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## Theatre of Exorcism: Evoking the Past to Control the Present

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<b>Keywords</b>  -exorcism -possession -extreme behaviors -mental illness -theatre of exorcism -demonic authority	<b>Abstract:</b> The paper will investigate the dramatic treatment of conjuring in the past theological and demonological texts of one of the English Renaissance plays. Exorcism is widely discussed and scientifically tackled during the twenty-first century theatrically and cinematically which is seemingly reflecting the out-off-heavenly thorough needs for eternal happiness. The paper is mainly divided into two parts. It starts with an introduction about the terms that are concerned mainly with the theme of the study. The first part is entitled 'Readings in Exorcism and the Spiritual Challenge of Religion and Science'. It sheds light on various dimensions of exorcism in religion and science and deals with certain Classical Perspectives. The second part is entitled 'Demonic Possession of Staging Exorcism'. It deals with some selected classical and modern plays that exemplify the significance of exorcism during the middle ages, and the increasing demand for exorcists in most updated dramatic adaptation of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century. The second part illustrates the medical horror drama caused by exorcism set in a catholic hospital of a modern Korean drama <i>Priest</i> (2018) written by Moon Man-Se. This part is also concerned with a modern play which was dramatized in two acts by Tim J. Kelly entitled <i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i> (1992) as to be the main focus of the present study..
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مسرح إخراج الجن : استلهام الماضي  
للسيطرة على الحاضر

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الخلاصة:	الكلمات الدالة:
يتناول هذا البحث موضوع تلبس الجن بالبشر وكيفية معالجته في أحد النصوص المسرحية في عصر النهضة. كما أن إخراج الأرواح من البشر هو من المواضيع التي تحظى بنقاش مستفيض ويتناوله عدد من الكتاب في القرن الحادي والعشرين في الأعمال المسرحية والسينمائية مما يعكس بحث الإنسان عن السعادة الأبدية. ينقسم البحث على مقدمة و قسمين فيبدأ بمقدمة عن المصطلحات المتعلقة بهذا الموضوع. أما القسم الأول: "قراءات في إخراج الأرواح والتحدي الروحي للدين والعلم" فيحاول تسليط الضوء على مختلف أبعاد إخراج الأرواح من الناحيتين الدينية والعلمية ويتناول الموضوع من وجهة النظر الكلاسيكية. أما القسم الثاني "التلبس الشيطاني وتجسيد إخراج الأرواح مسرحياً" فيتناول بعض المسرحيات الكلاسيكية والحديثة المختارة والتي تمثل أهمية إخراج الأرواح في العصور الوسطى، والحاجة المتزايدة للمختصين بإخراج الأرواح في الأعمال المسرحية الحديثة في القرن الحادي والعشرين. كما يبين القسم الثاني الرعب الطبي الذي سببه إخراج الأرواح في مستشفى كاثوليكى في المسرحية الكورية الحديثة ذات الفصلين "أحدب نوتردام" من تأليف تيم جي كيلى (١٩٩٢) والتي ستكون محور الدراسة الحالية.	إخراج الأرواح -التلبس -المرض العقلي -مسرح إخراج الأرواح
	معلومات البحث
	تاريخ البحث:
	-الاستلام: ١٢ ٢٠١٩/١١/
	-القبول ٢٠١٩/١٢/١٨:
	التوفر على النت

## Introduction

*The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic .... Music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment.*  
(William Bennett 16)

Exorcism started to be performed on stage during the early seventeenth century. It was rejected by Catholicism and radical Puritanism because it stood against the basic perspectives of reformed religion. On stage, exorcism is the satanic rituals manifested as supernatural. It is derived from a notion that Satan inhabits human body and the demonic figure could manifest itself in the material world. Possession and Exorcism were topics that fascinated playwrights of the seventeenth century who indirectly wanted to address the religious and political hypocrisy. The process of staging the demonic figure in the English Renaissance plays and the contemporary exorcism traced back to the theological and medical purpose of nature in which both are far distant. Phases debate the nature of the self and the tendency of the theatre. The theatre functioned to present personal and social controversy over exorcism to develop debatable shows between orthodox and heterodox religious attitudes. The demonic possession was staged openly by satanic figures or constructed as that exorcised by a character's behavior in which a ritual of exorcism performed or verbal indications of demonic signs uttered.

