LIBERATION FROM THE DEMON AND THE DEMONIC:

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE IN SPIRIT POSSESSION

By

Jaesung Ha

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Approved:

Professor Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore

Professor Volney P. Gay

Professor Victor Anderson

To my family that is God's one precious gift

My wife Yoonhee
My Children Sihyun and Elizabeth
and
Our prayerful parents in Korea

With gratefulness for your faithful support

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INTRODUCTION

How does one understand the complicated human experience of spirit

possession?[1] This question has plagued scholars both in the social sciences and in

religion, especially with the rise of modern science and, more recently, postmodern

appreciation for cultural multiplicity and religious practices. Spirit possession is more

than an idiosyncratic religious experience that provokes many theologians and scientists

with its unverifiable assumption about the existence of the demonic. Furthermore, spirit

possession is not simply a psychological phenomenon that demonstrates abnormality of

an individual human psyche saturated with hollow religious contents.

In this dissertation, I will argue that spirit possession, particularly for women,

reveals the reality of oppressive social and cultural structures and calls for radical

transformation. I will also suggest that possession plays an ambivalent role in women's

lives: it provides temporary respite from psychosocial pathologies and, at the same time,

it also sabotages their real liberation from the demonic, that is, from the institutional evil

that has confined women within limited gender roles deprived of power.

Spirit possession as an individual and socio-cultural problem has been omitted

from current mainline Protestant theology and academic psychological studies. On the

other hand, exorcism still functions as a way of healing through certain ritualistic

processes in the Roman Catholic Church and through charismatic prayers in some

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[1] By 'possession' here I mean an unintended episode of spiritual seizure in which a person experiences one or more spirits entering her/his body and co-existing or subsuming the host's self. Professional shamans manipulate spiritual power through intentional possession or 'trance possession', which is not a major concern in this dissertation. Instead, spirit possession here indicates a non-voluntary and abrupt episode frequently accompanied by psychosomatic symptoms, which is closer to 'peripheral possession' than to 'central possession' in Ioan Lewis's terms. See Ioan M. Lewis, "Spirit Possession and Deprivation Cults," *Man,* Vol.1.3 (1966), 307-329.

Pentecostal or conservative Protestant denominations. One might ask if possession has ever been at the center of Christian theology. What has been the meaning of possession in individual human psychology? What are the individual and socio-historical factors that have influenced today's perception of possession as a theological, religious, and psycho-social phenomenon?

Chapter I offers a brief history of interpretations of possession and exorcism in Christian Scriptures and in Christian theology. The human experience of spirit possession in the Scriptures is introduced in both Testaments, appearing especially frequently in Jesus' narratives of the Synoptic Gospels. How significant is the issue of possession in Jesus' ministry? What does he communicate through the practice of exorcism? Is exorcism a priority in his ministry and teaching? These questions also apply to Acts and to the works of later church theologians, whose answers would be more negative than positive. At one time, exorcism was seemingly essential for the church, but for the most part exorcism for spirit possession has not gained much attention throughout Christian history. Even before liberal theology takes precedence, spirit possession has seldom been a central concern in Christian theology. Theologians such as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Barth, and Tillich will be examined in the first chapter, but their theological foci are laid somewhere other than spirit possession with the exception of some notable concern of Luther or metaphorical use of 'the demonic' by Paul Tillich. Christian theology has kept a sound distance from active engagement with the phenomenon of possession, except for evangelism in the first few centuries and much later witch-hunts.

Then, what is the position of spirit possession in the modern scientific *Weltanschauung*? What does the psychoanalytic tradition say about possession and

exorcism as an individual psychological problem? Freud presents a anti-religious worldview through his modern skeptical critique of religion in general including spirit possession. He interprets spirit possession only as an intra-psychic product by denying its religious nature. Freud's psychoanalytic reductionism of religious experiences will be discussed in the second chapter.

Distinct from Freud, Jung explores myths and collective properties of the human mind in order to illumine the human unconscious. Jung develops positive ideas about spirit possession when he expands the Freudian concept of the unconscious to archetypes and collective unconscious. Jung basically shares with Freud the modern view of religious experiences, including spirit possession, as belonging to the unconscious forces which should be subjected to the dominance of the ego. His pathology of possession is also enclosed within the individual psyche, although his definition of unconscious goes beyond the individual dimension. Then, what are the common backgrounds between Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis that confine the understanding of spirit possession within the individual or collective intra-psychic arena? From a philosophical perspective, they share Humean skepticism with a strict empiricism as their psychoanalytic method of reasoning.

William James is not much different from Freud and Jung in that he restricts all religious experiences to none other than individual imagination, regardless of his respectful attitude toward 'varieties of religious experiences.' He asks what the real meaning of religious experiences is when medical science ignores religious complexity for its own purposes. In addition, developmental psychology explains the spiritual phenomenon in terms of childhood struggles with adaptation to reality. Does psychology

speak of any possibility of spirit possession if possession is identified with childhood imagination? According to developmental psychology, the persistence of childhood imagination only increases the possibility of diagnostic pathology in adulthood.

Regardless of psychological reduction of a spiritual phenomenon, spirit possession is still a popular topic in anthropological studies. Spirit possession leads to the understanding of culture, with its gender and political ideology, because it implies more than what appears as a severe psychosomatic symptom. Ioan Lewis argues that spirit possession among women of lower status in many African societies reflects their lack of resources of power. Many anthropologists critique his claim that spirit possession mirrors women's deprivation and victimization in society because his theory seems to disregard different cultural particularities. Then, does any possibility of generalization fundamentally prohibit thematic theorization of the shamanic phenomenon in anthropology? In anthropology, theorization of cultural phenomena after close observation is a feasible method of cross-cultural study through finding patterns and commonalities with ethnographic descriptions of the particularities of each culture.

Therefore, we may assume some possible connections between women's marginality and their proclivity toward spirit possession when possession is an open opportunity to women in a culture that denies them other roles. Lewis proposes that women who are deprived in society tend to become prey to the whims of spirit possession. Possession is the implication of women's 'deprivation' in social life and is more than a female psychological phenomenon related to the Freudian concept of seduction; there are, in this respect, socio-cultural forces that drive women into a depersonalized state. Anthropologists argue for and against Lewis's theory, but in many

African and Asian cultures, his thesis merits a plain approval. That is, women's propensity toward spirit possession has much to do with male-centered social system cross-culturally, if not universally.

Then, can religion be identified with a society where it is embedded when Emile Durkheim proposes that a clan and its god is one? Religious experiences are not completely explicated by social life due to their distinctive traits per se. However, religion is not totally separated from the society. Religion as an essential human environment, society is certainly related to human activities of mind and body, including religion. Anthropological and sociological studies of witch-hunting as a socio-religious activity in past centuries will be illustrated in the third chapter in order to identify the connection between religion and society in the study of spirit possession. In contrast to a witch-hunt, exorcism uses transcendental 'violence' in order to relieve the members of a society from similar tensions. Exorcism was a solution in certain social tensions derived from pathological marginalization and scapegoating. The statistical fact that the majority of witches accused in the human-hunting era were women implies the hardship of their socio-cultural and economic situations, including how the women of those days were unstable in social life.

In order to avoid reductionism, when considering spirit possession, the fourth chapter illustrates some particular cases from different cultures. The ethnographic descriptions of religion and society preserve distinctive particularities of values and lifestyles regardless of discrete time and space. However, in the pathogenesis of women's possession, those varieties narrow down to an uncomplicated picture: women's possession is surrounded by male dominance as a significant contextual factor. Although

the findings cannot be generalized to 'all' cultures, a certain socio-cultural commonality emerges when women are disposed to spirit possession as an optional path in extreme relational or economic deprivation under a broader ideological discrimination.

A study of Korean shamanism will further explore spirit possession and its socio-cultural pathogeneses with regard to concurrent psychosomatic symptoms. Shin-byung,[2] the divine illness, demonstrates complicated phenomena including psychosomatic symptoms and religious experiences. Possession comes before and after the initiation ceremony in a different manner: before the ceremony, possession is not put under control, but after it, possession may be skillfully managed in order to receive divinations. The healing is surely psychological so it can be described in psychological terms to a certain extent. Beyond that, however, the process of the initiation ceremony reveals a certain possible explanation about the mysterious healing of shin-byung in terms of interpersonal and socio-cultural horizons. Furthermore, shin-byung and its cure have some parallels with other deprivation cults in its development and background. Shin-byung includes crude spirit possession that has to do with socio-cultural features that may nourish marginalized women's propensity toward deprivation cults. The fifth chapter will offer a multilayered hermeneutics of shin-byung and spirit possession in Korean shamanism.

If spirit possession has a multilateral pathogenesis beyond individual psychology, what aspects of society specifically contribute to women's suffering? Based on the observations of spirit possession in many cultures, the last chapter presents critical analysis of socio-cultural ideology based on pastoral theological frameworks. Because women's marginality in society occurs in a pattern across the culture, an observer should

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[2] Although shin-byung is a non-English word, I do not italicize it because it is already acknowledged by DSM-IV as one of the culture-bound syndromes.

recognize it as another significant pathogenetic factor. Possession frequently accompanies some psychosomatic symptoms, and serious crises in life tend to precede them. Through a critical observation of complicated contexts in light of feminist theories and pastoral theology, the connection between spirit possession and social ideology becomes evident. The process may also reveal that the social ideological resistance for maintenance of the status quo, then, disarms any transformational intention of religious exorcism or shamanic ritual at a socio-cultural level.

Then, what would today's feminist scholarship envision as a holistically healthy women's life in the context of patriarchy that contributes to a chronic socio-cultural pathology? If many women are suffering from demon possession and its accompanying symptoms, what comes into the vision of feminist pastoral theology as a fundamental antidote for the demonic structures that continue to victimize them? Along with the task of revealing ideological assumptions about women, the pathology of culture presents itself according to feminist psychological insights. Beyond intra-psychic complication, spirit possession may become understood in the context of 'the living human web,' which focuses on one's essential relationship to broader circumstances, and the socio-cultural structures of ideology. A fuller vision of women's liberation from the demonic encompasses psychological diagnosis of intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics, critical analysis of oppressive ideology in society and culture, and prophetic challenges for changes with culture-specific strategies. In this respect, spirit possession among women signals an urgent need for socio-cultural transformation to achieve women's individual healing and collective liberation.

THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF SPIRIT POSSESSION

Spirit Possession in the New Testament

The Four Gospels

Exorcism by Jesus along with many other miracles is an important sign of the

presence of God's kingdom, according to the synoptic gospels.[3] Jesus claims that the

kingdom of God that symbolizes God's reign and authority becomes visible when he

drives out demons. It does not mean that exorcism is exclusive to the ministry of Jesus in

his day;[4] on the contrary, he recognizes that there are some contemporary Jewish people

besides himself who perform exorcism by driving out demons.[5] His uniqueness in

exorcism, according to himself, mainly comes from his dependence upon "the Spirit of

God" in the process of exorcism.[6]

Regardless of the significance of the practice for Jesus' ministry, exorcism is

often pushed aside as of secondary importance to entrance into heaven[7] or to the

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[3] P. J. Achtemeier, J. B. Green, & M. M. Thompson M.M. *Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans. 2001). See also Matt. 12:28 and Lk. 11:20.

[4] Exorcism was practiced in Hellenistic cultures beyond Judeo-Christian tradition and literature. However, they lacked the antithetical worldviews that the gospels commonly described between the Spirit and the devil. See David L. Barr, *New Testament Story: an Introduction* (Austraslia ; Belmont, CA : Wadsworth/ Thomson Learning*, 2002*), 276-277 and Delbert R. Burkett, *An Introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 86-87.

[5] Matt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19; cf. Act. 19:13-17.

[6] Matt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20.

[7] Lk. 10:17-20.

obedience of the will of God.[8] When the seventy-two disciples joyfully return from their mission, Jesus affirms their exorcism during the mission, both as the fall of Satan "like lightning from heaven"[9] and as the result of his authorization of the disciples' power over the enemy. However, he asks them to turn their reason for joy from Satan's surrender to their names being written in heaven. On the other hand, driving out demons in Jesus' name will not endorse the exorcist's admission into the kingdom of heaven unless he/she does the will of God by bearing good fruit. Therefore, exorcism is reckoned by Jesus to be less important than those priorities in the synoptic gospels.

In fact, exorcism is not a challenging work for Jesus' teaching and ministry in that he does not even struggle with demons in his practice of exorcism as his disciples do.[10] At his encounters with demons, he provokes fear and immediate obedience from them.[11] Although Satan is depicted as attempting to destroy his work in Mark and Luke, Jesus is assumed in the gospels to have overpowered Satan and its demons before the exorcisms happen. "He has defeated Satan *already*," [12]even though there is no answer in Jesus' words. With authority over diseases[13] and forgiveness of sins,[14] Jesus appears to possess the "power and authority over demons" *already*.[15] His exorcisms in the synoptic gospels

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[8] Matt. 7:21-23.

[9] Lk. 10:18.

[10] Matt. 17:14-21; Mk. 9:14-29; Lk. 9:37-43a.

[11] Mk. 1:24; 5:6-7.

[12] Ben F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (San Jose, California: Pickwick Publications. 2002), 156.

[13] Mk. 3:15.

[14] Mk. 2:10.

[15] Mk 6:7 quoted in Barr, 277.

indicate his identity and his victory over Satan because of God's kingdom that he brings about.[16] Eventually in Acts, the apostles consider Jesus as "a source of exorcistic power for others,"[17] and the early church leaders officially invoke Jesus' name as divine in exorcism.

Those assumptions of the authors of the gospels about Jesus' authority lead them to stray from the assertion of the significance of exorcism in Jesus' ministry.[18] Exorcism is only one of the substantial aspects of Jesus' ministry, which includes healing diseases, raising the dead, preaching the Word, and performing other miracles that act as signs of the forthcoming arrival of the kingdom of God. Due to the limited purposes of the gospels, the narratives of exorcism put emphasis on the exorcist's authority and the arrival of the kingdom of God. They do not pay as much attention to possessed people or the process of possession[19] as to those main purposes that are commonly apparent with many other kinds of miracles. Jesus "enjoins strict silence on the demons and unclean spirits ([Mark] 3:11-12; also 1:25, 34; but not 5:6-13),"[20] not because they speak wrongly

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[16] Boring points out that the exorcism of Mark 5:1-20 is not about an incident at Gerasa but about the declaration of "the meaning of the whole Christ-event: God is victor over the demonic." M. E. Boring, *Truly Human/Truly Divine: Christological Language and the Gospel Form* (St. Louis: CBP Press, 1984), 21, quoted in R. Pregeant, *Engaging the New Testament: An Interdisciplinary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 155.

[17] Eric Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism in the New Testament and Early Christianity* (Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 183. See also Acts 16:19 in which this becomes evident.

[18] Matthew downplays the importance of exorcism by omitting some crucial exorcism stories like that in the synagogue (Mk. 1:21-28), but exorcism in Matthew is still crucial in revealing Jesus as "the Son of David or of God." Graham H. Twelftree, "Demon, Devil, Satan," *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, eds., J. B. Green & McKnight (S. Illinois & Leicester, England: Intervarsity Press. 1992), 163-72.

[19] See Sorensen, *Possession and Exorcism*, 125-6.

[20] Barr, *New Testament Story*, 277.

about him but because he does not like to be exposed by the demons whose witness only disturbs his ministry.

Furthermore, the author of the gospel of John does not even present a case of possession or exorcism, although he acknowledges in his writings the reality of the devil[21] or Satan that works in a person.[22] He presents nine miracles[23] as 'signs' that "point to a deeper meaning (2:11; 4:54) or 'works' which testify to Jesus' identity (5:36; 10:25)."[24] They are far fewer than those in the synoptic gospels and include no exorcism.[25] John recognizes the upcoming judgment of "the prince of the world,"[26] Satan, and Jesus' ultimate victory over Satan that will come with his death.[27] Different from the other gospels, the gospel of John portrays Jesus as God who wields authority over the world, whose preexistence traces back to creation, and whose words have the power to judge the light and the darkness.[28] The author's concern is to make others believe that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, although he does not present more miraculous

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[21] The gender of the devil has been male in literature with the use of pronoun 'he.' However, the devil does not necessarily have male attributes at any rate, so I prefer to use 'it.' It is not because the devil is impersonal object but because any specific gender does not simply represent the devil's nature.

[22] Jn. 6:70; 8:44; 13:2, 27; 1 Jn. 3:8.

[23] Jesus performs 21 miracles in Matthew, 21 in Mark, and 18 in Luke. J. Drane, *Introducing the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress. 2001), 142.

[24] Burkett, *Introduction,* 218.

[25] There are six exorcisms in Matthew, five in Mark, and four in Luke. Getting rid of the overlaps, there are seven exorcisms in total throughout the gospels among 36 miracles performed by Jesus, among which about 19 cases are concerned with healing or raising from the dead besides exorcism.

[26] Jn. 12:30.

[27] In contrast, Luke understands that Jesus dies "when darkness reigns" (22:53).

[28] Jn. 12:47-48.

signs in this gospel.[29] Exorcism, or the exhibition of Jesus' visible power over the devil, seems to be minor to John in significance,[30] considering these magnificent claims about Jesus as God and his miracles as God's.

For all the gospels, with the limited number of cases of exorcism, it is not easy to conclude whether exorcism is crucial part of Jesus' ministry or not. Exorcism occurs as often as treatment of any single sort of disease by Jesus,[31] but its overall frequency is yet smaller compared to the total of other physical healings.[32] It is certain that exorcism conveys a manifestation of the presence of God's kingdom and of Jesus' victory over demonic power. Jesus risks being accused of diabolic sorcery[33] in order to heal those who are possessed. However, Jesus does not agree with those who claim the importance of exorcism in his name as a qualification for heaven. Exorcism, therefore, is not as essential as his teachings or other miracles in Jesus' ministry and as obedience or doing God's will in salvation.

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[29] Jn. 20:30-31.

[30] Twelftree presents three important reasons for the exclusion of exorcism in John: first, John picks spectacular miracles like using spittle (9:1-7) or turning water into wine in order to show Jesus' identity as the Christ; second, John plays down the theme of the kingdom of God that is clear in the synoptic gospels; and third, John connects Jesus' defeat of Satan with his death (14:30; 16:11), whereas other gospels frequently link it with exorcism.

[31] Out of thirteen healing stories in Mark, according to Twelftree, exorcism is the largest category.

[32] Barr acknowledges that "we should not make too much of these exorcisms-there are, after all, only five reported" regardless of its implications in Mark. Barr, 276.

[33] Matt. 10:34.

Acts

Acts has a different perspective from the gospels when it comes to exorcism, which is mainly performed by the apostles,[34] including Philip[35] and Paul.[36] Acts aims to replace old secular magic with Christian faith in its wider apologetic intention for "the centrality of God's purpose to bring salvation to all."[37] Acts illustrates an unsuccessful attempt at exorcism by the Sceva's seven sons, who regard exorcism as a kind of magic in the name of Jesus.[38] The story is followed by the burning of magic and sorcery books by the magicians who realize the power of Jesus' name.[39] Luke, author of Acts, coherently degrades the importance of secular magic as compared to Christian faith.[40] The growth of Christian faith in the non-Jewish world puts the church into conflict with its previous magical traditions.

In addition, Acts partly demonstrates a successful transfer of Jesus' authority and power to the church and its leaders through signs of healing. In validating his disciples' ministry as legitimate after Jesus through miraculous healings, the author of Acts uses exorcism in his name as a remarkable healing that "competes in the Greco-Roman

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[34] Act. 5:16.

[35] Act. 8:7.

[36] Act. 16:16-18; 19:11.

[37] Achtemeier et al., *Introducing the New Testament*, 266.

[38] Act. 19:13-16.

[39] Act. 19:19.

[40] Susan R. Garret, *The Demise of the Devil: magic and the demonic in the Luke's writings* (Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 1989), 10.

world."[41] Exorcism in Acts, therefore, exposes the limitations of secular pantheons and promotes the authority of the disciples and their messages in the Christian mission.

Regardless of the significant connotations of exorcism in Acts, the frequency of exorcism is only a handful in comparison to other healings. Narratives about exorcism are extremely small in Acts, except that of Paul in Philippi, compared to those in the gospels. Furthermore, exorcism is not actively practiced by the disciples unless their ministry is confronted or seriously hampered by demon-possessed persons, which is also true for Jesus' exorcisms.

It is remarkable to note that Paul seems to be reluctant to perform exorcism on the girl for the first several days in Philippi. Paul's exorcism in the name of Jesus follows only after several days of the possessed girl's continuous bother of his work.[42] For some reason, Paul delays the exorcism on the girl with a "Python-spirit" even though he understands the girl's condition and has the power to exorcise. His message in Philippi is consistently an evangelistic one about faith in Jesus,[43] but his exorcism plays a small role toward the purpose except that it leads to his incarceration and a jailor's subsequent belief. Exorcism is not a significant sign for the people in Philippi but a ground for his persecution. Therefore, in Acts, exorcism is an important instrument for authorizing the church and its leaders in the wider Mediterranean world of the first century, but its importance is peripheral compared to the central Christian messages.

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[41] Sorensen, 149.

[42] Act. 16:16-18.

[43] Act. 16:31.

Paul's Epistles

While the Gospel writers describe demon possession as a physiological and religious crisis of a person they notice, Paul teaches about the devil and its angels in the context of ethical decisions of saints. Oftentimes, he also employs a thought of evil as part of his own affliction. Paul "emphasizes with the bonds and strictures of evil… [by describing] possession in terms of both physiological and moral bondage."[44] However, he does not pay meaningful attention to exorcism in its literal sense throughout his epistles.

In his writings, Paul scarcely mentions exorcism regardless of numerous wonders that he has performed.[45] It is often attributed to Paul's "disinterest in signs and wonders"[46] throughout his writings, but he understands the importance of miracles through the Spirit's power.[47] In fact, he values equally the worth of signs and verbal proclamations[48]; however, his expectation is more focused not on the promotion of miracles themselves but on spreading Jesus' gospel by all means that eventually contribute to people's faith in and obedience to God. Signs and wonders are important work done by the Spirit through Paul: they are only instrumental in helping people believe. They often accompany his mission of preaching whereas his major concern is on the efficiency of communication of the gospel through the demonstration of God's power through the signs.

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[44] Sorensen, 155.

[45] Act. 19:11-12; 20:7-12; 28:1-10; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; Gal. 3:5; 1 Tim 4:1.

[46] Sorensen, 158.

[47] Rom. 15:17-20.

[48] Rom. 15: 19; 1 Cor. 2:4.

Regarding exorcism, Paul may have it in mind when he mentions signs and wonders, but he does not comment directly on spirit possession or exorcism *per se* in his letters. Whereas he is clear about the reality of the devil or demons as an enemy for saints to stand against,[49] he does not offer any skills of exorcism to defeat the enemy. As is clear in Luke's intention of separation of the Spirit and magic in Paul's ministry, Paul ignores any skill of exorcism except to show Jesus as the victor over Satan.

On the other hand, instead of imposing blame solely on the devil or demons with regard to human's sinful condition, Paul directs his attention to human agents and their religio-ethical responsibility. Paul does not mix "sin with a demonic figure such as Satan, nor explicitly identif[y] sin itself as a demon,"[50] although saints are facing the formidable challenges of Satan and its angels in real life. Humans and their innate sinfulness are directly responsible for leading them astray from God, often through the stimulation of evil spiritual agents. However, when Jesus' redemption becomes true through believers' faith, according to Paul's theology, they become liberated from the bonds of sin and condemnation of the law that are powerful instruments for condemnation by the enemy.

However, in Paul's theology, it is clear that Jesus has gained ultimate control over Satan and his angels. He believes that Jesus has triumphed over demons and "that God would make complete his victory over these forces (Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 15:20-28; Phil 2:9-11; Col 2:15)."[51] He is well aware of the Spirit's work of passing on Jesus' victory

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[49] Rom. 8:38-39; 16:20; 1 Cor. 5:5; 7:5; 10:20-21 ; 2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; 6:15; 11:14; 12:7; Eph. 2:2; 6:10-18; 1 Thes 2:18. 3:5.

[50] Sorensen, 159-60.

[51] T. Paige, "Demons and Exorcism," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters,* eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL & London, England: IVP. 1993), 210.

and its advantages to believers by defeating the enemy.[52] Demon possession is not a big deal for Paul, accordingly, in Christian life unless believers neglectfully allow themselves to fall into an immoral and unfaithful life. Exorcism in Jesus' name really happens in Paul's missions, but his theological thrust moves toward the preaching of core Christian messages and obedience to ethical teachings. According to Paul, "one's submission to sin or to the Spirit of God manifests itself in ethical actions,"[53] but exorcism is not an overall redemptive or purifying ritual for ethical intention.

Paul understands that exorcism is a necessary step for a possessed person in order to restore physiological and spiritual well-being, but his goal and concern about a saint's life goes beyond what exorcism alone can attain. Paul or any other author in the New Testament does not connect "exorcism with the ethical purification achieved through one's renunciation of demonic forces."[54] Paul's disinterest in possession and exorcism does not reflect his ignorance about them; instead it indicates his advanced concern beyond them, that is, the Christian mission and communal ethics. He simply assumes that the saints' victory over the spirits has been at any rate solidly determined in Jesus already.

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[52] Paige, 211. See also Rom. 8:3-4, 5-9; Eph. 6:10-18.

[53] Sorensen, 161.

[54] Ibid.,167.

"Possession" by the Holy Spirit[55]

After Jesus' resurrection and the Pentecost, his disciples and other Christian believers are encouraged to wait for and receive the Holy Spirit as God's free gift after his ascension.[56] The aspect of their experience in the Pentecost is being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues,[57] and receiving the nonecstatic fruit of the Holy Spirit. "The coming of the Spirit in conversion has conspicuous ethical and social consequences,"[58] so the fullness of the Spirit displays itself beyond these prominent religious experiences,[59] that is, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Most of these are concerned with relational and ethical instructions among fellow human beings.

Usually expressed as the 'fullness of the Spirit,' possession by the Holy Spirit as opposed to demon possession also explains why exorcism in the New Testament receives less attention than other religious and ethical instructions. Long before the Pentecost, Jesus himself claims that he expels demons with the power of the Spirit, which implies his 'possession' of the Holy Spirit as a sign of the presence of the kingdom of God through exorcism.[60] He also indicates that without the Spirit's occupation of the person

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[55] The actions of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament are not called by this name although they may look similar. It is true that the word 'possession' is not frequently applied to actions of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. Therefore, I use 'possession' about the Holy Spirit's work here simply for the purpose of comparative description between the two, the Holy Spirit's and demonic possession, in terms of religious studies, not because of its correct implication of the meaning. The way Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit is completely different from that of demonic possession.

[56] Jn. 20:22; Act. 1:4-5; 2:38.

[57] Act. 2:3.

[58] S.C. Mott, "Ethics," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 273.

[59] Gal. 5:22-23.

[60] Matt. 12:28.

after exorcism, the condition may get worse because the demons would come back with more evil spirits to possess him or her again,[61] which explains why he commands the demons in an epileptic boy not to enter him again.[62] Therefore, 'possession' by the Holy Spirit is necessary for those who are freed from demons through exorcism in order to avoid any relapse into it.

However, Spirit 'possession' itself is to a degree deemed as instrumental for the spiritual powers of believers whose ultimate aim is to witness on behalf of the gospel.[63] It is consistent in the New Testament that 'possession' by the Holy Spirit is instrumental for both the gospel and believers' religious obedience in ethical life.[64] In the process, exorcism often accompanies the apostles' ministry in Acts, but 'possession' by the Spirit does not prioritize exorcism as its major function.

According to Paul, the Spirit of God "is present to aid the believer in living out God's will…[and] is given freely to all, on the sole condition of faith in Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3)."[65] The Spirit liberates believers from the bonds of sin and revokes condemnation of the Law in the soteriological work of God, and the notion of sin in Paul's letters is efficiently "countered by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit."[66] Exorcists in the following centuries, therefore, should have accepted Paul's notion of

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[61] Matt. 12:43-45.

[62] Mk. 9:25.

[63] Act. 1:8.

[64] However, this does not mean that the Holy Spirit as presented in the New Testament is simply a power like those of ancient Greeks' belief. The Spirit cannot be manipulated or handled by magical incantations like demons or other spirits. Paige, "Holy Spirit," *Dictionary of Pau and his Letters*, 404-13.

[65] Paige, 405.

[66] Sorensen, 167.

'possession' by the Holy Spirit as an essential foundation for themselves while they still referred to the Synoptic Gospels and Acts for lively examples of exorcism.

The Spirit is also the power of God[67] that demonstrates unusual skills and gifts with which believers encourage one another. However, Paul himself does not perform any signs or wonders through the Holy Spirit for the purpose of private entertainment except for "the purpose of evangelism or…living the new life in Christ."[68] In Paul, therefore, regardless of its absence, exorcism through the presence of the Spirit may be assumed as one of the many works of apostles for more efficient evangelism and communal building of believers.

Paul consistently indicates the singularity[69] and uniqueness of the Spirit as God's Spirit that distributes a variety of spiritual gifts for believers[70] in order for Christian communities "to be built up (1 Cor. 14:1-19; 26-33) and [for] outsiders…to be converted (1 Cor. 14:20-25)."[71] Concerning splits among Corinthians upon the issue of spiritual gifts, Paul concludes that love is an ultimate value that Christian believers must pursue beyond all other valuable spiritual gifts.[72] In this respect, the Holy Spirit in Paul's theology gives a fundamental motivation for communal care among Christian believers.

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[67] Isa. 31:3; 34:16; 40:13.

[68] Paige, 406.

[69] 1 Cor. 12:4-6; Eph. 4:4-6.

[70] 1 Cor. 12.

[71] G. D. Fee, "Gifts of the Spirit," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 342.

[72] 1 Cor. 13.

One of the prominent spiritual gifts[73] related to exorcism is "discernment of spirits,"[74] which later Athanasius "identifies…as a charisma given by the Holy Spirit…with reference to exorcistic technique."[75] However, Paul presents it with no additional elaboration or examples even in his other writings, so Athanasius's explanation is not warranted by itself. Even if his interpretation is meaningful to a certain extent, the emphasis is not put singularly on exorcism. Paul's intention in the First Corinthians chapter twelve is to show the diversity, not the singularity, of spiritual gifts in the one Spirit in order to build Christ's body.

Therefore, it may be inferred that 'possession' by the Holy Spirit, in effect, aims at the conversion of non-believers and the religio-ethical building of Christian community. Exorcism is a minor concern to Paul, who is totally absorbed with preaching the gospel to gentiles and with building up spiritual and ethical church communities. Satan is already trodden under Jesus' feet, and the Spirit continues Jesus' work through saints. Believers can defeat their enemy by means of exorcism through Jesus in the Holy Spirit, and Paul's concern goes with human reality backed by the 'possession' by the Holy Spirit both in individuals and in communities. As in the gospels, Paul emphasizes human care and ethical responsibility concerned with divine signs or spiritual gifts including exorcism. 'Possession' by the Spirit, therefore, empowers and nurtures believers with their community without losing ground in reality to the peculiar spiritual

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[73] There are three kinds of miracles described in Pauline Epistles as spiritual gifts: "'faith' (=the supernatural gift of faith that can 'move mountains'; cf. 1 Cor 13:2); 'charismata of healings' (of the physical body; also 1 Cor 12:28, 30); and 'workings of miracles' (=all other such phenomena not included in healing)." Fee, 345.

[74] 1 Cor. 12:10.

[75] Sorensen, 157.

phenomenon. Distinguished from demonic possession, "being grasped by the Spirit, namely the divine presence"[76] is a sign of religious health, according to theologian Paul Tillich.

Demonology in Christian Theology

Early Christian Church

Exorcism was an active practice in the post-apostolic ages. Exorcism of the time involved many different types of religious rites for healing from possession, including "prayer, fasting, laying on of hands, burning of roots, or the sprinkling of holy water." [77] The most effective way of exorcizing demons was to invoke Jesus Christ's name, according to Justin[78] and Tertullian.[79]

Demonology in the Scriptures becomes doctrinally elaborated in this era with regard to demons' origin, possession, and Christians' exorcism with higher authority. Demons are spiritual beings without flesh according to these teachings,[80] but they are not

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[76] Paul Tillich, *The Meaning of Health: The Relation of Religion and Health* (Richmond, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1981), 57.

[77] Justine Martyr. *Second Apology* 6. in S. E. McClelland, "Demon, Demon Possession," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 308.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Tertullian, *Apology* 23 Ibid.

[80] Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos* 2.71, in "Demons, Demon Possession," ed. David W. Bercot, *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs: a reference guide to more than 700 topics discussed by the early church fathers* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 201. Numbers after the church fathers in this dictionary refers to volume and page of *The Ante-Nicene fathers: translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325* by Alexander Roberts, (Edinburgh : T. & T Clark ; Grand Rapids, Mich. : Eerdmans, 1989-1990).

souls of dead people.[81] They are fallen angels, and they "breathe into the soul, and rouse

up its corruptions with furious passions and vile excesses."[82] They do not originate as

demons, but they are away from God and the way of truth.[83]

Because they do not have physical substance, "they slink into the bodies of

men,"[84] which ends up in a harmful possession. Through possession, demons "simulate

diseases, alarm the minds, and wrench about the limbs"[85] to cause the possessed people to

serve them. Origen separates "complete and entire possession" from inducement of evil

suggestions into the human soul: the former deprives their captives of feeling,

understanding, and reason, and the latter of various intelligent thoughts such as with

Judas.[86] People may be deceived by their certain ability of prediction because demons

invent "astrology, soothsaying, divination… [and] those productions that are called

oracles, necromancy, the art of magic, and whatever other evil things"[87] that people who

are subdued by them tend to practice in secret or in public.

Christian triumphant over the power of the devil and its demons was a coherent

theme in early Christian theology. Jesus' authority was recognized as God's power that

had overcome demonic possessive powers through exorcism in his name. The existence

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[81] Tatian, 2.72, Ibid.

[82] Tertullian, *Apologeticum* 3.36, Ibid.

[83] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.638, 649. Ibid., 202.

[84] Lactantius, *Instiutiones divinae* 7.64. Lactantius is more sophisticated with physiological descriptions of possession: in secrecy, demons work inside of people, "corrupt the health of these persons, bring on diseases, terrify their souls with dreams, and harass their minds with frenzies. They do this so that by these evils, they may cause men to come to them for aid (Ibid., 203)."

[85] Mark Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 4.190, Ibid.

[86] Origen, 4.336, Ibid, 204.

[87] Lactantius, 7.65, Ibid.

of the devil and its demons as real spiritual beings was taken for granted, but their influence was limited over the believers.[88] The believers were entitled to victory over demons, and they stirred fear among demons due to their submission to God. Exorcism, therefore, in early Christianity presented a clear message to the world that Jesus was the Redeemer who had defeated demons. Exorcism also defined the church and its members as co-victors with Jesus, as long as their power came from his name.

Exorcism was more active and its reports more frequent in the first centuries of Christianity than in the New Testament where exorcism itself served as a "subject of apology" in the early church.[89] However, it emerged from the unique combination of contexts in which infantile Christianity began to grow in the Mediterranean Greco-Roman world in the first centuries. The apologists who defended the Christian faith, such as Justin the Martyr or Tertullian, had to defend Christian faith against Greco-Roman religious and philosophical traditions.

Cyprian became somewhat extreme in that he accused his opponents such as Jews, heretics, or polytheists of demon-possession or of being "children of the devil"[90] in accordance with his apologetic intentions for the eschatological significance of exorcism. In the New Testament, exorcism belonged to the ministry of Jesus and his disciples as a sign of presence of God's kingdom in the *eschaton*, the last days of the world. In that era,

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[88] Origen, 4.652, Ibid., 205.

[89] Sorensen, 180.

[90] Cyprian, *Epistulae* 54.2, 11 Ibid., 172, n. 8.

martyrdom was often taken as another mark of victory over the devil because it imitated the death of Christ on the cross.[91]

Due to the unique context of the time, "exorcism and the demonization of the pantheons were recurrent features in the extant Christian apologies of the ante-Nicene period."[92] Given that the apologists' original audiences were outsiders to Christianity, possession and exorcism in the end understandably waned as a major theological subject with the increasing Christianization of the Roman Empire. The apologetic and soteriological perspectives on exorcism,[93] which then followed the first eschatological interpretations in the New Testament, now turned to the care of possessed persons due to the rise of critiques from other perspectives within[94] and without[95] Christianity.

In spite of the hay-day of exorcism during the first centuries of Christianity, the church was "extremely parsimonious in dogmatizing in this [demonological] area."[96] Exorcism abounded in the practice of baptism in local churches, but in general the devil

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[91] Cyprian, *Epistulae* 8 [c.250]; Athanasius, *De incarnatione* 50.17-20; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.44; 1.31, 7.17; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.1.19-23, in Sorensen, 172-173.

[92] Ibid., 173.

[93] Ibid., 175. Infantile Christianity struggled to stand on its own by spreading the gospel for people's salvation, and exorcism was instrumental in demonstrating God's or Jesus' dominion over polytheistic Greek and Roman religions. Therefore, some apologists such as Justin or Tertullian kept distance from Greco-Roman culture by condemning their pantheons as demons' work, but they also solicited people's attention via exorcism in order to replace the current religious systems.

[94] See Sorensen, 173, n. 11. The second century Christian apologists such as Arnobius, Quadratus, Eusebius, Athenagoras, Commodianus, Melito, and Aristides do not present exorcism as having any important role in their apologies (R.M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988).

[95] Secular critics of Christianity in the second century such as Tacitus, Celsus, Porphyry, and Pliny (who calls Christianity a *superstitio* or a kind of magic) provoked Christian apologists, but the latter "adopted a conciliatory tone in their overtures to the dominant polytheistic culture" and demonized only "the pantheons rather than the pagans themselves" (Sorensen, 174-5).

[96] Adrian Hastings, "Devil," eds A. Hastings, Mason, and Pyper, *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 165.

is limited in its importance "from Irenaeus to Augustine"[97] because of their rejection of ontological dualism, which broke up the Manichean balance in tension between God and the devil. Except for Tertullian, who critically dealt with the devil, dogmatic installation of exorcism or demonology did not exceed apologetic usages in the first several centuries of Christianity.

Augustine

Due to his Theocentric rather than Christocentric theology, influenced by the Neo-Platonic notion of divine transcendence or immateriality, Augustine pays little attention to possession or exorcism throughout his writings. He is well aware of the existence of the devil and its possession of human beings. Reports describe him laying hands on patients with spiritual troubles and setting them free from their bondage.[98] However, his ideas on the devil are more sophisticated with regard to God and human sin as opposed to demonology *per se*.

According to Augustine, God allowed the demons "to act as… 'public executioners'"[99] since Adam's sin that caused God's justice to deliver "the whole human race…into the power of the devil."[100] Possession was one of the sufferings that the demons afflicted upon human life, along with "damage to crops, disease…, incongruous

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[97] Ibid.

[98] *Acta Sanctorum Augusti,* vol. VI, 439, in Taugott K. Oestrreich, *Possession: Demoniacal & Other,* trans. Ibberson, D (New York: University Books, 1966), 177.

[99] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 132.

[100] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 121.

behavior, gratuitous accidents, and the untimely deaths of small children."[101] After

Adam, the human race became no more than the "plaything of demons" who had power

as the prince of the air. As soon as God left the first sinner, the demon as "the author of

sin immediately entered into him"[102] with complete influence over humans in their sinful

condition.[103]

However, the devil's power is extremely limited and God's justice as illustrated in

the cross keeps it under control. Although "the devil wishes to dwell in the hearts of men

and to speak there all the things that tend to seduction,"[104] the devil as the prince of the

world has been cast out of "the hearts of those believing."[105] Believers are now indwelled

by the Redeemer Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit, and the devil cannot attack from inside

anymore, if any outside temptations arise.

Augustine is not clear about the process of possession or exorcism, if any, but he

emphasizes the way the devil tempts people through persuasion by means of evil

thoughts. This differs from a physiological meaning of possession, but is similar to a

direct inducement of thoughts from outside into human minds.[106] Possession is another

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[101] *Contra Julianum* V, iii, 8, Ibid.

[102] Augustine, *Trinity*, 121.

[103] Thomas Aquinas elaborates Augustine's idea of the devil's ability to engage men and women sexually in order to make them sin, but he denies any realization of begetting the devil's children through humanity. People may be influenced by the work of the devil and get involved with each other sexually, and their bodies may be "assumed for this purpose." However, the angels or demons are not physical, and "the properties of such men would lead us to men, and not to angels." Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.51.3. in *The "Summa Theologica" of St. Thomas Aquinas literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican province* (London: Burns Oates & Washburne Ltd., 1922), 23.

[104] Augustine. *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, trans. John W. Rettig (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 173.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Augustine shares this idea with "Athanasius, Origen, Peter Lombard, Bede, and Aquinas" as a general mode of the devil's action among people. McClelland. 308.

extreme mode of the devil's control over a person, but usually people are tempted to sin either by "prompted thinking… or by persuasion from outside," which are both voluntary.[107] Therefore, persuasion rather than force is a significant means of the devil by which humans sin with their own consent.

In part, Augustine aligns himself with the critics of pro-exorcistic apologists who criticize exorcism as a kind of magic that attracts human curiosity. He criticizes the practice of working miracles for the sake of curiosity "in shows, in theatrers, in the rites of the devil, in magical arts, [and] in sorceries."[108] It only entertains "the desire of the eyes" and is not about God's will. Augustine has a fundamental distaste for social corruption arising out of human lust, e.g. gladiators murdering in amphitheaters and erotic plays in theatres; the practice of miracles, including exorcism, is nothing other than entertainment for instinctual satisfaction.

According to Augustine, Jesus has already made a conquest of the devil "first by justice and afterwards by power,"[109] and the devil is certainly destined to submission and eternal punishment.[110] Though the devil is still active like a roaring lion in seeking to devour believers, its "bond of slavery against us…was blotted out."[111] Augustine intentionally avoids the significance of exorcism by assuming the victory of Jesus and his believers over the prince of the world.

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[107] Augustine, *Of Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Anna S. Benjamin and L.H. Hackstaff (New York : Macmillan Publishing Co.; London : Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1964)﹐110.

[108] Augustine, *Tractates,* 156.

[109] Augustine, *Trinity*. 125.

[110] Matt 25:41.

[111] Augustine, *Tractates,* 127.

