

THE CULTURAL THEATRICALS OF EARLY MODERN IMAGES OF DEMONIC
POSSESSION

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Artists creating images of demonic possession during the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation communicated theological messages by accentuating the most famous and dramatic exorcisms. This project proposes an interpretive structure, called cultural theatrics, for analyzing these works. Brian Levack's theory of cultural performance provides the framework from which cultural theatrics develops. Levack's cultural performance includes the demoniac and the exorcist as participants in religious dramas who act in a way that their religious communities expected them to act. However, this thesis proposes that images of possession and exorcism (rather than the historical events of alleged possession and exorcism themselves) are more appropriate subject matter for studying the theatricality of possession because artists held the interpretative leverage of conveying theological messages through depictions of exorcisms. This research shows how the artist, patron, and learned advisor mobilize cultural theatrics in images of demonic possession.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among the lavish decorations of Santa Maria Novella's Strozzi Chapel is Filippino Lippi's *St. Philip Driving the Dragon from the Temple of Hieropolis*, painted in the 1490s. The fresco depicts the possessed statue of Mars, along with one of his three victims, the high priest's son, whose limp body appears on the right side of the image (fig. 1). In the foreground, the apostle Philip and the dragon confront each other in the moment of exorcism. Philip raises his right hand in an emphatic gesture while the defeated dragon cowers before him. Exorcism was a popular subject in art during the early modern period, and Lippi's fresco finds numerous parallels in the work of other artists, including the *Panel of the Small Mariazell Miracle Altar* (fig. 2) by an artist of the Danube School, an anonymous woodcut of the *Administration of the Blessed Sacrament to Nicole Obry in 1566* (fig. 3) with the priest's forceful lunge towards the possessed Obry, and Peter Paul Rubens's *Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, (fig. 4) a depiction of the saint defeating demons. However, despite the popularity of images of possession, they have not been subjected to intensive art historical investigation. This study examines the theatricality of images of demonic possession to demonstrate their significance in conveying theological messages through the consistent use of script, actors, and audience.

Most surviving images of demonic possession date from the early modern period (1450-1750), specifically the period defined by the Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) and the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation (1545-1648). Accounts of alleged demonic possession also reached unprecedented numbers during these years. This project proposes an interpretive structure called cultural theatrics to reveal how images of demonic

possession disseminated theological messages. While the theatrical framework may be applied to actual historical events of alleged demonic possession, its application is even clearer in artists' images of demonic possession. The actual events of demonic possession provide the background that assists in the understanding of the historical significance of these images.

There are three aspects to cultural theatrics: script, actors, and audience. Script denotes the texts that influence the content and form of images. Drawn from a range of visual, textual, and performative sources, the artist, patron, and learned advisor determined the theological messages conveyed by the demoniac and the exorcist in their images. Thus, the demoniac and the exorcist depicted in images (as distinct from the actual historical demoniac or exorcist) are the actors who perform the script. The actors convey the theological messages for the audience, which consists both of those figures within the artwork that are not "actors" as well as the viewers of the artwork. Images of possession and exorcism (rather than possession and exorcisms themselves) are a more appropriate subject matter for studying the theatricality of early modern demonic possession because the artists, patrons, and learned advisors held the interpretative leverage of conveying theological messages through depictions of exorcism during the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Historiography and Methodology

Thus far, modern scholarship on images of demonic possession predominantly uses them as illustrations of other phenomena. Some scholars apply images of demonic possession to diagnose medical conditions, such as "hystero-epilepsy."¹ Others identify

¹ J. M. Charcot, *Les Démoniaques dans l'Art* (Amsterdam: B.M.Israël, 1972); J. M. Charcot, *Les Diffôrmes et les Malades dans l'Art*, (Paris: Lecrosnier et Babé, 1889); Arthur Gamgee, "An Account of a

the historical importance of these images as shaping the iconography of madness or mania.² Historians, who focus on the events themselves, also use these images to illustrate their arguments, but they do not provide the historical importance for the images they include, nor do they recognize images of demonic possession as a genre in the history of art.³ The present study, on the other hand, is concerned solely with images of demonic possession as a genre and as a form of theatrical performance.

As the actual events of possession are the background that assists in the understanding of the images, it is important to elucidate how historians view the actual events of possession and exorcism as theatrical. The early modern materials used by historians to study the events of demonic possession include records of witchcraft prosecutions, published narratives of possession and exorcism, demonological treatises by theologians and inquisitors, and records of exorcisms performed at shrines and other locations. Historians face the challenge of determining the accuracy of these accounts, especially because authors (with rare exceptions) recorded their accounts of possession secondhand.⁴ Authors of possession narratives misrepresented or exaggerated the

Demonstration on the Phenomena of Hystero-Epilepsy Given by Professor Charcot,” *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 928 (October 12, 1878): 545-48; Ida Macalpine, *Schizophrenia, 1677; a Psychiatric Study of an Illustrated Autobiographical Record of Demoniactal Possession*, (London, Dawson, 1956).

² Jane Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy: Public Madness in the Visual Culture, 1500-1850* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

³ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 2004); David. Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain*, (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

⁴ An exception to secondhand narratives is the personal diary of Christopher Haizmann, published in Macalpine, *Schizophrenia, 1677; a Psychiatric Study of an Illustrated Autobiographical Record of Demoniactal Possession*, Psychiatric Monograph Series; No. 2 (London: Dawson, 1956), 53.

demoniac's symptoms to "heighten fear of the demonic, demonstrate the sanctity and power of the exorcist, or prove that only [the author's] Church had the power to cast out demons."⁵ Thus, there is already a propensity for the dramatic in accounts used by historians to study the actual events of possession and exorcism.

Furthermore, the emergence of Catholic and Protestant printed material on the subject of demoniacs and demonology, during the so-called "printing revolution," may begin to explain why historians believed that all alleged exorcisms of the early modern period were overly theatrical. The invention of the printing press and the ensuing proliferation of possession narratives played a crucial role in the dissemination of demonological texts. These texts, which included sermons, possession narratives, reports of witchcraft prosecutions, and even printed versions of plays featuring demoniacs, placed biblical possession narratives and other demonological texts in more hands than ever. The number of surviving possession narratives suggests that all possessions were theatrical because of the propensity to dramatically narrate the experience of witnessing an exorcism. Images, on the other hand, emphasize the most dramatic exorcisms and more clearly demonstrate cultural theatrics than does the problematic theatricality in the actual reported events of possession.

Images of demonic possession, particularly in the early modern period, are theatrical because they visually detail the dramatic moment of exorcism. The exorcist is typically depicted in an emphatic gesture or is depicted as divine to most effectively contrast the writhing bestiality of the demoniac. James Clifton studies the dramatic

⁵ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 4.

quality of demoniacs in early modern images of demonic possession.⁶ Clifton applies cinematic theory to images of demonic possession to discover the horrifying effects of inversion and the disempowered body. Clifton compares the motifs of horror seen in contemporary film to the motifs in early modern paintings and prints, more specifically, the works of seventeenth-century artists like Peter Paul Rubens.⁷ Rubens's work, in the baroque style, is also theatrical through its use of exaggerated motion and dramatic tension.

The theatricality of images of demonic possession lends itself to a performance-based explanation, commonly used to study the actual events of demonic possession.⁸ A performance-based explanation typically describes the action of demoniacs in terms of a dramatic performance that communicates social, political, or religious ideas. While complicated and problematic when applied to actual events of possession, this type of performance-based analysis, in fact, is distinct and clear when applied to visual imagery as a construct of the artist's imagining. In other words, images do not intend to reflect real events, but instead idealize and dramatize the events of possession and exorcism from the early modern period.

The historical context of actual demoniacs and exorcists as actors sets a foundation for viewing the depictions of demoniacs and exorcists in images as actors. Both early modern and contemporary critics and scholars provide the framework for

⁶ James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body," *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373-92.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 377.

⁸ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*; Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France*; D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); Moshe Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

historians to view demoniacs and their exorcists as actors in religious dramas and thus also as a cultural performance. In the early modern period, Protestants often accused Catholics of falsifying possession to win converts. For example, one Protestant named Samuel Harsnett published an anti-Catholic treatise titled *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* in 1603. This treatise claimed that both the demoniacs involved and the Jesuit named William Weston faked the exorcisms that they performed in the mid-1580s.⁹ Critics of the theatricality of possessions set a precedent for the idea that demoniacs and their exorcists were actors in dramatic, religious performances. But regardless of whether the historical exorcisms were merely performances, the images always were.

Contemporary scholarship similarly recognizes the inherent theatricality of possession and exorcism. For example, Hilaire Kallendorf explores exorcism and demonic possession as recurrent motifs in early modern Spanish and English literature. Specifically, she examines the works of Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Ben Jonson.¹⁰ Demoniacs appear in a variety of early modern literature, including *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and a notable play called *A True and Fearful Vexation of One Alexander Nyndge*.¹¹ Kallendorf's study further perpetuates the idea of demoniacs as actors. To define actual demoniacs and exorcists as actors, as Harsnett does, is problematic because it assumes an agency and knowledge of the performance. However, characters in literature and the

⁹ Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, (London, 1603), reprinted in F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham*, 191-413, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1993).

¹⁰ Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain*, 14-16.

¹¹ William Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, (New York: W.W.Norton, 1997); Edward Nyndge, *A True and Fearefull Vexation of One Alexander Nyndge Being Most Horribly Tormented with the Devill*, Early English Books Online (Imprinted at London: Stansby and Barrett, 1615).

depicted figures in images are actors because both the author and the artist act as the stage director placing the demoniac and the exorcist in the performance of exorcism, as dictated by the script.

Brian Levack's *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* uses cultural performance to describe all participants in historical events of demonic possession, including the demoniac, the exorcist, and witnesses, as participants in ad hoc religious dramas who act in a way that their respective religious communities expected them to act. This thesis expands upon Levack's idea and introduces the interpretive structure of cultural theatrics to visual imagery. Cultural theatrics modifies and applies Levack's theory of cultural performance to visual analyses, because its application is clearer and more concise with images of demonic possession.

Together the presence of the script, actors, and audience in images of demonic possession creates the theatrical production of an exorcism. While Levack similarly uses script as texts that inspire actual events of demonic possession, this thesis analyzes how various textual sources inform and change the visual appearance of images of demonic possession. Furthermore, this thesis studies the demoniac and the exorcist as the actors and the different ways in which the artist, patron, and learned advisor collude in the creation of artworks that depict these figures in the service of the propagation of theological messages. The presence of the audience, depicted explicitly in every image of demonic possession, supports the existence of cultural theatrics and the performance of the theological messages of the artist, patron, and learned advisor. Throughout the early modern period these messages communicated the importance of Counterreformation theology, however, Protestant theology will be also used in this thesis as comparative

material. While it is important to note that early modern religious culture cannot be reduced to only two sides, discussing the Catholic-Protestant rivalry in the early modern period explains major differences in content and form in representations of demonic possession.