It is hard to find a suitable answer to the question of how to hinder the growth of belief in 'possession', and how to respond to the increasing requests for exorcism. As hard as it may be not to dismiss concepts of possession and exorcism out of hand as archaic and unenlightened, there are modern elements to it --facets of culture that recognize and accept it as real and incorporate it strongly into their framework of the world. Many people have little opportunities to fight against beliefs in which they are preoccupied and trapped by. Therefore, they will use whatever outlet they have, even extreme behaviors that seem excessive to rational people. In order to address scenarios labeled as Demonic possession and treated via exorcism, we need to reach a greater understanding of the general lines of religious culture exorcism flourished in. Yet, necessarily, the definition should dig into the meaning of possession (physical or spiritual demonic possession) and exorcism. Demonic in religious folk and supernatural beliefs is defined as "a form of spiritual possession that takes place when certain violence and evil spirit control over a person's body" (Sands 3). Exorcism is defined, according to the latest edition of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, as "the act of driving out, or warding off, demons, or evil spirits, from persons, places, or things which are believed to be possessed or infested by them or are liable to become victims or instruments of their malice" (Todd).

Exorcism is usually performed by a person with a special religious authority like a priest or shaman. The practice was common in ancient societies and based on the

practice of magic. Ancient Babylonian civilization had special priests who used to destroy a clay or wax image of a demon in their rituals to reinforce the idea of destroying real demons. The ancient Egyptians and Greeks had similar rites. Many religions in various parts of the world continue the practice of exorcism. The Bible includes a number of references to demons and exorcism. The New Testament describes occasions when Jesus Christ expelled evil spirits by prayer and the power of his command. In the Roman Catholic Church, exorcism is an order that priests may practice with special permission. Additionally, it is mainly used as a preparation for the sacrament of baptism (Redmond).

During the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, medical exorcism had passed over liturgically the holy water and salt in missals. It became a necessary treatment for toothache. *The Libra de diversis medicinis*, compiled the mid fifteenth century contained the *adiurote gutta migranea* that presented to Ss Appollonia and Laurence (Ogden 18).

Many cultures and religions contain some concept of demonic possession. The oldest references to demonic possession are from the Sumerians, who believed that all diseases of the body and mind are caused by "sickness demons" called *gidim* or *gid-dim* (Skarsanne 157-17). The priest who practiced exorcisms in these nations was called a 'sorcerer' as an opposed figure to a physician.

This paper approaches exorcism from two arguing points of view. The first determines that the exorcist is that one who holds the religious behavior as liturgical instructions of regulated concern that give legal foundation of exorcism rather than the illegal believing in it. While the second breaks down any essentiality that opposes the divine religious structure of the Church and increases the fear of any intruder spiritual enemy. Therefore, the practice of exorcism in some cultures does legalize itself as a sort of a shifting belief that suits the needs of the time. Yet reversely, it questions the possibility of destroying man's belief in God and Church. Francis Young in his book *A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity* (2016) states:

An exorcist speaks with the authority of God to cast out demons. Whether or not this invisible drama really takes place behind the outward words and actions of exorcist and demonic, the Catholic exorcist's pretensions to authority are grounded not in personal self-assurance but in legal fact. (Young 5)

Thus, the practices of official exorcists to confront demonic tempts are claimed by the Church in recent time to affirm the divinity of God and to stress the authorization of the Church. The entire legitimization of exorcism is a sort of political approach classified within the norms of authentic treatment against the intrusion and discomfort of harmful spirits. Nevertheless, exorcism raises a strong tension between being a rescuer or demons bearer.

On the other hand, diseases are often attributed to the presence of revengeful spirits in the body of the patient. These spirits are more often the ghosts or shadows of animals or people wronged by the bearer. Therefore, the exorcism rites usually consist of respectful or sacrificial offerings.

Catholic belief affirms that demonic possession is not that mental illness in which the latter, unwillingly, produces aggressive reactions and threat, while the process of following the demonological relations celebrates the secular involvement that creates new forms of witchcraft. Simultaneously, Muslims believe that God's creatures, other than humans such as Jinn and devils, possess their believers and authorize them, as their loyal followers, with a particular ability (Baig 507). Thus, the devil tempts people's belief to follow the less-value worldly desires that lead to disobedience to God or reduction of their own state of soul (Sells143).