Martin Luther[112]

Perhaps no other theologian mentions the devil or demons as many times as Luther does in his abundance of theological writings. This may reflect Luther's personal background of growing up,[113] the cultural *Geist* of the 16th century,[114] or his theological struggles with personal guilt and the Roman Catholic Church. His thoughts and theology cannot be properly evaluated without serious consideration of his sense of the reality of the devil; his conception of the devil is not to be dismissed simply as a medieval spiritual phenomenon that has to do with collective monasterial fear of it. His fight with the devil is as real as the presence of Christ in his pastoral ministry, and his struggles show themselves in his care for the believers of his time by giving them specific instructions on how to defeat evil thoughts and evil angels.

Luther understands that the devil has autonomy with destructive power against humans. He understands "the hellish fears of his time" and experiences "himself the devil's trials and temptations."[115] In many exhortations of his pastoral letters, Luther encourages his audience to confront the strategies and the powers of the devil with particular instructions. For example, he persuades them to take plenty of food and drink against doubts and evil thoughts afforded by the devil.[116] He does not want people to fast

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[112] I skip spirit possession of medieval era in this chapter because I shortly introduce Thomas Aquinas in chapter three concerned with exorcism and witch-hunt. In the same chapter, I also deal with historical backgrounds of the development of collective monastery fear and scapegoating of female gender in this era.

[113] Luther's mother is often claimed "to have introduced young Martin to a world full of demons and to have put fear of the devil into that soul already weighed down by his strong, willful father." Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, (New Haven: Yale University Press 1989), 103.

[114] Luther lived in the middle of the historical witch-hunt in Europe that ranged from the Middle Ages through the 17th century when hundreds of thousands of people were executed as witches.

[115] Oberman, *Luther,* 105.

[116] Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 88.

often, but to have enough food and enjoy life, so that they may not show weakness to the ancient foes. Cheerful hearts and joyful thoughts are also significant in defeating the devil's torment of melancholic thoughts.

Luther's advice often gives an impression of today's psychotherapeutic diagnosis and treatment. With regard to a melancholic man, he advises the man's wife to read or tell him "stories, news and curiosities…as long as they excite him to laughter and jesting, "[117] and to avoid isolation or immersion into his own thoughts. Because depression is from the devil, general means for fun such as gossip, fables, "cards, music, and company" are essential for depressed people because "they are divine gifts."[118]

When it comes to believers' spiritual battles with the devil's temptation, Luther emphasizes the use of the word of God,[119] prayer,[120] and the Lord's Prayer.[121] By honoring God's name in all circumstances, Luther believes we may also tackle the strategy of the enemy "who may not be able to injure us [any longer] as he is eager to do."[122] His tactics for believers extend to becoming humble before God and confronting directly the devil with an imperative tone in confidence whenever the sting of the enemy approaches them. By all means, Luther demonstrates the reality of the believers' spiritual fight with the enemy and tangible and invincible weapons available in daily lives. Luther takes the opponent into account more seriously when it comes to God's people having

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[117] Ibid., 91.

[118] Oberman, *Luther,* 310.

[119] Thodore G.Tappert. ed. *The Book of Concord*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1959. 359-60.

[120] Tappert, 424. Luther adds that "by prayer alone we shall be a match for the devil."

[121] Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 43*, Devotional Writings II. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1968), 22.

[122] Tappert, 374.

evil thoughts such as doubt and worry, melancholic depression, or suicidal ideation; these hamper healthy Christian life in relationship to God. The devil's work may deepen the despair and anxiety of the believers when it finds any opening to sneak into their hearts.[123]

However, in many of his exhortations and instructions about spiritual warfare, Luther mentions only a few exorcisms without much elaboration of traditional rites. He is convinced of Jesus' victory over the devil through his suffering and obedience to God as the Lamb of God for the sin of the world,[124] but he does not depend on traditional rites for exorcism. He himself personally performs exorcisms for possessed people, but his detestation of the Catholic Church led him to exorcise demons without using ecclesiastical rites.

When he was concerned about a woman who had been plagued by the devil in the 1520s, Luther asked her to "pray fervently and oppose Satan with your faith, no matter how stubbornly he resists."[125] He claimed that he subdued the wicked demon with perseverance and unceasing prayer till God answered with unquestioning faith. The official practice of exorcism "appears to him a 'display' of which the devil is unworthy."[126] What Luther feels necessary for exorcism is "prayer and contempt" with no more serious attention to the devil itself.

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[123] Because of his tendency to demonize all kinds of thoughts in human mind, Luther is blamed of regarding all mental problems as possession. Oesterreich, 186.

[124] Luther, 1968. 107.

[125] Tappert, 42.

[126] Oesterreich, 187.

The first-century Christian churches needed confirmation of Christian doctrine in the secular world through wonders like exorcism, according to Luther, but the devil deserved neglect of believers. Paying no attention to thoughts endowed by the devil was an important aspect of his confrontation with the devil.[127] While Augustine regarded persuasion as the devil's essential weapon, Luther considered thoughts of doubt and worry as the enemy's main threat which can tear the person from Christ and God. The best way to defeat the enemy's attacks was to ignore and pay no attention to them. If God's people could let those thoughts vanish naturally, they might defeat Satan's trap with which he tries to deceive them into worry and distrust.

Luther identified himself as "a biblical scholar," [128]and he based all his theology on the Scriptures, with which he confronted the "fortified tradition" of the Roman Catholic Church. He put his energy into translating and interpreting the Bible, and his demonology was produced primarily through biblical theology and pastoral care. He cared for patients with physical and spiritual struggles. In *Letters of Spiritual Counsel,*[129] he manifested his ideas of spiritual warfare with the devil. His mystic experiences and instructions eventually contributed to the formation of pietism and many spiritual movements such as Halle Pietism or Moravianism in 17th century Europe.

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[127] Luther, 1968, 128.

[128] J.T.McNeill, "Lutheranism, Luther," eds. Alan Richardson and J. Bowden, *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 1983), 343.

[129] Martin Luther, *Letters of Spiritual Counsel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1955), Theodore G. Tappert, The Library Christian Classics, vol. 18.

According to Erik Erikson, young Luther "was deeply imbued with the idea of the universal presence of spirits in concrete form." [130] Luther externalized his inner struggles in the 'world full of dangers' – a world that included the pope, emperor, and regions such as Prussia – through his demonology and sought a kind of safety in "a form of collective mastery of the unknown."[131] Luther "understood the hellish fears of his time. [He] discovered in the Scriptures the true thrust and threat of Satan and experienced himself the Devil's trials and temptations."[132] He saw fear of the devil everywhere among his contemporary people, due to the same omnipresence that the Church Fathers had experienced and theologized, which became uncontrollable as mania via "homilies, exempla and folklore" [133] throughout the 17th century.

However, Luther and his followers did not overestimate or exaggerate the threat of demons in theology and tradition; instead, he and other theologians such as Calvin overcame fear of the devil theologically. Anselm limited the role of the devil through his emphasis on "sacrifice over ransom."[134] In addition, the predestination of the omnipotent God restricted freedom of humans and angels. This theological issue had remained unresolved since the Fathers, and the powerful image of the devil diminished thereafter. The devil's role was limited to guilt and depression according to Luther and it was not omnipotent at all, even if it seems to be omnipresent. Eventually, the church abandoned

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[130] Eric Erikson, *Young Man Luther: Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc. 1958), 60.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Oberman, 105.

[133] Jeffery B. Russell, "Devil," *Westminster Dictionary,* 157.

[134] Ibid.

exorcism rituals by the 18th century according to Luther's "*Taufbuchlein*" after his death

in order to prevent possible abuses.[135]

John Calvin

John Calvin borrows some theological thoughts from Luther along with his other

predecessors such as Augustine or Bucer, but his publication is remarkably independent

from them from its outset.[136] The theme of demonology is more peripheral in Calvin's

reformed theology than in Luther's due to his scholarly theological thoughts and his

confidence in biblical authority. His demonology throughout the *Institution of Christian*

Religion is full of citations and excerpts quoted directly from the Scriptures rather than

from experiences. Because the Bible is Spirit-inspired and is "the source of authority for

the church and for the Christian life,"[137] Calvin objects to using any outside resources

besides the Bible when he establishes his theology.[138] What he seeks in Geneva is also to

realize the teachings of the Bible in civil life.

Different from Luther's theology, which focuses on the forgiveness of sin and

justification through faith, Calvin's theology emphasizes the glory of God because God is

in control of all the universe and human salvation as an omnipotent and omnipresent

Being. Human beings in depraved condition for original and actual sin may be saved

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[135] "S. S. Schmucker and others rejected exorcism. C. F. W. Walther advised congregations that practiced exorcism not to abolish it in haste and those that did not have it not to reintroduce it." Erwin L. Lueker. ed. *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis & London: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), 288.

[136] See Francois Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 10-11.

[137] J. T. McNeill, "Calvinism, Calvin," in *Westminster Dictionary*, 80.

[138] Calvin even "warns against speculation on the mystery of election, but it clearly entails repentance, faith and sacrifice." He pursues biblical and spiritual principles in salvation, and rejects Luther's physical presence of Christ's body in the Holy Communion. Ibid.

through God's election from unconditional grace and mercy.[139] Calvin's accent on sin

and the invisible authority of Christ explicit in his theology[140] contributes to the solution

of the problem of 'seemingly' ubiquity and omnipotence of the devil up to his era. In this

sense, Calvin and Luther draw a strict line about the limitations of the devil's role in

Protestant theology.

Calvin believes in the existence of Satan in its literal sense as the Bible indicates.

As opposed to modern liberal theologians, Calvin believes that demons are "actualities,"

not simply "thoughts."[141] In common with the church Fathers, Augustine, and Luther, he

holds to the idea of demons as "degenerated from their original state" and as "unclean

spirits and apostate angels," not just "impulses or affections of minds."[142]

However, human minds and willful thoughts are good avenues for Satan in

manipulating believers in order to enslave their lives. The blind minds of unbelievers are

like horses saddled with the devil as a rider, in Augustine's words, and eventually driven

into uncontrollable destruction.[143] However, their will, not the devil, is to be held

responsible for the result because human will determines to stand "under the devil's

power, and indeed willingly."[144] As a result, Calvin emphasizes the culpability of human

will to its sin rather than the role of the devil throughout the process. The proliferation of

evil and the extreme absence of goodness come from human nature in order to obliterate

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[139] Calvin affirms the predestination of Augustine and Bucer as an essential part of his theology.

[140] He emphasizes that there is "nothing holier, or better or safer than to be content with the authority of Christ alone." John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. T. McNeill, trans. Ford L. Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), IV.xv.19, 1319.

[141] Ibid., I.xiv. 19, 178.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., II.iv.1. 309.

[144] Ibid.

God's glory that is ultimate end of human existence,[145] although Satan captures human nature with its blaspheming intents.[146]

In this respect, Calvin ignores the power of Satan especially over believers.[147] Because of the pre-determination of their salvation from God's absolute sovereignty, no niche exists for the devil to revoke the believers' salvation. Although the devil and its demons aim at the destruction of God's kingdom and reign, they are to be countered by the believers' irreconcilable warfare against them. The "believers can never be conquered or overwhelmed" by the enemy because "Christ, by dying, conquered Satan, who had 'the power of death.'"[148] Satan as a liar and murderer deceives the minds of unbelievers, but has only limited influence over the believers' mind.

Concerned with the misuse of God's name, Calvin prohibits unlawful exorcisms and other superstitious practices, including witchcraft. He enforces scriptural regulations against sorcery[149] in Geneva, [150] but he has no attraction to exorcism in his ministry. He is concerned about abuse or misuse of exorcism on human's part, and had no intent for verification of Christian truth through it like in the early Christianity. Theologically, the victory of Jesus and his followers over the enemy is out of the question, and his theology is fundamentally based on the biblical authority rather than Christian history or tradition.

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[145] Ibid. II.i.8, 250-2.

[146] Calvin indicates that "corrupt man is like Satan 'under a necessity of sinning'…[as] a servitude to evil." Arthur Dakin. *Calvinism* (Port Washington, N.Y & London: Kennikat Press. 1972 [1940]), 42.

[147] Calvin, *Institutes*, I.xiv.18. 177.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Ex. 22:18; Dt. 19: 10-11.

[150] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: Europe's House Divided 1490-1700* (London & New York; Penguin Books. 2003), 569.

Among his contemporary theologians, Melanchton, the humanist, affirms that he has seen ghosts, and those theologians share Augustine's thesis that the ghosts in folktales are demonic in nature. They also develop the idea that angels help the saints as the force counter against demons.[151] Calvin accepts the actuality of angels as real beings that function far beyond "good inspirations or impulses which God arouses in men's mind."[152] Otherwise, Calvin does not pay attention to possession or exorcism any more than the cases in the New Testament such as Mary Magdalene and Jesus' warning about relapsed possession when one makes room for the devil again.[153] His theology, based on biblical authority and its interpretation, as with Augustine and Luther, in the long run ends up with a decentralization of demonology compared with God's sovereignty; yet, in recognition of the spiritual threat among believers, it allows no more significance than the Scriptures do. His followers eventually reject the practice of exorcism as belonging solely to the early Christian church after condemning exorcism through baptism and other rituals as Lutherans also do.

Karl Barth

Karl Barth is a twentieth century neo-orthodox theologian who bridges the gap between the traditional concept of demonology and the modern notion of demythologized[154] demonology. On the one hand, he acknowledges the reality of the

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[151] Ludwig Lavater published a guide to ghosts in 1569 as an emphasis on Augustine's theory, and other Reformers refocused on angels as biblical resource of comfort against the devil. See Ludwig Lavater, *Of ghostes and spirites walking by nyght, 1572*, eds. J. Dover Wilson and Yardley, May. (Oxford University Press, 1929).

[152] Calvin, *Institutes,* I.xiv.19, 178.

[153] Ibid., I.xiv.14, 173.

[154] Demythologization is a new method of biblical study developed by Rudolph Bultmann in order to separate historical factual events and myths radically among narratives of the New Testament. Bultmann

devil, its power beyond human life, and the power of the name of Jesus over the demonic world. On the other hand, he does not follow the traditional explanation of the devil as a fallen-angel,[155] and he further emphasizes the significance of resistance against the symbolic power of the devil in individual, socio-cultural, and political spheres of life.

Barth warns against too much attention to the devil because it may bring about the very result the devil itself wants from people. He describes Luther as a person who looks "too frequently or lengthily or seriously or systematically at demons,"[156] which to a certain extent satisfies demonic desires of attention. Belief in the devil or demons is different from faith in God, and fear of God will eradicate fear of the devil. In order to avoid any misplaced exaltation, the devil and demons should not be paralleled or 'grouped' with angels, although he is well aware of traditional explanations of the devil's origin dating back to the church Fathers.

Barth's attitude toward the devil and demons is ambivalent. On the one hand, we should not ignore but know them. If we ignore them, "they deceive us by concealing their power until we are again constrained to respect and fear them as powers."[157] On the other hand, we should be wary of absolutizing them by attending to their power as real. Through our "respecting and fearing them as true powers, they have deceived us by concealing their character as falsehood, and it will be only a little while before we try to

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presented this term first in the *New Testament and Mythology* (1941, see *The New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1984)) and later in *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Schribner, 1958). Through the new method, he tries to save Jesus' vital proclamation (*kerygma*) that can promote modern people's self-understanding.

[155] Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics* vol. III, 3 (Edinburgh: T.& T. Clark, 1958), 531.

[156] Ibid., 519.

[157] Ibid., 526.

ignore and are thus deceived by them again."[158] If we pay too much attention, as Luther did, we cannot avoid becoming demonic to some extent. Therefore, Barth encourages believers to live in tension between excess and deficit when attending to the devil.[159]

Because the devil lies and deceives us "by pretending to be glorious and attractive on the one side or terrifying on the other,"[160] we must "be proud and enlightened and unafraid and unconcerned in face of it."[161] Barth emphasizes that the devil as a reality of invasion and attack should be theologically exorcized as "an act of the unbelief…[and] a resolute denial."[162] Our determined denial requires slapping and turning our back to the devil as the Bible intends, instead of looking at it with respect the way absolutized demonology has done.

Jesus' triumph over the devil and demons is evident: Jesus Christ is the answer to all spiritual questions and struggles. Barth declares that "it is Jesus Christ, God in his person, who as the Lord and Victor, overthrows nothingness and its lying powers."[163] The enemies pretend to have the authority and power to enslave us, but in fact they cannot prevent our liberation and celebration of victory when we join in Jesus Christ and His triumph.

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[158] Ibid., 526-7.

[159] C.S.Lewis takes the same stance about the believer's attitude toward the devil: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."(C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (London. 1942), 9 quoted in Nigel Write, *The Satan Syndrome* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1990), 14.).

[160] Barth, III, 3. 525.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid., III, 3. 521.

[163] Ibid., III, 3. 530.

Barth extraordinarily discusses an exorcism by Johannes Blumhardt, a nineteenth century theologian in Germany, because Blumhardt's case presents "the presence of the opposing world"[164] when he negates the satanic darkness in a girl simply with the name of Jesus. Although the same case provokes Rudolph Bultmann to label it "an abomination,"[165] Barth judges it to be a demonostration of the power of Jesus' name. In Jesus' name, "not just a psychic but a historical and even cosmic decision is made,"[166] and Jesus' rejection of the demonic brings about complete healing through the Word of God.

Barth's explanation about exorcism is consistent with his whole theology, even though possession is a complicated phenomenon that reveals the connection between "sin and sickness and repentance and healing."[167] As is true to other parts of Barth's theology, Jesus' name is the answer in putting the sickness under control. He does not deal with exorcism in its literal sense because he does not exclude any possibility of mythology[168] in exorcism.[169]

However, Barth takes up the issue of possession and exorcism afresh as another form of sickness in that he sees it as a reflection of "not only the power of the devil or

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[164] Ibid., III, 4. 371.

[165] Rudolph Bultmann, *Kerygma and Mythus*, 150, quoted Ibid.,III, 4, 370.

[166] Ibid., III, 4. 371.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Barth claims that demythologization of demons "will really hurt them" (III, 3. 521) and will resist forming a positive relationship with them by seeing them as a myth rather than merely inquiring about their existence. He criticizes traditional demonology for their starting place of reverence instead of repugnance for the devil. See III, 3. 522.

[169] Ibid., 521.

even the wrath of God but also the divine benevolence."[170] He warns against showing any

respect for the devil even in doctrinal descriptions: the enemy deserves eternal

punishment instead of attention. In this respect, possession and exorcism may be one of

the means for divine grace through Jesus' name, while it should receive no more

attraction for its sensationalism.

Paul Tillich

Like Barth, Paul Tillich points out that Luther's claims about the devil may have

the effect of producing demonic elements by identifying "the wrath of God with Satan,

the half-divine-half-demonic picture he gives of God's acting in nature and history."[171]

He adds his critique about Calvinistic "fear of the demonic" that produces "an almost

neurotic anxiety about the unclean" [172] in defining the divine holiness because Puritans

even in later generations practice the resistance to the unclean in an extreme fashion.

Because Tillich intends to "replace the traditional criteria of theological content by the

test of an attitude of ultimate seriousness,"[173] Lutheran and Calvinistic theology cannot

be final (nor can any theology) and should be countered by God's ultimacy. Their

approach can also be demonic when they claim to be final and make absolute their finite

view of God. Theology should be continuous 'process and correction'; God always exists

beyond theology.

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[170] Barth, III, 4. 374.

[171] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology,* vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 217.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, "Paul Tillich," in *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 687.

Tillich still pays attention to the traditional concept of demon in his theology by making references to Scriptural and theological concepts of the demonic. However, he shows himself far more imbued with modern existential philosophy, psychology, and history than most previous theologians when he delineates his thoughts of the demonic and demon possession. He expands the concept of the demonic into the "structures of individual and social life,"[174] and he pays more attention to the demonic power structures of the world that distort individual, social, and spiritual health.

Tillich defines the demonic as "the claim of anything finite to be final in its own right"[175] and as "the supra-individual structures of destruction…[or] the enslaving structures of evil."[176] These descriptions appear repeatedly as a major theme in his theory of the demonic.[177] For example, if any holy 'objects' claim to be holy, instead of pointing to the divine by negating themselves, they are demonic in nature and distort the divine. Tillich pays attention to the definition, especially due to its proper analogy to his contemporary society during World War I and Hitler's regime, under which he experienced "an intensely strong feeling of the evil in the world"[178] as demonic. He feels that evil goes beyond the sum of individual human evil, and his use of the demonic to name this evil has become popular among more recent theologians.

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[174] Tillich, *Theology*, vol. I, 49.

[175] Ibid., 134.

[176] Tillich, *Theology*, vol. II, 161.

[177] Tillich also defines 'demonic' as "the unity of form-creating and form-destroying strength" (Tillich, *The Interpretation of History*, trans. N.A.Rasetzki and Elsa L. Talmey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 81 quoted in Vernon R. Mallow, *The Demonic: A Selected Theological Study* (Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1983), 116).

[178] John W. C. Wand, *The minds behind the new theology: Kierkegaard, Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1963), 22.

Therefore, Tillich's notion of the demonic is explained afresh in modern metaphoric language coming out of his unique theological method through the dialogue between theology and social scientific disciplines such as psychology and sociology, as well as philosophy. He points to the "estranged world [that is] ruled by structures of evil"[179] when he mentions the demonic with respect to the culture and society of his time. When he makes use of scriptural and theological usages of the demonic, he regards them as symbols rather than literal entities. The demonic, instead, involves "the structure of reality,"[180] on which the demonic operates, because the demonic survives as a parasite to creative power in reality.

In this respect, Jesus overcomes the demonic attempt of Satan to subordinate him in the wilderness into the finite desires that pursue "food, acknowledgement, and unlimited power."[181] Jesus does not cease to be the victorious Christ by giving into demonic desires. Christ is the victor who subdues the demonic through God's love. The symbol of *Christus Victor* is manifested in Paul and Origen through "the experience of the conquest of existential estrangement."[182] The power of the New Being, which is symbolized in Christ, conquers the existential estrangement of the world under demonic powers.

Demonic power is broken fundamentally in Christianity and "the demonic-idolatrous powers which rule the world and distort religions have been conquered in the

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[179] Tillich, *Theology*, vol. II, 27.

[180] Mallow, *The Demonic*, 116.

[181] Tillich, *Theology*, vol. II, 100.

[182] Ibid., 171.

cross of Christ" according to Paul.[183] However, ambivalence still exists because the demonic is not terminated; it falls away for a time and returns without dying. The demonic still produces anxiety and fear and still intends to prevent the human soul from reuniting with its Creator. Liberation from fear of the demonic is a significant Christian message derived from Jesus' atonement.

When Tillich employs scriptural expressions of the demonic as symbols for his contemporary interpretation of culture and society, demonic possession in contrast with divine ecstasy is understood in terms of whether it preserves or destroys "the rational structure of the mind."[184] According to him, divine ecstasy in many religions promotes rational principles, while demonic possession seriously hinders logical functions of human reason. Divine ecstasy may stay in line with ethical notions of reason, but demonic possession obliterates those principles.

Consequently, Tillich preserves possession by demons as a symbol in order to interpret human and social evil, rather than religious definition of literal demon possession that affects an individual's physical and psychological experience. He is mainly concerned with "the existentially estranged world [that] is ruled by structures of evil"[185] and shuns any dogmatic situating of the devil's reality. He searches for and warns against the symbolic inscriptions of demonic forces within individual, socio-cultural, and political structures, including the traditional belief system that claims eternal validity with only finite resources in contrast to God's infinity. The demonic is no more than a part of

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[183] Tillich, *Theology*, vol. I, 134.

[184] Ibid., 113-4.

[185] Tillich, *Theology*, vol. II, 27.

biblical symbolism by which existential experiences can be analyzed in Tillich's theology.

In closing the chapter that samples theological moments in Christian history, including the New Testament, I have found an interesting phenomenon among the selected theologians and their ideas: demonology concerned with possession and exorcism has neither left the realm of theological property nor received any central focus by the theologians. This coincides with the record of Jesus in the Gospels when he esteems other priorities in the kingdom of God more highly than exorcism. The significance of exorcism as an apologetic tool reached its peak in the first few centuries of Christianity, and theologians have repeatedly backed away from articulating demonology because they take for granted Jesus' victory over the devil as an unchangeable and eternal truth.

Ambivalence concerning triumph over the devil is another common theme of demonology among the theologians. They recognize the final blow of Jesus to the enemy's head, but at the same time, they acknowledge that the devil is not terminated yet, which leads to the ongoing spiritual battle of believers in the world. Their final victory is confirmed in the victory of Jesus. In the meantime, the enemy is still advancing into individual and social life. The enemy is defeated by the Lord, but believers should still watch out for its cowardly threats. The war is over, but small skirmishes remain.

In sum, the theologians considered above seem to assert in a consistent manner that no more attention should be paid theologically to the devil in order to avoid granting 'undeserved' merit inadvertently from believers. Over time, the existence of the devil began to be seen as a series of existential encounters with evil in socio-cultural structures.

In this vein, perceptions of possession and exorcism have become perceived far more metaphorical than literal: expressions of old mysticism have occasionally revived, but the original meaning of possession and exorcism has become fundamentally suspect.

With the termination of exorcism as a ritual in many Protestant traditions since the Reformation, care for possessed people has been widely compromised for fear of abuse of the ritual. Theological development has also contributed to the concession of the traditional definition of possession and exorcism to the modern notion of symbols, and, as a result, only a limited affirmation of the ritual exists in today's church and theology. In addition, seeing the phenomenon from a socio-cultural perspective is still a useful expansion of the demon possession horizon.

Veering away from the intentional disregard of possession and exorcism in light of the presumed victory of Jesus and his centrality among traditional thinkers, modern theologians tend to disregard the spiritual phenomenon based on materialistic scientism. Classical theologians do not recognize the socio-political dimension of evil, while modern theologians ignore individual care from the spiritual perspective. However, the traditional point of view should not become discounted in significance because the modern scientific spirit cannot consume or reduce religious dimensions of human experience into meaninglessness. On the other hand, the modern perspective does not necessarily stray from the traditional interpretation of the demonic when one takes account of the fact that believers concerned with ethical behavior in the New Testament refer to the devil. One complexity related to possession and exorcism as observed today is that this peculiar religious phenomenon may be significantly intermingled with social injustice against the victims, a topic which is further explored in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF SPIRIT POSSESSION

How does the traditional psychoanalysis and psychology understand spirit possession when it attempts to overcome religious assumptions of the phenomenon from the view of modern scientific empiricism? It is certain that the term possession is replaced with neurosis in Freud. The religious belief in the existence of God and the devil is debunked in psychoanalysis. The origin of religious belief is attributed to the unconscious activity of human mind that reflects childhood disturbances according to Freud.

Born in the soil of modern scientific spirit, psychoanalysis reduces the unobservable existence of God in religion into the representation of father who is in ambivalence between fear and care in a person's life. God as well as the devil is not an observable and verifiable phenomenon according to Freudian scientific *Weltanschauung*, because objectification of human experience through repeated observation is a crucial process in getting at true knowledge in the modern science. Then, are the positivistic claims about pure objectivity in human psychology free from any subjective prejudice? Could it be simply considered as another absolute truth? Can spirit possession interpreted in terms of psychoanalysis be simply recognized as exhaustive?

Jung utilizes rich property from archeology and anthropology in his theory of creation of gods and devils in human unconsciousness: he endeavors to illuminate the contents of human unconscious in light of old mysticism and collective unconscious in

humanity. However, isn't his idea still limited within intra-psychic dimensional understanding of possession without any attention to religious or sociological perspective surrounding the phenomenon? Furthermore, by reducing religious elements in spirit possession as mentally ill, aren't Freud and Jung also trapped in self-contradiction in their claim for exclusivity of one single worldview that simply replaces religion?

In development of psychoanalysis, dogmatization of the theory of the unconscious eventually faces fundamental challenges from insiders. Eventually, the aspects of relationship between infants and their caregivers come to attract interests from later scholarship beyond the intra-psychic pathogenesis. Furthermore, socio-cultural and anthropological insights become involved with psychoanalytic work for understanding neurosis, which opens a possibility to gain a deeper knowledge of spirit possession in a wider horizon.

Spirit Possession in Freud

Among his volumes of life-long original writings, Sigmund Freud who founded psychoanalysis has left only one article, "Seventeenth Century Demonological Neurosis,"[186] in which he specifically deals with the issue of demonic possession and exorcism. He did not encounter a case known as spirit possession in his multiple clinical analyses, so he simply analyzes a case of three-century old story from his psychoanalytic perspective in this article. He assumes that spirit possession in the old writing matches the neurosis, which belongs only to the intra-psychic dynamics of human experience.

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[186] Sigmund Freud, "Seventeenth Century Demonological Neurosis," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIX (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964).

Freud eliminates any prognosis to external existents of possessing spirits that once gripped people's mind in the previous centuries.

Freud does not seem to have any trouble in interpreting the case of spirit possession because according to him it presents rather a clear picture to him. His modern notion of human psychology intentionally discredits the contents of the clerical report due to the superstitional credulity. Even though the report includes many witnesses to the spiritual encounters, he coherently attributes them to "a collective hallucination."[187] Even further, he casts a doubt about the effectiveness of exorcism considering the relapse of the person back into possession.

At the center of his argument, Freud identifies the demon with God in its intrapsychic origin as a substitutive father-figure from childhood. The man of demoniacal neuroses in the article had lost his father for nine years before he came to suffer from depressive melancholy with demonic enslavement. The man gave himself to the demonic dedication in his melancholy as his bound son or slave. Then he experienced the demon as a copy of his father in his childhood derived from his developmental complexities. Freud seems to make use of the appearance of sacred figures as haunting possessors of the person as additional evidence of identification between the devil and God.

It is a developmental problem that has not been resolved between "a longing for the father and a fear of him and a son's defiance of him"[188] in childhood. From his psychoanalytic perspective, Freud claims that the patient's interaction and contract with

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[187] Ibid., 77.

[188] Ibid., 85.

the devil about wealth, security, and sexual enjoyment is only "a neurotic fantasy."[189] The person's ideational image of father in childhood is joined together with "the father of the primitive and primal horde … [in] the inherited memory-traces,"[190] which eventually materializes God in individual's thoughts.

In Freud, God has the same origin with the devil from the first; only the ambivalence between hatred and fear about father in childhood eventually separates the attributes of God and the devil. Although he recognizes the difficulty in identifying the "satanic view of the father in the mental life of the individual,"[191] Freud is still adamant that the devil is a copy of the father and has the same origin with God based on his experimental method of free association. Possession by the devil in this respect is no more than a manifestation of childhood repression of negative attributes of an 'earthly' father's image. His earlier conceptualization suggests that the devil is "unacceptable, and hence repressed, aspects of ourselves,"[192] but it is consistent throughout his work that the devil is a creature of our own psyche.

Origin of Spirit Possession

Freud employs the method of careful observation as in today's laboratorial study of human psychology in his effort to emancipate psychology from philosophy to natural science. A rigorous reasoning and the systematic observation avoid mere speculations or mysterious thoughts in the study of human personality. With the modern scientific

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[189] Ibid., 84.

[190] Ibid., 85.

[191] Ibid., 86.

[192] Ana-Maria Rizzuto, *The Birth of the Living God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 168.

method, Freud's "deepest devotion was to deal scientifically with the problems of personality."[193] His belief in the science of psychology is so strong that he expects that "eventually psychology would be replaced by chemistry."[194] Here, he reduces mental functions of human psyche into materialistic neuro-chemistry.

As far as religion is concerned, Freud consistently holds a naturalistic attitude in arguing that the psychological nature of human beings can be explained through causal or factual hermeneutics of experience, without any reference to supernatural beings. He gives up any philosophical or metaphysical discussions in his psychology; instead, he adopts a modern scientific method of observation, testing, and repetition of the procedures in order to come up with a 'scientific' psychological theory. Therefore, any supernatural authority of religion, either God or the devil, comes to have a different meaning and interpretation in his psychoanalytic theories. His scientific expectation toward human psychology was thorough and complete with no change in his understanding through the end of his life.

Freud's critique of religion is strict and rigorous: he believes that religion is the enemy of psychoanalysis as well as that of science. He believes that "scientific work is the only road which can lead us to a knowledge of reality outside ourselves."[195] Any dependence on an unauthenticated experience of religion, which has influenced human history so much, is now purely "a psychological problem." Furthermore, science has an

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[193] Franz G.Alexander & Sheldon T.Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry: an evaluation of psychiatric thought and practice from prehistoric times to the present* (Harper & Row, New York, 1966), 184.

[194] Ibid., 182.

[195] Freud, *The Future of Illusion*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1961), 40. Also see "The Question of a Weltanshauung," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XXII (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 159.

interceptive prerogative over philosophy and religion in that it affects both an investigation and establishment of credible facts in those areas.

Freud casts a suspicious look at the origin of religion because, first of all, the ancestors who started religious belief systems were believed to have been much more ignorant than his contemporaries. They had passionate imagination without a sense of reality so that they created and propagated miraculous reports with religious faith. The former generations were so uninformed and under-civilized that they swallowed religious absurdities full of miracles and wonders without a proper activation of reasoning.

Freud points out that human weakness is another significant motive for religion in human history. His observation of intra-psychic dynamics of mental patients leads him to a father-motive of religious origin, that is, he maintains that every religion holds the father-image as a protector over his weak child. The religious worldview of creation or creator is exaggerated in regard to the size, and the imagination originates from a picture of the self in childhood.

> The indications of ambivalence in the attitude to the father are deeply imprinted in every religion…when the growing individual finds that he is destined to remain a child for ever, that he can never do without protection against strange superior powers, he lends those powers the features belonging to the figure of his father; he creates for himself the gods whom he dreads….Thus his longing for a father is a motive identical with his need for protection against the consequences of his human weakness. The defense against childish helplessness is what lends its characteristic features to the adult's reaction to the helplessness which he has to acknowledge—a reaction which is precisely the formation of religion.[196]

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[196] Ibid., 30.

The origin of religion here is reduced to the activity of human psyche in reaction to superior powers of father experienced in childhood. In need of fatherly protection of the child from dangers, religion and God as his representation comes into being as an individual and later collective experience. Accordingly, Freud declares that "God is now nothing more than an insubstantial shadow and no longer the mighty personality of religious doctrines."[197] He also emphasizes that religious records and proofs in religious writings are not able to stand against "contradictions, revisions and falsifications."[198] Accordingly, Freud is successful in reducing religious belief to a factual-individual level from a literal-supernatural one.

Freud is fully skeptical about religious experience such as spirit possession, because any claim of religious truth based on a rare inner experience cannot be true to many people who do not have the same experience. Religious experience cannot be generalized to anyone based only on religious obligation that may exist above human reason. Furthermore, a real problem is that the religious hypotheses make people behave 'as if' they believe those 'fictions' as reality.

Change of Dimension: Spirit Possession to Neurotic Illness

As a result of his coherent reduction of religion to individual psychology, Freud changes the concept of 'possession' as a religious or spiritual phenomenon to a psychological neurosis. He has a constant interest in possession and its related

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[197] Ibid., 41.

[198] Ibid., 34.

symptoms,[199] but his unswerving claim is that the devil is a father-figure in human psyche. Possession, therefore, is no more about a 'spiritual' state in Freud's theory than simply about a 'neurotic illness' with a common causality of father in childhood. The devil is "bad and reprehensible wishes, derivatives of instinctual impulses that have been repudiated and repressed."[200] Freud certainly puts the dimension of possession and the devil in religion in an individual's internal psychological dynamics.

Freud describes the medieval ages as dark times in which "the demonological theory…has won in the end against all the somatic views of the period of 'exact' science."[201] He plainly draws a line between the 'earlier dark times' and 'our scientific days' in which scientific investigation can be made. The Middle Ages performed "the projection of mental entities into the external world"[202] without noticing what had happened within internal human life. Consequently, Freud reorganizes the record of the seventeenth century based on his 'scientific' psychological perspective. The patient's claim of the physical appearance of the devil is modernized as 'monastic superstition' or group hallucination derived from the patient's unstable environment and fragile mentality. He interprets the 'exorcism' as an effort to inspire belief within the faith group who left the story: he does not believe that they exorcised spiritual demons in the person.

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[199] Freud's interest in witchcraft or possession is said to have started between 1885-86 stimulated by his study about possession in the sixteenth century. His two letters sent to Fliess in 1897 includes witches and the Devil as a father-figure. In 1909, Freud spoke about the belief in the Devil and its psychological composition. In 1922-23, he wrote the article "A Seventeenth Century Demonological Neurosis." See "Demonological Neurosis," 69-71.

[200] Ibid. 72.

[201] Ibid.

[202] Ibid.

Freud begins to place spirit possession within intra-psychic dynamics and exorcism within a falsified collective effort of religious communities. He puts any religious claims under the rubric of his modern scientific *Weltanschuung* in which any kind of religious experiences should be placed under scientific psychoanalytic scrutiny. According to Freud, "psychoanalysis is a branch of science and can subscribe to the scientific *Weltanschauung,*"[203] which endorses a scientific method of observation and objectification often with deterministic approach toward any human experience.

Freud's interpretation of possession as oedipal hysteria has been widely accepted by later psychiatrists[204] and anthropologists[205] who observed multiple cases of spirit possession in many other cultures. They understand possession as a struggle initiated from the infantile sexuality with intra-psychic conflicts in order to relieve the long-lasting tension. Spirit possession concerns, they believe, incestuous sexual ruthlessness and hostility, which results in psychosomatic symptoms such as sudden spiritualistic convulsions that may lead to the damage of consciousness. Therefore, spirit possession is none other than a manifest indication of a person's inner psychological conflicts: the repression in possession is originated from hysteric disturbances in sexuality.

However, possession as a complex phenomenon involved with psychological, religious, and cultural dimensions cannot be exhausted by the interpretation of one of the

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[203] Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1965), 181.

[204] O.W.S. FitzGerald, "Love Deprivation and the Hysterical Personality," *Journal of Mental Science* 94 (1948): 701-717; P. Chodoff and H. Lyons. "Hysterial, the Hysterical Personality and 'Hysterical' Conversion," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 114-2 (1958): 734-740. ; D. W. Abse, "Hysteria," *American Handbook of Psychiatry*, vol. 1, ed. S. Areti, (New York. 1959).

[205] S. A. Freed and R. S. Freed, "Spirit Possession as Illness in a North Indian Village," *Ethnology* 3 (1964): 152-171.; Gananath Obeyeskere, "Psychcultural Exegesis of a Case of Spirit Possession in Sri Lanca," in *Reader in Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, eds. V. Crapanzano and V. Garrison (John Wiley & Sons: 1977).

disciplines as Freud argues. The psychoanalytic perspective that starts from Freudian

modern scientific *Weltanschauung* fundamentally reduces the multi-faceted phenomenon

at the cost of holistic understanding of a person and his or her surrounding contexts.[206]

For a fuller understanding of the phenomenon beyond the intra-psychic pathology, his

modern positivistic determinism as his major worldview as well as his intent to

reorganize the whole constitution of religion must be put into reconsideration.

Spirit Possession in Jung

One of the critical common grounds that Carl Jung shares with Freud is his

pursuit of scientific understanding and rationalistic explanation of human psychology. He

was literally a scientist with Freud in a sense that he sought for scientific disillusionment

of psychology and criticism of religion through the modern scientific method. Jung

performed rational researches about seemingly irrational patterns of religious

phenomena.[207] Otherwise, Jung's concerns in psychology and his ideals of psychological

health are significantly separated from those of Freud. Jung is much attracted to the study

of occult, paranormal, and mysticism instead of sexuality and instinctive theories like in

Freudian psychoanalysis.

Jung wrote his thesis for his medical degree in 1900 about a case of occult

phenomenon. The subject of his study was a girl named S.W. known as a spiritual

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[206] Richard Castillo criticizes the mechanistic assumption of Freud and his followers in anthropology when they diagnose the possessed people as 'hysterical.' Instead, by employing dissociation theory, he interprets trance or possession as "an adaptation and survival behavior that can operate in situations of life-threatening danger or other instances of extreme or repeated stressful situations in the environment" (Castillo, "Spirit Possession in South Asia," Part 2. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 18 (1994), 144).

[207] Jung's basic goals and methods are consistently scientific when he focuses on religious experiences with scientific questions like "'Why do they persist?'…[rather than] 'Are such beliefs true?'" Volney Gay, *Reading Jung: science, psychology, and religion* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), xiii.

medium: she demonstrates an ability to communicate with ancestral and other spirits in

an abnormal split of her personality. Jung noticeably indicates his observation of the split

that accompanies a surge of a new personality: "S.W. led a curiously contradictory life, a

real 'double life' with two personalities existing side by side or in succession, each

continually striving for mastery."[208] S.W.'s symptoms started when she was a teenager.

She simply wanted to turn tables for a magical fun, which was popular among her peers

at school those days. Eventually she accomplished her dream in July of 1899 only at the

cost of becoming a spiritual medium.

Jung observed S.W.'s sudden intellectual expansion after she became a medium:

she reproduced her relatives and acquaintances who had died before: she was able to

point out their slight peculiarities in her somnambulistic dialogue, that is, in her sleep-like

state. Her disturbed talking in reality turned to an exclusive use of literary German in a

different tone; she became confident in her accent in the somnambulistic state. Compared

to her slow growth of knowledge in reality, she came to grasp much new knowledge that

was alien to her common life in a very short period of time. Her knowledge rapidly

expanded during the first thirty days of her being a medium, and later ideas and thoughts

were "only an elaboration of all thoughts and the cycles of visions that had been more or

less foreshadowed right at the beginning."[209] There was no further expansion of

knowledge in this later period.

Jung attributes all the knowledge to a personal entity named 'Ivenes' who takes

control of S.W.'s second state of personality as "the channel for the entire intellectual

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[208] Carl G. Jung, *The Psychiatric Studies,* trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books/ Princeton, 1977), 25.

[209] Ibid., 24.

output of all the manifestations."[210] In the second personality, she behaves as if "there is something extremely immoderate, unsteady, almost protean, in her character,"[211] which is a hysterical state that she did not have before the advent of medium-ship. The second personality is observed to enter into the girl's consciousness and eventually becomes assimilated into it.

