated. To exorcise them would be to deprive that person of an aspect of their own experience or personality. We are psychological beings, just as we are physical beings, there cannot be a spiritual experience which does not also engage our psychology (Dave).

I do not argue with this assumption, as I agree with it from a psychological standpoint. Yet a part of me cannot help but to wonder what the last 1% would be; I was not given the information. Whether or not Dave simply meant that the other 1% is controlled by “external, non-physical agencies” - as quoted further up regarding his view on possession – or something else is not clear to me.

More importantly, I believe we must seek to understand *why* these clergymen and the Church feel so uncomfortable talking about the subject. It is easy to assume, like mentioned earlier, that the clergy may be unwilling to talk about it because they are hiding something. However, I believe I noticed a different reason throughout the interview. John apologised to me over the phone because he felt that he was not helpful, and that I may not have gotten the answers I sought. Dave also writes:

[...] I fear my answers will be disappointing to you, but I hope this is enough to give you some idea of my approach to things (Dave).

When contacting one of the dioceses I also got the following reply:

The Church of England (if that is what you are interested in) has no specific ‘policy’ on Deliverance other than the requirement that each Diocese has persons in place to deal with issues that arise. [...] One person will only give you that person’s experience and practice (Steve)⁴⁸.

⁴⁸ Fictitious name.

While considering the fear of disappointing me with their answers and the assumed need to point out that my interviews will be based on personal experiences and practices, I must wonder what they assumed I had in mind while interviewing them. On the other hand, if we consider the media-attention exorcisms get and the very dramatic role exorcism has in films and entertainment at large, it may not be so surprising that there's a sense of caution while discussing the matter.

As a result, I must wonder: *why does society seem to expect something negative and dramatic from the Church in connection to the phenomenon of possession?*

To answer this I feel we must look deeper than to the dramatic films and media which portray possession in an exaggerated manner for the sake of entertainment, and wonder why this fear and controversy came to be connected with possession – and as a result, the Church – to begin with.

My answer to this, using Jungian psychology, would be that we are projecting onto the Church and the clergy. The Church represent something we've repressed within ourselves in the modern world; in a world of science and logic, our spirituality has been repressed to the point of becoming “a demon” for us. Thus, the Church becomes a powerful symbol for everything we try to separate ourselves from in this day and age; superstition, spirituality and the fear of the unknown. In a sense, the collective is projecting their shadow onto the Church as a whole; the Church takes on all the aspects within ourselves which we dislike and have repressed. The more the Church withdraws itself from an open standpoint on the matter, the more people will be able to project their inner fears and negative associations towards the Church.

We must also consider that the unwillingness from the Church to discuss this subject also associates the Church with the very symbol they are trying to work against. The word “devil” originally comes from the Greek term *diabolos* which means accuser or traducer/slanderer.⁴⁹ It is not entirely impossible to hypothesise that the Church, through the general behaviour of the clergy and the Church's policies, invite people to associate the Church with already existing symbols such as the devil. By this I mean that the Church, not only secretive and thus leaving room for wild interpretation, also may seem like an accuser. Throughout the Church's history we can see that the Church indeed have held a very accusatory stance in some cases, e.g. witch trials; combined with the controversy of deliverances today, a part of the human psyche may feel that the Church – through deliverances and their possible belief in possession – is accusing certain sides of an individual for being evil. The behaviours and feelings which are considered sin by some within the Church can be considered a part of humans and their psyche, and thus it is not impossible that non-Christian individuals react and reject the concept of deliverances and respectively the clergy

⁴⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica, entry word: Devil; Sharma 2005: 2314

performing them. The Church can thus be considered a threat, either on a conscious or unconscious level, and the unwillingness to confront the controversial subject may increase the uncomfortable feelings sparked by these psychological processes.

It is not entirely impossible, in my opinion, to theorise that our current, torn relationship with ourselves also lead to our projection of negative emotion towards religion – and in this case, the Church – especially regarding possession and deliverances. It is believed within Jungian psychology that man has a Self – the totality of the whole psyche – which gets expressed through the discovery and attentiveness of the ego – the personality and individuality expressed by the person.⁵⁰ In the western world today, the general attitude of society would appear to be focused on materialistic lifestyles and values. Religion has gone through secularisation and become something private; however there still seem to be a sense of disapproval towards religion in general. The Self can be expressed through something nearly transcendent.