The following chapter discusses the history of demonic possession as well as the history of images of demonic possession, placing the images in a strong historical framework. The subsequent chapter, Chapter Three, identifies the different aspects of the interpretive structure of cultural theatrics as they manifest themselves in images of demonic possession during the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. This chapter illustrates, for instance, the differences between medieval images of possession and early modern images of the same subject, differences that are due to the disparate theological contexts of the times. Chapter Four uses case studies from the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation to show the importance and efficacy of analyzing these artworks through the frame of cultural theatrics. This thesis concludes with Chapter Five's brief summary of the major themes and placement of this study within a larger historical context, offering fruitful areas for further expansion.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF DEMONIC POSSESSION AND IMAGES OF DEMONIC POSSESSION

Demonic possession is broadly defined as the invasion of a foreign, maleficent spirit in a human body, with a demon assuming partial or total control over the body and its speech and actions.¹² Records of demonic possession saw a rise in the thirteenth century, a sharp decline in the fifteenth, and slow rebound to to a larger peak in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹³ Stories of demonic possession were wonders and glimpses of the preternatural to which medieval and early modern people assigned religious, prophetic, or apocalyptic significance.¹⁴ Demonic possession was nearly unanimously thought to exist within the laws of nature, as were most of the symptoms exhibited by demoniacs, excluding levitation.¹⁵ Europeans looked for physical symptoms to indicate demonic possession such as convulsions, physical pain, rigidity of the limbs, muscular flexibility and contortions, preternatural strength, levitation, swelling, vomiting, loss of bodily functions, and fasting as well as behavioral symptoms that involved

¹² This study does not deal with issues of gender; however, most scholars agree that the majority of people labeled as demoniacs throughout the Middle Ages and early modern period were women. Early modern people considered women to be weak in mind and body and therefore more susceptible to spirit possession and temptation. For further discussion on gender and demonic possession see Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 172; Sluhovsky, *Believe Not Every Spirit: Possession, Mysticism, & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism*, 19; Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France*, 25; Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford England: Clarendon Press ; New York, 1997), 398; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 21-23.

¹³ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 84.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

changes in speech, personality, and conduct.¹⁶ Later, the interpretation of early modern possessions included symptoms such as the knowledge of languages previously unknown, changes in voice, clairvoyance, blasphemy, abhorring sacred objects, and immoral gestures and actions and their true origins within the body of the possessed.¹⁷ The ritual of exorcism is prescribed to relieve the demoniac's body of the demon.

Exorcism is the process of driving a demon out of the body of the possessed and curing him or her of the affliction. This action carried various political and religious functions and meanings throughout history. Christian accounts of curing demoniacs with exorcism begin with Christ's exorcisms in the Bible, which demonstrated his divinity and the power of God. In late antiquity, Christian exorcisms became an instrument for converting pagans by proving that only Christianity had the power to expel demons.¹⁸ In the Middle Ages, accounts of exorcisms demonstrated the power of the saints as holy figures, Christ-like in their miraculous healing powers.¹⁹ Increasingly, in the fifteenth century, the institutional Church relinquished its claim to have the power to work miracles and thus clergy maintained their power as exorcists, partially, by calling on saints and using sacred objects to perform exorcisms.²⁰ This new type of exorcism came to embody the power of the Church, particularly during the Roman Catholic Counter-

¹⁶ For further research on the differentiating of symptoms of possession see Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 6–10; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 314; Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 73, no. 3 (1998): 733.

¹⁷ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 11–15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁹ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 227.

²⁰ For more on the decline of belief in miracles see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England*, (New York: Penguin, 2003), 28.

Reformation.²¹ Exorcisms became dramatic spectacles by which the church could reinforce the apparent efficacy of its theological and doctrinal agendas upon the masses. Artwork that depicts images of demonic possession similarly works to reinforce the apparent efficacy of the Roman Catholic Church's theological messages.

Early Accounts of Demonic Possession

The earliest Christian records of demonic possession exist in the New Testament.²² Thus, the Bible is the foundation for the tradition of demonic possession in Christianity. There are fifty-six accounts in the New Testament in which Jesus drives out an unclean spirit from a person. Five of the most well-known accounts of possession are in the Synoptic Gospels, including the exorcism of an unclean spirit from a man in the synagogue at Capernaum in Galilee, the story of the Gadarene (or Gerasene) demoniac, the exorcism by Christ of the Syrophoenician woman's daughter, the curing of the epileptic boy, and Christ's exorcism of a blind and mute demoniac.²³ These stories demonstrated the power of God and the divinity of Christ through the latter's ability to exorcise demons.

In the Middle Ages, the body of the possessed became a battle-ground between the divine power of the exorcist and the demonic power within. In other words, possession and exorcism shifted from a demonstration of Christian supremacy over

²¹ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 227.

²² Demons, or maleficent spirits, exist in many other ancient cultures and in many different contexts. In the Christian context they exist in the Bible. Demons are present in the Old Testament and become a direct threat in the New Testament. See David E. Aune, *The Blackwell Companion to The New Testament*, (Hoboken: Wiley, 2010), 298–299.

²³ Capernaum in Galilee (Mark 1: 21-28 and Luke 4: 31-37); Gadarene or Gerasene demoniac (Matt. 8: 28-32, Luke 8: 26-39, and Mark 5: 1-20); Syrophoenician woman's daughter (Mark 7: 25-30 and Matt. 15: 21-28); the epileptic boy (Mark 9:14-29, Matt. 17: 14-21, and Luke 9: 37-43); and the blind and mute demoniac (Mark 3:20-30, Matt. 12:22-32, and Luke 11:14-23). This study uses the English translation of the Latin Vulgate, available online at Vulgate.org.

paganism to a demonstration of priestly power over demons.²⁴ Accounts of possessions peaked at the beginning of the thirteenth century, remained high throughout the fourteenth century, and finally declined sharply in the fifteenth century before the Reformation.²⁵ Medieval people connected the rise in demonic activity as a sign of the coming apocalypse and viewed the demoniac's body as the microcosm of the macrocosmic battle between God and the Devil that would bring about the end of the world.²⁶

Early modern people also believed in apocalyptic conceptions of demonic possession, which primed the theories on demonology and witchcraft.²⁷ In 1517 Martin Luther posted his *Ninety-Five Theses*. This act sparked debates about nearly every doctrinal issue within the Church, including the reality of possession, the power of exorcisms, existence of spirits, miracles, and the apocalypse.²⁸ The vast majority of Catholics believed in the reality of demonic possession and widely prescribed the Rite of Exorcism to address it. Protestants, however, generally considered the Catholic Rite of Exorcism to be too magical and superstitious. Protestants preferred the word *dispossession* to the etymologically loaded word of *exorcism* because medieval and early modern writers used *exorcism* and *conjunction* interchangeably to explain the command of an evil spirit.²⁹ Lutherans preferred some form of exorcism, though it differed from the

²⁴ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 84.

²⁵ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 76.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 256.

²⁷ Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, 403.

²⁸ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 32.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

Catholic Rite, whereas Reformed Protestantism rejected exorcism categorically, to the exclusion of dispossession.³⁰ The Protestant exegesis required that dispossessions follow Christ's words that only prayer and fasting can drive out unclean spirits, though Catholic "dispossession" was not dissimilar to Catholic exorcism in some of its methods.³¹ Protestant dispossessions, which consisted solely of prayer and fasting, were less public and failed to fully realize the potential that demonic possession held for reform propaganda.³² As Levack states, "Publicity explains why exorcisms always had a theatrical dimension."³³ Protestant dispossession was less successful in promoting theology. The Protestants' disadvantage came from their attacks on the theatricality of Catholic exorcism, rather than using their spiritual skills to expel demons through prayer and fasting.³⁴ Catholics drew larger crowds to exorcisms to receive the theological messages. Possession and exorcism more generally became demonstrations of confessional superiority, analogous to those early medieval contests with paganism.

One of the more influential and well-documented cases of possession and exorcism is that of the sixteen-year-old girl Nicole Obry at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Laon. This episode effectively demonstrated Catholic confessional appeal through one of the more dramatic exorcisms of the early modern period. In 1566, during the beginning of the French Wars of Religion, when Obry first displayed signs of possession, Catholic

³⁰ For more on the differences between Catholic and Protestant dispossession see Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 177.

³¹ Mark 9:14-29, Matt. 17: 14-21, and Luke 9: 37-43.

³² Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 85, 90-91.

³³ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

authorities capitalized on her distress by exorcizing her in front of a large crowd.³⁵ The exorcism used the Eucharist to prove the effectiveness of the Catholic sacrament and legitimize the Catholic belief in transubstantiation. The Eucharist is typically used at the end of an exorcism, and its proponents believed it could severely agitate the symptoms of the possessed and successfully expel the demon. In Obry's exorcism, the Eucharist is alleged to have done just that. The written accounts of this event were some of the first to also include apocalyptic interpretations; these include, Jean Boulaese's *Le Thrésor et entière histoire de la triomphante victoire du corps de Dieu sur l'esprit maling Beelzebub, obtenue à Laon l'an 1566*, which considered the exorcism as evidence of God's plan to convert and unite Laon in Catholicism before the apocalypse.³⁶ Thus, because Obry's exorcism attracted large crowds, used the Eucharist to exorcise the demon, and instructed the witnesses about the power of Catholic sacraments, it was a prime example of Catholic propaganda. Afterwards, many of the texts written on the exorcism of Obry became strong instruments to the Catholic propaganda campaign.³⁷ Some of these texts include Boulaese and Pierre Boaistuau's, *Histoires prodigieuses extraictes de plusiers auteurs* from 1566. Catholic propaganda, like that surrounding Obry's exorcism, was most effective in France, southern Germany, and England.³⁸

It is impossible to understand what the ordinary citizen thought of Obry's exorcism and others like it because few texts survive from ordinary people who

³⁵ Ibid., 86–87.

³⁶ Ibid., 67.

³⁷ For more of the literature of the Miracle of Laon see Irena Backus, *Le Miracle de Laon: Le Deraisonnable, le Raisonnable, l'Apocalyptique et le Politique dans les Recits du Miracle de Laon* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1994).

³⁸ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 85.

witnessed dramatic exorcisms. It was difficult for the actual performance of an exorcism to communicate theological messages due to an inability of the organizers to control the audience's interpretations and equally unpredictable actions of the demoniac.