Jung supposes that the world of spirits and dead people is the major contents of human unconscious and that the power of the unconscious should be subjugated for the maintenance of ego. Failure of "the maintenance of [the] ego-consciousness and… the subjugation of the resistant unconscious forces"[212] may result in neurosis.[213] The girl's expanded knowledge about the dead relatives, therefore, comes from her neurotic unconsciousness in Jung's perspective. He observes more complex interactions among spirits within S.W. e.g. her talking of herself in the third person, her behaving as if she were another person, speaking in a different voice and accent and so on. The girl believes that the spirits are reality while Jung judges that "the manifestations were a kind of illness."[214] Her aetiology, in his view, is certainly psychological, not spiritual or religious.

Jung's major concern in this study is her hallucination as an abnormal phenomenon of unconsciousness, not as a spirit possession *per se*, although her

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[210] Ibid., 36.

[211] Ibid., 44.

[212] Carl Jung, *The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1960), 238.

[213] Meanwhile, Freud identifies the ego as facing ongoing challenges of the untamed passions of the *id* out of the unconsciousness. Freud explains the relation of ego and id as that of a rider and his horse. He develops libidinal drive theory by claiming that the id that exists only within unconsciousness keeps trying to exert its power by "blindly striving to gratify its instincts in complete disregard of the superior strength of outside forces." Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1933), 106.

[214] Jung, *Studies*, 23.

symptoms demonstrate manifestations of spirit possession from a religious perspective. [215] Therefore, S.W's experience has nothing to do with any spiritual existences: it is none other than a split-off of personality at the level of the unconscious. She died of tuberculosis around ten years after her first advent of table-turning. Jung reports that she seriously deteriorated to a two-year-old child's level of maturity at the point of death.

Jung is consistent in claiming that human psyche "is distinctly more complicated and inaccessible than the body,"[216] which has not been properly approached due to its unique difficulty. The girl manifests "how the unconscious personality builds itself up"[217] without being controlled by the conscious ego. The unconsciousness may even obliterate the function of the ego in a limited hypnosis. Untypical voices and accents come from the self-constituted subconscious personality that grips her speech organs. The active imagination of the patient produces the new personalities, and hallucinations become visible through the thought process that sinks into the subconscious.

In addition, Jung argues that human psyche does not just belong to individual but to the entire world, which means the contents of inner human experience are commonly and universally shared to a certain extent by all human beings across time and space.[218]

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[215] About hallucination, Jung suggests that the patient's subconscious exerts its power upon his/her restricted consciousness by the automatic construction of complicated scenes with simple perceptions.

[216] Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 132.

[217] Jung, *Studies,* 53.

[218] Jung introduces 'archetype' and 'collective-unconscious' as common property of human psychology. According to Jung, archetype is 'pre-existent forms of experience,' of which concept is used to explain 'patterns of instinctual behavior.' See Jung, C.G. "The archetypes and the collective unconscious" (Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. 9, part1, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959) in Sue Walrond-Skinner, *A Dictionary of Psychotherapy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 15. It is "[a]n innate, latent nucleus of personality predispositions conforming to a consistent set of attitudes, ideas, emotions, and behaviors" (Jeffrey Satinover, "Jungian Psychotherapy," in *Encyclopedia of Psychotherapy*, vol. 2. eds. Michel Hersen & W. Sledge, (Amsterdam etc.: Academic Press, 2002), 69). Collective unconscious is, in Jung's view, "the various archetypes including anima, animus, shadow" (Ibid.) because the archetype "constitutes the

Ivenes, the somnambulistic ego of S.W., is the historical prototype as a mystic being, which has split off "from the primary unconscious personality."[219] He rejects a possession of the ego by a demon as primitive, but, instead, he believes "the enfeebled consciousness" cannot often stand the inrush of the archaic material that is abundant in schizophrenia.

The archaic material as "the expression of a still existing infantile and therefore primitive mentality"[220] represented by multiple personalities is commonly shared cross-culturally. The material can usually be approached by hypnosis, which Jung believes veritable and attempts to discover through his own experiments. Spirit possession appears as a phenomenon when the unconscious has increased in its extent. When the hallucinations become intensified, the perception arouses such a strange feeling that one may think that an autonomous spirit exists in human personality. When "the hypnosis, and with it the chain of split-off ideas, breaks into the visual sphere,"[221]occult phenomena as creation of the unconscious tend to accompany the contents of spirits.[222]

Based on his theory of the unconscious, Jung limits the scope of possession within human unconsciousness as having a capacity to develop another personality with an extended margin. The unconscious has a detrimental power by itself over the conscious ego unless properly managed, and occult phenomena demonstrate one's striving for

unconscious component of conscious acts and relationships" (Walrond-Skinner, 15-16). When the archetype is unapproachable to consciousness, it wields a negative effect in psychological reality.

[219] Jung, *Studies*, 72.

[220] Jung, *The Psychogenesis of Mental Disease* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1960), 244.

[221] Jung, *Studies*, 57.

[222] According to Gay, Jung was of the same mind with his contemporaries who regarded hallucinations "as due to environmental and physical sensations versus personalistic and spiritual explanation" (Gay, *Jung,* 6).

control over the personality. Through his spectacular efforts to confront the human unconscious, Jung attempts to excavate its collective contents and various archetypal origins through the means of myth and fantasy. From his modern scientific and rational perspective, he inherently keeps the contents of the unconscious from religious doctrines. He throws away the pre-modern beliefs about the existence of demons and their possession of human personality.[223] A significant commonality of Jung with Freud is that he interprets possession as an intra-psychic phenomenon as is a visual hallucination without major attention to cultural influence on human psychology regardless of his expansion of the definition of unconscious by including a collective aspect in addition to a biological and individual one in psychology.

Spirit Possession and Modern Scientific *Weltanschauung*

Modern psychoanalytic tradition started by Freud reflects the *zeitgeist* of the modern scientific *Weltanschauung* since the Enlightenment and later evolutionism of Darwin. The spirit of psychoanalysis appropriates the values of Greco-Roman rational humanism instead of those of Christianity that dominated the Middle Ages, believed to have suffocated scientific rationalism. Because psychoanalysis assumes the new *Weltanschauung* of the modern scientism and humanism as its philosophical foundation, it is by nature inclined to reject any religious beliefs as pre-modern or 'barbarous' products of ignorant credulity.

A philosophical foundation of the modern skepticism about religious doctrines becomes manifested with the philosophy of David Hume. Freud inherited Hume's

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[223] However, Jung still finds it striking to see the similarity between the girl's occult phenomena and the religious knowledge of which she was not aware. Ibid., 7.

skepticism of supernatural phenomena to a large extent in his theories of religion.

Hume's skepticism is so thorough that he criticizes the principle of causality that is

essential in Newtonian science. He once casts a critical doubt on human reason when his

preference goes to human sentiment and its experiential perception: he continues to put

reason under the scrutiny by itself, which eventually influences Immanuel Kant's critique

of reason. Consequently, he rejects any religious doctrines that presume supernatural

deity beyond human sentiment[224]; miracles in religion fundamentally violate the law of

nature in his view.[225]

Hume's empiricism seeks primarily a regularity of experience observable in the

natural world, which is the only solid ground of philosophical justification of the truth.

With Kant, he rejects any possibility of knowledge of God or that of non-sensory realm.

Christian doctrines are not successful in this frame of thinking in presenting intelligent

witnesses or evidences enough to become "the truth of our senses."[226] His declaration on

miracle has a conclusive tone:

> Nothing is esteemed a miracle if it ever happens in the common course of
> nature… But it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life; because
> that has never been observed in any age or country… no testimony is
> sufficient to establish a miracle.[227]

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[224] His skepticism affects areas like "knowledge of causal relations in the physical world, knowledge of God, and knowledge of the self." Sheila G. Davaney, *Pragmatic Historicism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), 6.

[225] Hume defines a miracle as "a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." David Hume, "Of Miracles," in *Hume on Miracles*, ed. Stanley Tweyman (England: Thoemmes Press, 1996), 6.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Ibid., 5-6.

In Hume's method, suspicion and contradiction is essential in determining a matter-of-fact-ness of certain experience. Hesitation to believe other's witness is another indispensable process to entertain in order to attain a real knowledge. Therefore, "the ultimate standard by which we determine all disputes that may arise concerning them is always from experience and observation."[228] His skepticism is exclusive of any sort of unconditional belief including religious dogma or *a priori* knowledge that takes for granted non-perceivable beliefs. For example, his reaction against the belief of spiritual beings is like revulsion:

> Nothing is more repugnant to all other notions, because nothing is more repugnant to common experience, than mind without body; a mere spiritual substance which fell not under their senses nor comprehension, and of which they had not observed one single instance throughout all nature.[229]

As is pointed out, Hume objects "to the postulation of any new interposition of the Supreme Cause"[230] in human life and experience, which fundamentally rejects a spiritual intercept in human personality. In his perspective, therefore, any spiritual or religious experience such as spirit possession or exorcism can no longer be interpreted as part of human existence in natural law. Because there is "no experience of divine attributes and operations"[231] in nature, religious beliefs can be simply falsified without scientific or experimental support.

Hume and Freud commonly agree on the problem of intelligent passion that spreads miracles without consent of the natural law. They name the passionate

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[228] Ibid., 3.

[229] Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 1998), 40.

[230] Antony Flew, *Hume's Philosophy of Belief* (New York: The Humanities Press. 1961), 168.

[231] Hume, *Dialogues*. 15.

imagination 'delusion' and call religion 'superstitious illusion.' They share the idea that religious beliefs lack rigorous reasoning and systematic observation and fail to separate barbarous absurdity from obvious reality. Religious testimony about miracles does not come up with rational foundation for authoritative truth. Instead, the trust of human reason will get rid of any principle that leads to religion.

Hume takes part in the Enlightenment that is matching to "the rise of modern paganism."[232] Freud joins in his paganism with the idea of father-origin of religion without any possibility of external existence of God. Jung also inherits it in his scheme of intra-psychic origin of religion with an expanded vision of collective human property in the unconsciousness. Hume makes a systematic effort for "a science of the pure givenness of consciousness"[233] in order to accomplish the task of skeptic science by demonstrating "not only the illusory character and yet natural necessity of that [religious] belief but also its psychological origin."[234] Hume is recognized as a forerunning philosopher that shows how "the transcendent Objectivity is constituted in the pure Subjectivity, in the sphere of pure consciousness, and how a knowledge related thereto is possible."[235] In this respect, psychoanalytic tradition owes to Hume from the start to the extent that it seeks for intra-psychic interpretation of human experience with the same method of empiricism and experimentalism. The psychoanalytic tradition confines

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[232] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, vol. I. *The Rise of Modern Paganism*. (New York: Knopf. 1966), in Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 345.

[233] Richard T. Murphy. *Hume and Husserl* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Pub. 1980), 2.

[234] Ibid., 13.

[235] Husserl, *Erste Philosophie*, Vol. I. (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff Pub., 1959 (1923/24)), 353, quoted Ibid., 19.

possession and exorcism in this modern spirit and focuses only on one's psychological

arena regardless of its wider cultural contexts.

Various Religious Experiences in William James

The psychoanalytic definition of religion does not represent what people

experience in reality due to its reduction into a pure subjectivity. Medical scientific

materialism thereafter inherently diminishes the meaning of religious contents into neuro-

psychological or chemical activity. In reaction to the materialistic reduction of religious

experiences, William James makes an enormous effort to preserve the complexity of

religious experiences as they are. He argues that religion covers far more than one

dimension of human life with its unique pursuit of the divine:

> Religion… shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of
> individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to
> stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine… Religion,
> whatsoever it is, is a man's total reaction upon life so why not say that any
> total reaction upon life is a religion? [236]

With James, religious feelings are not falsified due to its lack of rational details.

Instead, he identifies himself as having an open-minded philosophy about religious truth.

He claims that he stands with 'radical empiricism.'[237] He believes that those religious

feelings revitalize the inner world of people in despair of outer experiences, which is

uniquely and exclusively experienced in religion. They are not simply a "feeling of

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[236] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 31-32, 35.

[237] James calls himself as such, but his empiricism is different from the British predecessors in that he regards knowledge as "related to the 'stream of consciousness' of the knower, not merely as a series of isolated experiences." W. B. Hahoney. "James, William," in *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion* Vol. F-N, ed. Paul K. Meagher et al. (Washington D.C.: Corpus Publications, 1979), 1865.

escape" but a "religion's secret"[238] that can be known to the individual only if he or she becomes part of the religion. He recognizes certain changes in the sense of reality due to the religious belief in mind, even sensing the presence of external beings according to the situation. He is as open to religious experiences as to "believe that some higher power (or higher powers), indefinable in the present state of human knowledge, was operative in the universe and working toward good"[239] but only to a limited extent.

James, in another respect, joins in the modernist assumptions that religious experiences are restricted within individual's "ontological imagination."[240] Certainly, he would not believe that religious doctrines are trustworthy as described. However, he at least makes efforts to preserve what religious people claim to experience and tries to illumine the meaning of what they describe. He leaves a space for religion to speak for itself about its unique truthfulness in its own way; then he tries to give psychological explanations about their origins.

However, he still takes the modernist assumptions about religion when he claims that modern healthy-mindedness overcomes "the morbidness" of "the old hell-fire theology."[241] He also declares an inefficiency of Christian teachings as the contemporary therapeutic point of reference regardless of its past efficacy. He denounces the "sky-blue optimistic gospel" as a trustable answer to mental treatment. To a healthy person, melancholy or mental pain can be rare as is evil's existence to a healthy-minded enthusiast. James's notion of possession or exorcism may be interpreted in this respect:

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[238] James, *Varieties,* 49.

[239] Hahoney, "James," 1865.

[240] James, 71.

[241] Ibid., 89.

the experience of the phenomenon can be described as they report, but only unhealthy enthusiasts may not be able to get rid of the existence of evil from their mind as the unhealthy people cannot stand the prevalent assault of melancholy.

Possession and exorcism, therefore, may belong to the unhealthy group of religious believers when they are unable to ignore evil in James's perspective. A healthy mind can stand any cruel misfortunes from outside at the moment of victimization.[242] In this regard, James seems to share modern optimism of evolutionism of his time by putting his trust in the human reason although he himself protests against rationalism.

James gives more prudent affirmation of religious experiences than his contemporary modern psychoanalysts. He affirms that religion has a meaningful system that is usually 'secret' to outsiders. However, he still criticizes religion as inefficient for contemporary people because of its outdated instructions. He deems religious efficiency as limited in passive healing of the insiders from the pressures of outside, and he withdraws his trust of religion as an effective means of individual and social transformation. He overestimates human's psychological persistence in victimizing environments while he does not pay much attention to any possible destruction of inner personality by political, socio-cultural or systemic evil of outside. Spirit possession is, with James, no more than a weaker soul's sickness in response to its own fragility rather than to depriving socio-cultural or political circumstances. Along with Freud and Jung, he does not consider social or political influences over human psychological experiences.

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[242] Ibid., 142.

Spirit Possession and Exorcism in Developmental Psychology

Spirit possession and exorcism are not proper scientific terms in developmental psychology that pursues an enlightenment of the dynamics of human development. Developmental psychology starts from a close observation of children's behavior and its scientific process of theorization through a rigorous reasoning. When it comes to hallucination or imagination in psychopathology, many psychologists in the discipline attempt to explain the phenomenon by matching with childhood "imaginal dialogues."[243]

About the purpose of imagination in childhood, Jean Piaget focuses on its function to facilitate children's adaptation to reality: imagination and play as its expressive mode are not simply a reflection of reality but a distortion of it for the purpose of "subordination of reality to the desires of the self."[244] Imagination is a kind of "undirected thought" concerned with dream distinctive from intelligent thoughts. Children are engaged in the imaginal dialogues when they have a disturbed integration of reality into their ego, which eventually disappear when adulthood dawns. Spiritual entities cannot take part in the healthy adult's life in his view, and the phenomenon of possession, if it equals with imagination in his theory, is only to be confined within struggling thought of a person.

George Mead[245] explains imagination in childhood as serving social reality by simulating the real dialogue for the purpose of adjustment to it. Heinz Hartmann [246]

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[243] Mary Watkins uses this term in order to describe hallucinatory dialogues in childhood and later pathology, stressing its purposiveness and origin from natural imagination. Mary Watkins, *Invisible Guests: the Development of Imaginal Dialogue* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press. 1986).

[244] Jean Piaget, "Response to Brian Sutton-Smith," *Child's Play,* eds. R. E. Herron & Sutton-Smith, B (New York: Wiley, 1971), 339, quoted Ibid., 31.

[245] George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1934); *Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1936).

regards fantasy as having a basic orientation toward adaptation toward reality with its regressive deviation. As Mary Watkins, a critic of developmental and clinical psychology, points out, the developmental psychologists commonly inherit Freud's assumption that "psychical reality is in the end more the shadow of external reality than its equal."[247] As a result, the perpetuation of the imaginal dialogue throughout the development after childhood is believed to reflect "immaturity and pathology"[248] in the person.

Referencing to Greco-Roman definition of imagination, Watkins claims that imagination in a child is not an imitation of reality but "a poetic nature of mind."[249] She calls personifying "the spontaneous experiencing, envisioning and speaking of the configurations of experience as psychic presences,"[250] and it has a religious aspect in its phenomena. She views imaginal others in this context[251] as having autonomy and contributing to the creation of the self because imagination of a child may extend to far beyond her/his experience.

Contrary to the Freud's assumption that imaginal life is the origin of pathology as a result of internalization of outer experience, Watkins embraces imagination as poetic genius that can create another world by revising its *telos*. Contrary to Piaget and other

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[246] Heinz Hartmann, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation* (New York: International Universities Press, 1939).

[247] E.S. Casey, "Freud's Theory of Reality: a Critical Account," *Review of Metaphysics*, 25, 679, quoted in Watkins, 35.

[248] Watkins, 36.

[249] Ibid., 68.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Watkins leans toward Jung and Hillman in defining imaginal others as "at times…being outside of and independent of one's conscious agency (Ibid.)."

developmental psychologists, she recognizes multiple figures with spontaneity as "the building of relationships in dialogue"[252] rather than a depersonification or pathological phenomenon. Watkins redefines psychological experience of hallucination as also healthy in terms of the model of literature, otherwise typically regarded as pathological. In this respect, the traditional understanding of spirit possession may correspond to multiple aspects of mind with genuine creativity. She resonates Jungian efforts to explain the existence of imaginal others, intending to eradicate an innate alienation of multiple personalities from each other in the state of hallucination. She contributes to embracing hallucinations and interior dialogues as creative part of human existence. However, she continues to stay in the intra-psychic hermeneutics of the multiple phenomena without further consideration of their liaison to socio-cultural backgrounds.

Spirit Possession and Later Psychoanalytic Theories

While Freud focuses "on the freedom *from* illusion" in psychoanalysis, object relations theorists like D. W. Winnicott emphasize "the increasing freedom to *create* illusion"[253] through play. When an individual lacks an important relationship in infanthood, psychoanalysis may provide a compensatory atmosphere that may help attain the missing need of the self through 'mutual play' between the patient and the therapist. He calls it fantasy, which is in fact borrowed from Melanie Klein whose emphasis lies in the "unconscious phantasy as the pervasive underpinning of mental life."[254]Winnicott

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[252] Ibid., 102.

[253] Jay R. Greenberg & Stephen A. Mitchell. *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory*, (Cambridge: Harvard Unversity Press, 1983), 201.

[254] Ibid., 203.

stresses more "the interpersonal environment"[255] in reality toward which fantasy is oriented than *a priori* assumptions concerned with fantasy. Through the "moment of illusion,"[256] the infant converses with the outer world in her ruthless excitement.

With an explicit turn from the traditional instinct theory after Freud, Winnicott and Harry Guntrip with other theorists move toward the focus on the individual and social relationships. They manifestly lean toward the significance of object relations since infanthood. Human relationships become a major issue in object relational psychoanalysis rather than Freud's ultimately biological orientation in his emphasis on the instinctual needs of sexual gratification in human growth. Psychopathology in the tradition, therefore, faces a critical challenge for a fundamental renovation by taking into account the reality of a person with "all the motives, values, hopes, fears and purposes that constitute the real life of [hu]man, and make a purely 'organic' approach to [hu]man inadequate."[257] Fragmentation of the ego comes now to reflect the lack of real relations in the building-up of compensatory internal objects.

The "regressed ego," which is the essence of every psychopathology in Guntrip's phrase, develops from "a profound sense of helplessness and hopelessness" in the miserable situations[258] such as the infanthood traumas with poor mothering. The ego basically continues to struggle for survival by staying attached to reality in the threat of

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[255] Ibid., 202.

[256] Winnicott locates the origin of God or religion in what he calls the 'transitional space,' which may correspond to Freud's Oedipal emergency. Ibid.

[257] Guntrip calls this new object of science the 'spiritual self' as encompassing all different phases of real relationships. Harry Guntrip, *Personality structure and human interaction: the developing synthesis of psychodynamic theory* (New York: International Universities Press. 1961), 15-16, quoted in Greenberg and Mitchell, 210-11.

[258] Guntrip suggests that the "regressed ego" comes to existence with "a fear of and antipathy toward life" and "renounces all others, external and internal, real and imaginary (Ibid.)."

depersonalizing distresses. He leaves Freud fundamentally in this respect by criticizing

his theories about impersonal drives, machine metaphors, and aggressive instincts by

nature in favor of the real world and its internal object relationships.[259] When spirit

possession is considered a deprivation of relational care, it may be paralleled with the

theory. Spirit possession often accompanies depersonalized states of human psyche due

to destitute social environments.

Freud's instinctual theories face more challenges by feminist psychologists like

Karen Horney, one of his pupils in his last years. Her philosophy of psychoanalysis is

"growth-oriented, life-affirming, [and] freedom-seeking"[260] in that she believes that

"psychoanalysis can free a human being."[261] She does not want to limit a person within

the context of birth and its deterministic power over life without change: instead, she

prefers the idea of "plastic possibilities to be shaped by organismal environmental

interactions."[262] Eventually, she pursues identification of socio-cultural pathology of

human anxiety instead of the maintenance of Freud's libidinal drive. Both troubled

relationships and socio-cultural forces like competitiveness and distorted morality

nurtures individual anxiety and neurosis, which ultimately hampers human growth.[263]

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[259] Freud's biological or 'metapsychological' theory has also been questioned due to its incompatibility with an interpretive science by "Guntrip (1971), George Klein (1976), Gill (1976), Holt (1976), and Shafer (1976) (Greenberg and Mitchell, 22) ."

[260] Harold Kelman, "Introduction," in Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc. 1967), 13.

[261] Karen Horney, "The Technique of Psychoanalytic Therapy," *Current Biography*, Vol. II, No. 8 (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., August 1941), 27-29, in Kelman, "Introduction," 13.

[262] Kelman, "Introduction," 13.

[263] In *New Ways in Psychoanalysis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939.), Horney turns attention to an outer factor of neurosis from distorted social morality with her holistic perspective rather than simply to Freud's mechanistic concept of unconscious forces.

Horney also warns about moral pretenses that may impose too much burden on children and debilitate their growth: therefore, the goal of psychoanalysis is to reveal moral hypocrisy in society and culture and to help develop appropriate moral criteria for "human growth and self-realization." Children tend to develop "the idealized self"[264] when they are surrounded by social threats like unsuitable moral charade, and the idealized self can be satisfied when appropriate social morality may be built up. Started from her clinical observation that libido theory does not work for women, Horney explores a wider dimension of neurotic pathology in terms of social philosophy of Georg Simmel[265] and anthropology.[266]

There is no conclusive match between psychoanalytic theories and spirit possession. Coming down to a fundamental connection between spirit possession and its individual and social pathogeneses, however, culture and its ideological structures manifestly become interweaved with the abnormal psychosomatic phenomena of spirit possession. The wider perspectives about neurosis may enlighten spirit possession by engaging situational and environmental elements as well as individual psychological factors surrounding the complicated human experience.

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[264] Horney explains that the idealized self in the end forms children with a sense of who they are. However, because of 'the tyranny of the should' of the day, they are alienated from themselves. In *Our Inner Conflicts: a constructive theory of neurosis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945), she makes it clear that "compulsive trends in neuroses are not instinctual but spring from disturbed human relationships (Horney, 187)," which can be resolved through the improvement of the conflictual relationship.

[265] From Simmel, Horney learns that her contemporary "civilization is a masculine civilization…The state, the laws, morality, religion and the sciences are the creation of men." She concludes that psychology like other sciences and disciplines are fundamentally masculine in its perspectives and that masculinity in psychology subjects femininity under its sway for its vantage point. *Feminine Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1967), 55-56, in Kelman 29.

[266] About Freud's claim for the universality of Oedipus complex, Horney responds that "the statement probably is correct so far as the present German and Austrians are concerned" and that it "is non existent under widely different cultural conditions" (Ibid.) in her anthropological insights.

In conclusion, both Freud and Jung are attracted to spirit possession as a religious phenomenon for the purpose of supporting their psychoanalytic theory of religion and science. They commonly attribute spirit possession to the activation of human unconscious and to its potentials to create multiple images in a person regardless of its contents, whether religious or hallucinatory. Freud distinguishes himself by concentrating on oedipal conflicts as deterministic elements in possession, while Jung is distinctive by focusing on collective unconscious that expands the potentiality of the unconscious into the creation of multiple personalities within human psyche.

The modern critique of the religious phenomenon has been coherently sustained to the next generation without critical dissent. Developmental psychology also shares the idea that childhood imagination created in a person is a possible pathogenesis in adulthood if persisted without disappearance in time. Modern philosophical skepticism of the religious experience has influenced the psychoanalytic tradition, which tends to make believe that explanation through intra-psychic neurosis has exhaustively explained the phenomenon of possession.

With the rise of a fundamental suspicion about libidinal unconscious, however, neurosis has itself experienced serious revision in post-Freudian scholarship. More than an intra-psychic pathogenesis, they turn their attention to outer elements that affect human psychology. Due to the development of sociology and anthropology, the doctrinal assertion of machinery image of human psyche becomes subject to the fundamental revision. Instead, a holistic perspective about human psychology becomes appealing and the relational environment comes to get involved with the hermeneutics of mind.

Furthermore, it is claimed that cultural atmosphere and moral conditions influence the development of individual neurosis.

In this regard, possession that is previously understood as a simple neurosis has to get another illumination in the light of sociology and anthropology. Modern spirit attempts to contain the far-reaching religious phenomena under the rubric of the unconscious, but with the advent of new horizons in psychoanalysis, spirit possession should be taken care of in intra-psychic, relational, and contextual point of view. Different from its prior limitations, psychological tradition continues to contribute to the illumination of possession with its own advancement; it opens a new perspective through a widened scope of environmental understanding.

CHAPER III

ANTHROPOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS AND DEBATES

Why is spirit possession still an active phenomenon in many other cultures, according to anthropology, regardless of psychoanalytic reduction of the phenomenon? What are the individual and socio-cultural meanings of possession when experienced as part of daily life in those cultures? Do any prominent, if not universal, commonalities of the phenomenon exist among those cultures where possession is observed? For appropriate answers, I will examine socio-anthropological materials about possession related to the historical event of witch-hunting and contemporary arguments concerning spirit possession in cultural studies.

The study of spirit possession in shamanism has recently revived through the ethnographic study of culture in anthropology. The qualitative approach deals with the shamanic practice of possession not simply as a universal phenomenon under the rubric of parapsychology. Instead, possession acts an instrumental conduit into a deeper understanding of the culture by examining the context of the specific experience (e.g., psychological, cultural, and socio-economic factors). The first part of this chapter, therefore, hammers out new methodological possibilities in the study of possession from an anthropological perspective based on the assumption that possession involves more than an intra-psychic diagnosis.

The aim of presenting the historical episode of witch-hunt is twofold: first, it illustrates the validity of anthropological methods in the study of possession and

exorcism by analyzing the spiritualistic epidemic from socio-cultural angles. Second, the presentation of the witch-hunt demonstrates the similarity of social backgrounds between the practice of witchcraft and emergence of spirit possession without regard to the gap in time and society. Anthropological analyses of witchcraft and witch-hunt demonstrate some lucid commonalities with the contemporary experiences of spirit possession in many cultures: specifically, the prevalence of women in gender and their socio-cultural marginality.

Witchcraft was not necessarily related to possession by definition because the former implies an active engagement with the devil for certain purposes, either personal well-being or magical revenge against an individual or society. Possession typically refers to a passive or involuntary involvement with shamanic religious practices or the mediation of witchcraft. During the human-hunting epidemic, witches were held responsible for children's possession, which further inflamed the persecution. The Christian church once regarded possession as a treatable spiritual illness, whereas witchcraft was roundly condemned from Biblical times. However, during the time of persecution, spirit-possessed people were also burned at the stake without proper pastoral or communal care.

An anthropological exploration has contributed to an active engagement of social issues such as gender and economy in the study of witch-hunt and spirit possession. According to the study, many more women were executed as witches, especially when they lived in poverty or solitude. Likewise, recent study of possession in anthropology reveals women's proclivity toward spirit possession when it exists in a socio-economically marginalized women's sphere.

Ioan Lewis's theory of spirit possession as 'deprivation cult' attracts serious attention from both his supporters and critics in anthropology. Lewis establishes a substantial connection between spirit possession and women based on socio-anthropological observations. He proposes that marginalized women are most likely to engage in this anomalous phenomenon in many cultures and societies. His critics, however, point out his tendency to generalize the theory across cultures and to ignore culture-specific experiences of women. Despite their arguments, however, Lewis's theory seems to have gained increasing support from many more cultures in recent studies. Although some cultures take spirit possession to be a male magician's role, the meaningful connection between women and spirit possession becomes greater in many other cultures. In addition, interdisciplinary studies in anthropology (e.g., feminist or psychological theories) can be legitimized for a rich and critical analysis of culture without reduction through searching for certain patterns and theories by comparing and juxtaposing multiple ethnographic data with each other.[267]

Study of Spirit Possession in Shamanism

Spirit possession is taken so seriously in anthropological study of shamanism that it is often identified with shamanism itself.[268] With its ethnographical approach to culture,[269] anthropology cautiously preserves possession as an existing phenomenon with

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[267] In this chapter, the terms anthropology and sociology may be used interchangeably or jointly for revealing a specific mode of contextual human life regardless of their clear distinctions as disciplines per se.

[268] Jane M. Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," *Annual Review of Anthropology,* Vol. 21(1992): 307-30.

[269] Geertz describes ethnography as 'thick description' characterized with "a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures" and doing ethnographic work is like reading "a manuscript—foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations and tendentious commentaries." His comment presupposes

no claim of truth or falsity.[270] Possession "has long been an explicit topic of inquiry"[271] in anthropology and has attracted critical academic attention in understanding cultures. It serves as a good religious barometer through which social structures and functions become understood and analyzed. At the same time, shamanism has received decreasing interest from anthropologists who regard it as a "dustbin"[272] or "insipid categor[y]."[273] A widespread skepticism against the study of shamanism comes mainly from its tendency to generalize disparate practices from a variety of cultural contexts without much attention to particularities; shamanism has often been explained by "universal motivations"[274] disconnected from wider cultural contexts.

However, the temptation to generalize shamanism has been extensively resisted by the attempt to preserve its plurality as "shamanisms"[275] rather than a single shamanic tradition. Durkheim proposes that only a study of specific religion is possible because anthropology and sociology do not include the study of religion in general. His assumption that a religion is identical to its society may diminish the meanings of both,

the priority of an observed culture itself rather than the observing perspective in ethnographic description. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, NY: Basic Books. 2000), 10.

[270] See Agehananda Bharati, "Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion: Ritual and Belief Systems," *Biennial Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 7 (1971): 230-82.

[271] Janice Boddy, "Spirit Possession Revisted: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994), 407-8.

[272] R. F. Spencer. "Review of Studies in Shamanism," ed. Carl-Martin Edsman. *Am. Anthropol*. 70-2 (Apr., 1968): 396-7, quoted in Atkinson, "Shamanism Today," 307. .

[273] Clifford Geertz. "Religion as a Cultural System," in *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Banton (London: Tavistock; New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966), quoted Ibid.

[274] D.H. Holmberg, *Order in Paradox: Myth, Ritual, and Exchange Among Nepal's Tamang* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press. 1989), 133 quoted in Atkinson, 308.

[275] D.H.Holmberg, "Shamanic soundings: femaleness in the Tamang ritual structure," *Signs: J. Women Cult. Soc.* 9(1) (1983): 40-58.

but his claim may be partly legitimized in his emphasis on the close connection between religion and society.[276] When Durkheim identifies religion as "an eminently social thing,"[277] his claim is valid as long as a religion reflects social experience to a great extent. Shamanisms, in this respect, are peculiarly embedded within their host cultures, reflecting—although inevitably partial—social reality. However, society and religion cannot be identical: religion contains far more than what society offers for individuals in the spiritual and symbolic realms, while society certainly contains more than religion can completely encompass.[278]

Academic study of shamanism revived in the 1980s through an interdisciplinary engagement of shamanisms in the study of religion, psychology and anthropology. Regardless of the reluctance of positivistic universalization of shamanism in anthropological studies,[279] the efforts to find out common patterns or themes in the study have continuously been made. As a result, shared resemblances of each particular shamanism appear constantly, in spite of discrepancies in history or social context of the

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[276] Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9.

[277] Ibid., xix.

[278] Victor Turner makes certain that Durkheimian notion of religion reduces to social action does not apply to his study of rituals in Ndembu society, saying "[t]his method did not enable me to handle the complexity, asymmetry, and antinomy which characterize real social processes, of which ritual performances may be said to constitute phases or stages." He found that "the qualitative distinctions between religion and secular custom and behavior came to be obliterated" with the method. V. Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush: Anthropology as Experience* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1985), 6.

[279] Anthropology after postmodernism works as an instrument in multi-polarization of understanding of humanity by de-centering "Western conceptions of essence, rationality, system, self, writing, language and so on, while anthropological method (fieldwork and the dialogics of otherness) has provided the inspiration for imagining methodological progress beyond a narrowly defined scientific method." (Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overing, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: the Key Concepts* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 300).

religion.[280] In this respect, a pursuit of commonality among cultures, if not of general objectivity, is essential as a methodological alternative in the scientific study of culture.

For example, psychological anthropology,[281] which pursues a psychological analysis of ethnographic data as one of the goals of the general anthropological studies, has contributed to the cross-cultural study of shamanism, while most other anthropologists pay attention exclusively to ethnographic monographs. Such study risks the danger of reduction or generalization of disparate shamanic experiences due to its fundamental orientation toward human individuals cross-culturally. Probably the data of religious experiences collected from varieties of shamanic and socio-cultural traditions hold the possibility of reduction into a single psychological category for the researcher's convenience.

On the other hand, psychological anthropology has put its major emphasis on individual traits common to shamans in trance[282] for identifying therapeutic functions in

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[280] Regardless of the emphasis on diversity in culture that is ultimately valued in postmodernism, scientific effort to access a valid form of knowledge beyond the specificity of each culture is still possible. Gellner claims that "[o]ne simply cannot understand our shared social condition unless one starts from the indisputable fact that genuine knowledge of nature is possible and has occurred" (E. Gellner, "Anything Goes: The Carnival of Cheap Relativism which Threatens to Swamp the Coming *Fin de Millenaire*," Times Literary Supplement 4811:8, quoted Ibid., 302).

[281] Max Gluckman argues that a sociological anthropologist, "like a psychologist, may study events of mental and emotional life –the actions and thoughts of individuals and …even 'unconscious' thoughts and feelings. The psychologist seeks to find the relations between these events as they occur in the life of single individuals, what Radcliffe-Brown called 'individual mental or psychical system[s].'" In his perspective, 'psychology' in anthropology means the science of psychology, which is often confused with sociological anthropology due to their common concern about emotional and mental procedures. Although "Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Tawney, Radcliffe-Brown" were not psychologists, they certainly dealt with "mental and emotional events" (Gluckman, "Psychological, sociological and anthropological explanations of witchcraft and gossip: a clarification," in *Anthropological Studies of Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion: Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, ed. Brian P. Levac (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 227).

[282] According to Atkinson, trance rather than 'ecstasy' is a gloss preferred by behavioral scientists who eschew ontological religious descriptions of shamans. One of the issues in using the term is that it includes spirit possession as a cultural practice whose link to shamanism was the focal point of debates. See Atkinson, 310.

rituals. The study previously leans toward pathologization of the shaman's mentality to be treated from an individual psychological perspective, but more recently their 'abnormality' has given way to "the category of universal psychobiological capacities."[283] Shamanic behaviors of practitioners, therefore, are not 'abnormal' any more as typical human functions; instead, they are contained within the normal range of human ability.

Despite its limitation in encompassing the wider social connections of shamanism, however, psychological anthropology at least positively envisions the possibility of theorizing about shamanism based on its common human psycho-biological or psycho-social phenomena.[284] Behavioral psychologists find their "epistemological bedrock in the concept of altered psychological states"[285] as a common starting point for the psychological study of shamanism without taking seriously into account any ontological claims regarding trance or possession. However, "an ethnographic counterweight"[286] should still be imposed on the other side of the generalization in the study of shamanism in order to avoid "unwarranted reductionism and romantic exoticizing of a homogenous non-Western Other"[287] after a simple identification of

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[283] Ibid.

[284] Anthropology has been misrepresented as having an "imperialist" perspective: through 'studying down' by representatives of higher socio-cultural societies, the discipline has been identified with colonialism. Nevertheless, anthropology "helps to empower the alienated and give voice to the otherwise unvoiced." The new trend of 'study' of the last two decades has largely contributed to self-analysis of traditional anthropology and its presuppositions. Jeremy MacClancy, "Introduction: Taking People Seriously," in *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines,* ed. MacClancy (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 2002), 13.

[285] Atkinson, 310.

[286] Ibid., 309.

[287] Ibid.

shamanism with altered states of consciousness by psychological attempts in anthropology.

Without bearing in mind contextual factors of the phenomenon beyond the individual psychical action (e.g., ritualistic, socio-cultural, and economic factors), researchers cannot properly appraise shamanism and its subordinate experience of trance or possession. Atkinson claims that "to analyze shamanism primarily as a trance phenomenon is akin to analyzing marriage solely as a function of reproductive biology."[288] Therefore, trance or spirit possession is 'revelatory' not because of the phenomenon itself, but because of "their place in cultural systems of knowledge."[289] The phenomenon carries certain repressed messages of a person or society with its complex surroundings through rituals and other practices when it pursues communication between a spiritual world and its human counterpart.

Beyond the narrow psychological understanding of shamans and their therapeutic functions, shamanism comes to serve as a litmus test in reading the socio-political geography of a society. With psychology, the social and political dynamics of shamanism have become popular.[290] Because shamanic rituals are practiced within social and cultural systems, they reflect the politics, economic conditions, and gender issues of the society in which a shamanic belief is embedded. Although shamanisms commonly play a role of

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[288] Ibid., 311.

[289] R. Ridington, *Little Bit Know Something: Stories in the Language of Anthropology* (Iowa City: Univ. Iowa Press, 1990), quoted Ibid., 312.

[290] M. Taussig, "Folk Healing and the structure of conquest in the Southwest Columbian Andes," *J. Latin. Am. Lore.* 6(2): 217-78; A. L. Tsing, "Healing Boundaries in South Kalimantan," *Soc. Sci. Med.* 27(8): 829-39; D. H. Holmberg, 1983; Stan R. Mumford. *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

mediating between human and spiritual worlds, they also certainly deal with social issues

unique to their individual customers.[291] Consequently, spirit possession in shamanism

now receives wider and multiple interests with regard to its reflection of socio-cultural

circumstances surrounding the phenomenon[292] and the shamanic rituals associated with

it. Shamanic otherworldliness, therefore, reflects the socio-cultural and politico-economic

realities of those who resort to mysticism in this world.

Anthropological Retrospection of Witch-hunt

Durkheim's identification of religion and its god with the society that creates it

receives critiques from later scholarship.[293] However, religion certainly practices within a

social context regardless of its claim of doctrinal universality beyond individual societies.

In this regard, demonology in Europe from the Middle Ages through the seventeenth

century reflects diverse aspects of the historical and social situations of the time.

Anthropological and sociological study of the historical event reveals issues in common

with spirit possession in current study (e.g., women and their marginalization in society).

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[291] It seems that a certain level of generalization cannot be totally removed from anthropology in as much as ethnographic monographs are indispensable. The positivistic generalization from an outsider's perspective cannot be working any more as the right anthropological method today, but "many phenomena are now global [if not general] in scope" (MacClancy, 13) and require a common focus for investigation. Shamanic possession is one global phenomenon that has considerable cohesion in its contents and contexts as much as its diversity.

[292] Another emphasis in today's anthropology is a continuous change of social circumstances. "The long-standing conception of a culture as a fixed, clearly bounded, relatively static entity must now be forsaken for a much more fluid, dynamic sense of culture, conceived as a continuing creation of its members." (Ibid.) This note may exclude any positivistic claim of a theory in the discipline, but possession and its socio-cultural implications can be described as such in a global point of view. A study of multiple cultures on a wide-ranging issue such as possession may help illumine clearly both commonalities and discrepancies.

[293] See also Victor Turner, *On the Edge of the Bush*, 6.: "Bronislaw Malinnowski, Magic, Science, and Religion, and other essays."

According to witch-hunt research, European societies were obsessed with a collective purgatorial impetus, which derived not simply from religious doctrines but more so from socio-cultural contexts. Religious and civil leaders judged, condemned, and punished as witches a great number of people. Societies sought to maintain religious stability through the human hunt, but they pursued more of a personal and social homeostasis from the threatening power of 'the devil', which had been observed through natural disasters of the era. Historically, those women who were condemned as witches were socio-culturally isolated and peripheral in social status (e.g., old widows or spinsters). They were tortured and executed publicly when rumored to be witch. For them, spiritual communication with the devil appeared to others as a mode of life.

People were in the grip of a collective fear of demonic revenge through witches' magical curses (e.g., natural disasters on agricultural products, famine, illness or spirit possession of children, or even death of adults). After a series of overwhelming attacks of nature and war (i.e., the Black Death and long lasting wars such as the Hundred Years' War among nations), people came to be horrified at the 'unnamed' power of nature, which merged Christian demonology and traditional folk tales. This demonology was conditioned and modified by the need of societies; in turn, it came to inflict a serious influence back on social life.

Early on, the church regarded spirit possession as a matter for pastoral care rather than for persecution. The church offered special attention to a person with spiritual problems in early Christianity and the Middle Ages. Special clerics accepted the church's appointment to take care of possessed people. These were later called "exorcists."[294]

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[294] R. J. Woods, "Exorcism," in *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. R. Hunter (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 387.