Its subjective experience conveys the feeling that some supra-personal force is actively interfering in a creative way.⁵¹

I interpret this as meaning that we are not allowing our ego to listen to our Self; stopping our personality from growing, in a sense. Much like quoted earlier, anything repressed can turn into “demons” and affect us negatively. Repressing something as powerful as the Self may result in negative emotions in the least, and dissociative behaviour and neurosis – perhaps even a psychosis – at the worst. This repressed feeling of the Self which feels like a supra-personal force may get manifested through an unwillingness and apprehension towards traditional religion, and thus people may project their own torn relationship with the Self unto that of the Church, as the Church represents a supra-personal force which they themselves believe is guiding and leading them forward – much like the Self would if we listened to it. Thus, the act of deliverance may trigger some deep emotional reaction within us as it can become a symbol and representation of the ego's struggle against the Self; the person being exorcised would represent the ego which struggles against the Self in the ritual, making us react negatively and apprehensive as we choose to focus more on our ego, persona and materialistic lifestyle than we may choose to focus on the Self and transcendent, unexplainable sensations and experiences.

Further, I also believe that some people may unwillingly come in touch with an archetype when confronted with the Church; people who experience negative animus-associations may project this upon the Church at large. The Clergy become the villains; the suppressing dominant male which use

⁵⁰ von Franz through Jung 1964: 162-163

⁵¹ von Franz through Jung 1964: 162

exorcism and deliverances to oppress their followers through ritual in the eyes of the individual experiencing negative animus-association.

Clergy

The clergy themselves seem quite torn regarding their stance on possession. Dave writes:

We live in the 21st century and should beware of simply trying to transpose the anthropology of 1st century Palestine into our modern world (Dave).

I believe this statement shows the very torn relationship the clergy whom work with deliverances are confronted with. In the western world, we are becoming more and more dissociated from traditional religion, such as Christianity practised within the confines of a church.

Perhaps out of fear of the controversy or perhaps as a result of the modern age and it's discoveries within science and technology, the clergy seem to approach their own religion with the mindset one would with any issue within the western world. Some of the clergy seem to have moved away from *empirical religion* and moved towards a *scientific religion*. This relationship the clergy may have with their own faith seem to act as a metaphor for the western world's relationship with religion and, as a result, the Church.

I interpret the unwillingness of the clergy to give detailed answers or discuss the matter openly as not only an attempt at defending their Church and faith against misunderstanding, controversy and judgement, but also as a self-defence mechanism in which the clergy don't have to confront their possible torn relationship. I feel that this theory is backed up by the simple fact that John – a clergyman who quite clearly don't believe in demonic possession – and James – who clearly do believe in demonic possession – both were the most open and informative in the interviews. Peter, whom believe in the possibility of demonic possession yet felt he'd never encountered it, seemed more torn between psychology and religion. Dave, whom feel that he's never encountered demonic possession, was very straight-forward regarding psychological reasons behind assumed possession yet at the same time I personally felt like I had to try to convince him to reply to my questions. At one point I listed some signs of possession that were given to me by another of the interviewees and asked Dave whether or not he's seen these behaviours in the people he's worked with, and in his reply he avoided stating whether or not he had seen said behaviour in the people he'd worked with but rather expressed:

I have met many people who believed that they were being possessed by the devil. In every case, though, the root of their problem turned out to be intra-psychic, or intra-social rather than genuinely demonic (Dave).

I interpret this as an unwillingness to focus on the behaviour expressed by the people who believe themselves possessed; partly out of a fear that I may misunderstand or start a controversy regarding the claimed signs of possession and perhaps partly because he himself is of a psychologically-based mindset and therefore in that torn relationship with faith and science.

This divided relationship towards the subject of possession was also displayed by James, a clergy whom believe he has indeed encountered true possession. When asked whether or not the Church investigate psychological reasons for a believed possession he answered:

It might be fairer to say that we always bear this possibility in mind ~ and in the case of troubled houses we would be aware of natural causes of the trouble. One of my colleagues often jokes that a former colleague of his used to carry a radiator key, to cure "knocking sounds" and "cold spots" in a house. Most often, however, the people we are asked to help have already thought of all those explanations and believe that they are not adequate (James).

We can thus understand what a delicate issue this is for the clergy themselves. Torn between a faith which dates back centuries and modern society and technology, the clergy are further conflicted as they try to meet the people they assist in a respectful and understanding way, yet without necessarily belittling the persons experiences nor confirming it – in case the person suffer from a psychological issue that could be made worse with religious encouragement. Dave writes:

If they are prepared to accept the possibility that their troubles are psychological and not demonic in origin, then they stand a good chance of recovery. If, on the other hand, they persist in insisting that they are demonized, then the likelihood is that they will go looking for pastors who are prepared to agree with them. In some cases they may be helped – the placebo effect – in other cases they are harmed, and we then have to try to help with the consequent trauma and disappointment. [...] I try not to get involved in ritual enactments, just for the sake of gaining a placebo effect, because this would turn me into a magician who deals in power, whereas I think Christian priests should foster relatedness and love.