Misunderstandings included whether the demoniac was a victim in the battle between good and evil or if he or she was being punished for his or her sins. Theologians were also unsure of whether the demoniac's spoken claims were the truth, or the lies of Satan. Despite this confusion, the actual events of Obry's possession inspired many images in the early modern period, which more clearly demonstrate the theological message of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

In addition, there are accounts that involve possession and demons associated with witchcraft. Fear of the Devil and demonology were closely tied to the witchcraft persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The rise of reported demonic activity in Europe during the tumultuous early modern period resulted in historians often conflating the rise of witchcraft persecutions in the sixteenth century with that of demonic possession. The period for witchcraft persecution is 1430-1720, with the peak years occurring in southwestern Germany between 1561 and 1670.³⁹ Records of demonic possession also rose in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, nearly during the same exact decades as that of the most intense witch-hunts.⁴⁰ The two phenomena are arguably connected, though the witch and the demoniac interact with demons in opposite ways. A demoniac is a human at the mercy of demonic power and witch is a human with

³⁹ William E. Monter, *European Witchcraft*. (New York: Wiley, 1969); Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchcraft: A Very Short Introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, (New York: Routledge, 2006); H. C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562-1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations*. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford UP, 1972), 71.

⁴⁰ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 84.

the ability to harness demonic power. In the early modern period, demoniacs even became witnesses in criminal proceedings of witches, often claiming that witches sent demons into their bodies. Furthermore, a demoniac was never prosecuted for his or her actions while possessed.⁴¹ However, demoniacs were prosecuted if they faked their possession.⁴² Demonic possession and witchcraft worked in tandem to explain the existence of demons in the early modern period.

A Brief History of Images of Demonic Possession

The earliest examples of Christian images of demonic possession emerged in the fifth and sixth centuries and depict Christ's exorcism narratives from the New Testament. One such example is the mosaic from the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna depicting Christ with a brilliant halo, wearing a royal purple robe, and exorcising the kneeling Gerasene demoniac, who sits at the mouth of a cave against a heavenly gold background (fig. 5). Christ exorcises the Gerasene demoniac from a legion of demons. Christ sends the demons into a herd of swine nearby, which then dives into the ocean and drowns, a scene that appears to the right of the cave. This image sets Christ as the ideal figure for emulation in the future depiction of exorcists. This image also successfully depicts the goal of Christ's exorcisms in Christian antiquity, which is to convert pagans by proving that only Christ has the power to expel demons. This image shows Christ's divine authority through the brilliance of his halo, the royal purple of his robe, and the gold background depicting the miraculous and divine environment around him. The fleeing swine clearly demonstrate Christ's success as an exorcist.

⁴¹ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 191.

⁴²For a case of a prosecuted demoniac see James A. Sharpe, *The Bewitching of Anne Gunter: A Horrible and True Story of Deception, Witchcraft, Murder, and the King of England*, (New York: Routledge, 2000).

Because medieval people perceived the body of the possessed as a battle-ground between the divine power of the exorcist and the demonic power within, an important aspect of medieval images of possession is the representation of a person afflicted internally with a demon by depicting the physical relationship between the demon and demoniac. Artists devoted careful attention to depicting the demon physically exiting a human body, typically through the mouth, a physical hole for the demon to enter and exit.⁴³ Therefore, medieval scenes of exorcism are enlivened by the demon's violent banishment from the human body.

In medieval images of exorcisms, there is typically only one demon, usually depicted as a smaller black humanoid figure with black wings and horns near the possessed. This iconography emphasizes the physicality of the demon during possession. The possession scene in the manuscript illumination of *The Healing of a Possessed* in the *The Très Riches Heures of Jean Duc de Berry* by the Limbourg Brothers is just one instance in which this type of representation of a demon appears (fig. 6). Other manuscripts ranging from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century feature similar demons being exorcised by Christ or a saint (fig. 6-12). The demons vary somewhat in their zoomorphic add-ons, such as claws and tails. However, the demon is often shown escaping directly from the mouth with a foot still on the lips of the demoniac or hovering above the open mouth of the demoniac. Other images depict a single demon flying above the chaotic scene. Depicting the demon in this way is reflective of medieval demonology where medieval Christians believed that a demoniac's body literally contained a physically present demon. The interior experience of a medieval demoniac was then manifested in exterior symptoms, a belief which was continuously reiterated in miracle

⁴³ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 40.

stories, where the demon is “vomited” as various objects such as a toad, blood, frozen coal, black smoke, a hairy worm, or other various “terrible things.”⁴⁴ Early Christian writers including Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius believed the Devil was immortal but corporeal, and therefore medieval artists depicted demons as solid beings escaping through an orifice (typically the mouth) during exorcisms.⁴⁵ Later, in the early modern period, both Catholics and Protestants considered an exorcism to be successful when the demoniac vomited a foreign object as visible proof of the expulsion. The physicality of demons becomes a point of contention in the early modern period, in a shift that reflects the script in cultural theatrics.

The religious unrest of the Protestant Reformation and Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation permeated early modern culture and society. The most prolific time for images that depict demonic possession was during this very period. Art played a role in stoking interest in the topic. Small, reproducible prints could be widely disseminated and were well-suited to propaganda, while larger more public images such as frescoes and altarpieces had great significance to the Christian community at large. Woodcuts and engravings also found their way into more widely distributed Bibles, published possession narratives, and other demonological texts. As the reforms cast their shadows over much of early modern life, and Catholics and Protestants vied for the souls of the demoniac and the loyalty of the audience during exorcisms, images of demonic possession came to embody the power of the institutional church.

Early modern Catholic images of demonic possession changed from focusing on the medieval preoccupation with the physical relationship between the demon and the

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁵ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 58.

demoniac to display the power of the Church and its clergy. One of the first early modern Catholic images of demonic possession presents a shift towards a new exorcist, the local priest, to the contemporary audience. As discussed previously, images of demonic possession before the mid-fifteenth century typically represented Christ or a known saint as the exorcist. These images of saints as exorcists worked to validate miraculous intervention or celebrate the works of saints under consideration for canonization.⁴⁶ However, in 1470 in Florence, a panel from the *predella* to an altarpiece, painted by the Master of Saint Severin, depicts an anonymous priest performing the exorcism of a young woman and calling on the spirit of Saint Severin for aid (fig. 12).⁴⁷ The efficacy of calling upon the saint is visually represented by the miniature figure of the saint near the priest, chasing the exorcized demon. Emphasizing the idea of a priest calling upon a saint's power to perform an exorcism, the stole of the priest forms lines that point directly to the red book in his hands, most likely an exorcism manual. Thus, this painting reveals a shift away from images that primarily demonstrated the divinity of Christ and the power of God and instead moves towards the later trend of images that embody the power of the institutional Church and its agents, the clergy.

It is important to note that the presence of a demon in an image does not necessarily denote an image of exorcism or even a demoniac. Demons are present in images of demonic obsession, historical sinners, madmen, and witches. Demonic obsession refers to people who are tormented by demons, but never internally invaded. For example, an image from *Vita Beati P. Ignatii Loiolae Societatis Iesu Fundatoris Romae*, depicts Saint Ignatius of Loyola being tormented by demons in his bed, though

⁴⁶ Kromm, *The Art of Frenzy: Public Madness in the Visual Culture, 1500-1850*, 71.

⁴⁷ Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, 225–227.

the saint was never possessed (fig. 13). Historical figures, such as Saul and Herod from the Old Testament, are represented with demons near their shoulders. These figures typify sinners that are associated with demons though they themselves are not possessed.⁴⁸ Similarly, there are images of madmen, who seek cures from their ailments at the same shrines as demoniacs. David Lederer, in his book *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe*, strongly supports his argument that early modern sufferers of “religious afflictions” are distinguishable as madmen, demoniacs, melancholics, etc.⁴⁹ For example, an ex-voto, *The Veneration of St. Anastasia* depicts a popular Bavarian pilgrimage site named after the saint who cured a variety of ailments (fig. 14). The image depicts both a madman and a demoniac.⁵⁰ The fully clothed madman has cast off his chains and kneels on one knee before the bust of the Saint, who is also depicted alive above the scene. As he prays, the madman points to his head, directing the viewer to the area of his affliction. The nearly naked demoniac, on the other hand, has fallen to the ground in his fits, pulling at the rags around his body as his demons escape in a plume of black smoke. The demoniac appears more out of control than the so-called madman. Furthermore, the Roman Ritual, which includes the Catholic Church’s official rites of exorcism, insists that the exorcist knows the symptoms “that distinguish a possessed person from other individuals who suffer from melancholia or any other illness.”⁵¹ This distinction demonstrates that early modern Europeans separated

⁴⁸ Jane E. Kromm, *Studies in the Iconography of Madness, 1600-1900* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1988), 35.

⁴⁹ Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon*, 145-196.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁵¹ Catholic Church, *Rituale Romanum*, (Rome: Ex Typographia Polyglotta, 1894), 249.

possession from other afflictions.⁵² Finally, images of witches often include demons to emphasize and assert the diabolical nature of witchcraft.⁵³ As such, these images reflect different associations connected with the presence of demons.

As instances of alleged demonic possession were at their peak in the seventeenth century, images of demonic possession also reached their dramatic peak, particularly in the works of prominent Counterreformation artists such as Juan de Valdés Leal and Peter Paul Rubens. While the idea of the dramatic theatricality of images of demonic possession during the early modern period will be expanded upon in the following chapters, images such as *The Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* by Rubens and *Saint Ignatius Exorcises a Possessed Man* by Juan de Valdés Leal depict the quintessential qualities of the dramatic portrayal of demonic possession (fig. 4 and 15). For example, both of these artists represent the demoniacs in a bestial fashion by depicting their eyes rolling into the back of their heads and mouths open in an agonizing cry of pain, teeth bared. The demoniac is then made even more dramatic through the representation of the exorcist. In these images, the Jesuit Saint Ignatius is a pillar of strength and control. Furthermore, the exorcist is shown reverentially calm with a somber facial expression and eyes that look towards heaven. The depiction of demons always existing in this iconographic tradition also signifies the success of the exorcism and the power of the exorcist. In Rubens's altarpiece, wide-eyed demons escape towards the chapel and as a sign of defeat and terror, one demon's tail is represented between his own legs. Finally,

⁵² Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, 349; For typical lists of symptoms see Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, (New York, Barnes & Noble, 1970), 167-71.

⁵³ Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

the audience, or the figures represented in both of these images that are neither the demoniac nor the exorcist, stand as witnesses and as both physical and literal supporters of the demoniac during his suffering.

