

Demons from the Id

by [Kenneth Francis](#) (January 2024)



Devil Carrying a Head into the Air– Odilon Redon, 1876

We often hear people say that a troubled person is struggling with his/her demons, meaning a person is having mental problems. But do demons exist, and, if so, is the possession of a person mistakenly diagnosed as psychological mental illness in a predominantly secular world?

According to Henry A. Nasrallah, MD: “I shudder when I read a newspaper or magazine article that describes a person with a psychiatric disorder—often, a celebrity who has fallen from grace—as ‘struggling with his inner demons.’ That expression is a residue of the absurd belief during the Middle Ages that mental illness is caused by evil spirits—that justified burning the afflicted person at the stake. Remember Joan of Arc? (*MDedge Current Psychiatry* [Feb 2016]).

Last April, a movie was released called *Nefarious*, in which a convicted killer, some hours away from the electric chair, tries to convince a court-ordered psychiatrist he is a demon who has taken over the prisoner’s mind. Like Joan of Arc, would such a person have been burnt at the stake if he lived in 15th century France?

The protagonist in *Nefarious*, Edward, has been convicted of several murders, and Nefarious is the alleged demon who claims to possess him. Meanwhile, the psychiatrist must decide if the prisoner is mentally competent enough to be executed. But is it possible that demons can possess a person, causing them to act violently or insane?

One such strange condition of mental turmoil is schizophrenia. This involves a range of problems associated with paranoia, odd behaviour, and disordered emotions. According to the Mayo Clinic, signs and symptoms may vary, but usually involve delusions, hallucinations, or disorganized speech, often resulting in an impaired ability to function. But one eerie

aspect of schizophrenia is hearing voices in one's head.

Jerry Marzinsky, a retired psychotherapist from Arizona who spent some 40 years working in hospitals and prisons with schizophrenic patients, was quite disturbed when his analysis of some patients pointed to the supernatural.

From a spiritual perspective, he currently explores and writes about the phenomenon of non-physical beings that plague individuals and disrupt their lives. However, this approach to treating schizophrenia goes against conventional psychiatric practice, which concentrates on a predominantly physiological cause of this weird phenomenon.

Marzinsky says his research has led to methods of helping people come to terms with the malicious inner voices they hear to show them what these voices really are: Disembodied entities. He says: "If three decades ago, I saw an article labelled 'Demons Are For Real,' I would have scoffed, 'Oh really!' Now, after what I've experienced in my 35 years on the front lines with patients suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, there is no doubt in my mind that these entities exist. I've both seen and spoken to them and they are very nasty."

Marzinsky claims these disembodied entities feed off negative energy by tricking the patient into feelings of anxiety, fear, stress, and other negative emotions so as they can "feast from you."

In one case, a patient he'd never seen before reported his voices warned him to "'stay away from me!' the moment I walked into the emergency room." In another case, a patient who was improving told me his voices wanted to speak with me. "What the voices told me was this: 'You have no right to interfere with our way of life!'" Marzinsky also said that these demons tend to flee from the person when they hear Psalm 23 being recited, especially in a church.

In the movie *The Exorcist* in 1973, based on a best-selling 1971 novel by William Peter Blatty, a young girl is possessed by a demon. The story is based on a young boy, in 1949, who was allegedly possessed by demons. According to reports in local newspapers in Maryland, USA, and witnesses, such claims were documented during the 1940s.

The boy 'Robbie,' aged 14, was an only child born into a Christian family in Cottage City, Maryland. He was your average boy and was close to his Aunt Harriet, who was a spiritualist and dabbled in the Ouija board. She introduced the board to Robbie and he later started to dabble with it on his own.

From strange incidents in his house with furniture moving by its own accord, to a desk at Robbie's school hurtling across the classroom and banging into the desks of other students. (According to official reports, some 48 students came forward as witnesses to substantiate this incident.) Robbie ended up in Georgetown University Hospital where he was successfully exorcised by priests.

In the movie *The Exorcist*, a Jesuit priest called Fr Karras is a guilt-ridden psychiatrist who is slowly distancing himself from Christianity due to his faith in medical science. Counseling fellow priests at the local church, he despairs at his helplessness in the role of psychiatric counselor. Later in the movie, Karras regains his faith after witnessing demonic forces during the exorcism of a young girl, a ritual that ends up killing him.

Another movie about demons in 2011, *The Rite*, is loosely based on Matt Baglio's book *The Rite: The Making of a Modern Exorcist*, which in turn is based on real events as witnessed and recounted by the American then-exorcist-in-training, Father Gary Thomas. Fr Thomas speaks of the many who are moving away from traditional faiths and looking for alternative religions or spirituality.

Speaking to CNN, he said: "On my team, my exorcism team, I have a trained clinical psychologist, a psychiatrist, and a physician, all of whom are practicing Catholics, and all of whom believe in the possibility of Satan's existence, but they're not people who say there's a demon under every rock or chair."

He said that any person showing signs of possession must be tested by psychological professionals, doctors and questions about drug and alcohol addiction must be asked. As for the voices in the heads of biblical prophets, could they have been demons? According to Christopher C.H. Cook, in his book *Hearing Voices, Demonic and Divine*: "Christian faith finds both an understanding of what it is to be fully human (a theological anthropology), and God's perfect self-disclosure (revelation). Within such an understanding, revelatory voices represent a key point of interpersonal encounter between human beings and God."

When a person, usually a saint and/or Christian prophet, hears a voice in his or her head telling them it is the voice of God, it will be a unique experience of 100% authenticity, and not like the voice of a demon or the devil. The Christian professor JP Moreland once said that he was at a conference many years ago and met a man in the corridor who told him he was God. He then asked professor Moreland, "Do you know where the bathroom is?"

You will also notice that all the words from the prophets in the Bible are in line with the Logos (Logic, Truth, Beauty, Morally Good, Reason, etc); whereas the voices of demons are always anti-Logos. Testimony to the authenticity of the prophets' predictions is that they were all spot-on due to their Divine inspiration from the Holy Spirit.

The greatest example of a Logos verse is Isaiah 5:20, which describes today's Clown World: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light

for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Finally, according to Scripture, Satan and his demons cannot read our minds. Only God, or a person thinking, can read our thoughts (First Kings 8:39; Psalm 139:4; John 2:25; Matthew 9:4; John 6:64).

[Table of Contents](#)

Kenneth Francis is a Contributing Editor at *New English Review*. For the past 30 years, he has worked as an editor in various publications, as well as a university lecturer in journalism. He also holds an MA in Theology and is the author of [The Little Book of God, Mind, Cosmos and Truth](#) (St Pauls Publishing) and, most recently, [The Terror of Existence: From Ecclesiastes to Theatre of the Absurd](#) (with Theodore Dalrymple) and [Neither Trumpets Nor Violins](#) (with Theodore Dalrymple and Samuel Hux).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)