In a situation like this, it would seem the clergy could be held accountable if they agree with a person believing their possessed, as well as if they agree, making this a very delicate matter in which a clergy's job and reputation may be at stake.

Further, the clergy are confronted with the symbolism and thus associated emotion and

interpretation of the devil and the inner struggle between suppressing their shadow and negative archetypes. There's an added pressure on the clergy to be the “good guy” or the hero, but at the same time they also have to deal with the negative projection of society upon the Church; a society more than willing to revel in the possible negative outcomes of a deliverance or religious statement gone wrong. The clergy thus have to try to protect and care for the followers of the faith as well as nurture their own faith, all the while being both scapegoats and saviours in the eyes of onlookers. This pressure may be even heavier for the Anglican clergy in particular as the Church is still a state-religion in which the British monarchy is still associated with and even considered supreme governor and defender.

Whereas society may project their collective shadow, consisting of superstition and oppression, onto the Church, it is the clergy who become the living and walking symbols of this Church and the collective shadow.

There was also mention that the clergy may interpret a feeling of uneasiness around the troubled individual as a sign of possession:

Sometimes it is the sense of unease which we feel in their presence (James).

This uneasiness could be explained by several factors. If we assume the person who believes themselves possessed is manifesting and acting out an archetype (more about this in the chapter *Possession*), it is quite likely that the clergy themselves are faced with the archetypes. This could either occur through projection, where the clergy project negative archetypes onto the individual seeking help and thus experience discomfort, or through the individual acting as a trigger where the clergy come in touch with archetypes and their own unconscious, an event which is believed to be uncanny and awaken discomfort. Even if the archetype triggered is of a positive nature, such as the *hero* archetype in which the clergy act in the role of the divine hero saving a fellow man in reaction to a *trickster/villain/negative* archetype, the event is believed to awaken discomfort as the unconscious content is getting in touch with the conscious. Even more so when you consider the already existing pressure of acting right and just, setting a good example, being the “good guy” as well as maintaining their own, as well as the Church's, reputation.

So how does the phenomenon of possession seem to continue on within the Anglican faith? I have to base my interpretation on the following:

It is the experience [sic] of Priests of sound sense and good standing who have had experience of true possession and exorcism that have convinced me of the possibility that such ministry may on rare

occasions be needed (Peter).

John expresses a similar opinion; he feels that the Church still offer deliverances due to way of interpretation. He feels that the Church is responding sensitively and compassionately about it, *it* referring to the subject of possession and deliverance. He also feels that a few people within the Church readily would assume something demonic is occurring; if anything he explains his colleagues belief in possession as a result of the belief in the authority of scripture, where the New Testament describes possession for example.

I interpret these two answers as meaning that the main reason possession – and thus deliverances – still exist within the Church is due to faith and mainly the followers. Judging by the interviews, all of the clergy have encountered many people who *themselves* believe they are in spiritual distress or possessed:

I do not see many people who really believe that they are possessed by evil spirits. About 5 a year, maybe (Dave).

I would estimate that out of some 30 referrals in a year about two thirds related to people and the rest to places, though there is frequently an overlap so ministry is to both person and place. For those half dozen or so in which I personally became involved prayer for deliverance would be composed after careful listening and discernment, adapting traditional prayer resources as appropriate to the circumstances (Peter).

Across this whole range of problems we get asked to help perhaps a couple of dozen times a year (James).

As a result, I interpret this as such: the deliverances exist within the Church as a means of allowing interpretation and faith based on the scriptures, as well as to help the followers of the faith. It would seem that the main reason the concept of possession exists within the faith, aside from being based on scripture, is due to the followers believing in it as well as believing they're experiencing it. Which leads me to the next chapter: *Possession*.

Possession

In this chapter I will deal with the various signs, behaviours and symptoms displayed by the people who believe themselves possessed. These were gathered from all of my interviews; it is important to

note that these behaviours and symptoms were not necessarily seen as a sign of true possession by the clergy whom I interviewed. In the cases of the interviews where the clergy does not believe in true possession, it shows the behaviour of the people who *themselves* thought they were possessed when they sought out the help of the Church. In the cases where the clergy believed in the possibility of true possession, I will list the behaviours and signs which were considered by the clergy to be signs of true possession.

Symptoms and cause

It would seem that the various clergymen have various ideas regarding what would be associated with the phenomenon of possession, be it so called “true possession” or merely certain events and circumstances which the people seeking help themselves associate with possession.