By discussing the history of demonic possession and of images of demonic possession, this chapter places early modern images of demonic possession within a firm historical framework. Furthermore, this chapter explores the changing meaning of possession and the purpose of exorcism in the Christian tradition throughout antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern period. With this historical framework, it is possible to view images as theatrical in subject and theological in content through the interpretive structure of cultural theatrics.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL THEATRICALS AND DEMONIC POSSESSION

Cultural theatricals is an interpretive structure developed for analyzing images of demonic possession. It includes three key aspects: script, actors, and audience. It is related to but distinct from Brian Levack's notion of "cultural performance," which states that demoniacs, exorcists, and anyone who participated in the actual events of exorcisms were performers in religious dramas.⁵⁴ As discussed previously, both cultural performance and cultural theatricals are performative explanations because they describe either the actual events of possession or the images as communicating social, political, or religious ideas. And while this thesis relies heavily on Levack's contribution for this explanation, it also distinguishes itself as different from Levack because the structure of cultural theatricals conforms to visual analyses. While cultural performance may be applied to actual events, the application of cultural theatricals is clearer and more concise when applied to images of demonic possession. Cultural theatricals identifies the theological message conveyed through images of possession and exorcism. Such images of possession and exorcism (rather than possession and exorcisms themselves) are a more appropriate subject matter for studying the theatricality of early modern demonic possession because the artists, patrons, and learned advisors who collaborated in their creation held the interpretative leverage of conveying theological messages through depictions of exorcism during the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. This chapter discusses the presence of script, actors, and audience in early modern images. The images selected for examination in this chapter, and the following chapter, are some of the most

⁵⁴ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 29.

recognizable images from various artists' oeuvres and clearly display the effects of script, actors, and audience.

Script

In images of demonic possession, script reflects the influence of religious texts on the content and form of images. Script can refer to a variety of materials from the early modern period such as the Bible, sermons, possession narratives, demonological treatises by theologians and inquisitors, exorcism manuals, reports of witchcraft prosecutions, printed versions of plays featuring demoniacs, and records of exorcisms performed at shrines and other locations. Some texts, such as possession narratives, which clearly describe the events of possession and the words and actions of both the exorcist and demoniac, are more definitive in the theological message they provide for the actors to portray. Possession narratives and other types of script can elucidate to artists, patrons, and learned advisors ways to depict the appearance or actions of the demoniac or exorcist. On the other hand, some texts provide a more simple narrative. The Bible, for instance, does not provide descriptive details about the demoniac's state, but still offers a textual influence for the communication of theological messages. In the early modern period, images of demonic possession reflect theological ideas from the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation regarding the reality of possession, the power of exorcisms, existence of spirits, miracles, and the apocalypse.

The discourses of St. Thomas Aquinas, a pillar of authority in Catholic theology, provide a clear example of how medieval script influenced the representation of demons in the early modern period.⁵⁵ Thomas Aquinas was a prominent thirteenth-century scholar

⁵⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Theological Texts*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

who placed theological concepts in an Aristotelian framework.⁵⁶ While demons are not the focus of Aquinas's theology, in his *Summa Theologica* he investigates the nature of spirits. Aquinas claims that angels, like divine or demonic spirits, are not corporeal in any way.⁵⁷ As mentioned previously, earlier Christian writers including Tertullian, Origen, and Lactantius believed that the Devil was corporeal.⁵⁸ During the Middle Ages, the University of Paris condemned Aquinas's ideas on spirits and their non-corporeality.⁵⁹ Eventually, the Christian community accepted Aquinas's ideas, which slowly began to manifest in early modern images of possession. In other words, medieval artists followed the lead of early Christian writers and depicted solid beings escaping an accessible portal, often the mouth. Early modern images, on the other hand, developed visual cues to depict the non-corporeality of demons such as depicting many demons instead of one, depicting the demons escaping in smoke from the demoniac's mouth, and then the depiction of demons as spectral (though still retaining the form of human bodies.)

The end of the fifteenth century saw the end of the medieval focus on the physical relationship between the demon and the human body. Beginning in the sixteenth century, artists depicted demons in larger numbers, rather than the single black-winged demon, as seen in Belot's engraving of the exorcism of Nicole Obry at the Cathedral of Laon (fig. 16). The multiplicity of demons in scenes of exorcism persists throughout the sixteenth

⁵⁶ Rik Van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Peter Wawrykow, *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 3; Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 58.

⁵⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. I. question 50, articles 1 and 2 in Aquinas, *Theological Texts*, 342-343.

⁵⁸ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 58.

⁵⁹ Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 68.

century as the reports of demonic possession rose (see fig. 2, 16, and 17). The rise might reflect the perceived increase in demonic activity and, consequently, may be intended to make the authority of the exorcist more important, demonstrating his ability to cast out many demons at once.

However, when the rate of instances of possession was at its highest, towards the end of the sixteenth century and beginning of the seventeenth century, artists began to experiment with depicting non-corporeal beings based on this new script. An example of the these type of non-corporeal demons is *Christ Healing the Man Possessed with Devils*, an engraving by Johan Wierix depicting the Gerasene demoniac (fig. 18). The male demoniac is folded backwards in agony on a shoreline as a plume of smoke escapes his mouth, carrying small black winged demons. The smoke is one way to show a non-corporeal demon. Similarly, two artists of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation tested the limits and appearances of non-corporeal demons in their representation of the Jesuit St. Ignatius of Loyola. Peter Paul Rubens represents phantasmal demons flying away from the demoniac and his exorcist towards the apse in his *Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (fig. 4). The almost transparent demons appear as humanoid figures with tails and some serpent-like characteristics. Similarly, in Juan de Valdés Leal's *Saint Ignatius Exorcises a Possessed*, skeletal, dragon-like monsters are represented amongst a blurry fog from the demoniac's agonized mouth (fig. 15). Levack describes the change in the appearance of demons as artistic representations that make "abstract theological ideas regarding immaterial spirits comprehensible, [and] they were also representations of the

aerial bodies or phantasms that scholastic theologians claimed the Devil was perfectly capable of forming.’’⁶⁰

The influential script of Thomas Aquinas was just one example of the ways in which religious texts informed artists on the content and form of images of demonic possession. Aquinas, as one of the most important medieval theologians, who was a central figure in the intellectual movement of scholasticism, which was in turn responsible for the sustained interest in demonology. Medieval scholasticism was fundamental in creating and disseminating ideas on the nature of demons.⁶¹ Thus, Aquinas is one of the most important influences on demonic possession, though his texts are certainly not the only contribution to the content and form of images of demonic possession. The many influences of script on images of demonic possession are beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, suggestions for future scholarship would include an in-depth analysis of prominent medieval and early modern theological texts on demons and demonic possession, or exorcism manuals, and a search for parallels in the representations of those texts.

Actors

In distinguishing actual events from images of demonic possession, the term actors implies an agency or knowledge of the act, and it is nearly impossible to prove that actual demoniacs and exorcists knowingly performed in exorcisms. However, in images of demonic possession the artist, patron, and learned advisor collaborated as stage directors, completely controlling the appearance and action of the demoniac and the exorcist. The figures of the demoniac and the exorcist in images are actors because they

⁶⁰ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 62.

⁶¹ Ibid., 84.

are depicted as performing the script provided for them by the artist, patron, and learned advisor. The theological messages conveyed through possession and exorcism is clearer in images of demonic possession (rather than the events of possession and exorcism themselves) because the artist, patron, and learned advisor held the interpretative leverage of conveying theological messages through depictions of actors in scenes of exorcism.

Artistic representations of exorcists reveal that, for all Christian exorcists, Christ is the source for emulation and is the first actor. In images that present Christ as the exorcist, Christ is the central or largest figure present in the scene, he is typically elevated, one or both of his arms are outstretched and in most images he is portrayed with a halo. Examples include Raphael's and Rubens's paintings of the same title, the *Transfiguration* (fig. 19 and 20) and Johan Wierix's *Christ Healing the Man Possessed with a Devil* (fig. 18). The structuring of Christ as an exorcist in images like these provides a model for the Catholic Church's holiest figures to emulate in their own exorcisms.

Images of saints as exorcism-performing actors are visually similar to those portraying Christ as an exorcist. The protagonists are generally elevated in the scene, often on the stairs of an altar. Their arms are generally outstretched and most images their heads are capped with a halo. These traits are visible in the paintings of saints including Ignatius of Loyola, Francis of Paola, and others (fig. 4, 10, 14, 15, 22, and 23). Typically the saint looks up, as if towards heaven, to implore the power of Christ as he performs the script of the exorcism.⁶² The saint as actor in depictions of an exorcism is a visual

⁶² Interestingly, one of the most famous early modern female exorcists, Saint Catherine of Siena is depicted gazing reverently towards the ground, for example see French School, *Saint Catherine of Siena Exorcising a Possessed Woman*, ca. 17th century, Bibliothèque National, Engraving (fig. 25).

reminder of the power of God and his intervention in human lives; images like these propagate his miraculous power.

In images like these, the saint stands in opposition to the horrifying image of a second actor, the demoniac. James Clifton discusses the representation of the demoniacs specifically in his article “The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body,” in which he describes images of disempowered humans, including demoniacs, as an inspiration of horror. A common theme of any horror genre is that of the threat to the human body. This is visible in Catholic imagery, which focuses on the horrible pain of the demoniac. Yet, Catholic imagery also promises the relief from suffering by depicting a successful exorcism. The demon, as the monstrous other, is horrifying because it is a direct threat to the demoniac’s body. The viewer who is concerned about the threat to his or her own body also feels this threat vicariously through the image.⁶³

The best of the Counterreformation artists dramatically contrast the holiness of Christ and the saint with the savagery of the demoniac actor. In one of the most pronounced examples, a viewer can clearly see this binary played out in Juan de Valdés Leal’s *Saint Ignatius Exorcises a Possessed* (fig. 15). The saint is pictured in humble robes calmly and reverently looking towards heaven with his hands outstretched towards the suffering demoniac. In contrast, the demoniac falls to the ground in his torn trousers and rips open his shirt with one hand. The demoniac’s head tilts backwards and his mouth opens in an anguished cry. The exposed teeth and wild eyes make the man appear more like a rabid dog than a human being. The demoniac’s left hand is even pushing away at the cloak of Saint Ignatius; the two actors could not be more different in their

⁶³ Clifton, “The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body,” 377.

countenance and gestures. While this is an exaggerated example it is also typical for images to place their actors at odds with each other to show the holiness of the exorcist, or saint, or Christ in contrast to the writhing, animal-like portrayal of the demoniac. Increasingly, this visual duality lends itself to other binaries such as divine over demonic, male over female, and clergy over laity.