For a modern reader, it seems natural to include the phenomenon of possession under a wide title of disease. Thus, exorcism can be considered seriously as a special case of healing of such disease (Skarsanne 157-17). People, sometimes, seek to be healed from mental and psychological disorder as an urgent need to get rid of mental confusion. Culturally speaking, people have their tendencies to find a direct protection as to widen the search for any possible treatment.

As a social and cultural means, many playwrights adapted the topic of exorcism in theatre to shed light on such practices. Thornton Wilder in his essay *The Art of Fiction* writes: "I regard the theater as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being" (Wilder). This paper points out a certain problematic perspective; the approaches and rites practiced by the exorcists to heal the haunted or possessed people. Hence, such a perspective does not confine itself to the consideration of the downsides of exorcism (Redmond).

Overtly or covertly, the main goal that can be dealt with here is the specific social issues related to death and after death. Importantly, most exorcist targeting topics examine the nature of man and his belief in the existence and the sovereignty of a great power that overcomes his/her limits of realization. Moreover, exorcism enlarges the belief in healing the problem of evil supernaturally or humanly and the affirmation of faith in the inner part of the humans. Such issues are dramatized on stages and in a direct reference to the deepest fear of man exploited by the exorcist.

The spiritual experiences of people under the negative effect of their souls are either haunted or might be haunted at a possible day by a demonic power and they ought to end up this quite-possible haunting by a spiritual awakening powerfully and deeply. They are touched horrifyingly by unholy influence, yet they could be devoted unwillingly to evil and satanic groups. Their submissiveness is unable to confront the questions of religious faith and they mostly doubt the possibility of giving up possession.

### **I.1 Readings in Exorcism and the Spiritual Challenge of Religion and Science**

What is more dramatic than a belief in self-faith and self-confidence is the mind and heart struggle to behave either normally or abnormally. Mostly, life is punctuated by fear where the quiet peace has reported less. In increasingly secular societies, exorcism accesses the living of people who are haunted, or wrongly thought be haunted, by demonic spirits. The problems of faith and truth are alarmed by the increasing belief in demonic activity and power. However, while the steps are being forwarded to stop that belief, the evil spirits are still out-spacing spread. Sociologically, people are subjected to psychological and mental illness when society accepts oppression. Hence, the satanic beliefs are available to be followed and trusted to disorder people who are probably in need for official and experimental exorcists.

The path of science and religion and its crossroad with witchcraft remains controversial. For example, the Catholic Church in Poland gave its word to ban abortion in all cases, while the demand of Polish women insisted to break that restrictive law. In Turkey, although the majority of the population are Muslims, the religious neutrality and secularity could not ban the same-sex marriage or the Rainbow Groups. Potentially, many countries fail to heal the gap between religion and politics that consequently produces social division. The divided will of people and the shattered soul of these societies provide a sharp contrast among religion, science, and human peace. Thus, the exorcist posits the unsuccessful deeds of these three aspects to create the possible complexity of the battle between good and evil.

Defiantly, studies focus on what people believe or disbelieve. In his study of the possessions *Loudun in France* in 1634, a notorious witchcraft trail, De Certeau points to a real evidence of people's possession when he refers to the convent of Ursuline in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The convent nuns affirmed that they were visited and possessed by demons and extra ordinary events that they cannot explain. Although they searched for reasonable explanations to what they had experienced, they were unable to find answers. Arguably, the case of that time in Loudun was the most famous one of mass possession in history. Those nuns were inflicted by the evil spells of Father Urbain Grandier, who was convicted of the crime of sorcery. People of Loudun strongly argued that science did not reach that degree of development to find a rational explanation and perfect answers to certain phenomena. The argument of Loudun possession was adapted by modern writers such as Aldus Huxley in his novel *The Devil of Loudun* (1952). Huxley emphasizes the fact that the increasing number of believers in possession happens due to the increasing number of the professionals who deal with exorcism.

Rudolf Otto, a German theologian, philosopher, and historian of comparative religions believes that reality is subjective and it is variable in the context of social analysis. He asserts that beliefs have consequences and human behaviors are generated by religious experiences. Otto believes that some phenomena have no rational explanation within religious trends (Otto).

Otto's work is directed to hold the contrast between the scientific pattern and the religious perspectives. To Otto, a hinge can be explained as it is appeared to the viewers, a thing as it is in itself knowable by the senses. Otto found more reliable interpretations in a German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who coined a central figure of the doctrine 'transcendental idealism', arguing that time, space, and causation are mere sensibilities.