Exorcism as a healing ritual for possessed people was not directed against the person; instead, it was against the devil who was believed to reside inside the person.[295] As a sort of pastoral and spiritual care, exorcism was practiced directly against evil spirits, according to early Christian tradition.

People under possession were also the objects of communal concern among faith communities who offered routine prayers manifesting repugnance towards the devil. In the early Middle Ages, those individuals with mental illness received special care as "a matter of community responsibility."[296] Toward the end of the Middle Ages, approaching the fourteenth century, however, spirit possession began to be subject to secular justice concerned with the stigmatic rubric of 'witchcraft'. Spirit possession was not necessarily identical with witchcraft, but witchcraft seemed to create spirit possession. The stigmatized accusation of bewitching and misleading people from traditional society and its norms made possessed people lose their previous care as the afflicted. Even worse, accused of antisocial behaviors such as robbery or cursing, witches and sorcerers became a target of persecution for breaking the norms of faith. They received aggravated blame from society: they were "assumed to have engaged in incest and other forms of repulsive and forbidden behavior." [297] This may be interpreted as the projection of social evil into witchcraft, which was practiced by those who were isolated and removed from access to the dominant powers of society.

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[295] Alexander & Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry*, 52.

[296] Ibid., 53.

[297] Bert Kaplan, "Key Issues in the Cross-Cultural Study of Mental Disorders," in *Studying Personality Cross-Culturally*, ed. Kaplan, (Evanston, Il: Row, Peterson and Company, 1961), 415.

Among those who are isolated from major society and religion, magical thoughts and practices arise as Durkheim suggests.[298] If we take into account the importance of the connection between religion and society, deducing from his claim that religion is identical with society, we see that the practice of witchcraft in secrecy must have reflected the isolation of the marginalized from social majorities who were affiliated with traditional religion and concerned about any deviation from it. Observation of witch-hunting from an anthropological and sociological perspective, for that reason, is valuable for an understanding of the socio-cultural aspects of spirit possession and witchcraft.[299]

A Historical Background of Witch-Hunt

Accompanying the advent of the witch-hunt, traditional European feudalistic society was shaken by new scientific inventions (e.g., gunpowder). The Black Death claimed half of every European population, which spread a fundamental panic about the future and destiny among the people. The Hundred Years War and peasant revolts also contributed to the surge of superstitious belief out of psychological fear. Economic trade considerably decreased with the onset of those disasters and many intellectual products of the Middle Ages were rejected by the societies of the fifteenth century. Theologically, traditional institutions of the Christian church began to be challenged by the Reformation and the rise of modern science.

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[298] Explaining about harmful spirits that not all those forces of religious forms are religious or reside inside the society, Durkheim explains how magical powers are different from those of religion. He asserts that "at the point where the world of religion ends … that of magic begins." See Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 284-6.

[299] Spirit possession and witchcraft share a lot of socio-cultural factors as common backgrounds in gender, socio-economic status, and power, as will be demonstrated in the following arguments.

These radical transitions were too massive to handle with an ancient paradigm of human understanding. People began searching for an answer to the new historical situation from a variety of primitive forms of belief outside official Christianity. Especially, populations that relied on agriculture for a living were "subject to the caprices of nature, having ever been superstitious, prone to propitiate an unfathomable deity with charms and to exorcise malicious demons with curses."[300] Social instability incurred thereby brought about many forms of magical thoughts in people's mind in this context. They regressed to "belief in magic, mysticism, and demonology"[301] when the big social system came to an end after the attacks of 'barbaric' people and the plagues.

> The uncertainty of the age produced much insecurity, and stirred up the irrational forces always present in men's minds. Magic has always been one way to deal with the unknown.[302]

Traditionally, the clergy dealt with mental problems for the purpose of providing spiritual and physical care, while physicians mostly took care of physical illnesses. With the great social shifts, however, mental diseases began to be taken as the effect of the devil's dreadful forces channeled by witches. [303] With an effort to maintain their traditional homeostasis of power in response to the overwhelming influx of collective anxiety over the devil, political and religious leadership sought a recovery of control through the particular practice of scapegoating.

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[300] Edith Simon, *The Reformation* (Nederland: Time Life International, 1967), 11, quoted in Tom Douglas, *Scapegoats: Transferring Blame* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), 44.

[301] Alexander & Selesnick, 50.

[302] Ibid., 66.

[303] Dominican monks of those days such as Johann Sprenger and Henrich Kraemer laid responsibility for mental problems on the witches. Ibid.

Social institutions that are beginning to crumble cannot afford political or religious disaffection, and the Church, the monarchs, and the feudal lords grouped their forces for defense. This age had to find its scapegoat, and severe persecution of the Jews did not seem to be enough to stem the tide.[304]

Religious scapegoating targeted the socially isolated and religious apostates. Sociologically, these were usually the poor and mostly women who did not possess access to the official power in society. These were the people who secretly pursued power substitutes through magic and superstition in the absence of secular power resources, which aggravated hatred and misunderstanding from the public with the backing of religious authorities.

As the basis of superstition is the belief that things occur through the interference of unknown elements, then the basic drive to blame in an irrational way is well founded.[305]

The surrounding environment of people's lives has influenced their superstitious religiosity by attributing causes to the unknown. Although culture may not always bring about a change in traditional religion, socio-cultural elements have the potential to influence religious practices. Considering the nature of superstition that casts "blame onto inhuman factors such as fate or luck or the malice of others,"[306] researchers do not find it strange for traditional religion surrounded by overwhelming collective panic to degenerate into a simple crutch for the practice of scapegoating in a witch-hunt. Culture as context produces significant religious changes, including the transition into superstition:

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[304] Ibid.

[305] Douglas, 45.

[306] Ibid.

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Religious change is forced because…religious meanings are changed by changes in the surrounding culture: and the tendency of such forced, involuntary change has generally been to degrade faith into superstition.[307]

One of the prominent problems in the superstitious shift of faith "lay in crediting him [the devil] too much power and influence over mankind."[308] With the influx of collective fear, "many people, and particularly many priests and monks, were becoming more obsessed by the overwhelming power of the devil and his demons."[309] The description of the devil was extraordinarily negative in the Middle Ages, whereas the early church Fathers had been optimistic about controlling the power of the devil through the saints. Superstition in the form of demonology was so prevalent that the materialized presence of the devil gained massive attention among priests and monks, as well as the general population, in medieval Europe. They believed, for example, that a demon could occupy a person's bowels or open spaces where human waste collected. The devil was believed to be present ubiquitously, even in drinking milk,[310] and to be capable of capturing almost all people's hearts in bondage.

The haunting shadow of the devil intruded on people's minds through collective panic without any boldness for confronting the 'supreme spiritual entity'. They felt "themselves victims of forces which they [were] quite unable to master—and the more concerned with religion they [were], the more grievous their afflictions: monks and nuns

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[307] Don Cuppitt, *The Sea of Faith* (BBC: London, 1985), 11.

[308] Frederick Valletta, *Witchcraft, Magic and Superstition in England 1640-70* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 35.

[309] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (New York: Basic Books Inc. 1975), 59. Here, he asserts that no valid evidence proves the existence of a sect of Satan-worshippers in the Middle Ages in Europe.

[310] In a dramatic story illustrated by Cohn, the devil is encountered based on Caesarius' book *Dialougus Miraculorum*. Ibid., 70-71.

suffer[ed] most of all."[311] Exorcism as a form of mastery over the power of the devil was not even suggested as an option for overcoming fear as in traditional Christian theology. Christians, especially monks, "were so obsessed by the power of Satan and his demons that they were ready to see devil-worship in the most unlikely quarters."[312] Hence, the road to the great witch-hunt, based on strong religious support and lacking the means of exorcistic deliverance, became wide open, and the demonization of suspects was a strong inclination of the public under clerical and theological endorsement.

General Dynamics of Scapegoating in Witch-hunt

The term 'scapegoat' is connected with the purification and purging of a community or society.[313] From its primitive origin, scapegoating is basically a "ritual of expulsion" that is prevalent across societies.[314] As a social phenomenon, it necessarily involves violence against isolated individuals, and this violence is legitimized by the 'myths' of the community that the "isolated individual threatens them."[315] The community imposes a charge of the community's afflictions upon the victim(s) by

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[311] Ibid., 73. About nuns' collective possession, see also Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun,* trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000).

[312] Ibid., 74.

[313] The ritual of scapegoating is derived from Leviticus 16. According to the Scriptures, a goat was sent away into the wilderness, carrying the transgressions of the children of Israel. Therefore, 'scapegoat' means the substitution of punishment and transfer of blame for sins onto certain individuals in behalf of the community.

[314] Rene Girard emphasizes the clarity of scapegoating cases in a society because it may be simply discernable for its "childish naivete." He says "in the case of scapegoat the process of substitution is so transparent that we understand it at first glance." He asserts that scapegoat is not a secret phenomenon but an overt and easily observable one within a group or a society. Rene Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightening,* trans. James G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 154.

[315] Ibid., 63.

employing a violent restraining power. "[T]he attackers rush as one upon their victim. The collective hysteria is such that they literally behave like beasts of prey."[316] The process results in the transfer of collective guilt onto the victim. At the cost of victimizing one or more of its people, the community frees itself from the burden of communal crises. In this practice, "the myths always take the side of the community, the people, the crowd, against the one who is accused of criminal acts"[317] and the community tends to ignore the real voice of the sacrificial victim.

In the root of scapegoating exists 'the appetite of violence'. Under collective anger, people in the community look for a 'tangible' object for relief "when the true object of their anger is untouchable."[318] Projection of anger is reoriented towards the tangible victim with an aggravated intensity of group emotion. Group-psychological implications of scapegoating echo this interpretation:

> …the idea that the ritual of the scapegoat in an extremely distinct religious culture was really an overt expression of some innate behavior of human beings designed to reduce psychological discomfort and practically in terms of self preservation.[319]

Psychological tensions in a group or society created by certain crises are, by nature, looking for an escape through which they might be released or expressed. A group's stress stimulates its members to find a way to preserve the old structure of its society in the face of overwhelming disasters or abrupt revolutions. In this collective need, people tend to choose a violent means against those who are marginalized in the

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[316] Ibid.

[317] Ibid., xiii.

[318] Ibid., 156.

[319] Douglas, *Scapegoats*, 15.

group. The form of revenge ends up in capital punishment or expulsion of the suspected individual or group. The drive toward violence within a society would bring about catharsis by transferring the blame, the perceived source of social tensions, to a person or a certain group of people whose termination of existence would create little or no resentment in the whole group.[320]

The practice of scapegoating at the same time involves a ritual that implies purgation or purification from 'the unclean' in its original sense. Around the ritual exists a belief system in which members of the society unite together in appropriating the effective result of the scapegoating ritual. The dynamics reflect a pursuit of power in nature:

> The…most important fact of the belief system which was ritualized in the scapegoat procedure was the idea that evil, sin and badness all possessed some form of substantial existence, which meant that it could be handled in appropriate ways and thus transferred to and from inanimate objects, animals, and humans. Of course, this involved a set form of rituals…words and ritual actions were regarded as able to effect change-they were instruments of power. [321]

A belief system around the ritual of scapegoating is more than mere group amusement; instead, it provides a meaningful basis for the community to approve the 'smaller' sacrifice for the sake of the 'larger' society. With the support of 'religious' systems (i.e. beliefs or myths), the society ignores the cry of victims and offers a 'meaning-full' sacrifice to the 'bigger good' of the society. The ruling elites in the days

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[320] In the view of Girard's theory, witch-hunting evidently follows the pattern of scapegoating by transferring the evil of society to a small substantial group of the poor and women in the name of religious purification. The visualization of scapegoating through violence against the isolated, which followed the trials, contributes to the decrease of anxiety through psychic transformation, that is, catharsis. The majority of people unite with each other in the belief that the sacrifice was necessary and legitimate for the good of the whole society.

[321] Douglas, 15.

of witch-hunting looked for scapegoats in order to relieve the unprecedented tension in their circumstances. They needed a certain group of people to whom they could attribute all the chaos, insecurity and uncertainty prevalent at the time. If the devil in the traditional worldview were to be blamed for the disastrous circumstances, witches were to be held responsible as its allies and worshippers, who channeled its activity in the world.

> Convinced that the Devil was loose, members of the administrative elite could easily come to the conclusion that one of the best ways to counteract him and his destructive influence was to prosecute those individuals who had made pacts with him. In this way the world could be purified of its diabolical contaminants and the order of society restored…Witch-hunting, in other words, became one of the ways that people could maintain their equilibrium at a time of great stress. Witches became the scapegoats not simply of those who had experienced misfortune but of entire communities.[322]

Through the execution of witch-hunting, the ruling class put the other group under control by distracting their attention from the social turmoil to the scapegoat. Scholars often make the radical claim that "the ruling class deliberately used witch-hunting to create insecurity among the lower classes and to divert latent revolutionary energy."[323] Whether this is true or not, the ruling class and common members of the society might have experienced the compensational relief of anxiety by witnessing against those who were condemned in trials for the maintenance of the social status quo.

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[322] Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt In Early Modern Europe* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 158-9.

[323] Ibid.

Possession, Exorcism, and Witch Hunt

Exorcism rites came into existence after human sacrifices disappeared in history; exorcism is a ritual for "ridding a person or place of devils and evil spirits."[324] Exorcism in this regard had many similarities with scapegoating. First of all, the practice of exorcism was "an act of violence…perpetrated against the devil or his associates,"[325] and the united community executes exorcism against 'evil spirits'. Through the ritual, "having succumbed to reciprocal violence, the celebrants as a group vent[ed] their fury on the empty air."[326] As one of the most evolved forms of sacrifice with only a small element of violence, exorcism opened a new way of ventilating collective rage without human sacrifice.

In contrast to scapegoating, however, exorcism does not produce hostility in a group because exorcism itself points to an insubstantial presence of spirits rather than a certain group of people as in scapegoating. Therefore, exorcism is different from earlier types of sacrifice in the violent witch-hunt because the community can avoid mutual violence between the two counterparts. Keeping "transcendental violence" from falling back to "reciprocal violence" is an important role of the rites of exorcism.[327] One prominent phenomenon associated with the outbreak of the fierce witch-hunt is the lack of exorcism compared to the previous era. From an anthropological perspective, possession and exorcism has a therapeutic implication in community:

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[324] Rene Girard, *Violence and the Sacred,* trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1972), 123.

[325] Ibid.

[326] Ibid., 124.

[327] Ibid.

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We have already encountered the concept of possession in our review of religious ritual as therapy. One of the widespread explanations of illness, either physical or mental, is that an alien spirit has entered the body of the victim and is using it for its own purposes at the expense of the host. Hence exorcism of the possessing spirit is the indicated treatment…the search for exorcism becomes a search for the path to salvation itself.[328]

Although possession has to do with multiple personalities in a person, exorcism commonly includes the meaning of an individual's acceptance by the community through the ritual. Exorcism is, therefore, not necessarily about casting out the spiritual entities from a sociological perspective. Instead, the practice is more about acceptance of an alternative identity for the person's salvation into the community:

Exorcism…must be in effect not the casting out of devils but the ritual acceptance and recognition of these intrusive identities in a place and on an occasion allotted to them; the identities are encapsulated, insulated from one another, each permitted its share of fulfillment.[329]

According to an anthropological explanation, exorcism commonly has to do with salvation and therapy for both individual and community. Through the cathartic ritual, the community comes closer to the possessed individual, and the ritual facilitates the interconnectedness between the community and the individual. However, in the late Medieval Period and the following centuries, the rite of exorcism lost its direct relationship to the care of the community in Europe. A slight suspicion of witchcraft called for a judicial trial without pastoral care or exorcism. Although some legal processes existed to test and verify accusations of witchcraft against a person, the choice of witch-hunt instead of exorcism hindered a form of healing for the society or its people.

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[328] Anthony Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), 140-1.

[329] Ibid., 144-5.

Therefore, witch-hunt is a choice for violence instead of healing following a series of overwhelming historical disasters and repressed fear.

Women and Witch-Hunt

The archetype of witch in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century was elderly women, and widespread folk beliefs promoted the idea that female witches performed supernatural magic. As in the old fairy tales, elderly hag witches allegedly flew on broomsticks and turned their bodies into animals. During the immense European witch-hunt usually dated between 1450 through 1750, four-fifths of executed witches were women, while frequent associations arose between men and witchcraft through family relationships.

One of the worst aspects of popular belief was about witches' *Sabbath.* This belief characterized witchcraft as a group cultic practice, which distinguished it from an individual practice of sorcery. *Sabbath* was an assembly of witches,[330] and many reports impressed the public soundly enough to regard them as real practices. *Sabbath* became a solid basis for massive trials in which the legal procedure, largely ignored, lacked a precise execution of the law.[331] Before torture, witches frequently had to confess their participation in the *sabbath* and their encounters with the incarnate devil. These dreadful

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[330] According to Summers's description based on Henry Boguet's investigation in 1598, the witches were believed to be carried to the *sabbath*s by the Devil in the form of a tall black man, a sheep or a goat. In the sabbath, those participants worshipped the Devil, offering candles to him and kissing his posterior. They were believed to dedicate themselves to varieties of abominable behaviors such as sexual intercourse with the Devil. See Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraf and Demonology* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & co., ltd.; New York: A. A. Knopf, 1926), 130-33.

[331] According to Bodin, "proof of such evil is so obscure and difficult that no one out of a million witches would be accused or punished if regular legal procedure were followed" (H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch hunting in southwestern Germany, 1562-1684; the social and intellectual foundations,* (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1972),19).

reports pressed those who wielded power in the society into panic, and, in turn, witches

received both legal prosecution and a religious persecution.

Scholars agree on the fact that witch-hunt mainly targeted women, especially

widows, spinsters, and midwives who were outside of the protection of patriarchal

culture. In light of the life situation of widows and unmarried women in the society, they

were vulnerable both to the contact of witchcraft and to the violent witch-hunting. The

social isolation by and large contributed to the women's secret practice of superstitious

beliefs. Witch-hunts in France and Switzerland, for example, were very similar to that of

England, in which 90 percent of tried witches were female in a sample population of

Essex County. Typically, "the judicial records reveal two essential facts about accused

witches: they were poor, and they were usually women."[332] In addition, in Besacon of

France and Switzerland,

> [t]hree of the eight women killed as witches before 1609 were
> widows…This preponderance of widows and nicknamed, unmarried
> women among convicted witches can be noted in other places besides
> Besacon; a more dramatic example is furnished by the city of Toul in
> Lorraine, where twenty-nine of the fifty-three women arrested for
> witchcraft between 1584 and 1623 were widows and twelve more were
> unmarried.[333]

In the first two hunts between 1562 and 1562 in Wiesensteig and Rottenburg in

South Germany, 98 to 100 percent were women among 235 persecuted people. Even

though the rate of female execution decreased to 76 percent during 1627-31, the

prevalence of women in persecution remained still prominent compared to that of men.

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[332] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971), 520, quoted Ibid., 115. In
addition, these women were often quarrelsome and out of control in relationship with neighbors.

[333] E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: the borderlands during the Reformation*
(Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 80.

According to Midelfort,[334] among 1,288 witches who were executed during the panics in

that area, 82 percent of the victims about 1,050 were women.[335]

A misogynic mood prevailed in those days: old women without husbands became

an easier target[336] because of their insecurity in a male-centered society.[337] The witch-

hunting continued in fierce aggression against women, which was backed by the

traditional patriarchy and its ideology that favored control of women.[338] This

misogynistic attitude was common throughout European countries of this time:

> The roots of the stereotype seem simple and obvious. The broad
> misogynistic streak in European letters, which flourished during the
> Renaissance, and the misogynistic elements embedded in some parts of
> the Christian tradition…will suffice to explain why demonologists could
> agree on why women rather than men were 'naturally' prone to
> witchcraft.[339]

In a traditional family, the wife was last in order, even behind the servants,

according to Jean Bodin,[340] a famous writer of the sixteenth century. A woman's rights

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[334] See table 14 on Midelfort, 180-81.

[335] The rate of male persecution increased and outran that of female approaching the last part of the panics in some regions. See table 15 in Midelfort 182.

[336] According to Monter's report, "only one suspect in four [was] under age fifty, and a median around sixty seem[ed] typical in rural regions as well." Monter,123.

[337] Sharpe suggests that witches "are 'accused' of female sexuality" as committing sexual offenses against men in manifestly Western and Christian patriarchy. Quoting Mary Daly, Sharpe indicates that the phenomenon involved "phallocentric obsession with purity" (J. A. Sharpe, "Witchcraft and Women in Seventeenth-Century England: Some Nothern Evidence," in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, Vol. 4. *Gender and Witchcraft*, ed. Brian P. Levack, (New York/London: Routledge, 2001), 153-54).

[338] In addition to conventional understandings of misogyny in witch-hunt, Sharpe (168) suggests another aspect of misogyny by women themselves based on the anthropological study of Yorkshire witchcraft in England. In accusations of witchcraft, women played a tremendous role due to competition for dominance in the limited extent of power available under male-dominated society. This can be called a witch-hunt from below, not from the ruling above; however, it cannot be denied that the basic ideology of the time affected and limited all of women's gender roles, including the mode of action against themselves.

[339] Monter, 123.

[340] Ibid.

and authority in society, let alone in the family, were totally subject to her husband, and

female access to mainstream society was mostly denied. The status of older widows must

have been even lower due to their loss of the recourse to social contacts.

> People who rely on magical means of revenge are primarily those who are
> incapable of using the normal or socially approved means of revenge such
> as physical violence (very common in early modern European villages) or
> recourse to law courts. Older women who lived apart from direct
> patriarchal control were unable to revenge their numerous injuries in either
> of these ways.[341]

Unmarried adult women, especially the elderly, were vulnerable to the threats of

society, and they had to find a way to meet their basic needs from places other than

typical social resources. The practice of witchcraft in a secret manner was a viable option

for them because "[n]othing was open" to them besides access to magic due to their

"social and legal powerlessness."[342] In addition, they practiced cults in assembly, which

eventually led their contemporaries to feel threatened with respect to their traditional

Christian beliefs and the patriarchal social order.

> If we begin by emphasizing how often these accused witches were elderly
> widows or spinsters, we can argue that witchcraft accusations can best be
> understood as projections of patriarchal social fears onto atypical women,
> those who lived apart from the direct male control of husbands and
> fathers. These defenseless and very isolated women became the group
> most often exposed to charges of witchcraft.[343]

In medieval monastery life, the official prohibition of male sexual passion created

the idea that women were to blame for stirring up men's desire. This was allegedly the

work of the devil and, as a result, women in general received the designation 'carriers of

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[341] Ibid., 124.

[342] Ibid., 197.

[343] Ibid.

the devil'.[344] Furthermore, women who were "severely emotionally disturbed…were

particularly susceptible to the suggestion that they harbored demons and devils."[345] The

sentiments of the times concerning women were certainly misogynistic from today's

perspective, and enflamed fierce female-targeted persecutions thereafter. They regarded

women as having inferior traits such as susceptibility to demonic impression, curiosity

about witchcraft, interest in magical revenge, and slips of the tongue, etc., while their

male counterparts took the prominent role of "victims, accusers and witnesses"[346] in most

of the cases.

Poverty was another motive for women in making a pact with the devil: old

women's poverty[347] especially characterized the social marginality that frequently led to

the practice of witchcraft, which brought about a stronger resentful reaction from

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[344] William Perkins, one of the most influential Protestant writers in England in the 1600s, holds on to the traditional theological view of women as a feeble sex like their predecessor Eve. Perkins, "A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft, as farre forth as it is revealed in the scriptures, and manifest by true experience," (Cambridge, 1608), 168-69, quoted in Sharpe, 155.

[345] Alexander & Selesnick, 67-8.

[346] Sharpe, 165.

[347] In contrast, witch-hunt in Germany showed some differences in the economic status of witch suspects. *Mergentheim Confiscations* illustrated not only that "the wealthiest were more often accused but also that they were among the first to be executed" (Midelfort, 175-176). The appropriation of property by the governing body during and after the execution was a popular phenomenon although some territories commonly stopped the confiscation for witch-hunting. Nevertheless, witch trials guaranteed the jurists to receive a certain amount of payment out of the cases (see table 13, Ibid., 177), even though it is hard to say that their wealth attracted general accusations of witchcraft. Friedrich von Spee warned against "the greed of jurists for the profits of witch trials "(*Cautio Criminialis*, Q. 15 and Q. 16, no.3, Ibid., 178). Cornelius Loos criticized gaining money through the witch trials as a "new alchemy by which gold and silver were coined out of human blood" (Janssen, *Geschichte*, VIII: 633, Ibid., 178). Witch trials became, during the panics, a socialized institution solidly constituted and activated as a portion of ordinary life, and economic profits were involved with the process from another angle. Those accused of witchcraft from higher classes were allegedly the products of "some sort of real or imagined political conspiracy," according to Levack. He also suggests that accusing wealthy women for the purpose of gaining property was common in New England (Levack, 1995, 151-52).

neighbors.[348] In anticipation of economic crises, people of higher classes tended toward 'scapegoating' the peripherals in society, specifically poor women accused of being witches at all cost. In their compact with the devil, they supposedly had given themselves to the devil in exchange for the devil's "pledge for riches, luxury and such things they desire,"[349] which soundly implies that they belonged mostly to a lower social class in terms of economic status. When fascinated by the seductive offer of wealth in light of their impoverished situations, they leaned toward the attractions of magical means.

> If economic change deepened the predicament of the poor, making them more willing to contemplate sorcery as a solution to their problems, it also made their accusers more willing to make witchcraft accusations. Since almost all people were at least frightened by the prospect of economic decline, they became less accommodating and tolerant in their dealings with the poor and more willing to use witchcraft accusations to maintain their tenuous position in society.[350]

Witch-hunting has a massive and complicated history that cannot be exhausted with one single interpretation of the era: multiple and rapid changes of the time fundamentally threatened the traditional social structures and orders. Economically, unprecedented inflation swept away the security of a medieval lifestyle, and extensive changes radically shook the general homeostasis from the bottom. This explains why scholars designate those days as "the Age of Anxiety" and "the most psychically disturbed periods in human history."[351] Anthropological observations continue to

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[348] Previously, these poor women were objects of charity, but eventually they were regarded as a threat to their own stable social life in the village according to an interpretation of witchcraft as a female phenomenon (Sharpe, 156).

[349] Summers, *Witchcraf and Demonology*, 81.

[350] Levack, 151.

[351] L. White Jr, "Death and the Devil," in *The Darker Vision of the Renaissance*, ed. R. S. Kinsman (Berkeley, 1974), 26, quoted Ibid., 158.

illumine more specific aspects of the historical events and shine light upon the afflicted

women and the multi-layered constrictions that oppress them and eventually take their

lives.

On the other hand, collective possession of nuns in a Catholic institution at

Loudun in France during the same era is a legendary example of the possessive

phenomenon, which is still discussed by historians and anthropologists as the climax of

such episodes in the country. The possessed nuns show typical aspects of possession,

such as the demon's taking "advantage of the faculties and organs of a possessed person

in such a way as to produce, not only in her, but by her, actions that that person could not

bring about of herself."[352] Their possession plagues the whole city, and leaves it gripped

by panic and horror. Just as in witchcraft, the possessed people are mostly women. By

contrast, however, the possessed women of Loudun are younger women aged from teens

to twenties rather than witches whose average age was far older.[353] They are not simply

from the lower classes of society: they are "educators, well educated, [and] of good

families."[354] Possession, in this context, is viewed as "a rebellion of women" from an

anthropological perspective in that women reveal "their desires and demands, beneath the

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[352] J.Le Breton, "La Deffense de la verite touchant la possession des Religieuses de Louviers, in-quarto" (Evreux, 1643), 27, quoted in Michel de Certeau, *The Possession at Loudun*, tr. Michael B. Smith.(Chicago University Press. 2000), 38.

[353] Ibid., 89. This was typical in possession phenomena in the seventeenth century, but witches also existed in this age.

[354] Ibid., 104.

mask of those devils."[355] As with witchcraft, possession is also instrumental to a limited group of women as a means of expression of their inner motivations and desires.[356]

Thomas Aquinas recommends the punishment of a suspect's whole body for both witchcraft and possession when exorcism fails as a remedy. Witchcraft deserves punishment "because remedy may not be had for it by human agency, although [only] God may impose a remedy either by forcing the Devil or even against the resistance of the Devil."[357] He thinks exorcisms are effective only "against those specific infestations against which they [are] first instituted."[358]

With the support of theologians such as Aquinas, witch-hunting gained power; exorcism lost its role as a major solution of intensive social tensions. This attitude essentially prohibited the possibility of healing and therapy for those days. With the rise of experimental science and natural philosophy that separated the spiritual and natural dimensions, however, the panics associated with witch-hunting sharply decreased and suddenly stopped. Neither did the ruling elite need more sacrifices for social maintenance, nor were the masses overwhelmed by the power of the devil or witches:

> What ultimately destroyed the witch-craze on an intellectual level…was the new philosophy, a philosophical revolution which changed the whole concept of nature and its operations.[359]

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[355] Ibid.

[356] In Loudun's situation, exorcism with medical orientation was primarily applied to the nuns who were possessed, but one exorcist priest named Grandier was killed by capital punishment under suspicion of a pact with the devil.

[357] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Four Books of Sentences*, (Venice 1481, *Ditinctio* xxxiv, art. 3ad3, unnumbered folios, tr. E.P., quoted in Alan Charles Kors, *Witchcraft in Europe: 1100-1700; a documentary history* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 74.

[358] Ibid.

[359] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the 16th and 17th Centuries and Other Essays*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 180, quoted in Monter, 39.

With the death of demonology and the rise of a modern scientific worldview, witch-hunting disappeared from modern history. The demonological interpretation of socio-cultural phenomena claimed the proper operation of human rationality, as well as the lives of hundreds of thousands of—mostly female—witch suspects. Popular demonology gave way to secular science with an Enlightenment spirit, and experiential naturalism replaced the previous spiritism.

Rather than purely from a religious passion, the witch-hunt in European history arose out of collective fear during and after historical changes with natural disasters. In light of the sociological understanding of the great witch-hunt, witch-hunt was more of social scapegoating clothed with religious purification, especially targeting women in their vulnerability. Women who were deprived of access to power tended to gain easier access to witchcraft or possession for compensation. Their 'deviant' choice became exaggerated both through natural and historical disasters and through theological and traditional prejudices, which ended up in the destruction of life and human rationality. The great witch-hunt must have contributed to a relief from the wild social tensions of the days. The incident, however, clearly demonstrates that religion is keenly inscribed in social life, and that a society may critically run astray when the misguiding value of religion with over-attended demonology seriously affects collective rationale in the contextual hermeneutics.

Spirit Possession and Women in Modern Anthropological Studies

One prominent feature of possession as found in today's anthropological studies lies in its gender bias: a prevalence of women under possession.[360] Possession is prominently a women's experience in many societies where possession is known, while opposite cases still exist in many other shamanic cultures.[361] If a distinction should be made, "[m]ale practitioners predominate in the traditions to which Mercea Eliade assigns the label shamanism, whereas women are conspicuously present in traditions relying on possession."[362] Women are active in ritualistic possession in many cultures,[363] and they are also involved in other sporadic and inadvertent spiritual cults.[364] Ioan Lewis, a British anthropologist, asks a basically sociological question about shamanic possession:

> How does the incidence of ecstasy relate to the social order? Is possession
> an entirely arbitrary and idiosyncratic affair; or are particular social
> categories of person more or less likely to be possessed? If so, and
> possession can be shown to run in particular social grooves, what follows
> from this? Why do people in certain social positions succumb to
> possession more readily than others? What does ecstasy offer them? [365]

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[360] Ioan M. Lewis, "Spirit Possession," 1966.

[361] See L. L. Giles, "Possession Cults on the Swahili coast: a re-examination of theories of marginality," *Africa* 57 (1987), 234-58.

[362] Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," 317.

[363] Lewis 1966; Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1971); Grace Harris, "Possession 'hysteria' in a Kenya Tribe," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 59, No. 6 (Dec., 1957): 1046-66; Simon Messing, **"**Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 60, No. 6, Part 1 (Dec., 1958); Peter J. Wilson, "Status Ambiguity and Spirit Possession," *Man*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Sep., 1967), 366-378; Kendall 1981.

[364] Jung, *Psychiatric Studies*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1957); Frank D. Macchia, *Spirituality and Social Liberation : the Message of the Blumharts in the Light of Wuerttemberg Pietism* (Metuchen, N.J. : Scarecrow Press, 1993).

[365] Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion*, 27-28.

Possession is prominently a women's experience in many African societies.[366] Lewis acknowledges the prominent sexual bias toward women in cultic possession[367] in East and West Africa, including Somalia, Tanzania and among many other African tribes. The statistics reveal sociological implications of women's life and religious experience in those cultures, especially reflecting imbalance of power in gender.[368] He observes that women become active in the practice of possession when those societies are notably patriarchal.[369]

Women are far more inclined to become possessed by spirits than are men, especially when the culture is under the control of male power. Lewis argues that in patriarchal societies, women are more likely to find in possession a viable path for an alternative resource of power when they experience an extreme personal or social crisis (e.g., sudden death of family, physical or psychological abuse, financial impoverishment, and many other internal or external traumas).[370] Those societies usually afford women

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[366] Lewis, 1966; John Beattie, "Spirit Mediumship as Theatre," *RAIN*, No. 20 (Jun., 1977), 1-6; Giles 1987.

[367] Lewis distinguishes central possession from peripheral possession: the former means an institutionalized trance in organized rituals while the latter indicates a sign of protest by deprived people, frequently women, for compensation after deficiency of social power. The former is explained as possession by moral spirits representing people in high status, while the latter by amoral demons or witches capturing people of lower status in society. The former is usually a social response to pressures from outside the society while the latter is an individual response to pressures of society (Lewis 1966; 1971; *Religion in Context: Cults and Charisma* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1986); *Ecstatic Religion: a Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London ; New York : Routledge, 1989); *Social & cultural anthropology in perspective* (New Brunswick, NJ : Transaction Publishers, 2003).

[368] Mart Bax, "Female Suffering, Local Power Relations, and Religious Tourism: A Case Study from Yugoslavia," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 6(2) (1992): 114-127.

[369] Lewis, 1966, 1971, 2003.

[370] E. Fuller Torrey, *The Mind Game; Witchdoctors and Psychiatrists* (New York: Emerson Hall Publishers, 1973); Ari Kiev, *Magic, Faith, and Healing; Studies in Primitive Psychiatry Today* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964); Jerome D. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing; a Comparative Study of Psychotherapy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1961); Lewis 1971, 2003. It also comes after a lengthy exposure to shamanic rituals from childhood, usually with young women when a family member or a person with a frequent contact practices the rituals openly. See Jung-bom Suh, Hankuk Musokin Yoljon

with insecure positions in which women are isolated from social privileges that men monopolize.

Lewis illustrates many examples of the sex-biased shamanisms:[371] women as principle mediums and the major clientele of Chinese spirit possession in Singapore; an Islamic patriarchy of the Hausa tribe where women have a strong proclivity toward possession; nomadic and Islamic Somali tribes whose married women usually struggle with nomadic environments under frequent threats of divorce by men; women's speaking "with tongue" in the Akamba in the East Africa; high incidence of the devil's disease in Tanzania; women's affliction by Zulu and other spirits in the BaThonga and Zulu, and so on. Lewis names the female proclivity toward the possession and other diseases with religious symptoms derived from social pressures as 'deprivation cult'. He observes that women are usually deprived of access to social power when they are caught up in possession; women who are deprived of social and familial security are often predisposed to deprivation cults. In this respect, possession is considered instrumental for women, although an extreme experience, to get appropriate attention with likely material compensation from those who have ignored their needs, mostly their husbands.

Many Somali women, for example, who experience 'possession illness' would "demand luxurious clothes, perfume, and delicate foods from their menfolk."[372] Their symptoms are, albeit temporarily, relieved if their demands are satisfied. He argues that

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1958-2002, vol. 1-6 [Series of Korean Shamans 1958-2002] (Seoul, Korea: Woosuk, 2002); Macchia 1993.

[371] See Lewis, 1966.

[372] Ibid., 314.

spirit possession of women is an efficient means for communication with their oppressive

superiors. Eventually they tend to become qualified as shamans.

> It must now be clear, I think, that we are concerned here with a
> widespread use of spirit possession, by means of which women and other
> depressed categories exert mystical pressures upon their superiors in
> circumstances of deprivation and frustration when few other sanctions are
> available to them.[373]

Women in deprived circumstances, however, need more than material

compensation from their husbands, for which possession plays an instrumental role. A

Freudian interpretation of the situation suggests that their hysterical flights are the result

of women's "unconscious seductive maneuver and invitation to male pursuit."[374] The

converse notion, however, may bring up a contention that women's suffering under a

pathologically oppressive patriarchal system is as overlooked now as with Freud himself

at Vienna in the late Victorian era, in which he interpreted women in desperate need as

seductive.

In addition, Lewis's notion of possession as women's instrument or strategy for

survival seems to cast another delicate doubt: do women in these African tribes make use

of possession intentionally for compensation, or are they so victimized and abused that

they have no other option for themselves afforded by society except the horrible episode

of possession and psychosomatic sufferings? Somali women do not pursue compensation

on leisure at the cost of the dreadful depersonalization: instead, they desperately merge

possessive spells, while feasible resources are thoroughly out of reach. Thus, possession

cannot be an unconsciously purposeful strategy for women, but a nasty cul-de-sac after

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[373] Ibid., 318.

[374] Ibid.

the women's extreme deprivation by men and culture. Although their need for the proper

empowerment that they deserve is significantly compromised, the male-dominated

societies are not basically willing to change their blind dominance over women's life.

The repeated gifts for women in possession would bring about only temporary relief, not

a fundamental shift of women's mode of life. Consequently, the advantaged group via

women's possession is ultimately men themselves[375] who pursue the maintenance of

status quo of the social power.

Nevertheless, Lewis's effort to illuminate the sociological exploitation of woman,

backed by patriarchy, makes a significant contribution to the enlightened understanding

of possession in the sociological horizon, not just from an intangible spiritualistic

perspective. Lewis's argument implies a sound correlation between the social deprivation

of power and women's proclivity toward possession when possession is categorized

mainly as women's cultic experience.[376] Scholars agree that shamanic possession tends to

afford women a certain promise of alternative social power when they are deprived of

access to official power.[377] Even in a Roman Catholic community, women tend to resort

to the means of possession when they are overwhelmed with duties and moral obligations

that have been solely imposed upon them with a strong gender bias.[378]

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[375] Ibid., 319.

[376] Bax, "Female Suffering," 1992.

[377] Ibid.

[378] Lena Gemzoe, *Feminine Matters: Women's Religious Practices in a Portuguese Town* (Stockholm : Dept. of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, 2000).

Lewis's deprivation theory receives support and further development in many ethnographic studies of religion.[379] With limited access to social expression or power, women tend to take another viable path in shamanic or cultic rituals. Therefore, possession, according to this understanding, functions as an instrument of the underprivileged, particularly women, for more attention from others. Possession provides a therapeutic vent for those who are proscribed from essential empowerment that nurtures their identity.[380]

Lewis's theory has also been criticized by other anthropologists[381] due to his tendency to generalize possession as a deprivation cult of marginalized women. His critics claim that he universalizes a culturally specific phenomenon of possession as general women's deprivation, which may reduce local meanings of culture and context to objective theoretical assumptions, often pointing out such as feminist theories. His critics intend to keep from reducing possession into a general social pathology; instead they want to preserve its unique beauty within each particular socio-cultural context. According to them, women's victimization under lack of social power observed in many studies of possession is simply a superimposed scrutiny based on Marxian analytical input rather than an examination of each culture based on its own merits. They argue that possession reflects a variety of cultural complexities that cannot be reduced to one

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[379] Ardener, 1972; Giles, 1987; Jeannette M. Mageo, "Spirit Girls and Marines: Possession and Ethnopsychiatry as Historical Discourse in Samoa," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), 61-82; David N. Gellner, "Priests, Healers, Mediums and Witches: The Context of Possession in the Kathmandu Valley, Napal," *Man*, New Series, Vol. 29, No. 1 (Mar., 1994), 27-48.

[380] John G. Kennedy, "Psychological and Social Explanations of Witchcraft," *Man*, New Series, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jun., 1967), 216-25; Vincent Crapanzano, *The ·Hamadsha; a study in Moroccan ethnopsychiatry* (Berkeley, University of California Press 1973).

[381] Wilson, 1967; Nicholas, 1971; M. Lambek, *Human Spirits: A Cultural Account of Trance in Mayotte* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981); Boddy, 1994; Rapport, 2000.

universal principle (e.g. medical, psychological, or even feminist gender description).

Each cultural aspect requires consideration within its own contextuality and with an

intentional effort to avoid reduction or universalization.[382] In this regard, Wilson deems

possession as no more than a *rite de passage*,[383] in which he rejects the assumed

connection between women's peripheral status in society and their propensity toward

possession.

Nevertheless, female shamanic practitioners or women under possession certainly

share some commonality across cultures when they undergo possession as a cultic

experience. Despite his sweeping claims regarding possession, Lewis maintains an

anthropological method in the study of possession from many different cultures. It may

be going too far to say that possession in every culture constitutes a stereotypical

deprivation cult, considering the preponderance of male shamans in some cultures.

However, a cross-cultural consistency derived from 'being a common humanity' should

still be valid, in spite of the cultural relativism prevalent in the twentieth century. The

advent of radical relativism in anthropology in the last century has strictly prohibited any

attempts at generalization or the comparative method concerining human nature and

culture. However, empirical commonalities exist in many human phenomena and

acknowledging the importance of "human nature" is meaningful.[384]

> Are there no limits to cultural variation? Are there not perhaps certain
> "built-in" requirements, basic needs and drives that must be satisfied at the
> peril of psychological as well as physical disaster? … To question the
> immutability of society is a revolutionary act; it implies that observations

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[382] Boddy, 1994.

[383] Wilson, 1967.

[384] Erika Bourguignon, *Psychological Anthropology: An Introduction to Human Nature and Cultural Differences* (Holt, Reinhart and Winston: New York, 1979).