They present their views and experiences regarding behaviour displayed by people who may be considered possessed – by the clergy himself or the person experiencing the distress – as such:

I believe true possession is possible. It can arise from occult practice [sic] where a person surrenders their own will to an alien spirit. The classic signs are listed in the book *Deliverance* pages 124-125. They include extreme hostility to Christian symbols &c. The ability to speak in a language unknown in the normal state using a voice other than their normal one. The exhibiting of exceptional strength in relation to their normal physique, also extraordinary powers of clairvoyance and other psychic phenomena. These may be experienced as very threatening to the victim (Peter).

People have displayed a wide variety of symptoms: hearing voices, seeing visions, speaking in strange tongues, lapsing into trance states, feeling ‘spooked’, feeling oppressed by strange thoughts or fears, believing that they are the subject of black magic attacks, having clairvoyant experiences, disturbances of dreams or sleep – you name it. [...] In psychological terms, the most common symptoms that I see are to do with dissociative disorders, or conversion symptoms (which used to be called hysterical symptoms) (Dave).

There is no one sign. Sometimes it is the story that they tell you, in which they have invited some power to come in. Sometimes it is their reaction to a bible story, or to prayer (James).

John expressed that the people he met, who consider themselves possessed, generally act very undramatic and generally just feel and express distress.

It would seem that – no matter the view of the Church or the clergy in question – there undoubtedly seem to be a certain amount of people which these clergymen encounter whom themselves believe that they are possessed. The symptoms seem to be similar in these cases; symptoms that deal with experiences which the person feel they cannot control themselves. Although the Church seem to have modernised the way they deal with these issues, welcoming in

psychology and science, the people themselves seem to seek out the Church to get help for what they themselves interpret as a spiritual and religious issue.

It seems like the troubled individual themselves are the first to seek help and assume that they are indeed suffering from possession; whether the clergymen agree with them or not seem to be based on the clergymen's own faith and to what extent they look into alternative causes.

We do not go around looking for people who need help. Ideally we should like people to go to their local church, and the minister there should then call us in if he or she feels the problem is too big for them, or if the extra importance of an outsider might reassure the person with the problem. Often people will ring the bishop, or call at the cathedral, and the bishop's staff will then contact us with the details, and we then make contact with them (James).

Peter and Dave both seem to agree that practising the occult could be a reason for why a person would experience what can be seen as possession. The act of inviting an outside force in, or – according to James – incessant sin or practice of the occult/sinful behaviour by the individual or even their family can lead to possession. Agreed by all of the interviewees is that psychological reasons could be a cause; whether or not possession is believed as an actual spiritual situation or not, there seems to be a belief that psychological reasons could make the person vulnerable – either to actual possession or to the belief that they are possessed.

Interestingly, Dave seem to feel that multiculturalism and lack of understanding of modern science may be a reason for the belief in possession in the London area.

Jungian interpretation of possession syndrome

Using Jung's theories, I believe that we can find are several reasons for why a person may suspect that they are, or feel, possessed. I will now go through these “symptoms” and present my own interpretation of how these theories can be applied to the above-mentioned symptoms.

Distress and agitation

Looking at the various “symptoms” and behaviours presented above, which are linked with the individual who feels that they are possessed, we see that they range from a simple feeling of uneasiness, agitation and disturbances to that of hallucinations, trances, exceptional strength as well as knowledge beyond what they should possess such as clairvoyance and foreign languages.

The main cause could be seen as that of the unconscious, as hypothesised by Jung himself, presented in my above chapter containing the theories. Like Jung himself said: anything which have been repressed can turn into “demons”. Parts of the unconscious can affect a person far more than

they seem to believe. Various parts of the unconscious could be triggered through certain events or experience.

I don't believe you can catch demons just by taking an interest in the occult or reading books on practices, though this can badly affect a person's spiritual health (Peter).

As Peter expresses it, certain actions may affect a person's spiritual health. If we rephrase this with Jungian psychology in mind, one could say that certain acts – especially those who may focus on connecting with one's own unconscious, such as so called “occult” practices – may contribute to a person being more likely to getting in touch with their own unconscious.

The *personal unconscious* may thus be triggered by various perceptions or “cues”, which may reawaken a repressed memory, emotion or idea. This means that a person who has acted “sinful” according to their own faith and view of the world, or whom have gone through a traumatic event which they repressed – especially in the case of events where the person may feel guilt, both personally and religiously, such as in the case of rape or similar traumatic events – could come to face their repressed memory and guilt through a trigger; refusal to accept this resurging memory or a failure of understanding the repressed emotion and memory – if the memory has been distorted beyond recognition – could thus lead to a crisis or behaviour which the person feel they cannot control themselves. This trigger can thus be something like meditation, something associated with New Age – and possibly what Peter means when he says “occult” - practices. If a person have experienced something traumatic which they suppressed and possibly feel guilty about it is also quite likely that any event can act as a cue or a trigger; in the case of sexual assault, a person may get in touch with the negative emotions associated with the traumatic event when confronted with the concept of sex as a sin.