It is also worth noting that other philosophers and sociologists believe that the demonic possession may go beyond horrible and horrifying events, but those who are possessed suffer from physical and mental problems.

The occult world and religious rituals reported a great interest to discover, involve, and investigate. In America, "Gallup Polls shows that the percentage of people who believe in the devil has increased from 55 per cent in 1990 to 70 per cent in 2004 (Giordan 2). J.Baker (2008) depended on the data collected by the first wave of the Baylor Religion Survey set in 2005. It reports:

African Americans tend to have a stronger belief in religious evil than do whites. Women have a stronger degree of belief than men. Not of religious controls, younger Americans hold stronger belief in conceptions of religious evil than older Americans. Finally, social class plays an important role in how certain an individual is about the existence of religious evil, with those of higher social class having weaker confidence about the existence of religious evil. However, these effects are conditioned by church attendance. For those exhibiting a high level of participation in organized religion, the influence of social class is neutralized. For those not actively participating in organized religion, the influence of social class is more pronounced. (Baker 218)

While the second wave of the *Baylor Religion Survey* in 2007 scoped a question of the possibility of being possessed. The updated report proved that the per centage of responding of agreement increased to be more than 53. The per cent of those who used to attend church is 77.9. The Republicans were 65.9 per cent, while Catholics were 53.3 per cent. In Italy, according to the Association of Catholic Psychiatrists and Psychologists, half a million people per year would undergo an exorcism (Baglio 7).

In post-modern studies, the entire focus on science and updated discoveries did not change people's thoughts that science is inadequate to explain weird events and to satisfy minds' inquires. The interchangeable role of religion and science did not satisfy the emerged need to investigate the revival interest in exorcism. More importantly, the Church of England based on the 17<sup>th</sup> century doctrines had revived an interest that supernaturalism, including exorcism, increased among Christians (Giordan 5).

M. Sluhovsky in his 2007 research "Believe not Every Spirit. Possession, Mysticism and Discernment in early Modern Catholicism", investigates how a medieval Europe showed an interest to clarify the meaning of exorcism and to adapt

its significance within the social and cultural contexts. Sluhovsky asserts that exorcism was adapted in Europe as a common practice by religious institutions and common people. Regularly, people used to go to sacred places as pilgrims to purify themselves and to be cured of their possession by the demonic spirits. In 1614, "the task of the exorcist became professionalized and codified the time the official rite was promoted" (Girodan 6). Vatican, for example, allowed medieval European to perform exorcism and to practice it professionally to celebrate the ultimate belief in Catholicism.

Catholicism also referred to the growth of belief in the devil and how that belief had a scientific explanation during late modernism. Through a psychological analysis, the belief in demonic power increased profound studies in theological interpretations and religious professionalism to heal possessed people by exorcism.

### **1.2. Theatrical Dramatization of Exorcism: Classical Perspectives**

Exorcism is considered as a form of didactic religious drama. It represented a public struggle between God and devil (Dijkhuizen 153). To most sociologists and religious people, the possession of the devil is merely the representation of human's sins and the reflection of his evil part. The rituals of exorcism describe the sermons of religious people uttered to the devil seduction shown in and out man's behavior. In early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the exorcists formed a crowd. They did their rituals of exorcism publically in London in 1602. Their gathering was a warning manner that the possession of the devil represented the result of people's deeds. Similarly, the possession took place in cultures that won worldly means but lost explicitly the natural terms of heavenly rewarding. Thus, the process of healing the rituals formed during the 17<sup>th</sup> century sought the stability of religion and the awakening of morals that desperately needed. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, religion and supernaturalism are interwoven by Macbeth and the witches in the play defeated Macbeth's self-confidence was only the notion of his belief in witchcraft and possession. Sebastien Michaelie (1543?-1618), a French inquisitor and prior of the Dominican order, wrote about the classification of demons in his *Histoire Admirable de la Possession et Conversion d'une Penitente*. In his *Admirable*, Michaelie brought into consideration how people pay a heavy cost of a horrifying possession when they committed sins:

All the Assembly were so affrighted...at the dreadful passages which Verrine had, touching the pains of hell that there gushed from their eyes abundance of tears, when they called to remembrance their offences which they had committed. (Sebastien 21)