Other, lesser religious figures pictured as actors performing an exorcism in images of demonic possession, such as priests and monks, are portrayed in a slightly different manner than that of Christ or a saint. Lesser religious figures tend to be less centralized than of Christ or saints as exorcists, and lesser exorcists call upon the power of the Christ, saints, sacred objects, or Marian imagery for aid. For example, in an engraving by Jacques Callot of *An Italian Exorcism in the Seventeenth Century*, the anonymous priest exorcises a young woman who makes a dramatic motion in the foreground (fig. 21). The priest, at the right hand of the demoniac, is nearly indistinguishable among the crowd, and undoubtedly reading an exorcism manual. More apparent, is the devotional image of the Virgin Mary above the crowd, in the center of the engraving. To further direct the viewer's eye towards the image of Mary, the two framing figures similarly direct their attention to the image. The standing male figure on the right points to the image with his spear in hand and the kneeling male figure on the left directs his prayers towards the image of Mary. The inclusion of Mary, often a symbolic type for "Ecclesia," is like depicting the clergy member imploring the power of the saints; both Mary and the saints are symbols of the Church and thus emphasize that the exorcist is a foot soldier of the institutional Church's authority. Thus, actors and the ways in which they are deployed illustrate the goals of the early modern period such as the institutional

power of the Church, reinforcing the apparent efficacy of theological and doctrinal agendas upon the masses.

Audience

An audience member in images of demonic possession is any human figure in the picture that is neither the demoniac nor the exorcist. An audience member is depicted explicitly in every image of demonic possession. These seemingly extra but actually essential figures are vital in understanding all images of demonic possession as functioning within cultural theatrics. It appears that this topic remains untouched by scholars thus far.

The presence of the audience is particularly expressive in Renaissance paintings, as discussed by Leon Battista Alberti in his widely circulated treatise, *On Painting*.⁶⁴

Alberti writes:

A painting in which there are bodies in many dissimilar poses is always especially pleasing. ... For this reason be careful not to repeat the same gesture or pose. The *istoria* will move the soul of the beholder when each man painted there clearly shows the movement of his own soul. It happens in nature that nothing more than herself is found capable of things like herself; we weep with the weeping, laugh with the laughing, and grieve with the grieving.⁶⁵

Alberti describes the figures represented in Renaissance paintings as expressing the emotion of the scene and he also describes the emotional response of the viewer of the painting. Alberti describes the importance of extra figures, or audience members, in paintings that react to the scene they are a part of and furthermore, provide a model for the audience or the viewer of the painting themselves. In cultural theatrics the audience includes both the figures represented in images of demonic possession and the viewers of

⁶⁴ Leon Battista Alberti and John R. Spencer, *On Painting* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 76-77.

the painting. All audience members receive the theological messages conveyed in the image.

The depicted audience members are not solely witnesses, but are occasionally also participants in the drama. For example, in the mosaic from Ravenna, it is unclear from the biblical narrative who the figure dressed in white is (perhaps a disciple), but he clearly observes the successful exorcism of the demoniac, which in turn encourages the belief in Christ's ability to perform miracles (fig. 5). In an image of *Saint Eligius Releases a Demon From the Possessed*, from the fifteenth century, two male figures restrain the demoniac while witnessing the holiness and Christ-like authority of St. Eligius as he performs the exorcism (fig. 10). Hence, the audience participation in the scene varies throughout the history of images of demonic possession from witnesses to participants in restraining the demoniac, but they are all always members of an audience. As a final example, a group of monks act as an audience to witness the exorcism of a young woman in the *Panel of the Small Mariatzell Miracle Altar* by the Danube School (fig. 2). The depicted monks witness the theatrics, including the intercession of Mary through the light emanating from high on the right wall, and the power of the priest's stole around the woman's neck. They observe the power of calling upon sacred objects within the Catholic tradition. The inclusion of an audience in images of demonic possession shows the underlying presence of cultural theatrics.

Cultural theatrics is an important interpretive structure for viewing images of demonic possession, particularly in the early modern period, in order to identify how these images project the theological messages of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. Through an analysis of script, these images illustrate the differences

between medieval images of possession and early modern images of the same subject due to the disparate theological contexts of the times and the gradual acceptance of Aquinas's theology in Christianity. By analyzing the visual appearance of actors in images of demonic possession, these images demonstrate how the artist, patron, and learned advisor propagate theological messages in visual form. Some of the most prominent theological messages portrayed pertain to the power of the Roman Catholic Church in performing exorcism, the fear of the demoniac and the threat to the human body, and the efficacy of the clergy members to call upon the power of Christ, the saints, or sacred objects. Finally, the inclusion of audience members supports the structure of cultural theatrics by showing figures who receive the theological messages. Furthermore, these essential figures encourage the viewer of the painting, on the other side of the frame, to receive the theological messages.

CHAPTER IV

APPLYING CULTURAL THEATRICALS TO IMAGES OF DEMONIC POSSESSION IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

This chapter uses the interpretive structure of cultural theatricals to analyze case studies of specific images that depict scenes of possession and exorcisms with script, actors, and audience. These analyses show succinctly the uses of the script, actors, and audience in cultural theatricals across a range of images. The examples demonstrate that the early modern period used theatricality to emphasize Catholic theology in images of demonic possession. At this time, Catholics most successfully used images of demonic possession to promote conversion and retention of the faithful, highlighting elements of horror and theatricality. Although Protestants were less likely to use images to promote theological ideas regarding possession and dispossession, the following chapter also discusses the difficult relationship between Protestant imagery and demonic possession as comparanda.

A Comparison of Biblical Images

Because the Bible is the foundation of the Christian tradition of demonic possession, it is practical to begin with images that use the Bible as their primary script. Two images that reflect the same stories in a similar way are Raphael's *Transfiguration* and Peter Paul Rubens's painting of the same title (fig. 20 and 21). Raphael completed his painting in 1516 or early 1517, on the eve of the Reformation and decades before the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and the beginning of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. Rubens, meanwhile, completed his painting in 1604-1605, around the height of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. These images are based on the same

biblical narrative and use similar composition, and yet they differ stylistically and in their representation of the demoniac. The Baroque style is more theatrical than Raphael's, nascent Mannerism, and it follows that Rubens's demoniac is represented with an elevated degree of horror.

Both paintings depict the story of Christ's transfiguration and the boy with a demon (seemingly unconnected episodes that are adjacent to each other in scripture).⁶⁶ In the Biblical account, Christ reveals himself as divine to the apostles and a demoniac boy is healed. Therefore, both Raphael and Rubens, with the approval of their patrons and the presumed collaboration of learned advisors, chose to depict Christ levitating above the disciples while in the bottom right corner of each painting the father and possessed son appear.⁶⁷ According to Scripture, the boy's father approaches Christ and says, "Master, I have brought my son to thee, having a dumb spirit. Who, wheresoever he taketh him, dasheth him: and he foameth and gnasheth with the teeth and pineth away."⁶⁸ Mark also describes the boy's actions when he is brought before Christ, "And when he had seen him, immediately the spirit troubled him and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming."⁶⁹ The father describes the boy's symptoms further as, "oftentimes hath he cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him."⁷⁰ This boy is sometimes called "the epileptic boy" because his symptoms are similar to the violent convulsions of

⁶⁶ The Transfiguration of Jesus is found in Mark 9:2-8, Matt. 17:1-9, and Luke 9:28-36. The Boy with a Demon is found in Mark 9:14-29, Matt. 17:14-21, and Luke 9:37-49.

⁶⁷ Mark 9:3.

⁶⁸ Mark 9:16-17.

⁶⁹ Mark 9:19.

⁷⁰ Mark 9:21.

epilepsy.⁷¹ The symptoms described by Mark, visible in both Raphael's and Rubens's paintings, are the physical symptoms of convulsion, foaming at the mouth, and gnashing of teeth.

Both artists emphasize Christ's divinity in their composition and display his ability to exorcise demons. The boy demoniac adds to the element of chaos in the lower half of the painting and contrasts Christ's divinity with the depiction of his horrible appearance and unnatural movements. Giorgio Vasari wrote in his *Lives of Artists* that the *Transfiguration* was Raphael's "most beautiful and most divine" work.⁷² In the top half of this image, Christ is represented during his transfiguration as a radiant figure in pure white robes, which signal his divinity. The two prophets Elias and Moses flank Christ and their presences further confirm Christ's divinity.⁷³ The divine Christ is contrasted with the chaos of the earthly realm, represented in the foreground of the artwork. The focal point of the foreground is the actor, the child demoniac. While Christ is the cause of the demoniac's (soon-to-be-successful) exorcism, he is pictured here during his transfiguration and not as an exorcist. These two paintings are exceptions in the genre of images of demonic possession, because they do not depict demons as visual confirmation of the success of the exorcism; perhaps because both images focus rather on the divinity of Christ. His authority as an exorcist is assumed, however, through the representation of

⁷¹ In Matthew, the father requests Jesus's help and claims that his son is a lunatic. Matthew's use of 'lunatic' refers to the Greek word for "moonstruck," *seleniazetai*, because it was believed that the Moon caused epilepsy. A literal translation of *seleniazetai* would mean lunatic. The Greeks believed that the Gods caused epilepsy and it was considered a sacred disease. Epilepsy can also indicate demonic origin because it was derived from the Greek word for seizure, which can include the taking of a body by a *daimon*. Raphael's painting plays on this tradition through the watery reflection of the moon in the lower left corner of the painting. See Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 115.

⁷² Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 330.

⁷³ Mark 9:3.

his divinity. Raphael deploys the demoniac actor with swelling, defined muscles, his eyes rolling into his skull, his mouth agape, and an unnatural strain in movement. Vasari describes the boy by saying, “While he stretches himself out with a contorted posture, screaming and rolling his eyes, shows his suffering in his flesh, in his veins, and in his beating pulse contaminated by the malignity of the spirit, and with pallid skin makes that forced and fearsome gesture.”⁷⁴ Vasari is identifying the symptom of convulsions as represented by Raphael. The way in which Raphael depicts these symptoms dehumanizes the boy among the crowd of astonished audience members and the divine Christ being transfigured before their eyes.

Surely Raphael set a strong precedent for Rubens. It is certain that Rubens deeply admired Raphael and was aware of the story and symptoms depicted by Raphael. Since it is nearly a century later and baroque in style, it is not a surprise that Rubens’s rendering of the boy is more dramatic than Raphael’s. Rubens’s boy’s arms, hands, and head are twisting in more unnatural ways, there is foam coming from the corners of the boy’s open mouth, and his eyes are rolling into his head. The boy’s skin is depicted in an unnatural gray tone and his limbs are stiff throughout his convulsions. The boy’s right hand is clenched in a fist and pulls at his already torn clothes. Furthermore, the boy is lifted off the ground, indicating that his movements are so violent that he is unable to stand on his own and must be held by his father. Rubens’s boy is more out of control and violent than the boy depicted in Raphael’s painting. Here, both artists acknowledge the script from the Bible and emphasize the dramatic convulsions of the boy in order to portray the divinity of Christ.