Through this or other cues and triggers, a person may come in contact with their *shadow*. The shadow contains all the negative aspects of a persons personality and memories/emotions which they are repressing and despise. It is also insinuated that the shadow can contain content which doesn't necessarily stem from the personal sphere but rather content based on such things as the social behaviours and ideas which are collectively despised and repressed.

I think that for possession, or lesser similar troubles (oppression, &c) somehow the evil force has to be invited in, or generated by the person himself, through occult activity, or incessant sin, or because of family involvement in this kind of thing in a previous generation (James).

Assuming a person is religious – in this case Anglican – and thus believe in sinful behaviour and

evil spirits, as mentioned in the quote, it is not unlikely that a part of their shadow consists of the behaviours, feelings and thoughts which would be classified as “sins” by the religion at large. Their shadow would not only contain the content which are collectively despised by the religion, but also the content of their own personality which is frowned upon by the religion at large as well as the person themselves. Thus, if an Anglican came in touch with these very sensitive parts of their shadow, we can assume they'd feel repulsed by what they discover – aspects of themselves they would feel are sins – and seek to separate themselves from them. The “sins” and behaviours would, like James personally seem to reflect about, take on a “life of its own”:

[...] the word "daimon" in Greek implies a kind of inner self, or driving force for a person, not necessarily evil (Socrates spoke of being inspired by his daimon). I wonder myself (and this is not a general view) whether some persistent habit, or attitude, or sin can take on a life of its own within someone, so as to dominate their better self (James).

Looking at his statement, we can see that James already suspects, despite being a believer in true possession and believing he has encountered real cases of possession, that there may be some underlying psychological process which, in some way, end up possessing and controlling an individual.

The shadow-aspects of the person could, as a result of contact between the conscious and unconscious, be rejected and feel alien to a person who firmly wants to believe that they are a good-willed Anglican; it would thus be easy to – like Jung also points out – project your own shadow on the enemy which in the case of an Anglican could be the concepts of demons and evil. Ergo, their own “sins” become manifested in the belief in demons and when confronted by their own “sins” they reject these behaviours, feelings, memories and/or ideas and blame a foreign power – a demon – for these. When said repressed content somehow would get in touch with the conscious, they could thus act out the stereotypical behaviour often associated with demons within their own faith as a form of dissociative behaviour, refusing to accept these aspects of their own personality as a part of themselves and their consciousness/unconsciousness.

The confrontation with ones own shadow could be triggered by various events; the clergymen all describe psychological vulnerability and in two of the four interviews there were ties with occult practices. Multiculturalism is also given as a reason.

I don't believe you can catch demons just by taking an interest in the occult or reading books on practices, though this can badly affect a person's spiritual health. It is really only possible through active involvement, though persons who have experienced being cursed are vulnerable. Persons who just think

they've been cursed are not likely to become possessed, but rather may feel oppressed by perceived evil. Such persons are usually relieved by the power of a blessing (Peter).

I can't think of any obvious factors relating to background but, in London, we do have very large ethnic communities: West African, West Indian, Chinese, Moslem etc, and each has its own characteristic ways of manifesting distress, as well as its own psycho-religious ways of interpreting distress and ministering to it. Sometimes these can be effective, but they may lack understanding of more serious mental health conditions, like psychosis (Dave).

In one case the only cause that I could identify was some rather unpleasant sexual practices, which came to dominate the person's personality, so that they were an almost tangible second force within him. In another case, the person had got involved in a seance, and seemed to have been taken over by what claimed to be the spirit of a long dead leader of a coven. But in both cases the person had psychological problems too, which made them vulnerable (James).

The shadow – projected unto the devil or demons within the faith – thus can come to manifest itself to the person through the act of the “occult”. The individual reaches into themselves during occult practices that may involve meditation and trances; they touch the unknown and grace upon the unseen – the unconscious and the shadow – and it may cause a crisis for the person in question. We must also consider that individuals which participate in occult activities already may believe in the existences of spirits, demons and entities, resulting in their attempt of contacting and exploring these areas. A person's faith and view on the world affects their assumptions and interpretation of their perceptions; if your mind is set on ghosts, a knock could automatically be assumed to be paranormal rather than natural. In the same way, if you expect to encounter a spirit and then chance upon your unconscious, you may assume the content discovered are foreign and not a part of yourself.