It was obvious that the theme of exorcism was tackled by theatre of the early medieval period and many of the religious terms had depended on terms and idioms performed and uttered on the stage. Simultaneously, the concepts of possession and the demonic authority were coined to exorcism and seen all as a threat to religion. It was considered that such terms produce theatrical illusions of demonic interest in which Satan was characterized and performed as an influential actor and even "the



master of illusion" (Dijkhuizen 155). The illusory nature of the devil as seen by philosophers and physicians such as John Cotta, is that creature of God who can change his form and shape and can alter his appearance at will to persuade his victims by his super powerful ability through his rites and superstitions. Cotta wrote in his *Triall of Witch-craft* (1616) that "Devils cannot create any nature or substance, but in juggling shew of seeming onely, whereby with false shadows and outward induced shapes covering those things which are created by God" (qdt. in Dijkhuizen 156).

The French scholar Pierre Le Loyer (1550-1634) shared Cotta's philosophical impression stressing that the devil's ability is undeniable for he is capable of fostering his followers to believe in his illusion. To Pierre, human's imagination is subject to corruption and delusion by the misleading thoughts of the devil and by the devil's everlasting temptations. Hence, the existence of the devil character and his illusion on theatre had truly and indeed influence on audience's thoughts and appreciation on one hand, and on religious shadow on the other hand. Profoundly, there was an idea that man's beliefs are haunted by demonic concepts whether they are dubious or certain. People are overshadowed by early medieval century meaning of supernatural devilish power created originally by God that has its power from its creator. Theatrically, the reflection of people's beliefs was unavoidable on the stage. The French Renaissance humanist writer Pierre Boaistuau (1517-1566) emphasizes that the devil illusion dragged people's admiration in theatre. In Pierre's *Histoires Prodigieuses* (1560), which was translated by Edward Fenton, he assigns a clear comparison between the illusion of the devil and theatre:

If sometimes...we be drawne into admiration with the viewe of straunge things presented upon theatres or stages, which also we would not belevethoughe they were told us by others bycause they are so farr without the compasse of our understanding, why ought we finde it staurange if Divels and their Aungels (with their bodyes of the Elements) do abuse our fragilitie in shewing us visions, Idols, and figures. (qdt. in Dijkhuizen 156)

The relationship between theatre and demonism is positive in that each one of them reflects its effect on the other. The overpowering effect of drama places its stamps on the audience's minds. It is also accused that these minds are corrupted by attending theatre and be manipulated by the effect of the devil. In particular, women's minds were affected mostly more than men's by the demonic wicked deeds and Satanic cleverness especially when plays reflect the images of things women demand always to know and follow. The scholar John Greene in his *Refutation of the Apologie for Actors* (1615) asserts that the devil's ability of possession could take place strongly in theatre among audiences:

In the times of the primitive Church, a Christian woman went into the Theatre to behold the plaies. She entered in well and sound, but she returned and came forth possessed of the Divell. Whereupon certain Godly brethren demanded Sathan how he durst be so bold, as to enter into her a Christian. Whereto he answered, that hee found her in his owne house, and therefore took possession of her as his owne. (Greene 42)

Indeed, Greene's *A Refutation* brought a belief that theatre is a fearful place and the source of faked illusion. To Greene, the staged play brings man and women into filthy lusts of wickedness and increases their motifs to the invasion for more demonic hidden dimensions.

Both, actors and audience were fed by that Satanic invaded interests particularly when most of audiences are uneducated common people, which was the common attribute of the medieval ages. In addition, the subsiding trends in religion of the medievalism played a real part in condemning religion and sidelining the other interesting suggestions like the stage of the possession. The play *The Puritan*, or *The Widow of Walting Street* (1607) attributed to Thomas Middleton, examined the religion of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and its credulity of the demonological issues when Lady Plus was told by George Pyeboard that he knows a lot about her life secrets 'by a super-natural intelligence' (2.1.206). Lady Plus was never hesitant to claim that she is eager to know more about the satanic worldly temptations (Dijkhuizen 163).

Ostensibly, the stage characters could not play the role of God, but they could act the physical appearance of demon. This created a predisposition to accept the idea of the most-believable image of the demons and evil spirits on high- per cent daily life believing that the illustration and the personal reincarnation of the devil could be possible more than God's holy character.

