

Abstract

The following Heuristic enquiry sets out to advance the knowledge of Projective Identification through the analysis of the concept in contrast to spirit possession, this study was born from an early fascination with the subject matter. The aim of this research is to explore the role played by the exorcist in treating spirit possession and analysing the how this role relates to Integrative Psychotherapy practice. The assumptions going into this research are that the two roles share a cultural connective tissue. Through the experiences of experts in the fields of possession and psychotherapy this study contributes to the experiences of those experiencing emotional, psychological and physical distress and explores the theoretical basis for these two concepts

Introduction.

I will begin this heuristic inquiry into the similarities and differences between projective identification and spirit possession by firstly introducing my rationale for conducting this study. My fascination with spirit possession has gestated over decades, I became aware of the concept of the body becoming invaded by malevolent forces at around eight years old, when I first saw, what is now the most familiar and recognisable cinematic representation of possession and the ritual of exorcism, William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1974), based upon the novel of the same name by William Peter Blatty. Now in its forty-eight year of publication, this novel and its subsequent adaption has introduced many of the standard cultural characteristics that we collectively ascribe to the concept