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of alien ways of life may shed some light on our own. The differences between human groups are not so radical that we cannot recognize ourselves as we are, or as we might be, in others.[385]

Thus, cultural relativism must give a chance to an undeniable portion of commonality among humanity observed in patterns as fellow citizens in the world. The consistent prevalence of women's possession with a vicious pattern of misogyny in many cultures becomes problematic when possession is frequently observed as exclusively women's experience. This is, therefore, more than a problem of Lewis's or other feminists' tendency to generalize women's marginalization in society.

More recent findings in many culture-specific studies continue to confirm the sound connection between possession and women's social deprivation when possession is primarily known as women's experience.[386] In addition, the anthropological ideal that argues against Lewis may seem to be easier said than done.[387] Cultural anthropology is experiencing an ongoing attempt to eradicate universal claims about gender, power, or other individual or social systems[388] "as a social constructionist approach that would prevent analysts from projecting their own naturalized assumptions regarding inequality on the society being analyzed."[389] However, anthropologists may legitimately choose an appropriate type of theory (e.g., a feminist theory), without ignoring local implications for anthropological analysis of possession.

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[385] Ibid., 78-79, quoted in Melford E. Spiro, "Narcissus in Asia," *Ethos,* Vol. 24, No.1 (Mar., 1996), 166.

[386] Gellner, 1994.

[387] See Pauline Turner Strong, "Feminist Theory and the 'Invasion of the Heart' in North America," *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Native American Women's Responses to Christianity (Autumn, 1996), 683-712).

[388] See Sylvia Yanagisako and Jane Collier, "Gender and Kinship Reconsidered: Toward a Unified Analysis," in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Robert Borofsky (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

[389] Strong, "Feminist Theory," 689.

Therefore, the problem is not a choice "between feminist theory and local meanings,"[390] but a careful match between them. Furthermore, feminist anthropology has led to a long history of preserving cultural uniqueness in harmony with feminist analytical perspectives. Feminist anthropologists such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict have made remarkable contributions since the early twentieth century and have kept both anthropological and feminist perspectives in a critical balance.[391]

In conclusion, a substantial connection among witchcraft, possession, and women's sociological marginalization becomes evident without reductive generalization of the specific localities of many cultures through anthropological methodology. Beyond psychoanalytic understanding of possession, anthropology offers an expanded understanding of the phenomenon with regard to its context in culture and society. As a socio-cultural phenomenon rather than simply an intrapsychic product, possession relates closely to the socio-political geography of gender and economy.

An anthropological understanding of witch-hunt enlightens the possibility of sociological interpretations of a religious epidemic. The study of witch-hunt illuminates the shadows of socio-cultural reality reflected in religious practices in history. The study also provides the possibility of an anthropological approach to possession in contemporary cultures by revealing historical and ideological fixtures of misogyny and scapegoating. Therefore, depravity in women's life manifest itself as a vital factor commonly found in witchcraft, witch-hunt, and spirit possession through the study. Regardless of the critiques against sweeping generalization in the study of possession, the phenomenon among women continues to stir up the old sediments of misogyny and

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[390] Ibid., 690.

[391] See Ibid., n. 11.

scapegoating of the marginalized across the cultures. As witch-hunt is not simply

identical with madness or collective evil, possession is not comprehended in the

constricted individual dimension. The study displays socio-cultural factors and religious

reactions to them in possession regardless of the cultural uniqueness of each incident.

Feminist theories in anthropology are deemed as a kind of generalization, but both

the feminist themes and ethnographic specificities can be preserved with compatibility.

The problem is not a choice between generalized theories and ethnographical

specificities, but rather a careful correspondence between them for a better understanding

of possession. Therefore, the anthropological or sociological study of possession is

legitimate with the authorization of the use of analytical disciplines such as psychology,

feminist theory, and theology. The coordinated cross-disciplinary approach to possession

is efficient for a particular study of culture and its consistent commonality in gender and

ideology across time and space.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRIT POSSESSION AND WOMEN'S PSYCHOSOMATIC SYMPTOMS IN VARIOUS CULTURES

Spirit possession as a religious phenomenon appears almost ubiquitously across continents regardless of fundamental differences in culture.[392] Experience of possession varies according to psychological, familial, and cultural contexts as well as individual traits of personality. A psychological study of possession may claim validity for its description of one's internal psychological dynamics and interpersonal interactions regarding its many phases because spirit possession frequently accompanies a psychosomatic symptom that is partly subject to psychological explanations.

However, the study of possession goes beyond observations of internal or individual human experience: it extends to the sociological and cultural realms due to its implicit and explicit meanings connected to the society and culture in which possession is nurtured because cultural environments have much to do with the severity of one's possession. The study also calls for a cross-cultural viewpoint, considering sporadic but widespread appearances of possession ranging from culture to culture. Volumes of cultural and anthropological studies have covered the topic of possession with the intention of theoretical formation of the peculiar human experience thereafter.

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[392] See Boddy, 409 for detailed lists of studies on possession in Africa, Asia and Pacific Islands, Latin America, African-influenced America, Oceania, and southern Europe. Catholic Pentecostalism also deals with possession and exorcism as an integral part of its theology and practice.

Patterns and typologies that have arisen for theoretical convenience in proportion to the accumulations of innumerable studies of possession from many distinctive cultures must be reconsidered when anthropologists concern about possible reduction of contextual significances. Their efforts to respect each culture's unique contextuality, however, may also come with theoretical parallels and patterns discovered across cultures. A mode of human life in one culture distinguishes itself from another, but humanity still shares a large proportion of instinctive, psychological, physiological, cultural and religious properties. Therefore, finding some common backgrounds, shared progress of symptoms, and apparent parallels of individual and cultural preconditions that contribute to the cultivation of possession is not necessarily eccentric.

The prevalence of women in shamanic population in many societies, for example, reflects social injustice against women with some local variations. The "sexual bias of the spirits"[393] frequently, if not universally, demonstrates social restrictions over women's gender roles.[394] Correspondence between the type of society and the appearance of possession can be inevitably probable[395] : a soundly hierarchical society is more inclined

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[393] Lewis, "Spirit Possession," 309.

[394] This bias is found in the Shango cult of Trinidad (Mischel and Mischel, 1958), the Chuckchee (Waldemar Bogoras, *The Chukchee* (Leiden, E.J. Brill ltd.; New York, G.E. Stechert, 1904-1909)), and Wataita of Kenya (Harris, "Possession 'Hysteria'," 1957). It is also found in Ethiopia, Japan, Burma (Laurel Kendall, *Shamans, Housewives, and Other Restless Spirits : Women in Korean Ritual Life* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985)), Siberia (Lewis, 1966), Singapore, and so on.

[395] Erika Bourguignon, "Introduction: a framework for the comparative study of altered states of consciousness," in *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973), 3-35.

to producing possession, especially among women who are mostly situated in a vulnerable social position,[396] than an undemanding society.

In spite of the increasing anthropological concern about reductive simplification, theoretical patterns also strengthen the probability of the correlation between social organization and frequency of possession among its members. Therefore, contextuality and theorization of the phenomenon may not nullify each other; instead, they are in constant tension in order to counterweigh each other's drawbacks. Marginality of a person in many societies, for example, leads to a proclivity toward possession, but possession is not always derived only from the marginalization of women as seen, when considering individual and cultural situations. Generalization may certainly endanger the particularity of a single possession with its exclusive surrounding complexities. However, denying that a discernible pattern of women's vulnerability to possession is strongly connected with social injustice in gender fails to support a consistent effort to improve the practical condition of life for the marginalized.

For this purpose, I will select some samples of spirit possession cases from a range of cultures and present a brief description by summarizing individual, interpersonal, and socio-cultural backgrounds surrounding the experiential phenomenon. Some multicultural samples will give ideas about differences and commonalities, if not universalities, concerning possession. Psychological and socio-cultural details may seem messy rather than theoretically well-groomed, but this dissertation aims at revealing an inherent theoretical framework out of the complexities of individual and social

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[396] Possession does not affect women alone in gender. Only women are affected in many cultures, but in some the opposite is true. Otherwise, both sexes are vulnerable to possession according to the culture. In this dissertation, the main focus is on women's possession and their contextual sufferings related to it.

experiences. Many cases of possession across cultures upon a closer look will demonstrate the complexity of possession at intra-psychic, interpersonal, socio-cultural, and ideological levels, as well as helping us approach a certain agreement about a deeper understanding of possession.

Ethnographical studies cannot be reduced in their meanings and significance, which explains why distinctive cases from various cultures in divergent times appear in this chapter without crisscrossing generalizations on a flat theoretical plain. Each case and its context cannot be deprived of its uniqueness. Religious symbols cannot be simply narrowed down to a digitized compact[397] due to its inability to be translated into a modern equivalent. Mapping of a multi-layered cultural matrix including religious practices is almost impossible; however, as Clifford Geertz suggests, we can at least sketch "explanatory conclusions from the better guesses,"[398] if not an absolute truth, in cultural analysis. Because culture is not static at the time of anthropologists' observation, one sphere of culture observed within a limited period of time cannot be generalized without allowing for exceptional variances. What is observed in one place can be distanced from its actual interpretation.

On the other hand, cross-cultural comparison has an inherent limitation unless vignettes from each culture encompass longitudinal social dynamics. Hence, Victor Turner identifies "cross-cultural comparison" as having "limited itself to atemporal forms and structures, to the products of [hu]man's social activity abstracted from the processes

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[397] Volney Gay explains that digitizing, which means "extracting specific patterns from wholes" (Gay, "Mapping Religion Psychologically," in *Religion and Psychology: Mapping the Terrain*, eds. Diane Jonte-Pace and William B. Parsons (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 104) makes science possible. He cites Claude Levi-Strauss's notion of finding scientific patterns from the study of a variety of mythologies, by isolating patterns among uncountable redundant details.

[398] Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 18.

in which they arise."[399] Therefore, "many more extended-case studies"[400] are essential in cross-cultural study in order not to ignore 'dynamic' and 'procedural' social life.

With these theoretical orientations in mind, this chapter includes mostly qualitative ethnographic reports from each reporter's longitudinal observation of a culture and its process[401] concerning spirit possession. Each abstract, therefore, covers time-limited but still procedural aspects of individual and cultural experiences surrounding spirit possession. Each vignette may seem to be a mere snapshot of individual life and culture as ongoing processes, but the case does not ignore these aspects. This dissertation carefully employs cross-cultural comparison in an attempt to preserve socio-cultural contexts and analyze prevalent ideologies across generations of each society.

Each case is independent in real time and space, and cultural analysis of possession usually follows after each description of events according to the observers' critiques. Comparing them on a flat plain is not easy due to the uniqueness of each, but a common theme of women in possession will appear prominently throughout the chapter. The vignettes are selected randomly from African, Asian, and European cultures that demonstrate a rather strong connection between possession and women's oppression. Women's divine illness from spirit possession is not always connected to their marginality in society as a pan-cultural phenomenon. However, the psychosomatic symptoms represented by women's possession certainly open to us a possibility of its

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[399] Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), 43.

[400] Ibid.

[401] Geertz points out that "anthropologists don't study village (tribes, towns, neighborhood…); they study *in* villages" (Ibid., 22), emphasizing the importance of their particularity.

interpretation of contexts that are common to many different cultures: a highly probable connection between possession and collective social misogyny.

Possession for Compensation: The Wataita, Kenya[402] and Hausa Tribe[403] in West Africa

Sitting ashore in the Coast Province, the tribe Wataita has *pepo*, women afflicted by *saka*, spirit possession. The society is patrilineal: men perform agricultural works and cattle-herding while women are in charge of growing basic grain and vegetables for the family. Women are mostly vulnerable to possession with serious attacks and somatic symptoms in *saka* possession. The attacks may have early warnings easy to ignore, but they often start with unexpected convulsive body movements. Strange sounds and foreign tongues may accompany the attacks, and rhythmic trembles of the head and shoulders in strong fear characterize the typical attacks.

Married women most often experience the possession attacks:[404] up to half of married women in their adulthood in the society tend to experience possession, at least intermittently. Reports of the possessive attacks on men are rare in comparison. Instigating stimulations at the moment of possession vary according to individuals: the sight of car, the sound of match being lighted, or an intense desire for goods or other materials such as a cigarette or her husband's blood drop to suck.

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[402] Grace Harris performed the research between July 1950 and August 1952 in Wataita, Kenya.

[403] See also Mary Smith, *Baba of Karo* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954) for the male-dominated Hausa tribe and women's isolation from public life in the Islamic society.

[404] This is an opposite aspect of Samoan *ma'i aitu* possession that impinges on unmarried young girls. Samoan possession usually ends with the girl's marriage. See Jeannette M. Mageo, "Ma'i Aitu: The Cultural Logic of Possession in Samoa," *Ethos*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sep., 1991): 352-83.

Treatment follows the attacks: privately, they employ treatment of smoke. Some use the music of drums and songs, water, or conversion to Christianity. However, participation in the *saka* dance, frequently prepared by her husband, functions as a common treatment for the attacks, though without a guarantee for lessening the probability. Some dancers end up with more severe attacks during the dance and attacks often come back to the women afterward.

Husbands provide special costumes and paraphernalia for their wives in the dance. Women make beer for the dance, but men should provide materials and drummers that their wives desire in planning the event. The *saka* dance is mostly for possessed wives who have a 'heart' illness in this culture, which is attributed to women's craving or 'wanting.' Community members often regard this as a fraudulent strategy of women for more materialistic ownership. For Christians, *saka* is the devil's work, the result of foreign sorcery intended to devastate women of the tribe.

The tribe regards *saka* possession as an illness, and people seek a cure through dances or other private treatments. What possessed women want for cure is mostly associated with men[405] or with foreign products, which are somewhat extraordinary expectations or pathogeneses. Women in possession have permission to demand what they desire for a cure, and certain compensation from their husbands follows the symptom.

This peculiar psychological representation of possession necessitates some explanations of the related social experiences of women. In the management of property,

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[405] Harris separates possessed women's wishes into three categories: 1) regarding men, they ask for cigarettes, clothing, men's dance skills, bananas cultivated by men, and a husband's blood; 2) regarding daily goods in life such as sugar, clothing, and cloth; and 3) some foreign objects that have nothing to do with their life (e.g., car, train whistle, and other foreign products). See Harris, 1051.

they act as consultants to their husbands: a husband may not sell or rent fields or cattle without his wife's agreement, which shows a certain right of women with regard to the family property. However, a prohibition exists against women's ownership of wealth either through inheritance or through trade. Although women can exercise a strong influence upon household expenditures in purchasing goods for the family, they cannot hold any wage-earning job. In contrast to women's social limitations in activity and ownership of wealth, men have freedom to travel or trade and make contact with modern industrial products in neighboring cities. Production of food lies exclusively in women's hands, but social success and power are unavailable to them.

Women's financial dependency on men is an undeniable aspect of this society so that they cannot easily gain access to what they want with any extra desire. Society views them as having 'no head' for business when it comes to cattle or land due to their uncontrollable emotions or greed. "Femininity is made synonymous with an uncontrolled desire to acquire and consume, with selfishness and the pursuit of trivial private interests,"[406] whereas masculinity is identified with superiority in life by managing 'important' and political matters in society (e.g., provisions for sons, communal interests and authority, and prestige). Tribal women have to be circumcised in infancy, and they cannot join in the leadership of the community by becoming elders.

Thus, women in the tribe are considered "'deprived' persons"[407] who may get a temporary relief from *saka* possession by satisfaction of urges or participation in

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[406] Ibid., 1054.

[407] Ibid.

dances.[408] Psychologically, the process from a woman's wish in the attacks to her achievement of certain satisfaction by her husband's provision of gifts is certainly "compensatory or even therapeutic."[409] However, the vicious repetitive relapse of women into possessive attacks among the Wataita brings our attention to the embodied ideology of gender discrimination in this socio-cultural background.

On the other hand, possession is mostly women's experience in the Hausa tribe in West Africa where a female shaman, *yar bori*, is prevailing in number. *Bori,* the shamanic ritual, is superstitious deviance, according to the majority Muslim population. They generally look down upon women as 'irrational' beings.[410] *Yar bori* is usually composed of divorced women who do not comply with the social rule that a divorcee should re-marry. They reject the rule by becoming prostitutes and/or shamans. The whole society stigmatizes these women, and their family of origin usually terminates them no matter what their caste.

Possession in Hausa is directly subject to the shamanic hermeneutics of divine ordination as in many other cultures. *Iska*, the major shamanic deity, appoints a new person as his new horse for riding when his current horse, an old shaman, becomes too weak to work. The person should suffer from an illness that can be cured only through the initiation ceremony. "If she angers *Iska* by rejecting his offer again… she cannot

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[408] Harris provides a Freudian interpretation of women's envy of masculinity through the wish for men's belongings. Women's psychology of Freud, however, misses a cultural prejudice against women of his days, which is uncritically saturated in his study in light of recent feminist critiques.

[409] Harris, 1055.

[410] Susan Starr Sered, *Women of the Sacred Groves: Divine Priestesses of Okinawa* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1999).

recover again."[411] When *bori* is scheduled for a family, "the ritual is executed with those who are concerned…[I]n most cases, the rituals are open only to the female members in the family."[412] The Hausa tribe individually victimizes and socially scape-goats these women. With the serious symptoms of possession, they finally come to find their haven in shamanism where they proudly become new divine carriers of gods' messages.

In the state of possession, shamans' messages are regarded as gods' voices. Becoming an authoritative shaman usually elaborates their self-esteem as highly as spiritual messengers. However, they have to pay the cost of healthy social relationships in real life when they are engaged in shamanic possession rituals. Under Muslim patriarchy, the victimized women come to grips with their individual afflictions with the help of the shamanic pantheon with its psychological and social rewards.

In the traditional patriarchal social order, shamanic rituals in the Hausa tribe are only for female clients. As long as the authoritarian caste system preserves men's ultimate superiority of the social power, "the presence of *bori* is…necessary … for the society."[413] The ratio of possession by socially peripheral people may continue to exist in the society unless the victimized female population dwindles.

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[411] Tae-sang Jang, "The Hausa Bori Cult and Initiation Ceremony," *Korean Shamanism*, Vol. 5 (Dec. 2002), 210.

[412] Ibid., 213.

[413] Ibid., 222.

Possession as Young Girls' Cries: India and Sri Lanka

Richard Castillo[414] presents a critical overview of pathological spirit possession in Sri Lanka and India based on other anthropologists' original observations of spirit possession related to trauma in childhood or adult life. His first vignette describes a famous story of Daya in India testified first by Freed and Freed.[415] Daya was a fifteen-year-old girl when she was newly married. She belonged to a lower caste next to the bottom of the hierarchy. She became possessed by the spirit of her friend "Chand Kor" who had been forced by her family to commit suicide. Chand Kor was found pregnant before marriage, and her marriage to another man resulted in rejection by his family. She returned to her natal family, which brought critical shame to them in their culture. Her father commanded her to kill herself by jumping into a family well, which was a traditional method of suicide in the rural part of the country such as Shanti Nagar and its vicinities in order to remove shame from the family. One day, she successfully complied and died in the well.

Daya's another friend, Santara, had also engaged in premarital sex with her school teacher, which became known to her family. Her father took her out to the field and raped her. After slashing her throat, he threw her body into a well. He was not punished at all, and her family walked away from the shame that had been imposed by her actions. Daya's fear of marital sex grew extreme probably because she remembered her previous friends' disasterous deaths related to their sexual behaviors. Then she began to show

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[414] Richard Castillo, "Spirit Possession in South Asia, Dissociation or Hysteria? Part 1: Theoretical Background," *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 18 (1994):1-21; "Part 2: Case Histories," *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 18 (1994): 141-162.

[415] Freed and Freed, 1964. The research was performed between November 1957 and July 1959 in a village named Shanti Nagar (a pseudonym), India.

symptoms of possession by a ghost. She suffered illness due to the possessive symptoms, and showed clear disturbances in her marital sexual relationship. Premarital sex at this stage of the society struck a serious blow to family prestige, and the public did not issue any objections to the brutal filicide by family members, particularly by the father.

The following vignette describes a woman named Somavati possessed by multiple spirits when she was 29 years old. Obeyesekere made these observations in Sri Lanka.[416] Somavati's father had forced her to return to her family in order to take care of little siblings. Her compulsory separation from an emotionally involved grandmother in her younger years (around seven) left her with a traumatic memory. Her abusive family filled her life with oppression and beatings. In an effort to escape, she married a young man who favored her. He eventually proved himself a severe alcoholic who often threatened to kill her.

Somavati's parents became aware of the abuse and forced her to divorce him, which ended up in another traumatic move back to her family of origin. Completely dependent on her parents and lacking any allowance or leisure, she started her first episode of spirit possession through a form of illness. She felt a heavy weight on her head, while her hands and feet felt cold. Her rage increased and she began to demonstrate peculiar behaviors or possessions in which "she [hooted], [shrieked], [ran] all over, [threatened] to assault people and eat them up."[417] Later, she became possessed by her then dead grandmother, who had shown hostility toward her family. She was

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[416] Obeyeskere, "Psychocultural Exegesis," 1977, 235-94.

[417] Ibid. 249, quoted in Castillo 147.

subsequently possessed by *Riri Yaka* (the Blood Demon) and *Mahasona* (the great

graveyard demon), violent and malevolent gods from the Sri Lankan pantheon.

Most reports of spirit possession in Hindu culture involve young females in

India,[418] who are more vulnerable to possession than any of their family members. The

male authority over a daughter in youth is her father, who can even take her life without

any legal accusation in the case of a shameful incident concerning her. The father's

authority transfers to her husband with marriage and then to his eldest adult brother if he

dies. Oftentimes, a woman functions as "property" in the family that is placed at the

hands of the "owner."[419] Social expectations about women are clear in many Indian

societies: they have "to be obedient, submissive, hardworking, and noncomplaining."[420]

Instances of "dowry deaths, female infanticide, *sati* (widow burning), witch killings, rape,

and young girls sold into prostitution"[421] are still increasing in many areas of India. Birth

of girls is strictly controlled privately, resulting in a significant difference of the sex

ratio.[422]

Castillo coherently rejects traditionally Freudian interpretations of the female

suffering from possession, which attribute women's afflictions to their inner-psychic

struggles rather than inter-personal problems. He prefers a perspective of dissociation

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[418] J. S. Teja, B. S. Khanna, and T. B. Subrahmanyam. "'Possession States' in Indian Patients," *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 28 (1970): 71-87. This does not mean that males are not possessed in India. According to Freed and Freed, male possession is also common in the culture. See also Freed and Freed, "Ghost Illness in a North Indian Village," *Social Science and Medicine* 30(1990): 617-623.

[419] Gandhy, "Crimes Against Women," *Illustrated Weekly of India* (July 31, 1988): 8-17 in Castillo, 153.

[420] Ibid.

[421] Ibid.

[422] The ratio was 1000:935 in the late 1980's, which was worse than that of 1000:970 around the year 1900 according to Castillo. Ibid.

resulting from individual abuses rather than from female masochism. In extreme

afflictions in male-dominated abusive families, women face none other than two

alternatives: "suicide, or dissociation in the form of spirit possession."[423] Individual abuse

is a major cause of possession, according to Castillo, in its outbreak among younger

women because possession makes "trance as an adaptation and survival behavior that can

operate in situations of life-threatening danger or other instances of extreme or repeated

stressful situations in the environment."[424] Possession cannot be simply a symptom of

women's inner conflict, struggling with incestuous desires or self-destructive masochism

as is explained in the psychoanalytic understanding of afflicted women. What is missing

in Castillo's delineation of spirit possession is the cultural ideology of patriarchy that

backs and endorses men's violent domination over women's life in those cultures. The

diagnosis of spirit possession must stretch beyond the intra-psychic or individual

psychological horizon: socio-cultural patriarchy cuts through many South Asian countries

as a gigantic cultural buttress that sanctions severe abuse of women.

Possession as Social Rebellion: Kathmandu, Nepal[425]

Do women still suffer from socio-economic deprivation when they are

predisposed to spirit possession as Ioan Lewis claims? With an awareness of anti-Lewis

arguments, many anthropologists have become more cautious of the danger of

generalizing theories of possession. Instead of pulling back their assertions, however,

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[423] Ibid., 154.

[424] Ibid., 144.

[425] David Gellner first observed the religious phenomenon in Kathmandu, Nepal between 1982 and 1984, then again in August and September 1989. See Gellner, "Priests, Healers, Mediums," 1994.

they have not hesitated to demonstrate the validity of Louis's theory in many independent cultures. David Gellner is one of these scholars, and he has made an effort to connect Lewis's theory with the cultural specificity of Nepal.

Healers in the context of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, are mostly male, general practitioners who do not use possession. On the other hand, women far outnumber men when it comes to mediums who utilize possession everyday in order to handle the misfortunes of people's lives. Witches occupy a different layer of shamanism in Kathmandu, where people believe that they practice harmful actions through magical means. Folk stories in this culture often portray witches as mysterious women. When any person experiences a haunting possession by god, a witch allegedly performs devastating magic over him or her. Possession in women results from the attack of a witch who speaks through the victim, according to the popular belief.

Reckless possession is a prerequisite step toward her qualification as a medium. The next step is for a healer to perform a ritual exorcism to chase away the witch who supposedly has possessed the person. Suspected witches are mostly old women, especially widows. Witches become targets of people's hostility as are mediums in the society, although law prohibits any exploitation against them. However, people continue to label witches when they need a scapegoat during individual or familial afflictions; they exchange blame for stigma.

Remarkably, male healers deride female mediums by identifying them with witches. With bravado, they try to nullify female mediums' 'harmful' effects derived from their worship of the goddess. However, their accusation comes mainly from competition with the mediums in the limited market for shamanic customers. Their

efforts to blame female mediums do not free them from suspicion of practicing harm against other people.

Lewis's distinction between central and peripheral possession in 'continuum' is readily applicable to the Kathmandu context: mediums primarily experience peripheral possession due to their genuine afflictions in life. For a primary cure from witch possession, they should become a medium. Then, as approved mediums, they eventually move inside closer to central possession by dedicating themselves to the service of the goddess. Then, freed from the crude spirits that possess the person by attacking through witches after dedication, women become benignly possessed on a daily basis by the goddess. During possession, the mediums receive respect and divine identification, which indicates a strong empowerment for the woman in light of her normal human position in family and society. However, the possessing goddess cannot help the medium cross over the fundamental boundaries of a pantheon caste: instead, she must remain with a god of lower divine caste continuously.

Women in the area have to demonstrate their obedience to their husbands by practicing daily "bow[ing] down to the feet of their husbands and other senior affilial relatives."[426] Women's duties to their husbands, their husbands' parents and other household members usually overburden them in such a male-centered society. They must carry out hard work for the husband's family and produce children, preferably sons. When their stress reaches a peak under heavy duties and extreme tensions in unequal relationships, possession breaks out among women, usually at a time of crisis. Whatever

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[426] Ibid., 38.

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they do, they are bound to receive blame and, as a result, become a scapegoat under condemnation for any negative incidents or unexpected mishaps in the family.

Possession is an asylum in which the culture's ideological control over women temporarily ceases to function. Possession provides a brief refuge, if only momentary, for people in the society's lower castes: otherwise, higher castes effectively control them in every aspect of social life. Possession in Kathmandu typically happens to members of the lower caste and/or women, who declare 'a rebellion' to their oppressive life situations.[427] This constitutes a serious call for attention to the afflictions that they suffer with limited gender roles and marginalized experiences in society. However, this does not necessarily point to the need for fundamental changes in the caste system or designated gender roles. Thus, possession in this context soundly reflects the validity of Lewis's theory about its connection to women and other marginalized people in society. Furthermore, possession promises only a limited vision of liberation for female or lower-caste individuals because the shamanic system has already adapted efficiently to the social and cultural status quo.

Possession for Control of Male Violence: Medjugorje, Yugoslavia[428]

Many women in Medjurgorje, Yugoslavia began experiencing hysterical anxiety, fear, and the hallucinatory presence of the devil in the early 1980s. Their psychosomatic problems included fatigue, depression, and auditory hallucinations. Most of them believed that it was the work of the devil and a possessive phenomenon that needed

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[427] As Gellner points out, their rebellion "calls into question neither the hierarchy of caste nor that of gender," which implies a fundamental limitation of prospective social change through shamanic faith in the society (Ibid., 43).

[428] Mart Bax performed this research for eighteen months before civil war broke out in Yugoslavia in March 1991. See Bax, "Female Suffering," 1992.

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priestly exorcism. Their male partners dismissed it as "women's madness" and their clergy shared the same "diagnosis."

A lot of women reported devil-related illnesses in daily life, and instances of psychotic ailment increased enormously by May 1989. Up to 300 women reported illnesses to the priests of the area, and they requested exorcism almost every time. In response to priests' irresponsible disregard of women's afflictions, women appealed to *kalajdzije*, 'old women with wisdom' and 'heretics', who practiced exorcism and prescribed herbal medicines with healing talismans for wearing. Reports of appearances by the devil increased in frequency, which gripped women in a strong sense of collective fear and anxiety. They attributed the frequency of their illnesses to "a proliferation of the devils in the area,"[429] and they continued to seek deliverance from spiritual disaster. They cried for priestly intervention, but their wish was not fulfilled because of what they perceived as the lack of well-organized exorcism practices.

The settlement was traditionally Roman Catholic, an unknown mountain town with around 3,000 inhabitants before the 1980s. The peasants grew grapes, tobacco, and other fruits, but the town became overpopulated in comparison to the limited life-sustaining resources, which led to an increase in permanent emigration to Canada or the United States. More than sixty percent of adult men worked abroad for a living by the early 1980s, so the town's population consisted mostly of women and children, which increased the influence of the priests of the Medjurgorje diocese.

The remarkable turning point for the village occurred on June, 24, 1981 when six young village people testified to an appearance of the Virgin Mary on a nearby hill. Ever

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[429] Ibid. 119.

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since, millions of pilgrims have visited the town from all over the world, and a drastic change spread into every corner of village life. Men who had been working abroad began to return home for a new chance of socio-economic growth occasioned by pilgrimages. Women's power at home decreased drastically due to their men's staying home.

A large number of returning immigrants and pilgrims imposed upon women a higher expectation of gender roles and unprecedented psychological burdens: as residents of a holy village, they had to live spiritual lives as examples of piety and grace for the tourists. Priests advised them to make a good impression of the town. At the same time, they lost their power over the farm and family management. They went back to their household chores under the sway of returned men and received no alternative compensation. Furthermore, unlike men whose regular activities sent them to a larger nearby city for drinking or to the fields for several days of hunting, women did not have recreational activities with which to vent their tensions and internal stresses.

With regard to the increase in women's physical and psychological illnesses, men ignored women's claims of regional demonic proliferation while still acknowledging the increasing numbers. Priests denounced women's requests for exorcism based on their judgment that exorcism, prohibited by law, could not solve the problem no matter how disturbing. They simply tried to bring women to the church in order to help them build a strong relationship with God for the prevention of further outbreaks of illness. The women, however, felt themselves neglected in terms of spiritual care, which aggravated their anxiety and their fear of the devil.

In Yugoslavia, according to Bax, women in demonic possession experienced freedom from daily responsibilities and received a focus from the traditionally Catholic

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community, which gave visibility within the church to their social tensions. However, in this town, women felt themselves more vulnerable to spiritual dangers when their male counterparts and priestly authorities refused to recognize their spiritual suffering derived from socio-cultural disempowerment to use social science terms. Limited gender roles based on traditional ideologies in the society and the lack of 'escaping strategies', that is, means of reducing stress, largely contributed to the collective gender-biased outbreak of physical and psychological illnesses.

Bax follows a recent trend in social-scientific interpretation of the devil and witchcraft as a reflection of social tension. The author claims that exorcism after possession regulates men's violence, which eventually brings about women's empowerment through wider attention and care. Priests who perform exorcisms play the role of 'peacemaker' by balancing the unequal power between the two genders. Demonology constitutes an instrument of power by the powerless (e.g., women in a male-controlled society) in a consistent pattern across cultures. Possession by women, according to the author's explanation, "not only [channels] the inner tension, but also [serves] to restrict men's engagement in violence."[430] Due to the refusal of men and priests who usually occupy most formal positions in the Roman Catholic Church, women cannot have any other alternative means for asserting power other than resorting to possession and exorcism in the society.

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[430] Ibid., 123.

Possession-"Less" in Gender Equality: Okinawan Priestesses, Japan[431]

What if patriarchy is not prevalent when women are engaging in shamanic practice? Without a strong gender-discriminating culture, symptoms in shamanic appointment of new priestesses become conspicuously smooth and painless on the women's part. In a more equal and mutual social environment in gender roles, a shamanic transition shows far less painful struggles although the religion is still female-controlled as in many other shamanisms. Certain types of possession and illness in shamanism and other parallel rituals still exist (e.g., initiation ceremony). However, no prominent peripheral possession may be stigmatized as women's madness like in other cultures, which leads to the hypothesis of a probable connection between the intensity of patriarchy and the degree of women's suffering with the onset of spirit possession.

Women are official religious leaders for families and clans exclusively in the Ryukyu Islands, Henza, Japan, according to the ethnographical report from the middle of the 1990's. Henza priestesses in Okinawa are depicted as deconstructing ontological distinctions between human and divine *kami* in that the divine is immanent without having superpower over other humans. Because a pantheon hierarchy does not exist in the local religious system, all priestesses are also regarded as equal.

The society demonstrates flexible gender roles; male dominance limits itself to the official political arena only. Men sometimes do what women are supposed to do and the opposite is also true. No rebuke or mocking occurs among boys at school such as "you are 'acting like a girl.'"[432] Social hierarchy is more flexible than in other parts of

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[431] Susan Sered performed her ethnographic research in 1994 through 1995 with her family living in Henza, Japan.

[432] Sered, *Women of the Sacred Groves*, 71.

Japan. Family in this society does not have a tight relationship as in other cultures. Their societal ethics are more situational than absolute (e.g. in stealing or adultery).

Furthermore, premarital sex does not carry any stigma, and extramarital sex does not necessarily bring about communal ostracism in Henza. In the religious domain, the priestesses' menstruation does not prohibit them from performing religious rituals or private sexual engagements. The Henza community does not proscribe or control human sexuality according to any ideology of gender concerned with its socio-cultural self-identity. Hence, scapegoating does not seem to take place in the social interactions, which may come from individual violation of and/or reactions against social regulations. Women are not restricted under the sway of neighbors' scrutiny concerning their individual moral behavior.

Men in Okinawa are generally non-violent in spite of their traditionally harsh work of fishing or boat construction, which in fact has small economic importance in the society. Some men are violent and abusive in the family, but women can protect themselves with the right to protest by going back to their family-of-origin with children. When it comes to gender roles, women control food in daily life; food is one of the most significant essentials in Okinawan family, religious rituals, and culture. Women dominate religious rituals and make their male counterparts assist them. Men take the role of killing pigs for rituals or some ocean events; otherwise, women control and process most rituals. Women in Henza are, therefore, free from patriarchal gender roles and caste distinctions, which is totally atypical in general Japanese culture.

A priestess's calling manifests itself through illness because the religious power to ordain someone is absent. No voluntary system exists to fill any empty priestess

positions. With phenomenological parallels in symptoms found in other cultures, Henza priestesses experience healing when they receive the divine calling as their destiny, which usually follows the death of a previous priestess. They believe that *kami-sama*, the divine has sent the illness, and they experience a variety of types of epiphany, including vocal or visual hallucinations during the illness.

However, they do not believe the illness to be a punishment from god because the symptoms are mild (e.g., nose bleeding, allergies, or other minor symptoms). They believe a priestess, *noro*, is born to her position, and the illness is just a reminder. The person should easily recognize her divine calling; a gentle reminder through mild illness is enough. Therefore, the violent exorcistic practice common to other shamanisms is not part of the Henza initiation because *kami-sama*'s mark is distinctively discernible in time.

The commitment of a new priestess is not clearly about spirit possession as observed in other shamanic rituals, but is still a type of religious merger with the divine *kami-sama* via her entering a new role in the religion. Spiritual fusion between *kami-sama* and a priestess is facilitated after initiation, and the god becomes embodied in her when she accepts her destined vocation as a shaman. The illness is an essential step in returning a priestess-to-be to her rightful place as designated by the divine. However, her physiological weakness may not be on a par with the peripheral possession identified in Lewis's theory and others because new priestesses do not necessarily come from a socially marginalized status characterized by suffering from individual abuse or socio-ideological gender restrictions.

With regard to religious knowledge, villagers know little about sorcerers, who bring about supernatural disaster through the manipulation of magic. They do not believe

that human sin leads to punishment by the god(s) in the form of illness or accident. Such a cultural system that lacks a concept of guilt or shame is also radically distinct from dominant Japanese culture.

Historically, the traditional Japanese patriarchy derived from Confucianism controlled advantaged women in society with feasible moral restrictions. Confucianism eventually blended with Zen Buddhism and this combined ideology, which considered women only as "heir providers"[433] has ruled Japanese society during the last millennium. Women's importance, therefore, originated from their contribution to the sustaining of paternity and their roles became more restricted in the *Maiji* era in late nineteenth century Japan. Husbands with full rights and power in the family have exercised complete dominion over their wives while women have accepted obligations that were ideologically or politically imposed in the family.

The Peace Preservation Law in 1887 officially prohibited women from participating in political activities. The law designated women for and restricted them to domestic duties such as rearing children and taking care of old parents-in-law. Although Japan is less Confucian than Korea, restriction of women's roles exists even in modern Japan. The society is still characterized by women's subordination to their husbands, dependency on men's financial monopoly, and a pathological expectation of women's sacrificial roles in the household.[434]

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[433] Joyce Gelb & Marian L. Palley, "Introduction," in *Women of Japan and Korea: Continuity & Change* (Temple University Press, Philadelphia. 1994), 5.

[434] See Takie Lebra, *Japanese Women: Constraint and Fulfillment* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984).

Patriarchal domination over women through misogynic ideology does not take place in Henza, however. Therefore, Henza does not experience an increase in women's proclivity toward possessive rituals as in the previous cultures in this chapter because the society is not fundamentally male-dominated in its structure. According to this author, the marginalization of women's status does not seemingly exist in this society; so their status does not necessarily contribute to their penchant toward possession as an essential cause-and-effect in women's marginality and their experience of spirit possession. Distinct from other religious systems, "Okinawan religion…does not embrace or advance an elaborated gender ideology."[435] Instead, individual and collective openness toward a divine calling tends to break down women's individual resistance against the calling. With the incorporated correspondence of *yuta*, a current priestess, the woman with illness acknowledges her diagnosis as a tutorial for divine vocation.

The Henza society uniquely lacks a male-dominated ideology that otherwise governs women in other cultures. Constricting moral codes or confining gender roles are still loose, which results in women's smooth transition from divine illness to shamanic priesthood. As the author indicates, this case is unique in many ways. It presents an exclusive sphere of women's life and possession, which may result from the geographical isolation of the island from mainstream Japanese society.

Cultural assumptions about women under little or no oppression from their male counterparts and without a gender-biased ideology underlie relatively mild symptoms of divine illness in Henza. A wild exorcistic ritual is not necessary for healing as in the other cases: women's longings that are frequently associated with possession do not even

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[435] Sered, 9.

appear in the culture. Out of the many distinctive characteristics of the culture, a connection between the lack of patriarchy in society and the painless nature of illness in possession seems to become visible.

In conclusion, individual cases of spirit possession do not disappear when they are discussed all at the same time. The selected illustrations of possession and the anthropological observations made so far do not necessarily cover or represent all human experiences of possession. They do not even offer a complete explanation of the general atmosphere of their extended cultural contexts.

However, each case offers illumination about the relative connection between women's possession and cultural assumptions toward them when they fall prey to possession more frequently than men in many societies. The exceptional case of Okinawan women may strengthen the logical tie between women's propensity toward possession and ideological patriarchy in society in a different way. Women in religious priesthood experience exceptionally smooth transitions to the divinely appointed position in Henza in comparison to the other examples above.

The complexity of human contexts surrounding possession may vary, but possession actively engages the social ideologies of gender once women become involved. Each distinct factor developed for a reason merits respectful consideration, but a clear pattern of the connection between women and possession emerges as an operational commonality across time and culture. When women are under a severe spirit possession, they have already been suffering in their socio-cultural system, as well as in individual traumatic illnesses. Therefore, possession ranges widely from intrapsychic to

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interpersonal and eventually to socio-cultural and ideological levels, inflicting unbearable obligations on vulnerable female souls with limited resources for living.

All the above societies have distinctive indigenous pantheon systems; their gods have different names and characters. Ages of women's vulnerability to possession also vary according to cultures. However, possessing spirits seem repeatedly to be fond of women in powerless positions without self-sustainable energy when possession is part of women's potential in society.

Lewis's theory may demonstrate its validity to many more cultures than those considered above. However, his understanding of possession as women's "strategy" for compensation after deprivation is subject to revision: in each possession, women do not necessarily intend to utilize the 'strategy' to survive. They simply suffer and adapt to their unfriendly environments with limited feasible resources in spirit possession. They continue to endure until they are overpowered by another "divesting" spirit, which often diverts their destiny to a shaman. People around them begin to offer gifts to the possessed women in the family, not from a refreshed generosity, but from a pure fear of the spirits' revenge on them.

In possession, women in family or society receive limited powers and additional attention. They experience temporary liberation from restrictions or familial duties when they are adulated as gods' maid. Economic restrictions may lift to a certain extent out of a family's fear of the gods that possess the person.

A fundamental limitation is manifest, however, if possession has to become an effective solution that strategically drives out structural evils of misogyny. Initiation rituals certainly may cure a possessed person of the divine illness, which brings about

temporary relief by drawing attention from oppressors. However, the situation easily

returns to the formidable bulwark of misogynic discrimination, and men and their violent

ideology soon revive after a temporary camouflage of adjustment by pretending to be

respectful of the divine interception.