In regards to multiculturalism, we can also assume that the big variety of faiths leave people open to various interpretations. Something which once was not a part of a person's belief system or experiences could be experienced through multiculturalism; the many cultures leave room for more religious faiths and ways of interpretation which may influence an individual to prescribe a psychological event as a spiritual one. The other cultures could also have our own shadow – or the clergyman's shadow – projected upon them; Dave may project his own superstition and spiritual fear onto them and their practises. In the same way a larger group could project their shadow upon a different culture, fearing their religion and becoming paranoid about curses and demons which may lead to a crisis that expresses itself as a possession. This could explain why the priest believe that multiculturalism may be the cause of spiritual superstition and suspicion.

The *collective unconscious* could also be triggered by rituals and various situations which would lead to the discovery of and projection/manifestation of archetypes, etc. It can trigger highly

uncanny and emotional experiences when it comes in touch with the conscious mind. The primal sense of “possession by spirit” is, according to Jung's theories, the result of contact with the collective unconscious. It is not meant to be known, so when it becomes known we feel a sense of dissociation and fear.

An example would be that of the *anima/animus*. Let us imagine a highly religious man. Anglicanism believe in sins and sinful behaviour; it is logical to assume that the sensual, erotic “inner priestess” of the man – the anima – would be rather repressed and considered sinful. If this man then participates in an occult event where meditation, trance or any other form of altered mental state was involved, it is quite possible to believe that he would encounter his repressed anima in the form of an outside form, a temptress and a “demon”. He may possibly already expecting to meet upon an entity, which more easily could lead to manifestation of the anima.

The irrational emotions, sexual desires and spiritual – on the verge of clairvoyant and “pagan” - aspects would come in touch with his conscious and cause the man to dissociate himself with this side of himself based on his religious belief regarding sinful behaviour which is associated with evil and demons, causing a feeling of separation, unease and uncanniness such as what is seen in dissociative disorder.

If this anima was highly repressed, the encounter with his inner woman could be traumatic and cause a crisis in which he could experience a neurosis or even – depending on the severity of his confrontation with the unconscious mind – a psychosis which can express itself through somatoform disorders and the like. This would explain experiences of uneasiness, feeling “spooked”, paranoia and strange feelings and fears. In the more severe cases, the continuous suppression of the anima or psychosis related to the original confrontation with the inner – possibly manifested – anima, could lead to physical expressions and hallucinations through conversion disorder or pain disorder. In the case of hallucinations, I would like to suggest that it doesn't necessarily have to be random expressions of disorders or a psychosis, but that it also specifically could be a manifestation of an archetypes when the individual is in a sensitive state, such as altered states of consciousness or psychological vulnerability, experienced through visual and auditory hallucinations.

Another possible expression of the animus is that of the *trickster*, which focuses on the physical needs and selfish behaviour of the individual. This would be seen as evil in the eye of Anglicanism which believes in the sin of the flesh, greed and selfish behaviour. Instead of encountering the anima as a sinful womanly archetype, one would instead encounter the negative aspect of the masculine.

Reactions to Christian symbols

The reaction to Christian symbols and prayer could be an unconscious response based on fear; fear which stems from the underlying knowledge that the shadow and personal unconscious or the anima/animus and collective unconscious are a part of the individual in question or have become conscious/associated with the ego, yet goes against the very faith the person base their world-view on. It would be a case of *cognitive dissonance* in which the person is experiencing two separate ideas, opinions, thoughts or interpretations of reality which go against each other. As a result they could reject one of the two and as a result try to repress and ignore this contradiction within themselves, something which would explain the reaction to Anglican symbols in the case of confronting ones own “sinful” behaviour and aspects of the personality. Simply put: some part of the individual may realise that what they are experiencing is based in the psyche rather than an outside force, and thus react to Anglican symbols and prayers due to the guilt they feel caused by their own “sins” or their rejection of this internal contradiction. The Christian symbolism becomes a symbol for the persons own inner turmoil, and when confronted with it the person reacts accordingly.

The more dramatic responses to Anglican symbols and practices could also be a manifestation of the inner trickster's reaction to the archetypical *hero* – the “god-man” which is re-enacted by the priest in the case of an exorcism. Dave, the psychology inclined clergy, seem to agree with this, more or less:

[...] extreme hostility to Christian symbols is likely either to be linked to bad experience of the church, eg abuse by a priest, or to a psychotic state of mind (Dave).

Ergo, the deliverance re-enacts the age-old fight between trickster and hero in which the person becomes the trickster fighting against the priest – the hero. Not only that, but two opposite parts of the animus would be confronted with each other: righteous versus selfish.

In regards to the exceptional strength, all these projections and manifestations as well as the underlying reasons and results of them, such as guilt, neurosis, psychosis, crisis, etc., could all trigger the “fight-or-flight” response which would explain exceptional strength, altered mental states, and the like. Dave seem to agree with this, as he states, in regards to exceptional strength:

As for possessing exceptional strength I have a friend who required 48 riot police in full body armour to subdue him, and he is a devout Buddhist with no signs of possession (Dave).