## **II. Demonic Possession of Staging Exorcism**

### **II.1. *The Devil is an Ass: Spiritual Afflictions***

Ben Jonson's play *The Devil is an Ass* is a comedy performed in 1616 and first published in 1631. The first setting of the play is in Hell. The play opens with a junior demon called Pug persuading his master Satan to send him to earth and spend a day in London doing the Devil's work of tempting men to evil as an attempt to form a commonwealth of hell. Satan thinks Pug is not convenient to the mission, as the world has grown so sophisticated in its vices, especially in the immoral places of London. Pug beseeches his case and Satan sends him into the world, specifically to afflict weird persons.

Hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, hoh, &c.  
To Earth? and why to Earth, thou foolish Spirit?  
What would'st thou do on Earth?  
Pug. For that, great Chief!  
As time shall work. I do but ask my month.  
Which every petty *pui'ny* Devil has;  
Within that term the Court of *Hell* will hear  
Something may gain a longer grant, perhaps. (Act I. Scene I.)

Taking over the body of a recently hanged thief, Pug meets a foolish 'gentleman' named Fabian Fitzdottrel. Pug persuades Fitzdottrel to take him on as a servant. The squire does not believe that Pug is a devil, despite Pug's insistence that he is:

*Pug.* Sir, I shall put your Worship to no charge,  
More than my Meat, and that but very little;  
I'll serve you for your Love.

*Fit.* Ha! Without Wages?

I'll hearken o' that Ear, were I at leisure.  
But now I'm busie. 'Prythe, Friend, forbear me,  
And' thou hast been a *Devil*, I should say  
Somewhat more to thee. Thou dost hinder now  
My Meditations.

*Pug.* Sir, I am a *Devil*.

*Fit.* How! *Pug.* A true *Devil*, Sir.

*Fit.* Nay, now you lie: (Act I. Scene III.)

Pug is happy that he asks no wages. Meanwhile, Fitzdottrel is the target of various men, who befriend him hoping to take advantage of his foolishness and to seduce his beautiful young wife. Pug, in looking for opportunities for villainy, is beaten, controlled, and generally abused to be sent to Newgate Prison. Then Satan rescues Pug when the former's prediction concludes that London was more than Pug could handle. After discovering that Pug was a devil after all, Fitzdottrel abandons his new friends, exposing them as the conmen they really are.

The prominent points raised throughout the play are greed, stupidity, and vanity of some people in comparing them to a devil. Ben Jonson embodies those vices in Fitzdottrel, whose main concern is achieving social standing at any cost. Because the idea of success is important to Fitzdottrel, he will even let another man tempt and woo his wife in exchange for a fashionable cloak to wear to the Black friar: What are you wearing? How did you get it? (Act I. Scene I.)

As a part of Jonson's criticism, he puts supernatural creatures on the stage and the play opens with a scene in hell. Furthermore, Jonson brings the attention to the degradation of man's morals represented in Fitzdottrel as the latter is ready to accept the idea of seduction of his wife. Thus, the exorcism practiced by Pug leads the "gentleman" Fitzdottrel to sacrifice morals for fake promises of being a successful figure in society.

One of the recommendations raised by this study is that such phenomenon can be treated psychologically when possession is dealt with as a form of psychological diseases. In less developed nations with lower levels of education and far less access to health care, people still explain disorders as spiritual afflictions. But not all cases may be medically definable and remediable. Inquisitively, as noted in the Catholic news agency piece, exorcism is "not magic. It is the Church imploring God to come to the aid of the person afflicted." This can be interpreted in a secular way -- if the troubled persons believe that they can be helped with this ritual, and then perhaps they really are *helped*. It is plausible that many cases of deliverance or exorcism have been successful because people have "named" their troubles and outwardly cast them away, like the devil, to be gone and leave them free.

Professor Christopher French, Head of the Anomalistic Psychology Research Unit of the Department of Psychology at Goldsmiths, University of London has studied the psychology of possession. He also thinks that under certain circumstances people can benefit from exorcism. In fact, this explanation shows that exorcism is important for certain societies of different backgrounds. As a tool of enriching and strengthening ethics, theatre has been used also to show the demerits of exorcism. As a matter of conflict between religion and science, playwrights have shed the lights on this phenomenon for documentary purposes rather than giving a clear and direct judgment against exorcism. However, for some like Professor Christopher French the matter is different: “As I believe that 'possession' is a purely psychological phenomenon, any psychosomatic symptoms might be cured by any form of treatment that the victim believes in. The popular belief in exorcism is growing” (JREF).