Furthermore, possession concerned with peripheral individuals guarantees only a

limited amount of liberation among women because the dynamics of spiritual pathology

in shamanism or individual possession has been 'successfully' modified to the

misogynistic conditions of society. Women's genius for simple survival does not create

possession. Instead, possession is another excruciating trap that threatens women's

physical and spiritual integrity, which results from their living in an individually

overwhelming situation with a resilient enforcement of patriarchal value systems against

them.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN'S SPIRIT POSSESSION IN KOREAN SHAMANISM

What is *Shin-byung* in Korean shamanism? *Shin-byung*, described as "god-illness," "initiation illness," or "a culture-bound syndrome" according to DSM-IV,[436] exhibits medically 'untreatable' psychosomatic symptoms suffered by most Korean shamans before becoming a *Mudang* (Korean for shaman). The duration of the illness ranges from several months to more than ten years before the patient recognizes it as a divine message commissioning service as a *Mudang*. The symptoms include a panoramic spectrum of psychosomatic pains (e.g., anorexia, severe headache, shoulder-ache, contortion of the spine, visual or auditory hallucination, swelling of the body, or a certain combination of many symptoms). Sometimes the divine illness appears to be schizophrenia because of its hallucinatory spells,[437] but the two differ because the shin-byung symptoms typically disappear after an initiation ceremony. Some peripheral possessions look like women's madness, but the seeming madness comes under control after she becomes a shaman.

Medical treatment, either physical or psychological intervention, does not seem to work effectively for shin-byung until the person consults a *Mudang* and receives an initiation ceremony for a new *Mudang* in which gods come into the patient's body as

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[436] Regardless of its foreign origin, I would rather use "shin-byung" instead of "*Shin-byung*" from this point due to a common recognition of the disease by DSM-IV as a culture-bound syndrome.

[437] Kwang-iel Kim, "'Sin-byung': A Culture-bound Depersonalization Syndrome,*" Neuropsychiatry,* Vol. 11. No. 4 (1972a), 15-26.

body-lord. As soon as the person completes the ceremony, she emerges freed from the mostly long-suffering disease. Once she becomes a *Mudang* who can make use of divine authority, she can perform mysterious arts such as walking on double-bladed fodder cutters in the state of possession. The vocation includes fortune-telling and performance of shamanic rituals with divine powers for both individuals and communities. Shin-byung is distinctive in that most of its sufferers and shamanic populations are female.

Shin-byung has attracted significant attention from many disciplines over the last four decades: Korean traditional folklore,[438] Jungian psychiatry,[439] psychoanalytic or psychodynamic psychiatry,[440] art and education,[441] and anthropology.[442] Many experts have performed field research in order to uncover the life histories of shamans associated with possession and exorcism. Some of them regard shin-byung as a totally religious

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[438] Tae-gon Kim, A Study of Shaman's Mythic Illness during Initiation Process in Korea, Asian Women's Study, vol. 9 (1970), 91-132; T. Kim, *Study of Korean Shamanism* (Seoul: Jimmun-Dang, 1982); K. S. Choi, "Initiation in Korean Shamanism," *Minzokugaku Kenkyu* 38 (1978); Y. J. Hyun, *Study of Che-ju Shamanism* (Seoul: Jimmun-Dang, 1986).

[439] Bou-yong Rhi, A Psychiatric Study of the Initiation Process (based on Korean shamanism), Dedicated to Dr. Myung, Joo-Han, vol. 2 (1965), 1-26; Bou-yong Rhi, C.K. Lee, and H. I. Chang, "Mental Disorders Associated with Folk Religion." *The Journal of the Korean Association of Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 3 (1970); Bou-yong Rhi and Sung-Il Woo, "Psychodynamic Aspect and Psychotherapeutic Implication of the Korean Shamanic Initiation Rite, *Naerim-Kut*." *J Korean Neuropsychiatry Assoc.* vol. 29, no. 2 (1990).

[440] Kwang-iel Kim, "Psychoanalytic Consideration of Korean Shamanism, *Neuropsychiatry,* Vol. 11, No.2 (1972b), 57-65.

[441] R. Hwang, The Role of Kut in Contemporary Shamanism, *Koreana*, vol. 6, no. 2 (1992), Summer; I. Kim, *Study of Korean Shamanic Thoughts* (Seoul: Jimmun-Dang, 1987); Y. K. Kim, A Few Notions of Possession Phenomenon, *Psychiatry*, vol. 4. (1980); Mercea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstacy*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964).

[442] H. Y. Cho, *Korean Mu* (Seoul: Jung-Eum, 1983); *Shamanism: the History and Phenomena of Korean Shamanism* (Seoul: Minjok-Sa, 1997); *Korean Shamanism* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1999): S. H. Park, Psychological Characteristics of Mudang in Initiation. *Nation and Culture*, vol. 5 (1998): 157-175.

phenomenon,[443] while others view it as a complex of psychological and religious experiences.[444]

What causes the illness? A teleological interpretation of shin-byung in the shamanic system suggests that a person with the illness has to become a shaman as destiny, which completely excludes medical interpretation and its therapeutic possibilities. Shin-byung, in this respect, has no other cause than a divine designation. The actual illness, on the other hand, starts with complicated human afflictions such as childhood trauma, abuse, death of family members or economic disaster in the family prior to shamanic interpretation as a divine vocation. Shin-byung often accompanied by peripheral possession may be, therefore, initially described by many disciplines other than the religious study of shamanism per se (e.g., psychology, anthropology, and sociology).

These disciplines may portray shin-byung as an illness that starts with traumatic events and produces complicated psychological phenomena including spirit possession.[445] The outbreak of shin-byung comes from an individual's overwhelming life

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[443] Cho, 1983, 1997, *Korean Shamanism* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1999).

[444] T. Kim, 1970; Rhi, 1965; K. Kim, 1972a; K. Kim, Psychoanalytic Consideration of Korean Shamanism, *Neuropsychiatry*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1972b), 57-65; Suh et al., 1996. Rhi classifies shin-byung as a coherently "religious phenomenon" rather than a medical nosology regardless of its multi-symptomatic physiological syndrome because it is traditionally diagnosed by shamans as an illness of divine origin. So far, the complicated features of shin-byung have been well acknowledged, but religious interpretation overshadows psychological observations. A peripheral possession in Lewis's perspective frequently accompanies the illness, which eventually has to shift to central possession in which a shaman adroitly manipulates divine powers for shamanic purposes instead of being passively possessed.

[445] Possession has two phases in Korean shamanism: the first uncontrollable possession afflicting individuals frequently comes with the advent of shin-byung, which corresponds to Lewis's notion of peripheral possession. The second phase of possession is a means for manipulation of divine power by a shaman who has already overcome the pathological irregularities of the first possession. While the former is usually regarded as a trait of insanity, the latter, an artificial possession by a shaman, produces shamanic benefits.

experiences such as childhood trauma, but it may also follow recurrent exposure to

shamanic rituals in childhood,[446] not to mention the psychological fixture of incidental or

repeated exposures to shamanic practices. Shin-byung derives from shamanism, but its

psychosomatic symptoms seem to communicate more than what religious experiences

would indicate: the illness can still be observed, delineated, and even analyzed according

to the terms of many disciplines other than religion as long as its scope covers significant

issues from multitude disciplines.

Recovery from shin-byung has dramatic religious phases that cannot be

observed in other therapeutic settings. The initiation ceremony in Korean shamanism has

two components: healing of the divine illness[447]and legitimate ordination of a new

shaman through verified skills of possession. Although some objections arise about the

omnipotent healing power of the initiation ceremony,[448] the people still believe that the

ceremony is the only and ultimate answer to the longstanding disease.

If the cure is observable in the ceremony and does occur among Korean

shamans, how should we explain these dramatic changes within a person? The ceremony

certainly is a religious ritual and religiosity should pervade the whole process of the

changes; however, if shin-byung also has to do with a person's serious psychological

problems, often persistently present from childhood until the ceremony, then

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[446] Jon G. Allen, *Traumatic Relationships and Serious Mental Disorders* (Chichester; New York: Wiley, 2001).

[447] According to other field research on the mental health of shamans who had experienced both shin-byung and cure through the initiation ceremony and had been working as shamans for a living since then, the group of shamanic practitioners does not show significant differences in numbers of psychopathological symptoms compared with controls, whereas differences are clear in the depth of the symptoms. Jin-tae Sohn, "The Psychopathology and Personalist Characteristics of Korean Shamanistic Practitioners in Chinju Area," *Journal of Korean Neuropsychiatric Association, Vol. 32. No. 5.* (1993), 631-644.

[448] Kim, 1972a.

psychological language must be capable of explaining at least some aspects of the ceremonial cure.

Given the remarkable contrast in psychological conditions before and after the initiation ceremony, the ceremony seems to have dramatic psychological therapeutic implications. Healing of damaged self-esteem seems to occur. From a self-psychological perspective, this ceremony offers a dramatic restoration of the fragmented self resulting from the absence of a childhood selfobject or a traumatic encounter with life events such as the death of family members or other overwhelming frustrations.[449] Although saturated with shamanic religious presuppositions, this ceremony seems to help a shin-byung sufferer rebuild her old fragmented self and find another horizon of selfobject in shamanism with whom she may identify herself.

In order to observe the psychological dynamics of an initiation ceremony, I will analyze a real case[450] that contains a verbatim account of two different initiation ceremonies. Because the self-psychological theory matches the situation well as its main psychological framework, Heinz Kohut's ideas on the process of fragmentation and restoration of the self should take a central role in revealing the probable inner dynamics of the ritual. Because the verbatim material in the article serves its limited purposes, a full analysis of the whole situation may be partially hindered. Another caution comes from

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[449] About the 'object loss' that enhances the self's internalization of environments in childhood, Kohut exemplifies "a broad spectrum of experiences, ranging from the parent's death, absence, or withdrawal of affection due to physical or mental disease, to the child's unavoidable disappointment in circumscribed aspects of the parental imago, or a parent's prohibitions of unmodified instinctual demands" (Heinz Kohut, *The Search of the Self: Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut*: 1950-1978, ed. Paul H. Ornstein (New York: International Universities Press, Inc.), 432).

[450] Bou-yong Rhi and Sung-Il Woo, "Psychodynamic Aspect and Psychotherapeutic Implication of the Korean Shamanic Initiation Rite, *Naerim-Kut*," *J Korean Neuropsychiatry Assoc.* Vol. 29. No. 2 (1990), 471-501.

the awareness that psychological understandings of the individual interactions do not exhaust all that the religious ritual represents. Therefore, self-psychological theories may serve in a limited way to illuminate psychological aspects of the ritual, though drawing a clear line between religion and psychology in the interpretation may be difficult.

Last but not least, shin-byung and its healing manifest a social link in a wider horizon of interpretation. The individual pathology deserves socio-cultural attention when it occurs with a certain commonality of gender roles and collective values. The Confucian patriarchy during the last six hundred years in Korean history has significantly shaped a collective ideology of gender. With women's individual afflictions in relationships, the socio-cultural agreement of gender roles pathologically contributes to a vicious cycle of violence against women. In addition, shamanism offers only a temporary relief from pathology while the bigger evil continues to exist more pervasively in people's unconsciousness. In the last part of this chapter, a deeper analysis of shin-byung from a socio-ideological angle in Korean perspective will suggest the necessity of a more complete liberation of women from the male-dominated status quo of the traditional social order.[451]

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[451] According to Atkinson, "[t]he richest contemporary accounts of female shamans come from Korea, where… over 95% of shamans are women and the remainder are men who perform in women's dress." Atkinson, 317-8.

Symptoms and Diagnoses of Shin-byung

Shin-byung has "long-existing hysterical or psychosomatic symptoms such as anorexia, weakness, insomnia, indigestion and/or functional paralysis of extremities."[452] These symptoms are precipitated by physical pains and finally they are followed by "a depersonalization phase" in which the patient may experience hallucinations, revelatory dreams, and confusions that also appear in "hysteric psychosis or schizophrenia."[453] The patient who has had serious psychological problems from childhood, according to Kim's psychoanalytic point of view, tends to project his/her unmanageable life struggles onto the traditional shamanic worldview. In psychoanalytic interpretation,[454] shin-byung and possession are a projection of the patient's struggles onto culturally endorsed outlets in shamanism. Therefore, shin-byung is treatable, according to him, by a psychoanalytic analysis of the nature of the projection that appears throughout the illness.

However, a Freudian perspective of religion reduces most religious phenomena to representations of the unconscious toward gods imagined in shamanic or religious belief. Possession or dissociation as one of the central states of the illness counts as a product of the psyche in which the patient flees from overwhelming struggles in the real world by turning to religious objects outside of herself.[455] For example, possession by ancestral gods is none other than the accomplishment of incestuous desire,[456] although in

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[452] Ibid., 230.

[453] Ibid.

[454] Kim, 1972a, b.

[455] A later study suggests that possession or depersonalization does not appear until an initiation ceremony; possession is not the central state of shin-byung but the result of its cure through the ceremony. See Suh et al.1996.

[456] Kim, 1972a; Freud, 1964.

possession shamans often claim to manifest real ancestors in the family with their voices and characters. In this psychoanalytic respect, shin-byung in Korean shamanism is merely a reflection of intra-psychic projection due to infantile dependency on parents.

From a psychiatric perspective,[457] the symptoms of shin-byung have received analysis in DSM III-R by using retrospective questionnaires about a shaman's experience of the illness. Shin-byung according to this observation exhibits the characteristics of "depression, somatization, psychotism and hostility."[458] Shin-byung is a mood disorder with respect to 87.2% of its symptoms whereas 8.6% of the illness results from somatization and dissociative disorder.

However, the initiation ceremony proves to be consistently effective in treating the symptoms. One important consensus among shamans is that shin-byung belongs to the class of shamanic diseases that should be treated accordingly, not as a specific medical nosology without regard to many physiological symptoms. Some dissociative patients tend to share a few symptoms with shin-byung, but shin-byung represents a distinctive divine intervention for the women with the illness. Nevertheless, along with its shamanic teleological interpretation, shin-byung may be yet subject to medical, psychological, and socio-cultural scrutiny due to its far-reaching concerns such as developmental, traumatic, cultic, economic or other cultural aspects of its experience.

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[457] Suh et al., 1996.

[458] Ibid., 1394.

Vignettes of Shin-byung

Jungbom Suh has performed one of the most prominent observations of Korean shamans' detailed experiences in his linguistic study of Korean literature concerned with shamanic origins. Although his study of shamanism was not academic research from a psychological or anthropological perspective, he performed careful interviews with over three thousand shamans over nearly half of a century.[459] His fame emulates from his study of Korean literature, yet his conclusive judgment about shin-byung after decades of first-hand interviews with shamans resonates with an academic psychological explanation of the phenomenon: lack of loving relationships in childhood and a familial shamanistic background.[460]

Problematic relationships that may precipitate girls' or adult women's shin-byung include "having no parents, having a single mother or a foster father, having parents with no attention or care for the children, having parents with extramarital affairs, having no child, giving birth to daughters without a son, untimely loss of loving husband or child[ren]." [461] In addition to these environments, stressful events or traumatic incidents may increase the likelihood of shin-byung and becoming a shaman thereafter. "With a good attachment in childhood, however, a person barely becomes a shaman because he or

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[459] His selective interviews about shamans' life histories occur in six volumes published in 2002. Although his concern is with Korean linguistics and the origins of vocabulary, his sophisticated data deserve attention: they may also provide raw but rather specific materials about shin-byung and its variety of symptoms. Even if Suh et al. (1996) rejects his material as inappropriate for psychological study, his careful interviews with each *Mudang* make possible a second-hand study of peculiar experiences of shin-byung. I personally interviewed Dr. Suh in the year 2003 while I visited Korea for summer research funded by the Center for the Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) at Vanderbilt University.

[460] Jungbom Suh, Vol. III, 247-254.

[461] Ibid. Vol. III, 247.

she can manage afflictions on his or her own."[462] A relationship with a care-provider

seems to influence significantly the possibility of the onset of shin-byung in Korean

shamanism according to Suh's experiential data.

A shaman's familial background is another prominent factor in the precipitation

of shin-byung and shamanic vocation, especially among females. If a person has the *buri*

of a shaman, that is, a shamanic "ancestor, blood, or root" in the family, she tends to

suffer shin-byung more commonly than those without it. Hallucinations or revelatory

dreams appear from childhood among those with *buri*, but shin-byung does not last

longer than in the former group due to a prompt diagnosis and help from family shamans.

They endure rather a short period of the illness compared to the former, presumably due

to their easier access to shamanic diagnosis and treatment. Distinctively, children from a

shaman's family, who have been exposed to shaman rituals, are more likely to exhibit the

last phases of shin-byung, such as hallucinations or revelatory dreams, escaping the

serious psychosomatic symptoms of which the former sufferers are well aware.

Butterfly Girl[463]

The butterfly girl held an initiation ceremony when she was thirteen years old. On

the day of her ceremony, a big butterfly remained on her shoulder for over three hours,

and she believed it to be the spirit of her father who had died when she was nine years

old. She entered elementary school when she was seven, but she suffered from serious

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[462] Ibid.

[463] Suh, Vol. I. 2002, 15-72.

headaches and anorexia that eventually prevented her from studying. She could not read her exams, and she fainted from time to time.

When her father was dying of an unknown disease, she was taking care of his needs. After his bankruptcy early on, her mother had treated him as a miserable creature. The girl had compassion for her ill father, while her mother did not take care of her husband. When she saw her father dead at home, she brought some imaginary food for her deceased father. She had a hallucination at the moment that a butterfly was flying to the artificial food.

In infancy, according to Suh's interview, she was never breast-fed because her mother was seriously ill at her birth. Even later, her mother never took good care of her because of her resentful preoccupation with her husband's incompetence in business. While the girl established a good relationship with her father, she struggled to relate to her neglectful mother.

After her father's death, the girl used to go to his grave by herself, taking care of it by pulling out weeds. In her loneliness, she always prayed by the grave that he would take her to his place. One day in third grade, the girl could not read an exam at school. The teacher gave her another paper, but she was not able to read it either. The teacher immediately sent her to the school nurse's office. She then sneaked furtively out of school and, while on her way home, she went to a nearby mountain trail alone. She fell asleep on a rock by herself until dark. Her mother was perplexed because her daughter suddenly disappeared without any notice. She returned home later, but did not answer her mother's inquiry. Her condition began to worsen: she frequently lost consciousness, skipped meals, and became melancholic.

Because of her strange behaviors and symptoms, the butterfly girl's mother enrolled her in a church Sunday school. When she was thirteen, however, she ran away from the church because she found it disgusting. Instead, she prayed alone in her late father's room in the manner of a Korean shaman, i.e., prayer with a bowl of fresh water, bowing to it. She hated her mother and prayed that she might enter her mother's mind to control her and avenge herself. Sometimes, while hallucinating, she thought she saw a butterfly approach the water and drink from it.

Suddenly on April 6th of her fourteenth year, she demanded that her mother take a shower and come back to worship her. When her mother refused, she vomited blood. Seized with horror, her mother hurriedly took a shower and returned. The girl turned into a different person with a strange accent, accusing her mother of having let her husband and her younger daughter, the girl's sister, die. She requested that her mother offer a *gut* (shamanistic ritual), and her mother reluctantly agreed. Then, she went into a deep sleep for three days, dreaming of a trip to the world of the dead.

The girl returned to consciousness upon hearing the sound of the *gut* that her mother offered with a shaman. She saw a beautiful butterfly come into the room and remain on her shoulder for a while before flying away. As soon as the butterfly landed on her shoulder, she felt on top of the world. Her symptoms did not completely go away until she was 26 years old, when she completed a private temple for her gods in the house. She served her father and an ancient Chinese general as her body-lords (those gods that possess the person and claim to protect and guide), who eventually commanded her to separate from her husband. Usually, once female shamans come to have their body-lords, they begin to communicate even sexually with their gods, which in turn

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results in a disregard for their husbands. After a long struggle with her husband, the butterfly girl divorced him. Afterward, she suffered no more symptoms besides dreaming religious or shamanic dreams. This completed her commitment to shaman rituals and fortunetelling with the aid of her gods.

<center>*Shaman's Daughter*[464]</center>

One documented *Naerim-gut,* initiation ceremony, was for the daughter of a shaman when she was eleven. This young woman felt so ill and distressed that she could not read words on the blackboard in class. Sometimes she saw butterflies flying on the blackboard instead of letters, and she often violently protested against her teacher with abusive words. During class, she frequently had hallucinations in which an old man appeared to her with a lady in her thirties and a little child.

The girl quit school later because of the severity of her symptoms. She consulted an oriental traditional doctor. When she was treated with acupuncture, her body became contorted. She did not want any more medical treatment. Her mother, a shaman, however, felt a hunch that her daughter manifested symptoms of divine illness. Therefore, she asked her daughter, "Who came into you that makes you sick?" out of a suspicion that a divine being must have initiated her illness. Then, the girl replied that an old man in a traditional coat was accompanying a lady angel and a child in order to make her wealthy.

According to another shaman's admonition, they hurriedly held a *gut* for her cure from the illness. Performing shamanic rituals, the girl cried over and over resenting her alcoholic father's violence. Her father had physically abused her mother when drunk and

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[464] Ibid., 107-113.

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was paranoid of adultery. Her father threatened her, saying, "I am gonna kill you!" when she expressed her emotion in the ritual.

Because the girl insisted on becoming a shaman, her mother helped organize an initiation ceremony. First, she danced as an 11 year-old girl on a large razor without injury, which is a common practice among Korean shamans while possessed. If possession is proper, shamans are not harmed on the razor. Otherwise, they may experience cuts and bleeding, which stops the ceremony. People expected the girl to have this same ability because her mother had experienced the same ritual of dancing on a big razor to become a shaman.

Even though she was still a preadolescent girl with no habit of drinking or smoking at the time of the interview, she often drank much alcohol or smoked tobacco during shamanic possession in her *gut* because her body-lord was her late grandfather, who had enjoyed them in life. While fortunetelling in her private shrine, she saw her grandfather present with her. She felt comfortable when she slept in the shrine under his care. She said becoming a shaman was her fate, over which she had once wept aloud because of her forsaken dreams and the possible discrimination she faced as a shaman.

Analysis and Interpretation

The two girls, whose dates of activity are not indicated in the book, both experienced serious struggles with a parent, the first with her mother and the second with her father. These struggles seem to be far more than a frustration that they can handle. In self-psychology, an optimal frustration in care or therapy in which the caregiver does not satisfy all needs of the infant or the patient highlights the beneficial aspects of minor

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experiences of embarrassment in childhood development. The initiation ceremony becomes an important opportunity for them to release intensive repressed memories for recovery.

Marriage problems apparently existed among their parents, and they commonly experienced fantasies and hallucinations in frequent peripheral possession, which resulted in quitting school because of their problems in reading and concentration. They were not able to read because of impaired sight while in possession. At their initiation ceremonies, the two girls experienced a culmination of emotional eruptions so that they verbalized what they had been through as victims of family conflicts. They had endured critically imbalanced parenting with extreme polarization: they each attached to one parent but seriously regretted the other's neglect and violent abuse, the first her mother's, and the second her father's.

The first girl survived the deaths of her father and younger sister and her physical condition became seriously worse after that. She hated her mother so much in childhood that she then wanted revenge. The second girl had maintained a serious hatred toward her alcoholic father, who frequently abused her. Family violence and physical abuse seem to have been persistent in her family.

In their religious experiences, the first girl experienced her spiritual journey to the world of the dead in dreams, while the second performed dances on razors. Their body-lords were different: the former's gods were her late father and a Chinese general, while the latter's was her late grandfather. Some of their late family members commonly became their gods and protectors. In addition to the broken relationship with parents, a consistent exposure to shamanic rituals from childhood must have been a critical element

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in contributing to developing a new generation of shamans in Korea. Exposure to shamanic rituals and practices in childhood for the latter may have exerted an important psychological influence upon the child, considering the 'horrible' themes of death, spirits, and magical beliefs in shamanism.[465]

Korean Shamanic Perspective

Many different causes of disease exist according to Korean shamanic belief. On the one hand, Korean shamanism claims that two main causes of illness:[466] first, a soul's escape from the body and, second, possession and punishment by evil spirits or ancestral gods.[467] A shaman treats the former through restoration of the soul, and the latter through magical rituals that chase away evil spirits. On the other hand, Korean shamanism interprets disease in terms of loss of a harmony or moral state among humans and/or gods.[468] Therefore, cure of the disease in this respect means restoring social relationships and harmony with nature and/or gods.[469]

Shin-byung represents a significant divine intention rather than a medical implication that commissions a person in the system to become a shaman. Hence, the divine illness can be cured if the person understands and obeys the divine intention for the accomplishment of harmony between the person and the gods. Otherwise, the illness

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[465] I would rather call it "cultic trauma," which has many parallels in witchcraft or other shamanisms.

[466] Jintae Sohn, 1981.

[467] Murayama (1929), a Japanese scholar on Korean folklore, asserts that disease or mishap occurs due to the intrusion of spiritual beings, which is possession, in Korean traditional folk religion.

[468] Sungnye Kim, 1978.

[469] Cho (1997) also emphasizes the essence of Korean shamanism in terms of harmony between humans and gods.

worsens or recaptures the disobedient person by continuing to break the harmony for a private desire. Rather than symptoms of the disease itself, its religious implications bear more value in Korean shamanism.[470]

The first girl's serious condition after her father's death may have been a divine message from her dead father, commanding her to become a shaman serving her late father-god. Because she did not obey the message by failing to build a private shrine at her residence, she had to suffer minor symptoms until she turned twenty-six in spite of her initiation ceremony at thirteen. Meanwhile, the second girl decided to establish harmony with the gods by accepting the fate of a shaman and giving up other future dreams. As soon as she acquiesced to the divine revelation, she became cured. Therefore, shin-byung registers as a pathological phenomenon rather than a medically categorized disease.[471] However, many aspects of the disease are observable from social scientific, including psychological, perspectives that will illuminate the dynamic progress from disease to cure,[472] which deserves academic attention for appropriate understanding of a person and the culture.

Psychological Implications

Lack of loving relationships, especially in childhood, is one of the major causes of shin-byung according to accumulative interviews across time.[473] Lack of care and loving

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[470] Choi, 1984.

[471] Ibid.

[472] Psychological difficulties with the illness resulting from struggles in life tend to meet serious engagement in the initiation ceremony via open therapeutic dialogues and rituals. See Rhi & Woo, 1990.

[473] Suh, 2002.

relationships in childhood cut through the shaman's divine illness frequently in a lasting

suffering. A psychoanalytic psychiatrist[474] has illustrated and explained that relational

environments including loving relationships in childhood play an important role in a

shaman's life as a crucial motive for shin-byung. The illness emerges from traumatic life

experiences, including individual traumas or serious family stresses. Shin-byung, in this

sense, does not necessarily have a clearly god-given and teleological intention for

commissioning a shaman from the beginning; instead, it certainly has a psychological and

environmental pathogenesis, which eventually meets the qualifications for a shaman.

Shin-byung, therefore, is primarily a diagnosable pathology with multiple environmental

pathogeneses although appropriated by shamanism for its own purpose as a qualified

track for a future shaman.

Developmental Psychological Perspective

In developmental psychology, the attachment of an infant to the parent is a crucial

concept because of its lifelong influence on forming attachments with others. Not only

physical security but also "a feeling of security" generally increases as the infant's

attachment with a caregiver continues to grow, according to John Bowlby,[475] a pioneer in

attachment theory. Based on an evolutionary biological theory, attachment has a

fundamental purpose of protecting offspring, which basically requires a long period of

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[474] Kim, 1972 a.

[475] John Bowlby, 1982.

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human growth and protection. Attachment, therefore, has its central purpose "in coping with trauma."[476]

Attachment or its trauma does not cease to function in infancy, but has lifelong significance for a healthy human condition.[477] If one's attachment becomes strong and healthy, the sense of security extends to the situation in which the caregiver is no longer physically available. A child's attachment maintains itself a sustaining bond regardless of temporary separation from its caregiver in time and space.[478] This is the role of internal representations, that is, the 'internal working model' that enables the feeling of safety in the temporary absence of a caregiver.

Attachment trauma is "maltreatment –abuse and neglect,"[479] that is, "physical and sexual abuse, as well as gross physical neglect."[480] Failure to protect an infant from danger constitutes attachment trauma, which then deprives the infant of a sense of security. In studies of maltreatment of children,[481] according to Allen, two emotional dimensions have been developed: "parental antipathy (rejection, including verbal abuse) and psychological abuse (cruel and sadistic acts)."[482] Attachment trauma "prevents painful representations (e.g., the experience of being hated) from coming to mind but promotes a sense of emptiness and passivity, as well as a lack of vitality and

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[476] Allen, 2001, 21.

[477] Bowlby, 1982; Ainsworth, 1989; Inge Bretheton, "The Origins of Attachment Theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth," *Developmental Psychology*, Sept. 1992, vol. 28, no. 5; Allen, 2001.

[478] Ainsworth et al., 1978; Allen, 2001.

[479] Allen, 2001, 22.

[480] Ibid., 23.

[481] Bifulco, Brown, & Harris, 1994; Bifulco & Moran, 1998.

[482] Allen, Ibid.

initiative,"[483] and developmental psychotherapy, therefore, pursues mentalizing what is

inhibited. The two cases above in Korean shamanism may find their fit in this theory of

attachment regarding parental traumatization through verbal and emotional abuse. The

first girl studied became traumatized by her mother's rejection and hostile disapproval

from infancy, while the second by her father's abusive, alcoholic antipathy against her

and her mother.

Verbal abuse is "only the tip of the iceberg of psychological maltreatment,"[484]

which also encompasses the concept of "malignant trauma,"[485] e.g., a concentration camp

or cultic religious practices that gain lasting psychological control over a person's life.

Children's exposure to parental or familial shamanic rituals may have a strong impact on

the early development of shin-byung and shamanic vocation as in the latter case. Many

young shamans who have been through shin-byung and the initiation ceremony at

younger ages tend to have a parent or other family members who are also shamans. As

Allen argues, "repetitively inflicting psychological trauma establishes control"[486] in

which attachment needs are compromised or exploited.

Self-Psychological Perspective

The discipline of self-psychology focuses on the relationship of self with the

selfobject, mostly caregivers, in a person's development. The self is not just a part of the

human psychic structure, but a psychological bed foundation on which human personality

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[483] Ibid. 38.

[484] Ibid., 37.

[485] Herman, 1992.

[486] Allen, 37.

can rest and grow. The self becomes stable in an empathic relational milieu, especially with an empathic caregiver in childhood. Many people who suffer shin-byung seem to lack empathic roles of selfobject such as mirroring or idealization in a self-psychological interpretation.

According to Kohut who begins to explain narcissism as the self's structural problems in childhood rather than the oedipal pathology in the classical drive theory, holding of self-confidence later in life comes essentially from a good childhood selfobject environment. In his self-psychological understanding, though a selfobject generally means an "archaic selfobject" of childhood, the self needs developmentally appropriate selfobjects and their responses throughout its lifetime. Therefore, ideally, an infant should be raised in an empathic milieu in which there exists a "vicarious introspection" of the parents who "think and feel [themselves] into the inner life of [the infant]."[487] The ideal caregiver will release an infant's anxiety through a calmed empathic signal, and the infant will idealize her as a healthy selfobject.[488] An infant can develop self-confidence and self-esteem with "nuclear ambitions, values, and goals"[489] by growing up with empathic responses from a healthy selfobject.

Unfulfilled archaic needs of a selfobject in childhood do not just disappear over time; instead, they may often be reactivated in situations such as analysis. Needs of one's self in three areas, namely, "mirroring and acceptance," "merger with greatness, strength, and calmness," and "one's need to experience the essential alikeness" in alter ego[490]

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[487] Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 82.

[488] Ibid. 83, 186.

[489] Ibid., 77.

[490] Ibid., 194.

should be satisfied not only in infancy or childhood, but also throughout one's life with

proper responses from selfobjects. The needs of the self change as one develops, but the

needs of the selfobject accompany a person from cradle to grave, so to speak. With

mirroring from and idealization toward a childhood selfobject, the presence of "*human*

humans" as an alter ego provides a child with a sense of security and belongingness that

make the self solid and healthy.

According to Kohut, "a debilitating illness or the confrontation with death"[491]

should be taken seriously into consideration for understanding different selfobject needs

in adolescence or old age. Likewise, childhood confrontation of the death of a family

member generally has a strong impact upon a child's needs for a selfobject. If young girls

experience traumatic and abusive relationships with their parents instead of empathic

responses, the self becomes fragmented because the situation is too harsh for them to

handle. Devoid of any tangible selfobject around herself, the infant may establish another

hallucinatory presence for support.[492]

The hallucinations of the girl in our first case can be understood from this

perspective. That is, her loving father's death as a loss of selfobject brought about the

creation of a hallucination in which a butterfly was the image of her late father. She drew

pictures of butterflies, played with them, hallucinated about them, and firmly believed

that butterflies were the spirit of her father. Her hallucinations functioned to prevent her

from "suffering permanent damage…by conjuring of a company of mirroring

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[491] Ibid.

[492] Ibid., 76.

selfobject."[493] Due to lack of attachment with her mother resulting from the neglect of her needs in infancy, she was not able to develop an infantile illusion of 'omnipotence' that would be the basis for a future healthy self.

Winnicott proposes that through the mother's mirroring reflection of what the infant experiences and needs, the infant comes to hallucinate that he/she creates what is needed, which eventually produces health and solidity of self.[494] Lack of a mother's sensitivity toward what is felt and needed in the infant's experience, on the contrary, "undercuts the child's sense of hallucinatory omnipotence, constricting his/her belief in his/her own creativity and powers and driving a wedge between the evolution of the psyche and its somatic underpinning."[495] In addition to the traumatic relationship with her mother, the first girl faced another serious trauma: the death of her loving father. The girl's encounter with his death[496] after her mother's chronic failures drove her to serious anxiety, which may be called "disintegration anxiety."[497] Fear from the loss of her selfobject, which is not articulated by the girl, has to do with her underlying fear of "a loss of contact with reality"[498] and *human* environment.

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[493] Ibid.

[494] See D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1971).

[495] Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, 193.

[496] With regard to the encounter with death, Kohut positively affirms it as "comparable to a fulfilled parting" with "the cohesion, firmness, and harmony of the self." (18) However, in terms of Harry Guntrip's childhood experience, his discovery of his dead brother on his mother's lap had seriously influenced his personality in life. With his mother's inability to give him a supportive response, this incident made him suffer "a severe, mysterious illness, [and] he remained for several years sickly and demanding" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 216). In his lifetime, he had to suffer from "themes and images about death, tombs, buried man"(Ibid.). In addition, according to him, the apathy of his mother nurtured the paralysis in his personality.

[497] Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?*, 16.

[498] Ibid., 18-19.

Cure of Shin-byung in Initiation Ceremony

The initiation ceremony is completely religious in its goals and ritual characteristics. The purpose of the ceremony is to verify possession through divination and to qualify a new shaman. Possession is a basic feature in performing shamanic functions, and the ceremony has a design for facilitation of spirit possession in order for a new shaman to be qualified for her vocation.

Because shin-byung mediates the ceremony, however, a basic concern of the ritual is the cure of psychosomatic symptoms. Although shamanic religious symbolism saturates the ceremony, we may observe meaningful psychological interactions between many surrounding shamans and the patient, who, after a successful ceremony, becomes a new shaman. Given its religious healing power, the psychological structure and process of the ceremony seems to have dramatic psychotherapeutic implications. In order to demonstrate the dynamics of the ritual, I depend on an experimental field research on the initiation ceremony by Korean psychiatrists.[499]

Illustration of Ritual

A prospective shaman is usually recognizable by her continuous afflictions since childhood. The woman in this case had a traumatic family story and was experiencing a current marriage crisis. When she was about six years old, her father committed suicide during the Korean War for fear of being captured and killed by North Korean

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[499] Rhi and Woo, 1990. There is also another successful case of initiation ceremony filmed by Diane Lee and Laurel Kendall (See Laurel Kendall and Diana S. Lee, prod., *An Initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), which can be referenced for compensatory explanations. However, the film does not present enough background information including childhood of a new shaman or clarify the steps of initiation ceremony while this case does.

communists. Of her ten siblings, five of them died in childhood from unknown causes. Among the other five, her eldest brother was captured during the war and killed in North Korea. Her second eldest brother died of stomach cancer. One sister died of seizures after having married a man, and another died shortly before the ceremony from unknown causes. Her mother, a shaman, had undergone an initiation ceremony when she was forty-four. The mother had never been warm-hearted toward her remaining children.

The prospective shaman had also suffered from postpartum depression with pains, anorexia, and stomachache beforehand. Through a shamanic healing ritual, she recovered temporarily. During the ritual, she surprised the people gathered by jumping and dancing violently to the shamanic music in spite of her illness. She held another shamanic ritual, and this time she danced on a double-bladed razor though she was not yet a shaman. She sustained no injury from this dance on the fatal blades when she was twenty-two. However, she failed to make a shrine for gods after the ceremony, which was a shamanic duty for those who have a calling from gods. Instead, she threw the shamanic instruments away, which is a sign of betrayal to gods. Some days later, she began to experience serious pains in her right eye, and finally she lost her sight in it after a year. She relapsed into shin-byung.

In marriage, this woman had continuous conflicts with her husband. He engaged in several extramarital affairs, and he often ran away from home. He had never been successful in business and ended up becoming an alcoholic. Throughout the marriage, the woman had suffered from certain chronic illnesses, but she seemed to get better when rituals were held for her recovery. For about a month prior to this initiation ceremony,

she became seriously ill. Her condition improved, however, as soon as she scheduled the ceremony.

The initiation ceremony comprised fourteen smaller rituals from Impurity (*Pujung*) through Epilogue (*Duichon*). At the start of the ceremony, the male shaman began calling many gods' names while playing the traditional percussion instrument. When the master shaman, a woman, judged that certain rituals had removed the impurity, she began to rebuke the prospective shaman for her carelessness toward the divine callings. She also severely reprimanded the prospective shaman's husband for his impatience and irreverence toward the gods.

Naerim-gut, the ninth ritual of the whole initiation ceremony designed to invite gods, occurred from 2:00 to 5:00 a.m. Just before the ritual, the master shaman offered divinations to the prospective shaman with both compassion and rebuke as follows:

> …[O]ur praying person ([the prospective shaman]), you have been through many storms and sufferings in your life… Your mother ([an old shaman]) is about to die… Dare you give up [your shaman's calling] again?… Just speak [without hesitation] like crazy…[500]

The master shaman gave other divinations to the prospective shaman's husband mixed with individual concern, comfort, scolding, and encouragement:

> *Daeju*[501] has to be diligent in your business… Dare you get rid of [the shrine]?… You look healthy but your conditions are worse… you are sincere but I am worried about your temper… gods have protected you from death… I will get rid of your grief… Don't just say, yes, yes, but do it…Don't worry… I will help you.[502]

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[500] Ibid., 475-76.

[501] Literally, it means a "great lord," which points out her husband.

[502] Ibid.

The prospective shaman wore many layers of colorful coats with shamanic bells in her right hand and a fan in her left hand. She danced violently to the sounds of the instruments. When she stopped, the music stopped.

> The master shaman: Look. A general came in!
>   (fifteen minutes of another violent dance)
> Shamans: Who was in? Who is it? Please tell us! …
> God-mother: We disciples do not know anything! … You have to
>   command saying "I am who…!"
> The prospective shaman: I am *Daeshin* Grandmother[503]!
> Surroundings: (Responsively) *Daeshin* Grandmother!
> The prospective shaman: I am the one who gives you prophecies in speech
>   and words.
> The master shaman: You are right!
> Surroundings: Yes, right!
> God-mother: *Daeshin* Grandmother who….! (and another violent
> dance)[504]

The tone of the shamans' questions and responsive comments demonstrates extreme respect toward the possessive god coming in. The shamans kept asking who had come into the prospective shaman. She answered by mentioning many names of gods known in Korean shamanism. However, the first possession effort failed since no clear voice claimed any divine identity. When the prospective shaman was not certain, surrounding shamans rebuked her, saying, "Why do you ask us? You have to command us!"[505] When the woman began murmuring, the surrounding shamans unanimously responded, "Yes, yes!" in a worshipful way, waiting for divinations as a sign of professional possession.

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[503] It means a "great elderly goddess."

[504] Ibid.

[505] Ibid., 477.

When the woman cried after the failure, one of the shamans encouraged her to

keep crying, respecting her as an honorable disciple. Her god-mother also encouraged her

to cry. Her cry then turned into a sad song over her late father:

> The prospective shaman: …father…oh…poor father…
>   [crying]…father…my father… I don't know your face…
>   You saved me… Why did you leave? …. Father… help
>   me… [crying]… Oh, poor person full of pain and *han*.[506]
> Shamans: Who came in?
> The prospective shaman: (As if she were her father with a voice
>   resembling his) Hey… Don't cry. I will help. Crying won't
>   work.
> Shamans: Sir, you're absolutely right! (nodding)
> Male shaman: What is the godly name of the father when he came?
> The prospective shaman: *Il-wol do sa*.[507]
> Male shaman*: Il-wol do sa!*… Your father came as *Il-wol do sa*…
>   You have to pray… Do you have pity on your children?
> The prospective woman: (As if possessed) I will help my daughter!
>   …. [to herself] Daughter, I am also here!
> God-mother: Who is it?
> The prospective shaman: My father-in-law! …(With her father-in-
>   law's voice) My daughter, do you know how I am trying to
>   help you and care for you? … You must have been
>   disappointed with my son ([the woman's husband]).[508]

At another point, the woman speaking with the authority of a god of a great

ancient Korean general, rebuked her husband in a harsh manner and offered him good

fortune and comfort:

> The prospective shaman: (To her husband who is handling money for the
>   ceremony) Hey, do it right! You have put the money upside down!
>   Correct it, so that luck is not gone!
> Shamans: (As if she were gods) Oh, please! Just because he does not

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[506] In general, *han* is a repressed emotion of the oppressed people due to individual or social hopelessness. Andrew S. Park explains that *han* involves "unjust psychosomatic repression" (10) and socio-cultural oppression upon an individual's heart from which the critical wounds develop. For an expanded meaning of *han*, see Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: the Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

[507] This indicates a god of sun and moon.

[508] Rhi and Woo, 478-79.

> know how to put them!
> The prospective shaman: (Comforting her husband) Don't worry. I will
> give you luck!

After the successful completion of the ceremony, the shamans complimented the new shaman with lighthearted comments: "She is better than me with the instruments," or, "She is a very smart shaman!"[509] Then, the master shaman offered an affirmation full of blessings and serious admonitions for the new shaman and her family during her dancing. She gave specific guidelines for the family in shamanic chants (e.g., "From now on, our praying person and our great-lord should have pity on each other…Now, our praying person, you become a carrier of gods…. Right… then, your body is not yours… You have to be strong and self-assertive"[510]). Encouragement and education with divine respect constitute an important part of the admonition in the ceremony.