This very response isn't a new discovery; in fact, most of us may have felt it in a bigger or lesser extent when startled or put in a threatening situation.

Knowing the 'unknown'

The one behaviour which have not been treated yet is the speaking of a languages unknown to the person in question. One could propose that it is very hard to know whether or not the language is truly unknown to us. Once again, Dave gives his own interpretation of this phenomenon:

[...] the ability to speak a genuine foreign language (as opposed to speaking in tongues) might have a number of explanations, for example I have heard of such a case when someone was under sedation at the dentist's but with no suggestion of demonic interference (Dave).

Our brain continuously deals with an endless amounts of signals; not all of these ever become a part of the conscious, meaning we repress or forget it. It is possible that these individuals would actually have knowledge of these unknown languages in the unconscious, speaking with an altered voice as a result of going into a trance or personally manifesting their inner conflict or experience with the "alien entity", which really comes from the unconscious. Further, we can not be entirely sure what languages a person truly knows; we only know what they tell us. This does not mean the person is lying, but due to their dissociated state they may sincerely claim that they do not know a language which they in fact do know.

There's also the less dramatic behaviours and actions of the people who may be considered possessed. As mentioned by John, the individuals he encountered who believed themselves possessed did not act in any dramatic or unconventional way, they were merely troubled and distressed. Also, another behaviour associated with possession by some clergy is the act of clairvoyance:

[...] also extraordinary powers of clairvoyance and other psychic phenomena (Peter).

An explanation to the less dramatic cases of alleged possession such as the experience of discomfort or the clairvoyant behaviour of these individuals could be found in Jung's theory regarding synchronicity. Dave's opinion, although not necessarily associated with psychology, seem to agree with this to a lesser extent:

'Extraordinary powers' like clairvoyance are not, to my mind, extraordinary at all; rather, some people just happen to possess them to greater or lesser degree (Dave).

With synchronicity, you seemingly experience clairvoyant events where you have a thought or reaction to a physical event which occurs at the same time, or later, in a different place, with no apparent connection between the two. An example would be seemingly precognitive dreams, where one may dream about an event before it occurs. Another example would be thinking about someone and having them call you at the same time.

This can possibly explain some of the experiences of the individuals who think themselves possessed. For example, if an individual partakes in an occult event such as a séance or the use of an ouijaboard, this may plant the idea of foreign entities – evil or benevolent – into the persons mind. Thinking about this experience and at the same time hearing a natural bang in the house, suffering from stress-induced symptoms or the like may cause the person to experience what I personally would like to call *artificial synchronicity*. With this, I suggest that an individual experience what seems like coincidences that link together, but in fact does not. Being excited or worried about attending a séance, a person may dream about a spirit the night before the séance. After the séance they may be startled and connect various events and occurrences in their every day life to that of a spirit, perhaps assuming it is of a spiritual nature when they normally would not. This artificial synchronicity may then cause the person to become distressed, paranoid, feel “spooked” and experience sleep disturbances. Becoming more and more focused on these events, they may experience more artificial synchronicity over the course of a few days, which possibly may lead to the discovery of their own unconscious content. This could in turn trigger a crisis and once again lead to the various symptoms described above.

Final thoughts

In this chapter I intend on discussing the method and theory from a critical viewpoint, trying to determine the positive and negative aspects of them both.

The method I used, that of empirical research, serves to give an insight into the actual experiences of these clergy and the people they've encountered. I believe this is positive because you can get the genuine experiences and first-hand recounts of the subject at hand. However, the use of interviews also have certain consequences, especially in such a small scale. Not only is our insight into the world of possession and deliverances within the Anglican faith quite limited as I only had the time and resources to interview four clergy – I would have needed a significant amount of time to try to obtain more, possibly even needing to travel over to the UK for interviews face-to-face due to the unwillingness to participate in interviews on the Church's part – but it also highly

reflects the experiences, interpretations and faith of these particular individuals. Like pointed out to me in one of the interviews – something I came to discover while analysing the varied material gained from these four interviewees – the Church leaves a lot of room for personal interpretation and faith. No one interview was the same as the other. This, however, is only natural as every person has their own set of unique experiences and interpretations. Thus, the answers of the clergy should not serve as a generalisation of the whole faith. Only in certain areas were the answers similar, such as in pointing out the diverse nature of deliverances and pointing out that their encounters with people who believe themselves possessed were quite undramatic.