This research also sheds light on the adaptive play entitled *The Exorcist*. John Pielmeier, an American playwright, showed an interest in adapting the novel *The Exorcist* by W. P. Blatty into a play. The first performance of the play presented at the Geffen Play house in Los Angeles in 2012. It was a successful attempt by Pielmeier as the audiences responded fervently.

## **II.2. *The Exorcist*: Good versus Ethos**

*The Exorcist* is considered the masterpiece of horror genre whether it is William Peter Blatty's 1971 novel or 1973 film. The adaptation of *The Exorcist* on the stage by John Pielmeier also relevantly refers to Chris as an actress moved with her daughter Regan to rent a house. The horrifying play starts when Regan found an Ouija in an upstairs attic, and she was thought demonically possessed because of her odd behavior and reactions. When the medical drugs and professionals failed to cure or even explain her violence, the church interferes to motion toward an exorcism.

Regan's odd scary behaviors are driven out by the devil that possessed her physically and mentally. She starts using foul language, vomiting green bile, screaming loudly, gazing, moving things around, and tiding to bed. Regan's unwisely play with the Ouija deeply increases the awareness of how people can be inflicted by strange means although the imaginative play scenes and acts are based on real 12-year-old Regan.

In brief, the play was a successful one in the main theme which is essentially concerned with unsettling battles of good versus ethos into a uniquely theatrical experience as complicated as it is suspenseful. Here, unlike Ben Jonson's play, many questions were raised for discussion. The expected answers are left to the audience to promote in details. The central and overt themes in Pielmeier's *The Exorcist* are metaphysical; What is the nature of man? How does one explain the existence of evil, and can that be reconciled with the existence of a benign God? This is the story of a child possessed, a mother who is frantic to save her, a priest on the verge of losing his

faith, and an anthropologist who, in a sense, brings salvation to all. A mixture of screens and projections are used in certain moments to create a vision of the ghostly demon and the terrible shadows that torment poor Regan. “The story is so utterly theatrical” says John Pielmeier “I mean what’s more dramatic than a life-and-soul struggle that takes place in a child’s bedroom?” Father Vincent Lampert believes that while steps are being taken to increase the number of exorcists, demand is still outpacing supply. According to Lampert and the International Association of Exorcists, “there is a great need for more exorcists (Cory).

The story focuses on twelve-year-old Regan MacNeil, who, after playing with an Ouija Board she finds in the house she is staying in with her mother, becomes bed-ridden with a strange illness. Symptoms include her making mysterious, odd noises in the middle of the night, developing a habit of stealing things, the sudden use of obscene language and exhibiting abnormal strength; she also begins talking to a supposedly imaginary friend called Captain Howdy. Desperate to help her daughter, Chris, the mother, calls on everyone she can think of; but when medical professionals fail to provide any answers to Regan’s unusual symptoms, Chris is forced to turn to the local priest, who believes an exorcism may hold the key to curing her daughter. However, in order to save the girl’s soul, Father Karras must overcome his own shaken beliefs if he is to truly tackle the demons that stand before him:

DEMON: Would you like to play a game, Regan? (The light flickers on again. A figure (DEMON) stands behind her. She does not seem to be aware that it is physically there. Its face drips blood.)

REGAN: What kind of game? (His moving lips don’t quite match the words.)

DEMON: A game with a prize. Don’t you like prizes?

REGAN: Depends on the prize.

DEMON: Smart girl. The prize is a wish. Whatever you want will come true.

REGAN: (teasing) Anything? Like a life-size chocolate pony? (The Demon smiles.)

REGAN: Or Dad coming home. Christmas every day.

DEMON: All you have to do is win.

REGAN: And if I don’t win?

REGAN: What would you like?

DEMON: I’d like to touch you. (Act I)

This stage version of *The Exorcist* also benefits from its relatively short running time. At just an hour and forty minutes, and played out over a single act, the story is able to ramp up a significant amount of tension and frightfulness, without risking the loss of any momentum through an interval at the halfway point. There is a reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the popular cultural depictions of exorcism in movies, books and on television: the more people see of even fictional depictions of possession and exorcism, the more accepting they become of the concept. When individuals steeped in belief in the devil and demons face a troubled person, whom they interpret as possessed, tragedy has resulted. Many afflicted people around the world are unwillingly subjected to brutal exorcism rituals that result in injury or death. The danger lies in the belief that the person is not their right self, but an “other” that must be removed to free the person to return to a normal state.