The process was highly dialogical and mutual, exchanging guidance, commands and comfort with each other. The master shaman verbalized in a poetic style what the family had experienced, wishing the woman a happier life. She also gave some ethical advice with understanding. She guided the family with detailed directions about family affairs and specific relationships. The master shaman also tried to bring about reconciliation between the new shaman and her husband through encouragement, reprimand, a promise of divine help, and advice regarding financial problems. Concerning the husband's alcoholism and misbehavior toward his wife, she reproved him and required of him reverence toward his wife's gods. At the same time, she criticized the new shaman's mother for oppressing her daughter's spiritual desire.

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[509] Ibid. 480.

[510] Ibid.

In the ongoing relationship after the ceremony, "the god-mother should offer lots of blessing and concern"[511] to the new shaman. Care for the new one does not end with the initiation ceremony. Rather, she must receive constant affirmation and guidance from her master as an apprentice. Through the ritual, the woman received healing from her chronic diseases and began working with a new identity as an approved shaman. If something goes wrong in the process of the spirit possession ceremony, the initiation ceremony can be held again later following the same ritualistic pattern.

Self-Psychological Interpretation of the Healing

The initiation ceremony inhabits a completely different setting from classical psychotherapy based on the one-to-one encounter of client and therapist, let alone its religious purposes and rituals. The woman diagnosed with shin-byung finds herself surrounded by many shamans who have experienced the same passage of illness. An empathic relationship takes shape without difficulty. Multiple shamans focus on one person along with her family, dealing with her individual and familial afflictions. Family therapeutic components are present when the client's husband and other family members receive divinations together with encouragement. Their interactions include encouragement, understanding, acceptance, comfort, supportive challenges,[512] and benediction. Those elements are typically essential in self's healing where defects in the self may become collected in narcissistic transference.

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[511] Ibid. 484.

[512] In Lee & Kendall (1991), the master shaman Kim confesses that her heart is compassionate while her words are harsh toward Chini, the new prospective shaman, during the ceremony. This may correspond to the concept of 'minimal frustration' in self psychology, which may nurture a patient's ability to cope with embarrassing reality in the context of a supportive relationship with a therapist.

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Empathic Atmosphere

The surrounding shamans in the ceremony play a different role from that of a self-psychologically informed analyst because they do not pay attention to the transference that occurs inter-subjectively in the analytic situation. Instead, they attend solely to a religious concern about the success of the person's possession in which she can utilize the gods' power for shamanic fortunetelling and healing. The healing of shin-byung in this process allegedly happens with the aid of gods coming into the person.

However, if we take a closer look at the interactions, participants exhibit empathy as sincere acceptance throughout the ceremony. Interactions among the shamans continue usually with dialogues characterized by empathic understanding, especially by the master shaman. The master shaman, as the main speaker in the ceremony, sympathetically understands the afflictions of the prospective shaman and her family. She seems to have "the capacity to think and feel [herself] into the life"[513] of the prospective shaman. She coherently maintains a shamanic perspective in interpreting the situation, but shows her concern for the whole family.

The woman seems to have had repressed desires for her father: it is *han*, which is a repressed emotional and cognitive tension within a person that is unresolved through a proper expression. *Han* seems to have occupied her life due to the absence of a crucial relationship with her father and her remote mother, who was central to the series of traumatic incidents in the family. In response to the horrible losses of her children and husband, the mother became distant and cold to her children. Parents who are distant from their own affective experiences cannot provide appropriate emotional nourishment

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[513] Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?*, 82.

for their young children. [514] Kohut regards as childhood trauma not only certain behaviors enacted by parents against their children, but also the patterned way of life:

> It is not so much what the parents *do* that will influence the character of the child's self, but what the parents *are*. If the parents are at peace with their own needs to shine and to succeed insofar as these needs can be realistically gratified –if, in other words, the parents' self-confidence is secure, then the proud exhibitionism of the budding self of their child will be responded to acceptingly.[515]

As long as the child's self is healthy due to rich parental resources from their wholesome selves, according to Kohut, traumatic events cannot be as serious as the chronic deficiency of parental empathic responsiveness. Even the weak self of the child can survive traumatic events, being set in the supportive empathic milieu of caregivers. Given her family history and traumatic circumstances, the prospective shaman's childhood was most likely traumatic and isolated without a parental selfobject's proper mirroring or an idealizable selfobject. A supportive alter ego seems to have been absent from the exceptional care of an elder sister. She lacked emotionally empathic selfobjects that might have provided her a reverberation of smile when her growing abilities came to light.

The mother distances herself from her child's emotional needs, according to Kohut, if her capability for empathy is absent or infantile, which results in panic without calmness, anxiety without understanding, and intensity of feelings without empathy even in later life for the child. Kohut seems to be deterministic about the significance of empathic selfobjects in childhood: without them, a person cannot be fully human with

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[514] Joan F. Hertzberg, "Feminist Psychotherapy and Diversity: Treatment Considerations from a Self psychology Perspective," *Diversity and Complexity in Feminist Therapy*, eds. Laura S. Brown & Maria P. P. Root (New York: Haworth Press, 1990).

[515] Heinz Kohut & E. S. Wolf, "The Disorders of the Self and their Treatment: An Outline," in *The Search of the Self. vol III* (Madison, CT: International Universities Press, Inc., 1978), 368.

"uncurbed spreading of anxiety or other emotions… [and] an impoverished psychic organization."[516] Therefore, in self-psychological therapy, the cherished experience of childhood requires careful investigation.

The childhood experience of coldness from outside, according to Kohut, is what contributes to the destruction of one's self. An exposure to that kind of nonempathic human environment results in the deprivation of "psychological oxygen."[517] With chronic psychological indifference and the absence of empathic responsiveness, a person cannot maintain his/her self-confidence or coherence.

The shamans in the ceremony do not seem to recognize the woman's childhood emotional deprivation as much as a psychotherapist might ascertain. They are not aware that they become a target of the prospective shaman's drive wishes and self-object needs that are remobilized for "a positive analytic development."[518] However, the accepting atmosphere opens up the possibility of remobilizing and satisfying her archaic needs through an unconditional and divine respect.

The initiation ceremony creates an empathic milieu for the impoverished woman who is full of deep-seated needs of mirroring, an idealizable selfobject, and/or an alter ego. The master shaman verbalizes what the prospective shaman has experienced, which is an important aspect of empathy in the understanding phase according to Kohut. She has the opportunity to grieve over her father,[519] and participants in the ceremony takes

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[516] Ibid., 83.

[517] Ibid., 18.

[518] Ibid., 84.

[519] Grieving over the deceased during the possession ceremony also receives the recommendation of the god-mother in Lee & Kendall's film on initiation (1991). In this case, the godmother advised Chini, the

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whatever she says seriously in a supportive way. Although the interpretation of the

person's situation comes completely out of the shamanic structure, their common

experience of shin-byung and their common fate as shamans guarantees a certain depth of

understanding. The elder shamans are in tune with the needs of the prospective shaman's

release of repressed *han* and committed to the recovery of her health through an empathic

relationship.

Cure of the Self

Respect toward the gods in Korean shamanism is so extreme among shamans that

even the prospective divine carrier receives careful attention during the ceremony. Others

encourage her to demonstrate the divine authority with which she proclaims the identity

and divinations of the gods in a state of possession. Then, the new shaman begins to

speak in the third person as gods' voices and the surrounding shamans become listeners

and disciples. When the voice identifies the possessor and speaks as the subject pantheon,

shamans respond obediently to the commands that fall from the lips of the prospective

shaman.

The ultimate aim of those respectful responses is confirmation of divine

possession in the person, which is an essential quality for Korean shamans. Respect

toward the gods frequently overlaps respect toward the new shaman in the ritual.

Eventually, the new shaman comes to receive respect as a god-bearer who carries divine

messages to humans. Throughout the process, many new shamans demonstrate an

extreme elevation of self-esteem by proudly exalting themselves as the best shaman in

new shaman, to grieve over her younger sister, herself, given that the possessing spirit was her elder sister
who had committed suicide at nineteen.

the world.[520] Receiving gods through the initiation encourages them enormously with their new abilities of fortune-telling and manipulation of spirit possession. In addition, wholesale affirmation from other shamans throughout the ritual cannot be underestimated as one of the key elements contributing to the shaman's cure from psychosomatic symptoms.

According to the self-psychology, our existence should be filled with affirmation from parents or other selfobjects that we are special and unique. "All meaningful human interactions" between analyst and analysand have a breadth of applicability to varieties of situations and a depth of tangibility to archaic experiences.[521] Not only the psychoanalytic situation but also the powerful religious affirmation in the shamanic ritual may lead to healing of the person's fragmentation, which may bring about a cure through radical compensation for the self (e.g., a new divine authority and extreme attention from others in the profession).

While only the reconstruction of transference in self-psychology leads to the rediscovery of early childhood selfobject needs, the prospective shaman's archaic selfobject seems to be redisplayed towards the surrounding shamans as selfobjects. An empathic acceptance of her in the ritual enables a deeper investigation of unmet childhood needs. When the child within the prospective shaman cries over her late father (or over the dead sister as presented in the film), the shamans encourage her to continue so that she might let go of past unmet needs related to the deceased. In this respect, the

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[520] Suh, 2002.

[521] Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?*, 190-1.

initiation ceremony is not a sophisticated style of therapy, but is still a dramatic form of treatment for shin-byung.

With a sudden surge of archaic selfobject needs and radical satisfaction of these needs through an empathic shamanic attunement in the ceremony, infantile narcissistic grandiosity seems to be compensated by the extreme divine respect offered by the elder shamans. From a self-psychological perspective, an infant's mother should mirror the archaic grandiosity of the child and/or represent the ideal omnipotent caregiver. The idealization of an omnipotent mother must be revised according to the child's recognition of her actual powerlessness, which is called "optimal frustration." If this process is too traumatic for the child to tolerate, it prevents the development of transmuting internalization from the empathic selfobject,[522] which is the process in which the patient internalizes functions or structures missing from his/her development.

Primary fear of the self does not come from castration anxiety, but from "disintegration or total devaluation of the self"[523] for the purpose of maintaining self-cohesion. Without an appropriate mirroring of the child's grandiosity or exhibitionistic desire, "consolidation of self-cohesion, self-esteem, and self-confident ambition"[524] cannot be stabilized. Instead, with chronic failure in the selfobject's attunement, the

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[522] Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1971), 50.

[523] J. A. Lang, "Notes toward a Psychology of the Feminine Self," *Kohut's Legacy: Contributions to Self Psychology,* eds. Paul E. Stepansky & Arnold Goldberg (Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum, 1984), 61.

[524] Robert D. Stolorow, George E. Atwood, & Bernard Brandchaft, *Psychoanalytic Treatment : an Intersubjective Approach,* (Hillsdale, NJ. : Analytic Press, 1987), 93.

infant's sense of mastery or its narcissistic needs degenerate into self-fragmentation in which its feelings remain segregated from the experience of the self. [525]

The elder shamans' empathic attunement to the patient's infantile transference enables self-disclosure in the safe environment created by the ritual. The prospective shaman is exploring her memories of her selfobject, especially the permanent loss of her father, in the psychological process of the ritualistic interaction, whose functional purpose is to pursue shamanic possession through the ceremony. Her sense of safety in opening herself up comes largely from the striking similarity of her disease to that of the older shamans in the ritual who have been through the same shin-byung at their initiation.

Similarity between the two counterparts in psychotherapy, the analysand and the analyst, may establish a relationship of trust for a client's disclosure "when the therapist demonstrates ability for accurate attunement and responsiveness to the client."[526] Within the ceremonial circumstances, the prospective shaman shares her history with the shamans who understand based on similar experiences (e.g., shin-byung, family trauma, and economic difficulty), which Hertzberg calls "the open self."[527] As soon as an empathic relationship intersubjectively bridges the two counterparts, "even the most severe and quasi-delusional analogous worries [that] are the direct consequence of some specific, identifiable injury … disappear, often with dramatic speed."[528] Such mirror transference helps the client feel fully accepted and wholesome because of the therapist's

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[525] Hertzberg, "Feminist Psychotherapy," 283.

[526] Ibid., 289.

[527] Ibid.

[528] Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, 372.

reestablishment of empathic connection with the self via interpretation of what had led the client into disruption.

The inherent purpose of the initiation ritual is the procreation of the next generation of Korean shamans. The senior shamans try to help the new one become equipped with the same god-bearing capacity as they themselves possess. The empathic understanding is simply a means to help her overcome the god-given disease and receive the same abilities to manipulate divine powers in her state of possession. The shamans who expect and mirror the initiate's grandiose assertion repeatedly ask her to provide divinations. The elder shamans take the role of disciples when the new one claims the divine authority of the gods she just received. Whereas the ritual is all about religious divination, it also elevates the prospective shaman's grandiosity through the intensely exclusive focus.[529]

Premature responses from childhood selfobjects do not work efficiently for an integrated experience of the nuclear self.[530] As a result of unrealistic reactions by the selfobject, an accomplishment of the self becomes separate from a realistic response of the selfobject, which eventually puts the self in danger when it pursues its own performance. In the initiation ceremony, contrary to self-psychological expectation, "unmodified grandiose fantasies" may be realized in both the shaman's dreams and other hallucinatory religious experiences, which may empower the person with a sense of being special as chosen by the god(s).

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[529] Suh (2002) elaborates the exaggerated self-esteem of new shamans when they consider themselves to be the best hope to save people with their new divine power and knowledge.

[530] Kohut, *The Search for the Self,* 1978.

On the other hand, the self without an opportunity "to merge with the calmness of an omnipotent selfobject"[531] has no capacity for self-soothing that prevents the self "from being traumatized by the spreading of his emotions, especially by the spreading of anxiety."[532] In the absence of self-soothing, the selfobject brings about a world full of suspicious danger and hostility. As a result of narcissistic injury, the overburdened self may explain how the early trauma in shin-byung would produce later psychosomatic symptoms.[533] Kohut argues that these symptoms will disappear very quickly as an appropriate empathic relationship is established,[534] which may be why shin-byung sufferers, who usually lack the childhood empathic selfobject, experience healing as soon as they undergo this dramatically empathic religious ritual. The prospective shaman, who has been rejected by her mother, all her siblings, and even her husband, now comes to find "the life-affirming atmosphere"[535] of the ritual that revives her empty self.

Cure from shin-byung in this self-psychological regard certainly has to do with the establishment of compensatory structure at many levels of the prospective shaman's fragmented self. In self psychological terms, the new shaman comes to experience transmuting internalization of the new selfobjects' empathic functions through the elder shamans in the ceremony. In the satisfaction of her infantile narcissistic needs of grandiosity with empathic understanding, the self of the new shaman becomes

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[531] Ibid., 374.

[532] Ibid.

[533] Kohut, *The Search for the Self*, 374-5.

[534] Ibid.

[535] Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* 134.

dramatically rehabilitated. A new horizon of the self as a shaman with divine authority becomes apparent through the initiation ceremony.

We have not yet seen if the new shaman finds her gods as substitutive selfobjects because gods become the new lovers and protectors with whom shamans are engaged in a deep relationship, often including hallucinatory sexual acts.[536] As Kohut suggests, this phenomenon may echo his idea of the development of the compensatory twinship pole when the other poles of mirroring and idealizing selfobjects are not available. The empathic shamans surrounding the new one seem to work toward her compensatory development of another pole of the self in order to fill up its deficiency. The development of this compensatory pole of the self takes "place as a result of the repeated disillusionment with [her] mother and father in the idealizing sector, and the relentless arguments that severely inhibited the development of [her] grandiose self."[537] However, as long as scholars perceive religious experiences as a simple product of the imagination, the question whether the gods in shamanism are imaginary twins or actual beings is a complicated issue that goes beyond the scope of the current discussion.

In conclusion, a radical relief from shin-byung occurs in the initiation rituals, which is a remarkable sign of individual transformation for shamanic authority in Korean shamanism. Possession by spirits appears before and after the ceremony, firstly in a crude and pathological manner and then through the professional ability to manipulate power. Shin-byung is certainly a religious phenomenon that serves shamanic purposes by reproducing new shamans for the next generation.

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[536] Suh, vol. 1, 2002, 31, 85, 103.

[537] Crayton E. Rowe, & David S. MacIsaac, *Empathic Attunement: The "Technique" of Psychoanalytic Self Psychology* (London & Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1989), 67.

However, shin-byung also involves psychological issues in both developmental psychology and self-psychology. This represents a meaningful effort to interpret the psychological circumstances of a shaman as long as a lack of loving relationship in childhood is a typical precursor of shin-byung. In addition, a psychological explanation merits further exploration with regard to earlier exposure to shamanic rituals, which often predisposes pathological possession of shin-byung among many teenage girls and women.

Therefore, shin-byung and its cure through the ritual have two contrasted aspects that cannot be exhausted with a single-sided hermeneutics of religion or psychology. Dismissal of either the religious or the psychological perspective on shin-byung phenomena would lead us awry in terms of the complicated psychosomatic conditions and cure through religious rituals with psychological components. The peculiar cultural experience of possession should be interpreted from the shamanic point of view, in which initiates experience the symptoms and cure in accordance with supernatural intervention to commission a new shaman. It should also be examined from psychological perspectives so that common human experiences around the symptom and the cure can provide a better human understanding.

The initiation ceremony known as the ultimate cure to the medically non-treatable psychosomatic symptoms of shin-byung certainly shows complex implications for healing that attracts other disciplinary attention. Psychological theories, especially of self-psychology, reveal some matching concepts with regard to a deeper understanding of the illness and the healing process in the ritual. Mirroring is an important aspect of the ceremony that accompanies encouragement and acceptance from surrounding shamanic

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'therapists.' The merging of other shamans into an idealized figure is not certain in the ceremony, but the prospective shaman's god-mother or the master shaman may function eventually as an idealized selfobject when she, as a new shaman, becomes an apprentice. Furthermore, she enters into a new engagement and powerful union with new body-lords, that is, her possessing gods. Her relationship with an alter ego, if divine gods come into her body, seems to be functionally constructed if the possession ceremony is successful.

The initiation ceremony is, in this vein, a process for curing the fragmented self that has endured the absence of selfobjects and a series of self-consuming frustrations that often led to panic. The empathic atmosphere in the ceremony obviously helps a shin-byung sufferer mend the defects of her fragmented self. An intensive respect from the shaman who shares her professional fate seems also to create a powerful therapeutic environment. Therefore, besides the shamanic religious function of qualifying a new shaman in the ceremony, a psychological healing occurs—intentionally or as a byproduct—through the institutionalization of a meaningful and empathic relationship with both the gods and the supportive shamans. This constitutes an indispensable quality in the cure of the self.

After the probable interpretations of shin-byung and its ceremonial cure under the illumination of psychology, however, another question requiring a wider horizon of explanations still follows: why is the appearance of shin-byung gender-biased in Korean shamanism? Why are most shamans and their customers female as in many other cultures? Does the bias derive from a traditional, socio-cultural gender ideology? Then, does shamanism and its ritual healing provide a fundamental cure for the repeated cycles of women's afflictions and their religious healing? What are more appropriate theoretical

frames that touch on the issues of basic ideology that underlies women's afflictions

generation after generation? Korean shamanism offers exemplary explanations about the

possibilities and limitations of shamanic healing for spirit possession and its culture-

bound syndrome. Cultural aspects of these psychosomatic symptoms and their religious

interpretations are to be explored further in the next and final chapter.

CHAPTER VI

WOMEN'S POSSESSION AND FEMINIST PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Women's possession, usually accompanied by other psychosomatic symptoms, does not simply reside in an individual psychological sphere, although spirit possession corresponds to some modern psychological models at intra-psychic and interpersonal levels. Thus, possession requires careful scrutiny at the socio-cultural level, as well as at an individual psychological level, for a complete hermeneutics of this peculiar religious phenomenon. Possession is an extreme type of psychosomatic symptom that frequently appears in women in some cultures when they experience serious isolation from relational resources. In many cases of women's spirit possession, the culture's ideological misogyny demands attention as a dominant precursor of individual suffering due to the enforcement of underprivileged roles for women.[538] Cultural ideology about gender roles in a patriarchal society frequently leads to a patterned victimization of women while men enjoy superior status and inherited privileges, which calls for a critical evaluation of women's socio-cultural marginality as another significant cultural pathogenesis.

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[538] Michael Winkelman (*Shamanism: the neural ecology of consciousness and healing* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2000)) appropriately points out that "possession involves a wide range of psychodynamics, psychosocial conditions, and therapeutic mechanisms" based on Shekar's categorization of possession into dissociation, communication, and expectation or sociocultural explanations (C. Shekar, "Possession syndrome in India," in *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health: a Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. C. A. Ward (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989). Possession, therefore, includes both women's individual pathology in which women demonstrate individual responses to "traumatic, disturbing personal afflictions or adversities" and sociocultural communication for transformation that "affects the action of socially significant others toward the possessed person, providing personal, emotional, social, and material benefits" (Winkelman, *Shamanism*, 161). Consequently, possession brings women "a social resource for managing stress and exerting social power" (Ibid.).

Spirit possession among women, hence, is multi-lateral in its pathogenesis: it covers the spectrum between the two poles of nature and nurture for women at a certain stage of life. Before the possession and its frequently associated psychosomatic symptoms become apparent in a woman of any age, she tends to have faced a serious crisis beyond her coping capacity. The crisis varies according to the individual, but it often includes critical psychosomatic symptoms, depending on the complexity of her life context. Spirit possession affects the whole person in the forms of mental illness with physiological pain beyond the reach of medical treatment, in which only religious exorcism or shamanic rituals seem to work.

Apart from its shamanic interpretation, possession as women's peripheral pathology calls for a critical analysis of women's unique circumstances as distinct from those of men in a given socio-cultural context. Where is today's scholarship with respect to women's traditional marginality in patriarchy, which may result in possession in some cultures? What would scholars say about women's socially-imposed afflictions? As implied in the dynamics of women's possession so far, studies of women attempt to reveal specific connections between women's depressogenic contexts and ideological pathologization, whether the subject is possession as in some shamanic societies or Dissociative Identity Disorder.

In this chapter, I will analyze the experience of possession from feminist psychological and pastoral theological perspectives in order to expose socio-cultural ideological assumptions about women in those cultures already considered with regard to possession and shamanic healing. Feminist psychology will reveal the pathological nature of culture in women's possession. Feminist strategies such as analysis of political power

structures and disclosure of oppressive ideologies will provide a method for analyzing the

dilemma of possessed women who are both liberated from previous psychosomatic

symptoms and further confined within the oppressive social system.

Through a feminist pastoral understanding, careful analysis of women's

marginalization and adaptation to society through possession will take into account a

wider context, that is, "the living human web,"[539] beyond the individual psyche.

Additionally, we will investigate women's depression as a psychological and pastoral

theological problem because of its similarity with possession as partially a result of

women's marginalization. Finally, calling for prophetic resistance to patriarchy and

diversified strategies for women's liberation in a variety of distinctive cultures where

spirit possession shows that women's rights are critically compromised will lead to a

vision of fuller liberation for women.

Possession: Socio-Cultural Pathology of Women

Critique of the Freudian Understanding of Woman

Concerned with women's pathology related to socio-cultural factors, feminist

scholars criticize traditional psychological trends created by male authorities and rebuild

feminist psychology from women's perspectives. Karen Horney, who was analyzed by

Freud himself, penetratingly points out that his psychoanalysis consistently maintains a

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[539] Improved further from Anton Boisen's "living human documents," "the living human web," which Bonnie Miller-McLemore develops as a new pastoral theological paradigm, covers the pastoral theological subjects for more appropriate "investigation, interpretation, and transformation." Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "The Living Human Web," in *Through the Eyes of Women: the Handbook of Womencare*, ed. Jeanne Stevenson Moessner (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 16. See also Miller-McLemore, "The Human Web: Reflections of the State of Pastoral Theology," *The Christian Century* 110, April 7, 1993, 366-9.

male-centered cultural perspective due to its origin as a male psychology. She claims that Freud ends up with false generalizations in his theories because of his disregard for cultural elements in psychology. From her clinical observations of women and her rigorous testing of the hypotheses therefrom, conforming to the Freudian method of science, Horney includes the issue of cultural impact upon women's psychology.[540] Women's neurosis from her budding feminist perspective is "made up of feelings of helplessness and isolation in a world considered to be potentially hostile."[541] She denies the possibility of finding one master prototype in infancy that develops into later psychopathological symptoms because "the psychological factors" must accompany "historical and social ones" in order to make a complete sense.[542]

Horney explores the depths of human psychology creatively in reaction to a "pride system" in society that works against a "true self" in contrast to a "public self." She believes that moral pretenses hamper real human growth by suggesting life as an "ideal" self instead of a "real" self, which produces neurosis over time. The tyrannical demands of morality threaten growing children and lead them to stray from their real moral issues at the unconscious level in favor of relief from social anxiety. Although her arguments continue to interact with Freudian theories,[543] which may have restricted a deeper sociological exploration in her psychology, she does not ignore "cultural

[540] In her earlier writing, "The Denial of the Vagina," Horney began to develop a theme of cultural influence upon both men and women. This became a theme of her later volume, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York, W. W. Norton & company, Inc., 1937).

[541] Harold Kelman, "Introduction," in Karen Horney, *Feminine Psychology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967), 31.

[542] Horney, *Feminine Psychology*, 95.

[543] Horney finds Freud as providing foundational ground to her as well as to psychoanalysis, in which she distinguishes herself from Adler's interpretation. See Horney, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc. 1937), ix-x.

restrictions" surrounding women's physiological growth and psychological transitions in order to help alleviate women's suffering in society.[544]

On the other hand, Carol Gilligan, who has largely contributed to building feminist perspectives in education psychology nearly three or four decades later than Horney's psychoanalytic theorization, emphasizes the difference between girls and boys, women and men, in an enormous effort to straighten out distorted descriptions of women's psychology stemming from Freud. Drawing on Horney and Nancy Chodorow, she defines femininity through attachment: a girl's identity comes from attachment to another's needs and feelings. Empathy, therefore, is a major characteristic of girls and separation threatens their self-definition. Without considering women's distinctive psychological features, male psychologists tend to adopt a narrow vision of women that does not include the importance of intimacy, relationships, and care from early in life.

Critiquing psychoanalytic thinking in the West, Miriam Greenspan who experientially envisions a feminist therapy points out the limitations of Freud's historical and social understanding of human nature.[545] Freud attributes psychological struggles to unconscious conflicts within a person or at large in a family, but his definition of family remains isolated from socio-cultural contexts, which Greenspan calls "ahistorical." The limited scope of personality in Freud neglects the contextual elements of "sex, race, and

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[544] Horney claims that a person with neurosis usually suffers unaware as compared to typical people in a culture. The person has to pay additional costs due to an unobservable impairment of defenses or capacities for enjoyment. He or she cannot make use of all the opportunities given in a culture: his or her self stands in the way as an inhibition. Horney approves the definition of neurosis when "it deviates from the pattern common to the particular culture." Ibid., 26-27, 29.

[545] Quoting from Jean Baker Miller, Greenspan describes the Freudian concept of ego as distinguished from women's "other-directed selfhood." Relation to others, which Miller calls "affiliation," is distinctively crucial to women because affiliation underlies the structure of female identity. Many cultures nurture girls in order to keep a "subservient affiliation" in which they learn contempt for themselves by denouncing their sacrificial homemaking maternal strengths. See Miriam Greenspan, *A New Approach to Women and Therapy* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1983), 219-226.

class,"[546] and therefore cannot portray women's circumstances in a full sense. Without consideration of the psychosocial impact upon women's self-image, as Greenspan insists, they may appropriate socially formed misogyny against themselves as their own. Women's "self-condemnation" is, therefore, a socially imposed self-image in which they attribute their struggles to their emotional tendencies rather than to socio-ideological forces. In the process, they internalize what the society defines about them as their own in a self-pathologizing way.

Possession, Depression, and Women's Socio-Cultural Afflictions

Women's psychosomatic symptoms cross-culturally appear especially when they live under a male-dominated social order. Possession is an extreme mode of these symptoms when women have exhausted their coping resources. The rise of women's spirit possession with psychosomatic diseases in many cultures corresponds to depression in their western counterparts. Depression is also suffered more frequently by women than men. The illness often becomes critical when they find no outlet for the paradox: their female comrades, including women in the same family, may also conform to social norms rather than to the needs of marginalized women concerned with certain stigma-bearing events. Western psychological studies recognize attachment as an important factor in depression; childhood abuse becomes a forerunner of Dissociative Identity Disorder. These clinical observations contribute to the discovery of latent links between the separate spheres of human experience, former abuse and later pathology. However,

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[546] Ibid. 10.

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those findings do not completely explain the unquantifiable influence of socio-cultural factors on a person's gender-biased afflictions.

The previous chapter has illuminated women's socio-cultural difficulties such as abuse, oppression, neglect, or enforced silence about their sacrificial life through the windows of Korean shamanism. Shin-byung generally follows from women's stressful relationships woven by monopolies of patriarchal power. Shamanism interprets the illness as having no other reasons but a special divine message for the commissioning of a new shaman. However, the illness clearly has both personal and cultural precursors in its background. Culture itself may not be a direct pathogenesis of the culture-bound syndrome, but cultural values that confine women who have a fundamental orientation of collective interpersonal relationship may nourish a flowerbed of pathology in which the psychosomatic illness of victimized women may flourish.

Horney goes beyond Freudian psychopathology and characterized neurosis by a disturbed instinctual drive. She offers a new horizon for the pathology of neurosis by including socio-cultural factors in the illness such as troubled social relationships and/or social competitiveness in the West, in addition to the traditional association with childhood psychosexual trauma.[547] Anxiety that results from compelling social forces stirs up improper neurotic defenses in a person (e.g., unhealthy cravings for power and eminence). Her definition widens the dimensions of a psychoanalytic understanding of

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[547] Eric Erikson also includes "psychosocial" elements in psychoanalysis and human development, but his positivistic claim that his life cycle theory applies "to all cultures at all times" does not adequately include women's disadvantaged contexts because of his Freudian oedipal interpretation of women's growth. For him, society requires a developing individual to adapt, but he perpetuates his predecessor Freud's gender insensitivity by regarding cultural influences upon individuals as static, not dynamically changing. Nonetheless, Eriksonl rightly points out that adolescence involves fears related to interpersonal involvements and "harbors some sensitive sense of existence as well as a sometimes passionate interest in ideological values of all kinds—religious, political, [and] intellectual." Eric Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed* (New York: Norton, 1982), 73.

human beings, especially women. For Horney, psychology is holistic rather than mechanistic and should include a person's interactions with socio-cultural environments. Then, she opens up a new possibility of developing a comparative pathology of neurosis in psychoanalysis based on anthropological findings related to particular cultures which leads her to renounce universal claims.

On the other hand, Greenspan asks a fundamental question about the treatment of women both in the mental health system and in society. Women find themselves trapped in a therapeutic system that trivializes women's multiple and distinctive priorities while male professionals define "the problem" of women from their own male-centered perspective. In this system of gender insensitivity, "women are simply born patients."[548] In Greenspan's argument, the problem is not so much women's mental illness as "the socially produced symptoms of sexual inequality."[549] The problem does not reside in a woman with an illness, but in the way the mental health system[550] and society define and treat her.

With regard to women's depression, Greenspan calls for a proper understanding of the anti-feminine culture surrounding women. Women's depression is none other than "a survival strategy" that women take in a social environment that undervalues women's importance. She identifies one cause of women's depression as "an abiding, unconscious

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[548] Greenspan, *Women and Therapy*, 10.

[549] Ibid., 7.

[550] With regard to psychology as a department of the social sciences, Greenspan criticizes its failure in the socio-scientific goal that encompasses the provision of complete observation and interpretation of an individual and his or her environmental surroundings. See Ibid., 11.

rage at our own oppression which has found no legitimate outlet."[551] This is reminiscent

of Lewis's explanation of peripheral possession as women's survival strategy in some

African cultures. Women tend to experience depression in an attempt to adapt to the

restricted resources that come from simply living in an antagonistic society. Greenspan

continues to say that

> [i]nternalization of oppression is the crux of women's depression and self-
> hate. It is as though every impulse of a depressed woman's consciousness
> is finely tuned to a view of herself that is in accord with that of the
> dominant culture's view of women as inferior. [552]

Women learn to hate even themselves in the misogynic atmosphere of society.

The vicious cycle of self-hate and psychosomatic depression among women will continue

to be activated responsively unless social ideologies are adequately monitored and

transformed. The definition of women's roles in a male-dominant culture confines

women's self-image, which helps distort women's self-value in comparison to the higher

social status of men in general.

On the other hand, Christie Neuger gives us somewhat direct indications about the

preponderance of women's possession in patriarchal societies from a feminist pastoral

theological perspective by analyzing cultural and environmental stressors on them.

Psychoanalytic diagnosis of women's depression does not satisfy her fundamental queries

on essential connections between women's depression and surrounding socio-cultural

pathogeneses. If women's spirit possession does not simply reflect individual

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[551] Ibid., 300. Especially in women, isolation from relationship is equal to loss of self because women's relatedness itself vital, though often unrecognized to their self-definition. Greenspan pays attention to women's priceless "life-giving functions" that must be properly recognized by all participants, that is, "as nurturers, sexual servers, homemakers, childbearers, and child rearers (228)," which people, especially men, take often for granted without appreciation.

[552] Ibid., 303.

psychological struggles, it may indicate more depressogenic elements under the surface in surrounding contexts, including socio-cultural misogyny and even more so a religious gender bias. Most oppressed women in certain contexts (e.g., housewives in Africa or young girls in India) are vulnerable to depression and further marginalization without proper resources for recovery. In the extreme of women's depression, spirit possession is another option in those cultures, if available, when they feel that all other opportunities are closed to them.

Depression that affects "the deepest psychological, social, and spiritual levels"[553] in life is one of the most common reasons behind people's seeking pastoral counseling in the United States. Such "a seriously debilitating psychospiritual condition"[554] preys on "women with few options for building self-esteem and a sense of competency."[555] Especially for women, living in a patriarchal society is a seriously harmful problem, which makes them susceptible to illness. Neuger appropriately points out that Freud missed the link "between society's pressured definition of the 'good' woman and her vulnerability to depression."[556] The cultural and environmental pathogenesis of women's depression coincides with peripheral possession among women in other cultures that exhibit confined gender roles and ideals of femininity.

Depression has many causal interpretations (e.g., cognitive-behavioral, biochemical, family system, and human potential thought). However, taking into account

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[553] Christie Neuger, "Women's Depression: Lives at Risk," in eds. Maxine Glaz & Stevenson Moessner, J., *Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 147.

[554] Ibid.

[555] Ibid., 148.

[556] Ibid.

socio-cultural influences that limit women's self-esteem is necessary for accomplishing women's wholeness in healing and rebuilding. Depression is a desperate reaction on the part of oppressed women against an anti-feminine culture desiring a minimal adaptation. Without a fundamental cooperative effort between men and women "to change the injustices of patriarchy"[557] a cure for depression can happen only at the surface level, just as in the case of possession and its cure.

Neuger interprets women's depression as a result of debilitating socio-cultural forces in the United States. Depending on the culture, however, women are vulnerable to depression, scapegoating, and eventually to spirit possession in different stages, and they struggle with traditional duties and judgments more than any other groups of women even in the same society. At the moment of severe possessive attack after a period of intolerable depression, they usually become isolated from their female comrades. Women's learned self-hatred involves both conscious and unconscious processes in the victimization of a woman separated from her social connections.[558] In depression or possession and its psychosomatic symptoms, whatever the society recognizes as a woman's extreme trauma, she apparently pushes herself to the extreme in order to gain any resources leftover. Possession is, in this respect, an instrumental social language that communicates an isolated woman's extreme devastation.

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[557] Ibid., 151.

[558] Carol Gilligan finds aggression among women as "a signal of a fracture of connection, [and] the sign of a failure of relationship" rather than a disruptive behavior to be controlled. Women's depression comes in a context similar to that of aggression, considering depression concerns relational problems. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 43.

Ideological Misogyny as the Psychosomatic Pathogenesis

Social ideology backed by political justification often defines and designates the nature of women's relationships with men. A culture's gender ideology may be defined as a structure of thought that "legitimizes sex roles and customary behavior of the sexes, and the deployment of gender categories as metaphors in the production of the conceptions of an enduring, eternal social order."[559] Ideology has to do with a particular era's political scheme for the purpose of controlling aspects related to a weaker group of people, including female sexuality.

Many societies have traditionally designated women's relationship to men, as well as their moral duties in an unprivileged manner. The ideological definitions of women's status, rights, and duties have specifically delineated how much women should be submissive to men in authority over them and how much they must surrender control over their own lives. Ideology of gender tends to impose value differences upon biological variations by labeling one as prestigious and the other as subordinate and/or trifling. Distinctions beyond biological differences between men and women have become culturally solidified in many societies as a way of controlling women and legitimizing an oppressive ideology.[560]

In the process of exacting new ideological rules, women frequently internalize the political ideology. A traditional society's ideological misogyny eventually becomes internalized among women themselves, which leads stronger women themselves to

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[559] Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Female Power and Male Dominance: On the Origins of Sexual Inequality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 6, quoted in Sered, *Women of the Sacred Groves*, 8.

[560] As Francis Mascia-Lees and N. B. Black argue, many Western societies made use of "supposed natural differences between the sexes…historically" in order to "rationalize and further systems of oppression and even to determine social policy." Francis Mascia-Lees and Nancy J. B. Black, *Gender and Anthropology* (Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press, Inc., 2000), 3.

exercise control over weaker women according to social expectations.[561] For example, women themselves frequently sustained the ideological preference for a son in Confucian patriarchy.[562] In the hostile environment of a woman's family-in-law, a "son was her savior and the only channel through which she was able to secure a stable position."[563] A little boy's penis became an object of family members' praise as "cute" or "pretty" although these English words are more commonly associated with girls, which simultaneously credited the mother. A mother's special affection toward her son "was not simply [from] a natural or instinctual motherly love but an intentional and instrumental one"[564] for her future compensation in which she would in turn become another dominating mother-in-law over a bride. Frequently, newly married women received blame for family struggles. Any unexpected disaster would result in serious scapegoating among the extended patrilineal family and the village.[565] In this context, a strong connection seems to exist between depression or spirit possession and women's struggles with an ideological definition of gender roles internalized frequently within themselves.

A persistent common factor between witch-hunt and shamanism is a collective ideology of misogyny among men and women. Women's desire for compensatory gifts from their husbands in Wataita possession, for example, often appears as greedy

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[561] Dong-won Lee, "The Change of Korean Family and Woman," *Womanology* (Seoul, Korea: Ewha Women's University Press, 1985), 376-401.

[562] H. J. Cho, "Continuity and Change in Korean Women's Lives," *The Study of Asian Women*, Vol. 20. 1981.

[563] Ibid., 96.

[564] Ibid., 97.

[565] Family-in-laws would often claim that "luck's gone because she had run in the front." If a woman's husband or other family members died after her marriage, for whatever reason, she was to blame as "a bitch that swallowed him (or others)." See Cho, 1981.

cravings. Possession and its concurrent symptoms deepen the hatred of women under a suspicion of deceit and manipulation for personal benefit on a woman's part. Women in possession and psychosomatic symptoms are allegedly the victims to their own fault so that the society shows minimum sympathy.

In addition, patriarchal powers impose socio-cultural sanctions on women's wealth in societies that ascribe to women a "lack of head" when it comes to wealth management. Such a society deems women's emotional assets as a fundamental disability in handling financial matters. They lose social privileges because of the belief that they are under the sway of whimsical urges of emotions. The phenomenon of spirit possession implies that women's existence itself is pathological and that women's rights must be constantly compromised by the social customs. However, the social system as a whole faces no further demands from the possessed women except the husbands' minimal obligations to provide some gifts for them.

When possession involves blame for a girl's sexual activities in Asian countries, she must carry the burden of socio-culturally ideologized shame related to sexual practice. Through exactly the same practice, however, her male counterpart experiences release from his instinctive desire and shameful responsibilities at the cost of her sacrifice. Once a violation has taken place, the girl involved must carry all the shame of her family as a scapegoat. The girl's right to live can be handed over to the leader of the family, usually her father, because her nonconforming act imposes a heavy blame on the whole family. As a result, any violent reaction against the deviant girl by her family incurs no criminal charge regardless of its severity.

Scholars such as Gilligan pay close attention to the voices of young adolescent girls in the United States. They observe that "too often girls are talked about and talked at, but rarely are they spoken to or listened to."[566] Without anyone who will listen, "acknowledging vulnerability to self and others may well pose too great a risk."[567] Disconnection of relationship is a common characteristic of adolescent girls; in order to protect themselves, they strategize how to remove themselves from relationship or from the bonds of trust. They often develop more valuable relationships with friends or other women when they withdraw from their mothers.[568] Approaching adolescence, many girls are fighting against disconnection from significant people in their lives. Disconnection is a relational impasse and fear accompanies a psychological response to the crisis.[569] Girls' confusion and defensiveness may grow in proportion to the increase of relational disruptions. An incisive disconnection from themselves or others may occur in the form of dissociation when they acknowledge the difference between what they experience and what others expect of them:

> separating themselves or their psyches from their bodies so as not to know what they were feeling, dissociating their voice from their feelings and thoughts so that others would not know what they were experiencing, taking themselves out of relationship so that they could better approximate what others want and desire, or look more like some ideal image of what a woman or what a person would be.[570]

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[566] Jill Taylor, Carol Gilligan, and Amy Sullivan, *Between Voice and Silence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 191.

[567] Ibid., 172.

[568] "Along with other losses of relationship and signs of psychological or academic distress, the disappearance of these women from girls' lives is additional cause for concern." Ibid., 147.

[569] Lyn M. Brown and Carol Gilligan, *Meeting at the Crossroads : Women's Psychology and Girls' Development* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1992), 7. As opposed to men's moral development that pursues separation through achievement, according to Gilligan, women grow toward interdependence through attachments, revolving around relationships.

[570] Ibid., 217-18.

What girls in the eighth and ninth grades in the United States mostly search for is relationship and attention.[571] In the presence of disconnection or in the absence of relationship, however, the girls are bound to experience limitations on their social, emotional, and intellectual development. Since "girls' voices are cut off and their visions of life are undervalued or disregarded by adults, many girls retreat to places unseen by others. They seem to begin to live significant portions of their lives 'underground.'"[572] Adolescence for girls is not only the time to "search for meaning and order in the universe," but also "the time of religious crisis and of exploring universal questions."[573] A marked increase in their physical, psychological, and social risk may endanger their spirituality.