If resources were available to me, I would have much preferred to travel to the UK and do the interviews face-to-face; not only because I may have been able to interview more clergy due to there being less suspicion when you actually meet a person, but also because I miss out on a good part of the interview: body-language. I may have been able to take the interviews to a deeper level than I could by mail and phone; it is quite easy to misunderstand each other through written text and hard to pick up on nuances within the interview which you then can ask about, right as you notice it. I do believe, however, that my material can serve a purpose of giving *one* insight, out of many, into the world of possession within the Anglican faith.

It is also important to remember that my material is based on the experiences of the clergy rather than those who believe themselves possessed. This means that the clergy will give their interpretation on what they've seen in regards to behaviour and heard from the individuals seeking council; some of the interviewees also base their belief regarding signs of possession in the scripture as well as the literature written about the matter by other clergy. The behaviours associated with possession are not given first hand from the individuals suffering from this, but rather as a recount from an outside source – an observer of the phenomenon. As a result certain nuances and symptoms may be missing in my list of symptoms and behaviours.

Regarding the theories: I chose to use sources as close to Jung himself as possible. If the text was not written by the man himself, it was a part of a book which he edited. This means that I got the theories in their raw form, leaving more room for personal interpretation. I do not claim to be a Jungian analyst, however, so there may be several flaws in my reasoning. On a positive note I do feel that my presentation of the theories and use of said theories for an analysis can serve as a steppingstone for those interested in the same subject, giving them an introduction and starting point to do further research into the matter.

The theories themselves are quite complex and have several layers to them. I will start by pointing out the negatives first. Naturally these theories are just that: *theories*. This means that these theories only present one of several interpretations of the human mind; a mind which, even at the

point of writing this essay, remains to be fully explored, understood and explained. Also, these theories are pure psychology in the sense that they are theories based on Jung's original experiences, later developed by further psychologists throughout the years. There's a lack of tangible science in it, such as neuroscience, which thus leaves out any possibilities of there being neurological and medical reasons for the behaviours described and analysed through his theories. Further, Jung suggests that we all possess a collective unconscious and remnants of the ancient past within us, remnants we no longer understand. At the point in time, to my knowledge, there is no confirmation of this theory so one should keep this in mind.

Another thing worth pointing out is that I used my sources in English, meaning that there can be nuances and misinterpretations which occurred during the various translations, as Jung himself was from Switzerland and I myself am Swedish.

However, I personally find Jung's theories interesting to say the least. They give one perspective and explanation out of many, without denying the experiences the troubled individual is experiencing.

Summary

In summary: there is no *one* answer to what these individuals experience. No matter if the clergy themselves believe in possession or not, there seems to be some followers of the Anglican faith that do, which in turn seek help from these clergymen.

Two out of four of the interviewees believe in true possession, and one believe that he has encountered it approximately 6 times over 40 years. The church itself seem to be hesitant to confirm or reject the possibility of possession but rather leave it to personal interpretation; we can understand why they're so reserved seeing as possession is a very controversial subjects in today's day and age – even more so within a state religion connected to the Queen herself, which has many followers.

Jung presents many theories which can be applied to the experience of possession. These are only one way to interpret what these individuals are experiencing however, especially since the experiences contain a wide variety of behaviour and circumstances.

We can summarise my essay through the following points:

- There is no *one* belief within the Church of England and Anglican faith regarding possession; it does however continue to be an issue which a few people within the faith themselves believe they have experienced.

- Even in the cases where the clergy themselves believe in possession, what they consider true possession seem to be very rare and they consider psychological and physiological alternatives for the persons distress.
- The phenomenon of possession seems to still be prevalent in the Church of England – at a relatively small scale in comparison to the UK's population – due to scripture and due to the faith of the followers of the faith rather than any policy or faith enforced by the clergy or Church itself.
- The many behaviours associated with possession range between the following: hostility and reactions to Christian symbols and prayers, speaking in an unknown language in an altered voice, altered states of consciousness, exceptional strength, clairvoyant abilities, auditory and visual hallucinations and vision, a feeling of oppression by an outside force, fears or emotions, disturbances of dreams and sleep, dissociation, conversion symptoms and paranoia.
- Archetypes, such as the shadow and anima/animus, can affect a persons conscious mind if the person somehow becomes aware of these and have them associate with their ego.
- Synchronicity can lead to a slightly apprehensive state in which the person finds religious causes for the coincidences.
- *Artificial synchronicity* consists of cases of misinterpreted and artificial coincidences which may be assigned to the paranormal if the person is so inclined.
- The unconscious – both personal and collective – can lead to uncanny feelings of dissociation and/or discomfort, which also can be caused by synchronistic events. This can lead to a crisis, neurosis, psychosis and/or various disorders such as conversion disorder.
- There is no *one* reason behind the experiences of an individual when they believe themselves possessed. Ignoring the possibility of religious causes behind their distress: possession can be the result of highly complex events, memories, emotions and psychological processes.

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