### **II.3. The Hunchback of Notre Dame: A Monster or a Man**

Victor Hugo's novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831), one of the great classics of world literature, is another example, which can be considered here as being dramatized by Tim Kelly in 1992. The play *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* discusses many questions including "What makes a monster and what makes a man?" This is the central theme of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, a sweeping, grand-scale musical from Disney Theatrical. Based on Victor Hugo's 1831 novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* tells the story of Quasimodo, the hunchbacked bell-ringer of Notre Dame, and his desire to be, one day, a part of the outside world. When he summons the courage to attend the Feast of Fools, he meets Esmeralda, a compassionate gypsy who protects him from an angry mob. But at the same time, Quasimodo's master, the archdeacon Dom Claude Frollo, and the new captain of the guard, Phoebus de Martin, fall in love with the beautiful girl. Adding to Quasimodo's struggle is his punishment and derision from Frollo, following years of psychological abuse, and the danger posed by the gypsies, who are willing to kill any outsiders who venture into their secret hideout. But before Paris is burned to the ground, "ill Quasimodo be able to save Esmeralda from Frollo's lust and anger? And, Who is the true monster of Notre Dame?"

**Woman 1:** Dom Claude.

**Woman2:** No, no, Dom Claude! You mustn't.

**Woman3:** It's a monster.

**Woman1:** Devil's work! don't touch it.

**Frollo:** Be silent. Have you never heard that charity given on earth will be rewarded in heaven?

**Woman 2:** what you're holding in your arms, Don Claude does not belong to earth.

**Woman 3:** It belongs to hell.

**Woman1:** what will you call the creature?

**Frollo:** I shall call this child Quasimodo

**Women:** Quasimodo!

**Woman2:** they say Don Claude is a dabbler in the black arts. A sorcerer. I never believed it until today. Who but a sorcerer would take such a child? (Act One: Prologue)

The gothic elements in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* seem capable to create the atmosphere of exorcism and the Cathedral responsibility is to cast off the demon as the resident inside the Paris medieval Cathedral. Furthermore, the forces of good and evil exemplify the power of exorcism in its negative form of portraying. Quasimodo has agonized speech about his facial deformity and the emotional touches by Esmeralda to the bell-ringer of Notre dame, as a woman of evil spirit, increased the abnormality of the situation and fostered the claims of Parisians of supernatural standards of capability of the monster and the witch. Yet, their brilliance and inner beauty might be the real threat that ranked them within the demonic challenge. The light soul of Quasimodo blindly made Parisians to think of him as the follower of the witch or might be the demon of the Cathedral. Casting him off from people unblessed the deformed bell-ringer and figured his heroic deeds in saving Esmeralda as satanic.

His furious facial appearance and his boiling the oil for revenge sounded for him the process of breaking the demon silence that kept compiling up for years. His nerve, eye-flash flames, ear-lips, and shaking body made him a devouring creature helped by dogs, the monsters, and the gargoyles of stone that watched people days and nights.

One of the misleading points is that this paper focuses on the growing belief in the need for exorcism in the last years. Some even start teaching exorcism in certain educational and academic institutions. Generally, God put guiding lines for good relationships, mental and psychological health, and prosperity for man. In a book entitled *Recognizing and Defeating the Demonic* (2015), Michael Mille suggests that possessed people or their families should learn how to recognize their activity, so they can take back the ground stolen by unseen spirits and to learn how to deal with demons the way.

### **Conclusion**

As we contemplate ethical, social and cultural considerations of accessibility of theater for people with the belief in demonic possession and exorcism, the most important question is why do such practices have great impact on certain persons than others? To present a comprehensive answer, we should consider seriously the social and cultural background to assign the real reason(s) of such a destructive behavior and then consequently suggest a suitable solution. After thinking of the long history of these issues and contemporary trends, it is of great value to present an intentional and purposive education. Through a translational education and any possible channel of communication, people will be allowed to view closely and critically some other people with demonic possession, beliefs in exorcism and 'mental illnesses performed on stage. It can be suggested that social change is possible by many opportunities for mutual social communication. Hence, the community gains greater awareness of the impact of exorcism, thereby reducing the believers in demonic possession. It has the potential to unlock understanding of the human experience for people with a belief in demonic possession and exorcism as well as the larger community.

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