⁷⁴ Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 329-330.

In the Bible, Mark's version of this story is longer and includes the most detail about the boy's symptoms, but Matthew's version focuses more on the faith of the boy's father and of the disciples. In Matthew's version, the disciples ask why they were unable to cast out the demon and "Jesus said to them: Because of your unbelief. For, amen I say to you have faith...and nothing shall be impossible to you."⁷⁵ These biblical stories are simple narratives for understanding these images, both the narrative and the image focus primarily on demonstrating the authority of Christ over demons. In these images, Christ's authority over demons is clearly demonstrated through the representation of his divinity in the top half of these paintings and is dramatically contrasted with the boy's uncontrollable demoniac behaviors.

Both artists provide ample audience members to the scene, including the twelve disciples. This is an abbreviated depiction of the scripture, where Mark 9:13 states, "And coming to his disciples he saw a great multitude about them and the scribes disputing with them." Among the many figures is the female in the foreground, depicted in striking *contrapposto*, who turns her head and stretches her arm towards the boy demoniac. She directs all eyes, those of the other figures represented in the painting and those of the viewer looking through the frame, to the boy's misery.

A Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation Image

Another Rubens altarpiece, *The Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, depicts the founder of the Jesuit Order. In *The Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, the saint is dressed in priestly garments, one hand is on the altar and the other is stretched out over the chaotic scene below (fig. 4). A row of Jesuits appears to his right. Below the saint, among a crowd of people, are two thrashing demoniacs: one figure is female and the

⁷⁵ Matt. 17:19.

other male. A group of demons escapes from the church's apse as putti fly about the colonnade. Saint Ignatius is not particularly known for his exorcisms, but he is elevated in Rubens's paintings of him as the exorcist and is clearly the chief dramatic actor in this exorcism image.

The most influential script for Rubens's depiction of the saint as an exorcist comes from the text *Vita Beati P. Ignatii de Loyola Fundatoris Societatis Iesu*.⁷⁶ This book contains an engraving attributed to Rubens that depicts the saint being tormented by demons (fig. 13). Another engraving in this text by Hieronymus Wierix depicts the saint performing an exorcism (fig. 18). Ignatius's posture in Rubens's painting emulates one of the conventional postures given to Christ as an exorcist. Rubens depicts the exorcist, Saint Ignatius, standing above the scene with open arms. As an actor, and an exorcist, Ignatius implores the power of Christ by looking towards heaven and also having a hand on the altar near a chalice, most likely containing the Eucharist. Through this depiction of Saint Ignatius calling upon both the power of Christ and the Eucharist, the image works to legitimize Catholicism as the true religion by its power to exorcise demons. Furthermore, the row of Jesuits against the columns also support the saint in his exorcism and moreover, support the power of the saint to exorcize demons. Situating the Catholic Church as the authority over demons, Rubens's Saint Ignatius rises calmly over the scene, standing as a veritable pillar of the Church's authority as opposed to the demoniacs who lack bodily control.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ John W. O'Malley and James P. M. Walsh, *Constructing a Saint through Images: The 1609 Illustrated Biography of Ignatius of Loyola* (Saint Joseph's University Press, 2008).

⁷⁷ It was said that God even gave Saint Ignatius the ability to control his tears. Clifton, 390.

Rubens depicts the saint as an exorcist though he is not particularly known for his exorcisms. The script for this depiction of the saint is the saint's role as an exorcist in his *Vita*, which also contains an image of the saint as an exorcist. This is another example of a simple narrative in which Rubens and his Jesuit patrons have coded theological messages within the image. Saint Ignatius emulates Christ as an exorcist and the demoniacs are depicted in the most exaggerated ways a demoniac was expected to act by the audience. The horror-inducing depiction of the demoniacs contrasts that divinity of the exorcist and inspires viewers, or the audience, to adhere to the theological message of the power of the Roman Catholic Church conveyed by Saint Ignatius.

The suffering of a demoniac's body, most often expressed through the symptom of convulsion, is one way to convey that an individual has lost control of his or her body. The depiction of convulsion is slightly more complicated because it requires an assumption of observed behavior.⁷⁸ Convulsions, as inherently time-based movements, are simulated through visual cues such as bulging muscles, contorted postures, and painful expressions because prints or paintings only capture a moment. For example, in the *Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, the male demoniac is depicted having fallen to the ground and the broken ropes around his ankles suggest he has broken free of his bindings in his violent movement. Furthermore, his supine position with his legs in the air, his arched back, and his face turned upside down signify his unnatural convulsions. The female demoniac is similarly arching, or falling backwards into the crowd. Her eyes roll into the back of her head, and her black tongue is protruding from her mouth. The woman's right hand grabs her own hair and pulls violently while the other pulls at her shirt collar and exposes her breast. The woman's exposure of herself is an obvious

⁷⁸ Ibid., 379.

encroachment of accepted moral behaviors and speaks to some of the new symptoms of possession that became more widespread in the demoniac literature after the thirteenth century.⁷⁹ Thus, the combination of amoral behavior, unnatural physical manifestations such as the black tongue, the loss of balance or falling, and the twisted poses all of which we see in *Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* signal the demoniac's loss of bodily control.

The inversion or exaggerated back bend of the demoniac is a key dramatic element in horrifying the viewer since it is the most unnatural. Johan Wierix also uses this exaggerated back bend in his engraving of the Gerasene demoniac (fig. 18). The inverted figure, especially the full inversion that allows the viewer to see the entire face of the male demoniac in Rubens's *Miracles of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, easily allows the viewer to come face-to-face with the threat to his or her own body. This visual affect effectively suggests loss of control and communicates the horror of the uncontrollable body.⁸⁰ In his article, which examines inverted figures such as demoniacs, Clifton does not trace the genealogy of the inverted figure, but he assumes that it is clear that this figure carries negative connotations and that inversion suggests the uncontrollability of the figure.⁸¹ Rubens himself mentions the power of inversion in a letter, when proposing the composition of Saint Peter's martyrdom for his Cologne painting. Rubens states, "His crucifixion head-downwards, a striking scene of which I would make something extraordinary according to my powers."⁸² Inversion is therefore a powerful tool in

⁷⁹ Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, 11–15.

⁸⁰ Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body," 383.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 384–385.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 385.

communicating loss of control to the viewer. Rubens's portrayal of the saint, as unshakeable as the columns behind him, gains even more power and dignity through the contrast to the inverted demoniacs below him. Rubens's viewers know that this is an image of demonic possession and they trust that Saint Ignatius, representing the Catholic Church, has the power to get rid of the Devil. Thus, Rubens supports the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation through his depiction of the saint as an exorcist.

The Difficulty in Protestant Imagery and Demonic Possession

Protestant imagery, during the Reformation, remains a difficult subject for scholars because of the many waves of iconoclasm and aniconism that took place in Europe during those years. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that it is challenging to find Protestant images of demonic possession or exorcism. The difficulty arises from translating Protestant theology into imagery, especially as the power to exorcise possessing demons was closely aligned, theologically, with the Roman Catholic Church. In this respect, the Roman Catholic Church always had the advantage of theatricality. Protestants' problematic relationship with images explains why there are so few images of possession and exorcism.

Protestant images of possession and exorcism do exist, however, one of these, a print by Matthäus Merian the Elder, is a depiction of one of Christ's exorcisms in the Bible. It is an illustration of the Luther Bible, the so called the *Icones Biblicae*, published by Lazari Zetzner in 1630.⁸³ In the *Icones Biblicae*, Merian engraved an illustration of

⁸³ Lucas Heinrich Wüthrich, *Matthaeus Merian d.Ä. eine Biographie* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe Verlag, 2007), 132.

Luke 11:14, “Christ Exorcising a Blind and Mute Demoniac” (fig. 25).⁸⁴ Once the spirit is exorcized, the man is able to speak and the crowd is astonished. And yet some critics among the crowd claimed that Christ had cast out the demons through the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons.⁸⁵ This story reveals a controversy that arose late in the public ministry of Jesus, by which time his fame as an exorcist was widespread. Mark adds that Jesus himself was accused of being possessed by Beelzebul.⁸⁶ Christ argued that if Beelzebul drove out demons by his own power, his demonic kingdom would be destroyed, for “if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.”⁸⁷ Luke’s narrative explicitly states that only the power of God can exorcize demons, encouraging the faith of the laity. Thus, this story is a fruitful image to be explored by the literal exegeses of Protestantism, because Protestants favored faith and grace over good works, and the focus of this particular Gospel narrative is on faith.⁸⁸

This image still retains its theatricality through use of script, actors, and audience, however, the Protestant image does not exaggerate the contrast between the exorcist and the demoniac, nor does it attempt to horrify the viewer through the inversion of the demoniac. Merian’s image shows Christ as the actor and exorcist in the middle of a large crowd. Jesus is not the largest figure nor is he elevated above the scene, but he is

⁸⁴ Matthäus Merian was born in Basel in 1593. By this time Basel had been a Protestant-dominated city for two generations. Merian worked closely with Theodor de Bry, a famous Flemish Protestant engraver, best known for his illustrations of Native American life in Virginia. Merian also married Bry’s eldest daughter. For more on Merian see Wüthrich, *Matthaeus Merian d.Ä. eine Biographie*.

⁸⁵ The critics vary according to the account: Pharisees (according to Matt.), scribes (according to Mark), and the crowd (according to Luke).

⁸⁶ Mark 3:24.

⁸⁷ Mark 3:24.

⁸⁸ Another image from the Bible that could more easily translate to the finer points of Protestant theology is the story of the boy with a demon, because from that narrative is where Protestant concludes that exorcisms should exclusively involve prayer and fasting. Matt. 17: 21.

separated from the other figures and also given a (nearly indistinguishable) halo. The demoniac, the other actor, lies on the ground in front of Christ, also surrounded by the large crowd as the audience. The demoniac is depicted nearly nude, with exaggerated musculature. The figure is not shown inverted as so many Catholic demoniacs are, and there is no attempt to horrify the viewer through inversion or other compromises of the body. Instead, the image allows the viewer to focus on the work of Christ. Finally, a single, small black demon escapes the demoniac's mouth in a phantasmal wave of ectoplasm. The use of a single demon, inside the phantasmal cloud, shows an awareness of Aquinas's theology and script, but a disregard for the dramatic potential of the trope. In this image, the most important aspect to the Protestant cause is the role of the audience, since communicating the importance of faith is imperative to Protestant goals for image making and exorcism. Furthermore, Christ is preaching to the crowd through the exorcism of the demoniac. Merian includes the large crowd of onlookers who could be the Pharisees, or the scribes, or just a large crowd of ordinary people who witness Christ's miracle and then hear his preaching. The visual emphasis on the Word of God is a crucial component to the theological message communicated in Merian's engraving.