Gilligan's notion of girls' powerlessness may explain their tendency to turn toward cultic or other religious practices for compensatory empowerment in other cultural contexts. In a sense, their search for magical power through shamanic rituals or cultic experiments may reflect their sense of powerlessness in girls' socio-cultural experience. Furthermore, Gilligan's understanding of girls' relational disconnection in a male-dominated culture may explain, to a considerable extent, why they are vulnerable to secret cultic practices in modern societies and shamanic possession in many other cultures. Considering that "[w]omen's psychological development within patriarchal

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[571] Taylor et al., *Between Voice and Silence*, 154.

[572] Carol Gilligan, "Teaching Shakespeare's Sister: Notes from the Underground Female Adolescence," in *Making Connections: The Relational Worlds of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*, eds. Carol Gilligan, Nona Lyons, and Trudy Hanmer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1990), 6-27.

[573] Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (New York: A Grosset/Putnam Book, 1994), 71.

societies and male-voiced cultures is inherently traumatic,"[574] women's (or girls')

proclivity toward possession in such societies becomes a viable option for the victimized.

Vision of Liberation from the Demonic

Possession and Shamanism: Promises and Limitations

In the process of women's healing from spirit possession, material compensation

by their male counterparts must take place as an important 'medicine' in Africa. The

compensation is more about simple appreciation and recognition of women's diseases by

those who have oppressed them in accordance with the social definition of gender than

about satisfaction of women's material desire for valuable goods. What women need at

this level seems to be equal respect and a rightful share of resources and power regarding

important life decisions. In light of the neglect of their basic needs and their diminished

resources, they tend to develop an extreme mode of psychological and physical

symptoms.

Possession and its symptoms invoke a fear-inducing threat against current

oppressors, mostly men, who nevertheless easily ignore them. The Yugoslavian women

suffer demonic diseases after abrupt familial and social changes. The outbreak of the

illness is a sign of additional spiritual burdens that require yielding control of their own

environments back to the men who return to the family and the village. Possession and

the demonic illness signal that the women are essentially destitute and lack appropriate

respect from men, as well as acceptable outlets to express their free will. In the village,

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[574] Brown et al., 216.

the symptoms demonstrated no improvement within the research period between 1989

through 1991 presumably due to the failure of the returning men to respond properly and

of the priests to provide appropriate spiritual care. Without appropriate care, attention,

and compensation that women in Yugoslavia deserve to receive, the report of similar

symptoms among women in many cultures may continue to increase.

To encourage adaptation on the part of exploited women to family and society,

cultures have developed some ventilating outlets that do not endanger their consistent

control under a wider ideological system. Shamanism ingeniously offers a soothing

system for marginalized women who experience a socially imposed illness. As a creative

institution, shamanism can mediate satisfaction of both needs: it cures the afflicted

women, although to a limited extent, while sustaining social hierarchy by lessening the

tension incurred by the socially powerful, mostly men or higher caste women. However,

achieving healing through an initiation ceremony inflicts another sacrifice on the women:

the ceremony claims their typical relational life resources because of the stigma[575] that

shamans carry in many societies, including Hausa and Korea.

Korean shamanism, with spirit possession as an essential constituent, functions

traditionally as a religion for women, while their male counterparts worship family

ancestral gods in the Confucian tradition.[576] Because of the political persecution against

the shamanism and Buddhism in the last dynasty, shamanism lost its previously long-held

positions in Korean society and religion. However, among women and lower class non-

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[575] In Korea, it is an unbearable curse to hear that 'May a shaman come from your family'.

[576] Confucianism, the official religion of Korea during the Chosun Dynasty (1392-1910), has thoroughly permeated the people's way of life even until today.

literati, shamanism became more prosperous in this era.[577] Male-oriented socio-political circumstances paradoxically contributed to the development of a more feminine and enigmatic shamanism. In the clear dichotomy between men's official family and state positions and women's limited roles within family affairs, Korean shamanism thrived by satisfying the private needs of women. Shamanic interventions explicitly dealt with women's concerns such as family health, prosperity, women's depression, anxiety, and other miscellaneous familial issues.

As more than an alternative religion in Confucian society, shamanism afforded therapeutic implications for individuals, families, and communities. Its therapeutic functions seem to have consisted mostly of relief for women from their ordinary experiences of oppression. Collective tensions between the sexes under the bastion of patriarchy in ancient Korea resonates with Lewis's suggestion[578] that religious experiences, including spirit possession in shamanism, are primarily indications of disheartened women's "deprivation and frustration."[579] When social tyranny escalated, women would depend on shamanism either by consulting shamans who were willing to

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[577] In the early twentieth century, American anthropologist Homer B. Hulbert (1906) analyzes Confucianism as "the political morality" for jurisprudence without god. See Homer B. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (Doubleday, NY: Page and Company, 1906). Akiba Takasi, the author of *Ethonographic Study of Chosun Shamanism* (trans. K. S. Choi (Daeku, Korea: Kyemyung University Press, 1950)) and Japanese colonial scholar of Korean shamanism, also points out that Confucianism lacks elements crucial to religious system and "could not satisfy religious desires of women and lower classes" (62). Confucianism as the dominant political ideology for the last six hundred years does not provide an appropriate religious environment due to its fundamental limitations as a religious alternative to traditional shamanism and Buddhism.

[578] Lewis, 1966; 1971.

[579] Lewis 1971, 318.

pay attention to their personal suffering or by undergoing possession that required

shamanic healing rituals.[580]

Possession and its healing do not always lead to the practice of shamanism. Many

cultures do not have shamanic healing systems for deprived and possessed women. Once

shamanism becomes involved, however, a woman's peripheral possession qualifies her

for shamanic ordination. After receiving healing for her early stages of possession, the

shaman is able to master skills for her new profession. A new life as shaman begins with

a cure from psychosomatic symptoms by attaining an interaction with a god (or gods).

This both liberates and restrains her social life: she comes to gain authority through

divine healing, whereas she receives disgrace from her family and society simply by

becoming a shaman. In many cultures, a shaman is an object of simultaneous fear and

hate, considering her interactions with divine beings.

Witch-hunt contributes to mass relief during a time of social tension through

scapegoating certain groups of isolated people, mostly women, in avoidance of

encounters with conflicting inner and social realities. Shamanism also avoids the reality

of socio-cultural gender discrimination by utilizing sublimation of affliction as a divine

instrument for shamanic calling. The practice reduces the problems in women's reality to

religious tribulations that can be fixed only in a shamanic way. Scapegoating and

sublimation as important strategies often help people handle social dilemmas efficiently

without requiring transformation of a culture's ancient patriarchal regime. A struggling

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[580] As Kendall (1985) understands, Korean shamanism cannot be simply marginal or subordinate to the traditional trend of male culture. Instead shamanism is a unique cultural product that belongs specifically to any other but women themselves as "complementary" to the male-oriented Confucian social order (25). Nevertheless, shamanism has founded itself isolated from access to official power and most shamans have experienced marginalization in the family and/or society. See also Sung N. Kim, "Historical Study of Korean Shamanism," *Korean Religious Studies* (Seoul, Korea: Sogang University Religious Department, 1997), 166.

woman under possession could have become a scapegoated witch in one time and place, while she would become a shaman or a medically treatable victim of depression in another. By keeping the focus on the troubled individual, the society faces no serious challenge with regard to the socially sanctioned religious functions of shamanism.

In this respect, shamanism and systemic patriarchy have co-existed to their mutual benefits. Possession often indicates rebellion against the social order that oppresses women and other marginalized people, but it does not fundamentally affect any particular patriarchal order. As long as shamanism softens the blows of individual rebellion, the patriarchy easily maintains its ideological status quo. Korean shamans often encourage female customers to obey their husbands or parents-in-law no matter how much their oppressiveness has contributed to the onset of possession by depriving women of life resources. Thus, both shamanism and patriarchy have contributed to the balance of power in face of an unstable societal structure.

When a woman's possessing spirit(or spirits) corresponds to a particular shamanic pantheon, the possession carries a significant implication for others of the same culture. If they believe the spirit to be the soul of a familiar person who has died, then the experience inscribes the image of the deceased within the mind of the possessed person. In many cases, spirit possession signals individual and social deprivation or oppression that requires expression and response. The underlying purpose of possession is communication to others in the community about extreme deprivation of attachment, loss of relational resources, lack of personal safety, or limited promise for the future facing marginalized members of the society.

From a psychological perspective, spirit possession seems reducible to the intra-psychic neurosis of women's masochistic attributes or interpersonal trauma. However, possession and its symptoms reflect both intra-psychic aspects and interpersonal exploitation. Possession is also a response to the ideological designation of gender roles and power status. If interpersonal violence is culturally available to men, women's safety becomes seriously compromised. Possession in this circumstance is a last resort for women who cannot handle the formidable misogynic realities that affect their lives. When women's madness accompanies spirit possession, however, society blames them for the frailty of their personality rather than acknowledging the driving forces of patriarchy that create unhealthy cultural environments for women.

The patriarchal stigma associated with women's possession comes from both men and higher class women who tend to add to weaker women's victimization through censorship and scapegoating. They often have double standards with a split consciousness about women: one is a generous rule for advantaged women who are like their male counterparts, and the other is for the marginalized who receive strict judgment from men. Regardless of whether they obtain or inherit the position, these women internalize the values of patriarchy for survival. They attempt to rescue themselves from gender discrimination through legitimate adaptation to the system (e.g., bearing a son, lifelong chastity in widowhood, or unconditional subjugation to the patriarchal order).

Possession in this vein may not be the best answer for women experiencing deprivation. Instead, possession tends to ambush women at the end of their afflictions by creating additionally unfavorable living environments. Women are commonly reluctant to be possessed, but they give in to it as a last resort. In this respect, possession is an

instrument for interpreting socio-cultural experiences of some women. The phenomenon reflects an individual woman's desperate attempt to cope with her difficult circumstances. More than an individual madness or dissociated personality, possession signifies cultural realities. Seen from a socio-cultural perspective, possession is a functional signal for ideological oppression of marginalized women in a particular society. Possession seems to be an easy option for women's undiagnosable symptoms caused by individual trauma in the context of far-reaching socio-cultural ideologies. After suffering for a long time, women find explanations in possession and traditional demonology without a clear medical categorization. Accepted as a demonic or divine outbreak, it actually reflects struggles underlying the social surface. The phenomenon signals the multi-layered nature of a person's predicaments.

The extreme perplexity of women's possession comes mainly from clashes between cultural ideological burdens embodied in the individual's unconsciousness and limitations of resources related to gender roles as women. The ideological expectations of women continue to limit resources and exhaust possibilities. They often cannot articulate problems clearly because pathological patriarchal expectations of women have historically adapted themselves to women's unconscious self-ideal. Without discerning the ideological control, women in distress tend to depend solely on shamanic or demonic interpretations of their pathological symptoms, which allow them to find a distorted meaning about the critical traumas. Therefore, shamanic hermeneutics of women's dilemmas in some cultures may not be identical to what they really experience at the core of their unconsciousness.

Shamanism has remained a popular religion[581] in the Korean Peninsula regardless of the enforced state policy against it. Shamanism is especially popular among women at the outside edge of society, and it has included female aspects from its foundation. Many legendary myths confirm that women of high social caste started shamanic practice in ancient times.[582] One of the symbolic legends is the story of Princess *Bari*, literally, the Forsaken Princess. According to the tradition, her patriarchal royal family deserted her just because she was born a girl when they were expecting a son to inherit the kingdom. In spite of their ill treatment, however, she sacrificed herself to save her royal parents. Later she became the first priestess who guided people to the world of the dead.

This simple narrative explains how shamanism has identified itself with women's oppressed perspectives in their marginalization from ancient society. Shamanism has represented women's concerns and helped them regain a certain degree of control over their life. Women are typically in charge of the whole process in shamanic rituals, and a female client often represents her "parents-in-law, husband, children"[583] when the family is still under a man's control. They take shamanic actions for protection of the entire household from any disease or bad luck.

Men have little to no role in *gut*, the shamanic ritual; often they are simple observers. While men in ancestral worship revere only their father's side, women in shamanic *gut* also include ancestors from their original family in addition to the former.

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[581] Small villages used to have shamanic symbols called *Jang-sung*, devil-guardians, at their entrance. Two high poles carved with shamanic generals to protect the village were a common phenomenon in traditional society.

[582] Akiba, 1951, 16, 43.

[583] Jin-Myeong Kim, "A Study of the Ideology of Sexual Discrimination Reflected on the Women's Religious Ritual: A Case Study of Korean Ritual," *The Study of Asian Women*, Vol. 27 (1988), 199.

They specifically "take care of their concerns about the family of origin from which their official relationship has been terminated since marriage."[584] Shamanic rituals defend the significance of bilateral families in a way that Confucian ancestral worship does not. Women's needs in patriarchy find a considerable satisfaction through shamanic engagement with the socially denied areas of life.

Therefore, women's silent resistance against formidable ideological forces is, in fact, another important function of Korean shamanism. Shamanism frequently demonstrates its resistance against patriarchal ideologies through its rituals.[585] By remembering victims sacrificed by a vindictive social system, shamanic rituals conteract the oppression of women. Songs in memory of sacrificed and forgotten people constitute an indirect but clear protest against the intentional amnesia practiced by the ruling social power.[586]

> Remembering a hidden history by creating images, materializing, talking, and singing about it is a part of resistance against the oppressive predominant society that tends to forget and lose memories.[587]

Women experience dramatic catharses when they join in rituals performed by female shamans. As an exclusive arena for women, these rituals provide a "cathartic sense of liberation from the oppressive patriarchy."[588] Participation in the rituals

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[584] Ibid., 200.

[585] Ibid.

[586] Cf. Michael T. Taussig, *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

[587] Kim, 201.

[588] Akiba (1950), quoted in J. M. Kim, "Space, Body, and Sexuality," *Korean Anthropology*, Vol. 29-2 (1996), 131.

guarantees a safe moment for women who are temporarily liberated from the oppression of onerous gender duties.

Nevertheless, shamanism often functions to reinforce patriarchal ideologies upon women. In one illustrative case,[589] a shaman rebukes a victimized woman who has suffered from severe hallucinations about her late mother-in-law after enduring traumatic abuse at the hands of her husband. The diagnosis identifies the hallucinations as a punishment for the woman's disobedience to her husband, without regard for her unspeakable sufferings. The shaman simply advises her to adapt to the traditional value of obedience in the family hierarchy while her husband remains cruel and irresponsible.[590]

Shamanism involves a creative mechanism for satisfying women's needs and soothing their sufferings under the misogynic culture. It certainly offers therapeutic compensation through its women-centered religious practices. Under violent male dominance, women have ingeniously found their own asylum in the shamanic faith in spite of the limitations on other resources and access to social power. Nevertheless, a female shaman must risk social isolation, contempt, disrespect, and fear. Although she is a master of shamanic possession and other curative skills, she may not approach the invincible power of socio-cultural patriarchy through her vocation. Her escape to a divine calling through possessive afflictions demonstrates her limitations with regard to the structural evil of socio-cultural misogyny. She has the authority to intervene in the private

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[589] B. Y. Rhi, C.K. Lee, and H. I. Chang, "Mental Disorders Associated with Folk Religion," *The Journal of the Korean Association of Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 3 (1970), 5-32.

[590] Another 'disobedient' woman who consulted a shaman received advice to become a Buddhist nun or a shaman who could support herself (Cho, 1981, 87). When the woman was not able to conform herself to the male-centered system by becoming unconditionally obedient, the shaman showed her some socially sanctioned ways of living.

concerns of female clients, but she seldom offers a critical analysis for active resistance against the cultural system that drives women into pathology. Through the initiation ritual she transcends her afflictions. The ritual also shifts demonic possession to another phase of shamanic ability. However, the demonic evil in society successfully hides its core problems behind individual sets of afflictions and institutional transcendence in Korean shamanism.

The brilliance of shamanism allows the transcendence to function, albeit in a limited way, as an active liberator of women from an oppressive culture. If one ideal of shamanism is harmony between the living and the dead,[591] the accomplishment of this ideal comes through women's further sacrifice as an adjustment to unyielding power structures in a male-centered family or state. While shamanism is favorable to women by affording a certain degree of security from social dangers, it ironically contributes to, or at least fails to oppose the status quo of women's isolation from social power.

A biased religious system may create perpetual depression among the disempowered by valuing one gender at the cost of the other. As long as "religion… perpetuates low self-esteem in women,"[592] even a female-oriented shamanism ultimately contributes to the continued victimization of women by excusing perpetrators and existing social structures. When possession follows women's victimization, shamanism ignores and even dismisses the practical causes of individual depression and socio-cultural oppression of women. Divine illness is a sweeping rubric for women's affliction

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[591] Heung-Yoon Cho, *Shamanism: the History and Phenomena of Korean Shamanism* (Seoul: Minjoksa, 1997).

[592] Christie C. Neuger, "Women's Depression: Lives at Risk," in *Women in Travail and Transition: a New Pastoral Care*, eds. Maxine Glaz and Jeanne Stevenson Moessner (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 153.

at all levels and turns attention back to shamanic interpretations of psychosomatic disease as a sign of the person's religious duties.

Shamanism becomes a mechanism for scapegoating, catharsis, or attribution of current disasters to otherworldly causes, which works simultaneously for better and worse. On the positive side, shamanism provides an afflicted woman with a smooth transition toward significant religious resources such as the sublimation of afflictions for a divine cause or compensation with self-respect through the shamanic community. Communal support and emotional expression through the initiation ceremony forms a healing context. On the negative side, however, shamanism demonstrates critically limited capacity to speak out for justice under the domination of male social power. Without the consistent development of religious ethics beyond individual practice, shamanism limits its focus to individuals and minor healings that do not challenge the system. In shamanism, women are still objects under men's power and carry the guilt of their weaknesses and self-ascribed victimization.

Vision of Women in Feminist Pastoral Theology

A cure for possession is viable in shamanism or other social institutions because possession does not simply belong to medical nosology: rather, its psychological and socio-cultural characteristics are more fundamental than its medical ones. Possession and its attending illness can be cured through certain conditional satisfaction in relational or psychological compensation, which basically differentiates it from other chronic mental illnesses. Satisfying their conditions to a certain extent by providing minimum outlets for dammed-up individual and socio-cultural tensions in shamanic rituals temporarily

relieves possessed women of their burdens. However, when they experience liberation into a shamanic system, they must usually gain mastership over possession at the cost of a typical lifestyle. They assume the duties of an ordained connection to the divine, which often provokes collective repugnance from majority society. The individual transformation benefits society in its maintenance of current ideological structures without allowing full liberation for the women. Shamanism provides a cushion between the individual and society, but the individual must compromise her fundamental needs in order to secure minimum compensation with little risk.

The primary pastoral theological problem raised by Anton Boisen's clinical pastoral education movement is the inclusion of human experience in theological argumentation. The work of theology should be grounded in our living contexts and a person's life must be a source of theology that is not simply an object of academic research. Boisen's metaphor of "the living human document" contributes positively to the development of twentieth-century Christian theology by insisting that theological thinking must actively engage human life.

Beyond a generalized description of women's socio-cultural vulnerability, Bonnie Miller-McLemore presents a more thorough picture of women's contextual pathology, needs, and realistic visions based on critical analysis from a feminist pastoral theological perspective. She employs a feminist method that values direct confrontation of human suffering. This method pursues the creation of theories for life change out of unorganized real experiences that refuse pretentious claims to objectivity. She declares that she is "dedicated to a pastoral method that makes the immediate human experience of suffering

and compassionate response to it primary."[593] Quoting bell hooks, she claims that a postmodern sense of liberation comes out of "the location of pain and struggle,"[594] although the challenge remains to clarify and theorize it. She ultimately pursues change within the lives of those who are marginalized through hands-on participation in the messy scenes of life.

Miller-McLemore's pastoral theological analysis of marginalized people provides fundamental diagnosis and a prophetic prescription for the transformation of inequality and sexism in the academy, society, and religion. Feminist studies have stimulated a radical shift in pastoral theological focus "from the individual to community, from personal distress to social injustice, from personal fulfillment to the common good, and from an ontology of separative selfhood to an open web of relationality," [595] which largely explains why pastoral theology cannot simply reside in individual pastoral counseling. A holistic concern about a person's wellbeing occupies the minds of feminist pastoral theologians, allowing them to study a variety of human experiences with the common goal of transforming the wider ecological system. They dare to confront the dominant powers over afflicted women, whether social ideology or unjust politics, and develop theories from the "messy" realities of everyday life. Religion and culture, in this respect, must have a critical correlation in order for pastoral theology to sustain its active engagement of human experience with theological theorizing.

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[593] Bonnie Miller-McLemore, "Feminist Theory in Pastoral Theology," in *Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology,* eds. Miller-McLemore & B. L. Gill-Austern (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 92.

[594] Ibid.

[595] Miller-McLemore, "Shaping the Future of Religion and Psychology: Feminist Transformations in Pastoral Theology," in *Religion and Psychology: Mapping the Terrain*, eds. Dian Jonte-Pace & W. B. Parsons (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), 193.

Miller-McLemore contributes to the paradigm shift in pastoral theology from the study of living human documents, which Anton Boisen claims as a source of theological studies, to "the living human web" as its central metaphor. A person connects fundamentally with his or her wider relational contexts, including family, society, culture, political institutions and ideologies of the time. In addition, the separation or autonomy of an individual cannot be the common goal of human development because "attachment and dependence are issues throughout life"[596] particularly for women. Society's problem is its biased attitude that repudiates women's needs for affiliation and encourage autonomy or separation from men's perspectives.

Therefore, a close monitoring of collective assumptions about women becomes essential for checking the automatic flow of thoughts in society. Miller-McLemore further proposes that "a feminist perspective demands an analysis of structures and ideologies that think of people as inferior or superior according to various traits of human nature."[597] For an appropriate understanding of women in culture, the visible or invisible surrounding contexts must be revealed and measured in terms of women's vision of fuller liberation.

Miller-McLemore's study of women starts with a common assumption that women are in charge of most essential work of caring and receive little appreciation as male-dominated culture rarely recognizes it regardless of their color and social class

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[596] Miller-McLemore, "Women Who Work and Love: Caught between Cultures," in *Women in Travail and Transition: a New Pastoral Care*, eds. Maxine Glaz & Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner (Minneapolis, MN : Fortress Press, 1991), 76.

[597] Miller-McLemore, "The Living Human Web," 16.

across cultures.[598] She envisions a newly structured family with radical mutuality in appreciation of power and freedom. Therefore, women's labor in the family merits some type of reward. The lack of recognition that comes from compromising rewards for women is reminiscent of deprivation possession in its extreme mode of expression as described previously.

When the harsh neglect of women's importance persists in the family or in society, silence is dangerous. In the absence of an emotional outlet, an extreme mode of psychosomatic afflictions such as possession in some cultures may lead women to seek painful attention in light of their unattainable freedom and power. As Miller-McLemore points out, a radical transformation must take place in a theology that "supports a male-dominated hierarchy."[599] A shamanic system perceives and responds somewhat to a person's afflictions, but turns swiftly to supernatural causality before digging to the depths of ideological injustice. Individual needs achieve satisfaction in many ways, but the need for socio-cultural transformation remains unaddressed because the belief system declines to take the risk of confronting social injustice in favor of a socially sanctioned method of avoidance and individual sublimation.

Without the capacity to challenge social injustice, specifically with regard to gender roles and patriarchal ideologies, religion perpetuates male domination over women because of a belief system that seems to promote the social status quo of sexual inequality. The ideological injustice in society remains unchanged and unchallenged regardless of repeated women's afflictions and ritual healings. Thus, the unintentional

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[598] See also Miller-McLemore, *Also a Mother: Work and Family as Theological Dilemma*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

[599] Miller-McLemore, 1991, 71.

authorization of patriarchal ideologies in shamanic practice prohibits a complete vision of liberation as long as the belief system pursues only other worldly causalities or ritualistic sublimation at the cost of viable resistance[600] against and transformation of traditional gender values.

Feminist pastoral theology continues to focus on the marginalization of all women through psychological and social scientific hermeneutics with a fundamentally pastoral theological orientation. While the anthropological study of possession discloses a patterned victimization of women through the less complete task of women's emancipation from suppression, feminist pastoral theology handles the data with a prophetic intention concerning aspects of women's sufferings in many cultures. Any judgment on particular religious experiences does not belong to pastoral theological goals, but the implications for women's individual and social lives extend to the revised self-definition of feminist pastoral theology.

With the aid of multiple disciplines applied in a mutually critical way, possession certainly becomes relevant to feminist pastoral theology in its overarching concern with contexts. Theology must deal with the "particularities of suffering [within] the ecclesiastical context of care."[601] However, traditional anthropology would not give in to any analytical perspectives from outside in fear of reducing the value of a culture. The anthropological method has received legitimacy because colonialism has fundamentally

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[600] Among pastoral theological functions, Hiltner's concepts of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciliation have given way to the feminist pastoral functions of resisting, empowering, nurturing, and liberating. See Miller-McLemore 1999, 80.

[601] Peggy Way at the forefront of feminist theology intends to interrupt the cultural status quo by demanding a change in the constant suffering of women. Miller-McLemore, 2001, 187.

blocked intervention from an interculturally humanitarian approach due to its past blatant offenses.

Nevertheless, some phenomena such as patriarchy are not limited to a certain culture or society: patriarchy is still common to many societies regardless of women's various covert or overt responses to struggles through language or religion. If anthropological studies require an educated guess from trained outside anthropologists, they cannot provide a bias-free description of their culture in spite of their fundamental admiration of each culture and its members. Reduction of cultural values may be minimized through conscious academic exertion, but the effort to find a common human concern cannot be ignored under the flag of anthropological relativism. Especially when certain classes of people continue to suffer from a common structural injustice, academic studies may provide an enlightened guide for practical liberation through its fundamental orientation toward human service.

Rebecca Chopp challenges traditional methods of Christian theology as "the crisis of cognitive claims" [602] because they represent the voice of the bourgeois as universal and ignores the voice of the oppressed; she radically criticizes theological positioning that lacks attention to the practical experience of marginalized people. Her thesis repudiates typical academic efforts for practical reasons, but the theme of liberating the oppressed receives serious consideration in the academic methods of feminist pastoral theology. The vision of theorization out of the untidy location of real struggles takes hold in the academic work of practical and pastoral theology through cultural and ideological analysis. Pastoral theology methodologically deals with contextual elements of

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[602] Rebecca Chopp, "Practical Theology and Liberation," eds, L. S. Mudge & J. N. Poling, *Formation and Reflection: the Promise of Practical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 127.

intersubjective connections surrounding suffering as an essential part of the theological task, overcoming a traditional Christian position compliant to the socio-political power. If possession concerns women's marginalized position and their suffering, the shamanic or psychological institution should be subject to a radical critique out of a transformative intent.

In the assertion of liberation from the demon and the demonic, the prophetic claim can go awry if oppressed people in a particular culture want a life without change from the currently oppressive situations. Some anthropologists intentionally do not pay attention to predicaments considered tolerable by the victim. However, the problem is greater than a person's yes or no when it comes to an environment that historically constricts the oppressed. A person's real judgment may emerge when she or he becomes so enlightened that she or he may develop a capacity to judge personal and socio-cultural situations appropriately. Otherwise, the choice cannot be free from the ideological influences that have also confined women's self-image and self-awareness.

One additional point in the academic effort to name and eliminate oppression of women is the fact that misogyny is an intercultural problem. Some cultures simply do not allow women's resistance to the system because of the lack of a unified voice. Lacking resources, socially discriminated women cannot support each other in dealing with their own problems. Their restricted social roles inhibit their ability to express what is right for women themselves. Social resistance against unprecedented voices from women may keep down any revolt against the status quo. Women's collective voices may be trivialized and their movements for liberation may be ridiculed as long as the governing

patriarchal ideology of a particular culture does not budge. Therefore, a culture-sensitive strategy for ideological transformation should be encouraged for a social liberation.

As Browning asserts, theory must come from the practice of life.[603] Anthropologists have developed ethnographic descriptions of cultures during brief periods of research, which requires a theorization based on the seemingly unorganized life of a group of people. The ethnographical method from situation to theory resonates with a practical philosophical and theological approach to theory and practice, which still influences the methods of feminist pastoral theology. A careful theorization related to local practice now returns to its dialogue with practice and the process of negotiation between the two must continue to narrow the gap.[604] Such an insightful theory should inform, in turn, how to proceed with practice in specific situations. Practice, then, should be concerned with the ethical and moral directions of informed members of a society. In an international context, the process cannot vary according to the particularities of each culture because of common moral codes. Most of all, human suffering and impoverishment is a common concern for the global community and therefore calls for international attention. Liberation from common pathology and affliction is a significant concern for all people regardless of cultural distinctions. Pastoral theology encompasses all concerns related to possession, including "intrapsychic, family, and larger cultural

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[603] Based on Hans G. Gadamer's practical philosophy clarified in *Truth and Method* (New York : Crossroad, 1988), Browning reworks the traditional model of "theory-to-practice" in human understanding. Instead, he proposes "a fundamental practical theology" as a new alternative that guides the church's communication between traditional Christian resources and other interpretive disciplines and experiences. See Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology: descriptive and strategic proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).

[604] Neuger presents a cycle of transformative praxis beyond psychological hermeneutics: she proposes a move from "culture [to] story [to] tradition for critique and reconstruction." Then the cycle goes back to the life story and pastoral theological strategies. Neuger, 191.

systems."[605] Its constructive envisioning of theology and future culture contributes significantly to an intercultural revisioning of women's experience around the gender-specific proclivity toward spirit possession.

In conclusion, culture itself is another critical corporate component in women's culture-bound syndrome, especially when the society is male-oriented. Consequently, without a critical change in cultural assumptions about women, possession as women's cultural syndrome may continue to appear. Furthermore, the shamanic system may unknowingly perpetuate patriarchy and contribute to the maintenance of the status quo unless women's possession is acknowledged as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The illness requires scrutiny from multiple social scientific disciplines.

Patriarchy and misogyny are "demonic" forces against women in many societies and cultures. In addition to intra-psychical investigation related to the treatment of possession and other culture-bound syndromes, socio-cultural ideologies should be revisited and interpreted in light of feminist perspectives in psychology, theology, and pastoral theology that pursue analysis of political power structures for a fuller vision of women's liberation. Feminist psychologists constantly revise the traditional framework that has confined women psychologically by repudiating male counseling norms.

Spirit possession correlates positively with the person's previous crises that include socio-cultural implications. Possession serves two purposes. First, possession provides an adaptive temporary relief for women who are struggling with oppressive gender roles under patriarchy. Second, spirit possession signals the need for a more radical transformation of patriarchal ideologies and cultural assumptions regarding

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[605] Ibid.

women. Spirit possession in this respect plays only a limited role for deprived women: a passive adaptation to the male-centered system instead of outspoken resistance.

Therefore, from the perspective of a feminist pastoral theology that pursues compassionate care and emancipation, women in possession are in fact in real need of liberation from both 'the demon and the demonic'. Shamanic faith does its best in an effort to liberate women from peripheral demon possession, but it does not get at the level of the socio-cultural demonic surrounding women's possession. Women's religiosity in shamanism ultimately contributes to the reinforcement of a biased social power system, that is, 'the demonic'. Feminist pastoral theology provides fundamental methods and tools for debunking religious pretenses when liberation is seriously compromised due to social sanctioning. Spirituality should be a shelter for victimized women, but it should not blindly accommodate forces or social systems that perpetuate their demonic status quo. Genuine spirituality both comforts the victims and confronts demonic individual or socio-institutional forces with efficient culture-specific strategies of change.

CONCLUSION

Spirit possession in the Scriptures and in early Christian history is not as conspicuous an issue as many may assume. Exorcism in Jesus' ministry is not a main priority in comparison to his other messages such as the importance of doing God's will. Exorcism is one important sign of the advent of the Kingdom of God, but Jesus puts less stress on its significance. Among his followers, Jesus becomes a name by which they cast out demons in Acts and in later Christian churches. Exorcism, therefore, is not essential as his teachings or his other miracles, not to mention obedience in salvation.

In Acts, exorcism is significant for exhibiting the authority of the apostles in order to verify Jesus' authority to the pagan Greco-Roman world. However, the number of exorcisms is fewer than other healings, and exorcism was not a priority for Paul or the other apostles when compared to evangelism or ethical obedience. Exorcism becomes more common in the first Christian churches, but the existence of the devil or its dogmatization is not an important priority. Augustine has a distaste of miracles for the purpose of entertainment because they are, he believes, means for instinctual satisfaction. The importance of exorcism decreases because of his assumption that Jesus has already defeated the power of the devil. Few Christian theologians pay much attention to the shadow of the enemy, whether they perceive the devil literally or poetically. Even Luther admonishes that the devil must be ignored with no attention because the devil does not even deserve any display through exorcism. It makes sense that the issue of spirit possession has been intentionally excluded from the major stream of Christian theology with a clear purpose of Christian spiritual health. In this respect, exaggerated attention to

demonology in a witch-hunt or some other spiritualist activities does not conform to the coherent theological position. Instead, Scriptures in the New Testament and later theologians turn our attention to ethical decision and obedience with regard to interpersonal and social issues without ignoring demonic influences.

Modern philosophical *Weltanschauung* influences Freud's theory of religion. Neither God nor the devil is distinct in his psychoanalytic theory because both of them are created within a human psyche and commonly rooted in a neurotic fantasy. They both function as a father substitute derived from a childhood struggle with a powerful father in the ambivalence of fear and love. His theory of spirit possession is completely consumed by his theory of religion, which denies any validity of its existence. In his reduction of religion and spiritual phenomena, he attempts to draw every outer experience into an individual psychology.

Jung demonstrates a positive progress in understanding the human psyche and spirituality with his inclusive property of collective unconscious. His interest in spirit possession stimulates his exploration of the world of unconscious that goes beyond biological and individual psychology. He encompasses the realms of myth and fantasy for an investigation of the unconscious, which he himself attempts to discover and theorize. However, his scope does not overcome the Freudian intrapsychic pathology of religious phenomena.

David Hume leaves critical imprints for a later psychoanalytic understanding of spirit possession as simply belonging to an intrapsychic dimension. First, he eliminates religious or spiritual aspects of human experience due to his empirical philosophical orientation. Second, he puts the transcendental existence of the divine under human

subjectivity. Third, he attributes all miracles in religious beliefs to primitives' naïve credulity. Hume presents a sweeping path to empirical rationalism, which stimulates later development of modern rational thinking and of psychoanalytic focus on empirical individualism.

To William James, religion is a person's total reaction to life, including the phases of emotion, behavior and understanding. James reads a special meaning of religious experiences, including religious feelings, as a good motive for revitalization to despairing people who experience religion as insiders. He gives no more credit to religious doctrines than do other modern psychoanalysts, but he does not restrain what religion describes for itself as meaningful. His limitations in understanding religion still persist among contemporary modernists: he confines religious efficiency to the past, not the contemporary, and he puts no more trust in its healing potential. Because he is too optimistic about the human capacity for handling situations, he attributes spiritual sickness such as spirit possession to one's own weakness instead of environmental pathogenesis. Spirit possession may belong only to an individual's external predisposition toward religious evil, not to any more realistic demons or depriving outer circumstances.

Developmental psychology offers a possible alternative to this explanation of spirit possession when theories of childhood imagination develop into a hermeneutics of children's imaginary friendships with invisible entities. Theorists such as Jean Piaget and George Mead draw a distinguishing line between reality and imagination, and the latter's persistence is deemed as pathological. Mead's concept of reality comes from social interactions beyond mental process, but social reality to him is simply a generalization

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through individuals' voices and reflections. Other than this, struggles remain at an individual psychological level, and cultural components are removed from the hermeneutical scene. Mary Watkins elaborates the Jungian perspective of imagination and attempts to eliminate the negative traits of hallucination. However, she does not overcome the intrapsychic hermeneutics of multiple personalities, including spirit possession, by decoding the connection to socio-cultural backgrounds

A change of perspective occurs with the development of object relations theory by taking into serious consideration a real person's life full of anticipations and hopes. The biological and organic approach to psychological problems is no longer taken for granted; instead the struggle of the ego for survival from the danger of depersonalization continues. When spirit possession is understood as a deprivation illness, as with Lewis, object relations theory contributes to the illumination of internal relations between the patient and her surrounding human and social psychological environments. Karen Horney is distinctive among Freud's heirs in revising Freudian psychoanalysis by including socio-anthropological notions of anxiety and psychopathology. With an ideal of sound human growth, Horney widens the scope of pathology into troubled relationships and socio-cultural influences.

Lewis's theory of spirit possession as marginalized women's deprivation in society continues to acquire resonating data, regardless of critiques for focus on cultural particularities instead of sweeping generalizations. However, with a careful avoidance of religio-cultural reductionism, spirit possession still shows common aspects across cultures to a certain extent. Especially in light of the socio-cultural and economic backgrounds of those who are possessed, spirit possession demonstrates its connection

with the social status and economic level of those who experience it, particularly when they are women.

The connection between religion and society has been positively illustrated in a study of European witch-hunt in the early modern era. Most punishments were imposed on women who were isolated in social status, economic standing, and religious position. The collective fear of the devil and witches as its agents mainly came out of the socio-cultural anxiety related to natural disaster and abrupt social changes beyond people's grasp. The practice of scapegoating in the process was an abusive social interaction between the powerful and the powerless in the name of religious demonology. The powerless people in society found their shelter in secretive channels, and the majority society needed explanations and dramatic solutions in order to escape from the drastic collective anxiety over an uncertain future. Religion was intricately involved with the practice of witch-hunting, and socio-cultural tensions instigated punishments of the isolated and later the condemned.

Compared to the witch-hunt, exorcism takes on the role of tension-relief without reciprocal violence among humans. Exorcism inflicts no harm for any members in society because it blames the spiritual entities that are believed to possess a person or a group of people. The violent means performed for exorcism are aimed at the spiritual beings at no cost of human sacrifice. During the period of witch-hunting, exorcism as a type of care disappeared except in its jurisdiction over witchcraft and spirit possession. Individual and social care through exorcism may work efficiently without imposing violence, but the healing has a fundamental restriction in bringing about the transition of a resistant status quo, the old paradigm of life that fosters marginalization and

scapegoating in its structure. Exorcistic healing is limited in its horizon due to the systemic attribution of real troubles to invisible spiritual forces. Nevertheless, witch-hunting demonstrates the powerful connection between religious practice and social values.

From an anthropological perspective, spirit possession is primarily a women's experience, with a few exceptions of male possession in some cultures. Possession in Lewis's theory reflects women's deprivation in many cultures; women's penchant for possession results mainly from their lack of power and resources in male-dominated societies. However, possession is not simply a women's strategy to live through tough situations; it constitutes a significant compromise of women's personality through horrific sufferings from societies that exclude women. Therefore, spirit possession does not bring about a fundamental change in women's environments; a temporary relief with materialistic compensation from their male counterparts in some African cultures, for example, only contributes to the solidification of the social system without fundamental challenge. Women's marginalization receives no significant attention in the payment of gifts from men. Cross-disciplinary studies of the women's experience promises to reveal what they suffer from behind the curtain of spirit possession on the surface.

Limited numbers of possession cases do not cover all particularities of each culture and its ideologies. However, a closer look at each case allows us to see a patterned connection between women's possession and their socio-cultural factors in a unique way. Possession of women is actively concerned with socio-cultural ideologies of gender. Most cases describe women in each society as having patriarchally defined gender roles that restrict their rights and freedom. Lewis's deprivation theory is widely

supported by the illustrations: women in possession are likely to have lived in the margins of a misogynistic society. Through possession, women may gain some compensation from those who recognize their symptoms, but their liberation is limited because the surroundings do not change due to their suffering. Material reward may help them lessen the depth of suffering, and exorcism may result in individual healing. However, those means have a fundamental drawback: they are adapted to the ideological system of culture and make only the slightest impact upon the system. In this respect, possession is another trap for women in order to keep them under persistent control over time.

Peripheral possession and concurrent symptoms may be cured through an initiation ceremony in Korean shamanism. A psychological explanation from both developmental psychology and self-psychology is meaningful because many shin-byung sufferers are known to share a lack of childhood attachment and unsatisfied self-object needs from relationships. An analysis of the initiation ceremony from a self-psychological perspective illuminates the process from fragmentation to repair of the self. If the psychological interpretations reveal the reality of inner psychical and interpersonal dynamics, they also point to the need for further explanation about spirit possession and its concomitant psychosomatic symptoms. Healing is effective as much as the rituals can provide, but the illness still has an unresolved pathology from the wider social background.

Furthermore, if shin-byung has a clear gender predilection, it requires a scrutiny of ideological gender roles that the culture has defined. The healing of shin-byung or peripheral possession through the initiation does not enact a social transition toward an

extensive care for the needs of women who are afflicted in society. Just as exorcism may soften the violence of a witch-hunt, if replaced, the healing process of shamanism softens the necessity of revolution of wider social environments at the signal of women's crude spirit possession or shin-byung along with psychological turbulence in growth. The healing efforts do not come up with structural transformation in the view of cultural ideological oppression against women in Confucian patriarchy. Regardless of some shamanic rituals of protest against social injustice, the whole shamanic system does not pay attention to fundamental social change.

Culture often contributes to women's culture-bound syndrome when the culture is male-centered. Therefore, a fundamental transformation at the socio-cultural level is necessary in order to eliminate pathogenetic factors for women's possession and its related illnesses. Therefore, feminist pastoral theology makes use of social scientific studies such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology for a more complete understanding of women's experience with culture-specific strategies for liberation. The demonic and pathological structures must be recognized and challenged appropriately, including socio-political intentions for maintenance of a vicious status quo.

Spirit possession can function as a path for healing, even though the traditional response to a possessed person has serious drawbacks. Possession can also be a rallying cry for a more fundamental transformation of cultural patriarchy against women. Feminist pastoral theology gives a prophetic challenge against the socio-cultural circumstances in which possession tends to develop among women: women must be released from the demon and the demonic by nurturing and encouraging emancipation. Spirituality and holistic health of women must bring about socio-cultural transformation

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of demonic structures, as well as individual healing with compassionate communal

attention. Furthermore, any forces that perpetuate discrimination, including religious

pretenses, must be subject to culture-appropriate scrutiny.

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