While this is an image of exorcism for a Protestant audience who viewed the Luther Bible, or the *Icones Biblicae*, it is more significant that Protestant examples are so hard to find. This scarcity goes to show that cultural theatrics is more applicable to Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation images of demonic possession. While the three aspects are visible in this Protestant example of demonic possession, the theatricality comes to the fore when viewing images from the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

These case studies show how artists, patrons, and learned advisors of the early modern period depict the three elements of cultural theatrics. Raphael's and Rubens's paintings exemplify a before and after pairing of Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation images of demonic possession. Similarly, *The Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, shows Rubens's mastery of dramatic effects and the horror of the disempowered body through the inversion of principle figures. Finally, a Protestant image of demonic possession, Merian's print illustrates not only that Protestants focused on the Word of God and faith in images when communicating theological messages, but also (in its uniqueness) that Protestant images are difficult to find because of their problematic relationship with images. Thus, it is evident that artists during the early modern period used elements of cultural theatrics to control the theological messages of their images, especially by accenting the dramatic tools of the horror of the disempowered body of the demoniac witnessed by the audience and viewer alike.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Through this study of images of demonic possession, the role of the images-creators in conveying theological messages becomes clearer. Artists' images of demonic possession primarily enact the goals of the Catholic Church, which propagated doctrine by accenting the most famous and dramatic exorcisms of biblical and modern times. The theological issues addressed by these images engaged major debates between Protestants and Catholics, and included such topics as the reality of possession, who has the power in exorcisms, existence of spirits as physical or incorporeal, miracles, and the apocalypse. Using cultural theatrics to analyze these images shows the discernable influence of script, the exploitations of binaries between the actors of these scripts, specifically the piety of the exorcist and the animal savagery of the demoniac. Finally, there was the impressionable audience depicted in the image and the audience beyond the image (the viewers) who received the theological message displayed in the theatrical production.

Because this topic has been largely unexplored in scholarship, there is copious room for further work. Future research might include consideration of the overwhelming ratio in images of male demoniacs to female ones, despite females being the vast majority of those named in the possession accounts of the early modern period. Scholarship could also benefit from a localized approach, exploring the historical events of a specific locality in relation to the images created there. In addition, scholars might further explore the similarities and differences between images of demonic possession and images of obsession, madness, sinners, and witches. This list is not exhaustive, but shows the areas in which this topic might be expanded in the future.

Stuart Clark, who wrote the canonical text on the intellectual history of demonology in the early modern period, writes,

The purpose [of studying historical preternatural and supernatural phenomena] should be as it has been said, to make intelligibility and not reality the historian's target. ... At the very least we are obliged to take up a relativist position with regard to what could count as real. And in order to underpin this we are in need of a social theory in terms of which any behavior to which meaning is attributed is shown to be constituted, as it were without a remainder, precisely by the way it is construed.⁸⁹

Clark is responding to the possession historian, D.P. Walker, whose argument is that historians should not ask their readers to accept supernatural phenomena.⁹⁰ Cultural theatrics aims to skip past these debates and make the phenomena of demonic possession during the early modern period intelligible through images as constructed by artists during the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

In the early modern period, Europeans were subjected to a moral panic and the widespread religious unrest, during which thousands of people throughout Europe claimed to be possessed by demons. The Catholic remedy for this phenomenon was a promise of immediate relief from suffering through the Rite of Exorcism. However, Protestants believed if they prayed and fasted for the demoniac's soul, he or she would find relief in heaven. Images assisted Catholics in illustrating that quick, albeit painful and dramatic process of exorcism, to achieve salvation from demons before the End of Times, whereas the Protestants, and their images of demonic possession (though few), retain the belief that the demoniac alone held the key to his or her salvation. And while both Catholics and Protestants claimed to be fighting for the soul and salvation of the

⁸⁹ Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, 396.

⁹⁰ D. P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 15.

demoniac, it is revealing that there are no images of just a demoniac without an accompanying exorcist and audience. Demoniacs did not receive an iconography of their own, outside the performance of exorcism. Artists used the suffering of early modern demoniacs to depict them during the ritual of exorcism to convey theological messages about the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation rather than sympathize with the thousands of people, who during the early modern period, believed themselves to be possessed by demons.

APPENDIX

FIGURES

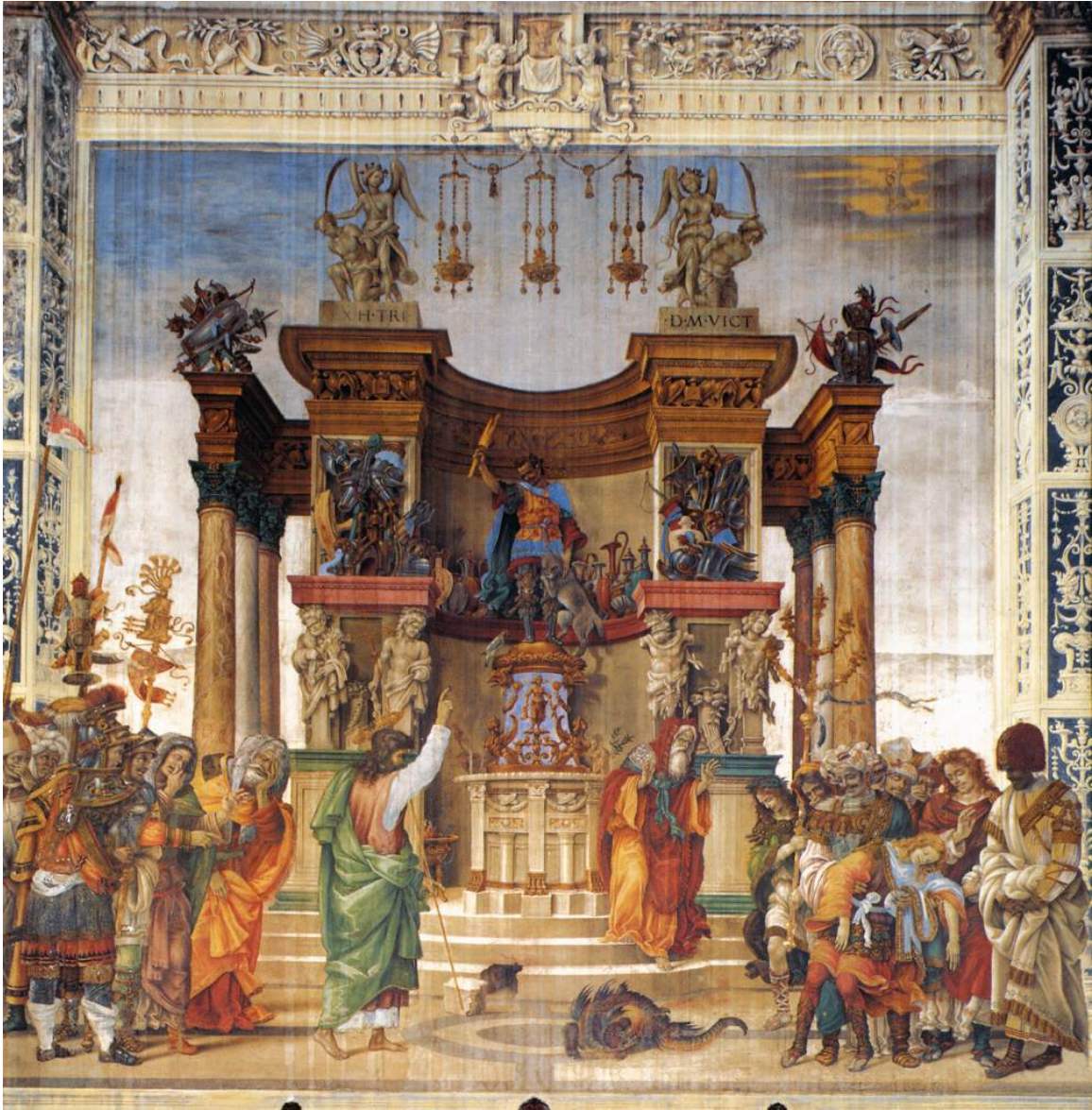


Figure 1. *St. Philip Driving the Dragon from the Temple of Hieropolis*, 1487-1502, Fresco, Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence. Source: Web Gallery of Art.



Figure 2. Danube School, *Panel of the Small Mariazell Miracle Altar*, 1512, Alte Galerie, Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz, Austria. Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 5.



Figure 3. *Administration of the Blessed Sacrament to Nicole Obry in 1566*, after 1566, Woodcut, in Pierre Boaistuau, *Histoires prodigieuses extraites de plusiers auteurs* (Paris 1575). Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 7.



Figure 4. Peter Paul Rubens, *Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, 1618, Oil on Canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 9.



Figure 5. *The Healing of the Country of the Gerasenes*, 5th -6th century, Mosaic, North Wall, Upper Level, Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Emilia-Romagna, Italy.
Source: ARTstor.



Figure 6. The Limbourg Brothers, *The Healing of a Possessed*, 1413-1416, Illuminated Manuscript, *The Très Riches Heures of Jean, Duc de Berry* (Folio 166r) Musée Condé, Chantilly, France. Sources: *The Très Riches Heures of Jean Duke of Berry*. Musée Condé, Chantilly, (New York: G. Braziller, 1969), fig. 123.

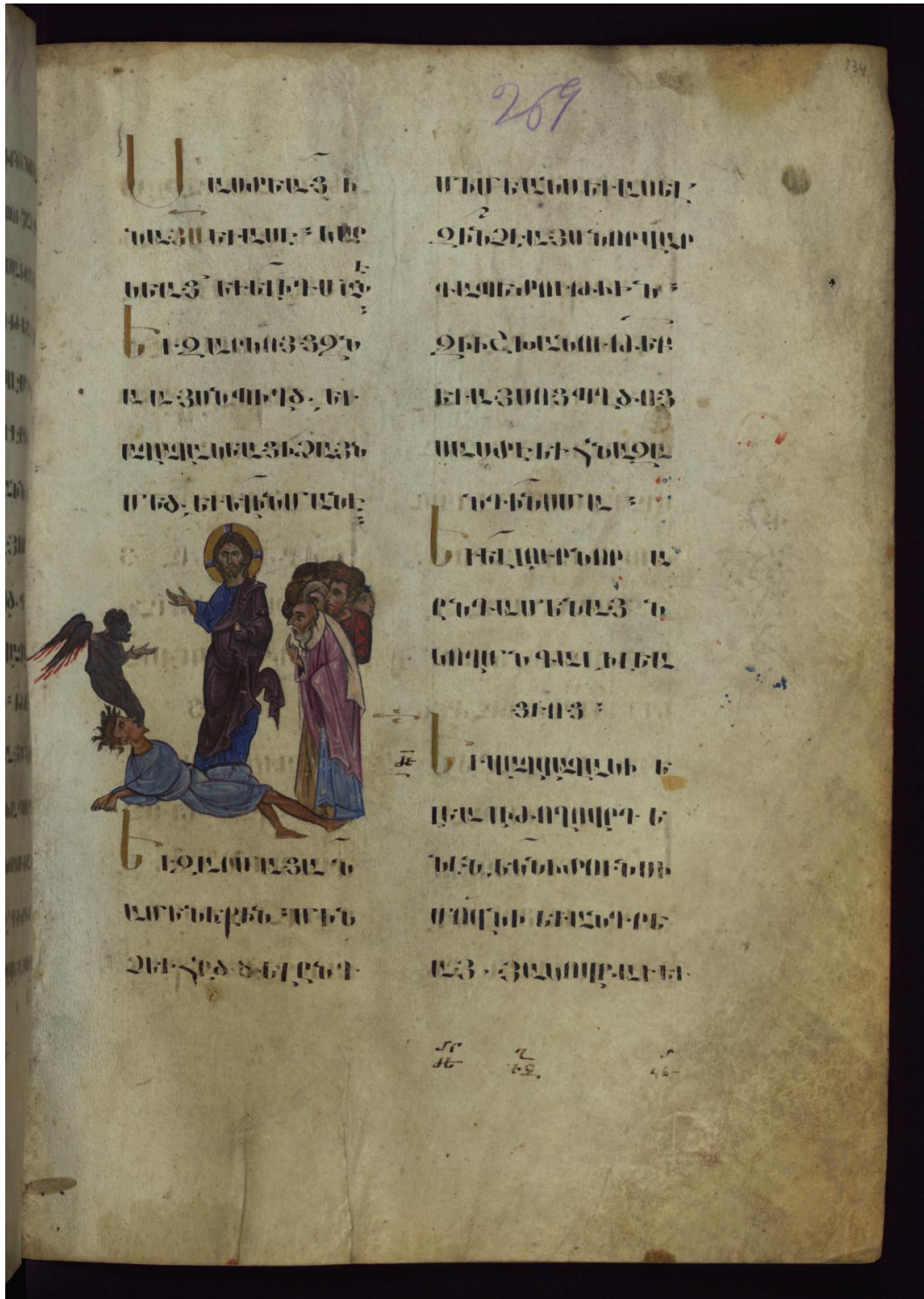


Figure 7. T'oros Roslin, *Healing of the Demoniac*, 1262, Illuminated Manuscript, from Armenian, Turkey, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore Museum of Art. Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 2.



Figure 8. *Guthlac Heals a Demoniac* Harley Roll Y.6 Roundel 10. Last quarter of the 12th century or 1st quarter of the 13th century, Protogothic, *Life of Guthlac* (the 'Guthlac Roll'), England (possibly Crowland) Origin. Source: British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts.



Figure 9. Anonymous artist from the Matches, *Storie della vita di S. Bartolomeo*, ca. 15th century. Source: Hilaire Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain*, (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2003), fig. 7.



Figure 10. *Saint Eligius Releases a Demon From the Possessed*, ca. 15th century. Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 3.





Figure 13. J.-B. Barbé, after Rubens (?), *Ignatius Attacked by Demons*, plate 67 from the *Vita Beati P. Ignatii Loiolae Societatis Iesu Fundatoris Romae*, 1606/1622, engraving, K.U. Leuven, Maurits Sabbe Library, Leuven. Source: James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373- 92, 377.



Figure 14. *The Veneration of St. Anastasia*, 1710, (Meichelbeck, *Leben/Leyden/Todt/Ehreburg...* 1710). Source: David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 259.



Figure 15. Juan de Valdés Leal, *San Ignacio Exorcizando a un Poseso*, 1660-1664, The Prado Museum, Madrid. Enrique Valdivieso, *Valdés Leal*, (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 1991), 168.

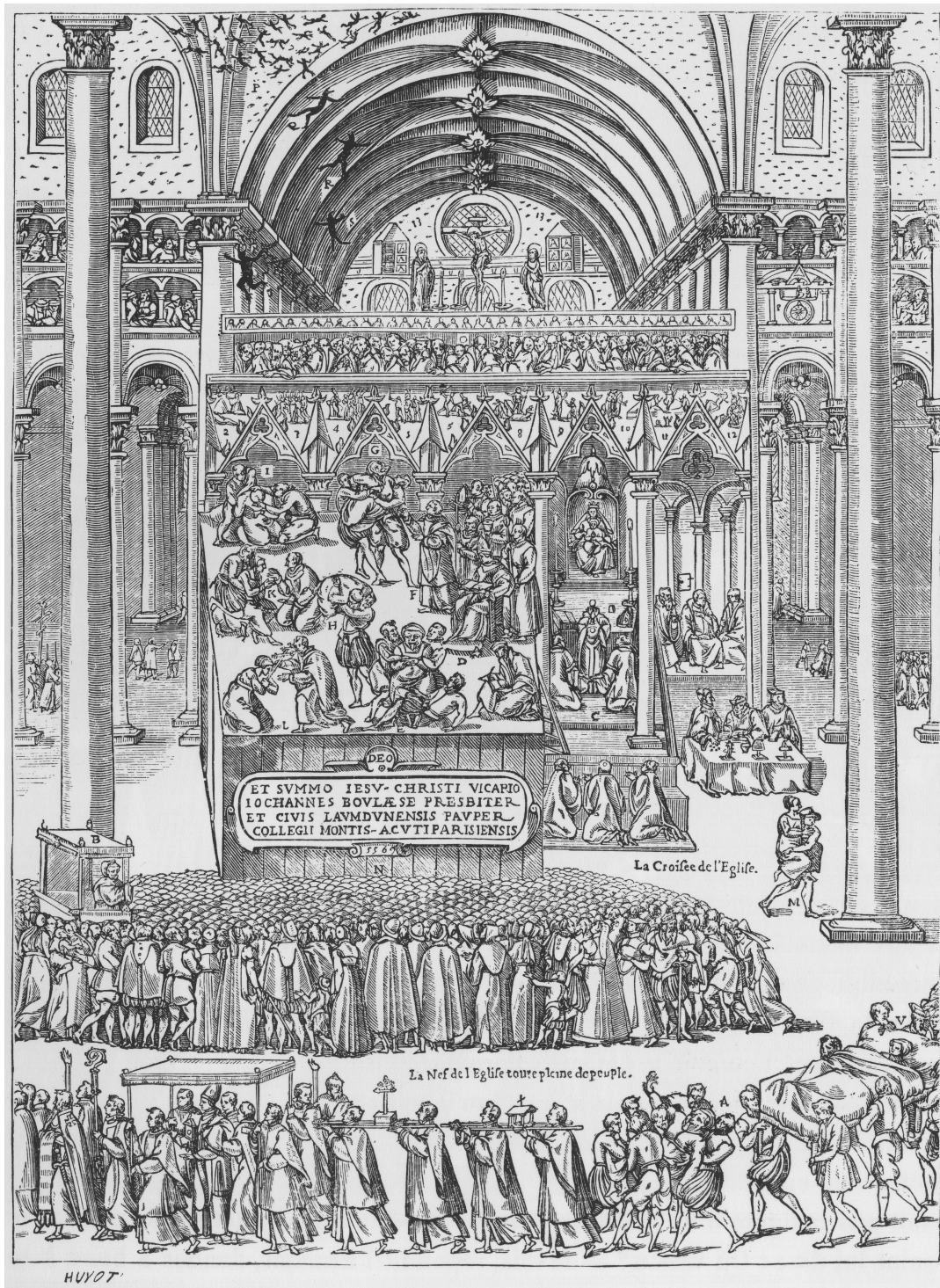


Figure 16. Thomas Belot, *The Exorcism of Nicole Obry at the Cathedral of Laon in 1566*, after 1566, engraving in Jean Boulaese, *Le Thrésor et entière histoire... à Loan l'an 1566* (Paris 1578). Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 6.



Multos sæpe Energumenos liberat
crucis signo.

46

Figure 17. Hieronymus Wierix, *Ignatius Exorcising Demons*, 1613, Engraving from the *Vita B.P. Ignatij de Loyola Fundatoris Societatis Iesu*, British Museum. Source: James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373- 92, 377.



Figure 18. Johan Wierix attributed after Gerard van Groeningen, *Christ Healing the Man Possessed with Devils*, in or before 1574, Engraving, *The Miracles of Jesus*, Loan Foundation Lucas van Leyden, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Source: James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373- 92, 384.



Figure 19. Raphael, *Transfiguration of Christ*, 1516-1520, Pinocoteca Vaticana, Oil on Panel. Source: James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373- 92, 380.



Figure 20. Peter Paul Rubens, *La Transfiguration*, 1604-1605, Oil on Canvas, Musée des Beaux-arts Nancy. Source: James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373-92, 390.



Figure 21. Jacques Callot after Andrea Boscholi, *An Italian Exorcism in the Seventeenth Century*, 1615, Engraving. Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 11.



Figure 22. Peter Paul Rubens, *Miracles of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, 1619, Oil on Panel, Chiesa del Ges, Genoa. Source: James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373- 92, 378.



Figure 23. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Miracles of Saint Francis of Paola*, 1627-1628, Oil on Panel, The J. Paul Getty Museum. James Clifton, "The Face of a Fiend: Convulsion, Inversion, and the Horror of the Disempowered Body." *Oxford Art Journal* 34, no. 3 (2011): 373- 92, 382.



Figure 24. Matthaeus Merian (the Elder) *Jesus Casts Out a Devil, Luke 11:14*, 1648, Engraving. Matthaeus Merian, Dancker Danckerts, and Anslo Reyer, *Icones Biblicae*, (Amsterdam: Cornelis Danckerts, 1648), 411 .



XXII.
Mulierem a dæmone obsessam, horrendisq;
cruciatibus afflictam fide munita
S.S. Crucis signo liberat.

Figure 25. French School, *Saint Catherine of Siena Exorcising a Possessed Woman*, ca. 17th century, Bibliothèque Nationale, Engraving. Source: Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), fig. 4.

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