

A Dybbuk

or

Between Two Worlds

Jan 18 - Feb 24, 1996

by S. Ansky

Adapted by Tony Kushner

Directed by Melia Bensussen

Music Composed by Yale Strom



Illustration by Matt Brownson

Study Guide

prepared by the Education Department of the Denver Center
Theatre Company



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In order to find more information about the Jewish tradition, take a trip to your school or local library. There is a wealth of material on this subject for both adults and children. Ask your librarian for help in finding the books, videos, records, tapes and magazines you need.

Become familiar with your library and you will find that a world of information will be at your fingertips. Most libraries are not restricted by their own collections but can borrow from other libraries to satisfy your informational needs. Become a skillful library consumer. Never hesitate to ask questions. Planning is important, however, and the farther you plan ahead, the more time you give your librarian and yourself to find the best resources.

Each show the Denver Center Theatre Company produces has its own unique informational needs. We here at the theatre, use the resources of our own and other libraries continually. Without access to information, it would not be possible to do what we do whether it is searching for the costumes of a particular period, defining the language of a specific time, discovering the customs and culture of when and where the play takes place, or finding technical information to produce the special effects on stage. Our people have to be well informed. We also think it's important that we share some of the resources we have discovered with you. In fact, this study guide has taken many hours of research, writing and editing in order to help you enjoy the production you are about to see and enrich your theatrical experience at the DCTC.



—Linda Eller
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SYNOPSIS OF *A DYBBUK*

A *Dybbuk* takes place in Poland at the turn of the century— for Jews a time of wretchedness, poverty and ever-present terror from the prevailing local government. It is not difficult to understand why many devout souls became convinced that they would be delivered from their terrible tribulations by supernatural and mystical doctrines. To a poor, young, impressionable, sensitive, lonely, love-sick, Talmudic scholar, what else except the miraculous was there to place hope in?

The young rabbi, Chonen, is prevented from marrying Leah because he lacks the wealth her father, Sender, seeks for her. Chonen desperately tries to get riches by invoking Satan's help, but he dies at the very moment he is triumphantly crying out, "I have won!" Leah is distraught by Chonen's death, but she has little time to grieve, for she is betrothed to Menashe. On the night of her wedding, she visits her mother's grave; there she is possessed by a dybbuk, an alien spirit. It is Chonen's spirit. His spirit, unable to ascend to Heaven, must inhabit a human body. To exorcise this spirit, the family must go to Mirapol to consult the chief rabbis. Before the Dybbuk can be expelled, one of the rabbis, Rabbi Shimshin, has a dream. The dream reveals

that as a youth, Sender and his friend Nissen had promised the betrothal of their yet unborn offspring, Leah and Chonen. The spirit of Nissen, who died shortly thereafter, now demands that Sender be brought to trial. The rabbinical court punishes Sender and exorcises the dybbuk amid much ceremony and shofar blowing (see glossary). They also order the marriage of Leah and Menashe. But before the bridegroom can arrive, Leah dies and her spirit joins Chonen's.

On the surface the play seems to be a romantic tragedy. But it is much more than that. The love story is allegorical; the much larger theme encompasses the capacity of man to redeem himself and the basic justice of the universe. We may yield to temptation and fall from virtue, but we may also, by our own will, find our way back to goodness. Likewise, the Lord of the universe, for His part, permits no wrong to go unrighted. Leah, having been promised to Chonen, is joined to him in spirit after his death. And Sender, who in his search for wealth has forgotten the value of a man, is sentenced to use his wealth for the benefit of man.



TONY KUSHNER

"Your intentions make very little difference to God. What counts is what you do and whether you're righteous in your life. That appeals to me. It also feels very American."

Tony Kushner, born in New York in 1956, was toted down to Lake Charles, Louisiana ("No one asked me if I wanted to go") at the age of one by his musician parents. Young Tony developed an appreciation of opera and the Wagnerian scale of events from his father, Bill; from his mother Sylvia's involvement in amateur theatricals, he learned to love the emotional power of the theater.

In the mid-70s, Kushner moved to New York to attend Columbia University. There, he studied medieval art, literature and philosophy, and read the works of Karl Marx. Still fascinated with theater, he explored the experimental work of directors like Richard Foreman, Jo Anne Akalaitis and Charles Ludlam. After getting a BA at Columbia, he went through New York University's three-year directing program

where he was influenced by Bertold Brecht's plays. He's also been influenced by the "magic realism" of Latino playwrights, such as Maria Irene Fornes.

Kushner began directing because he was afraid he had nothing to say as a writer. His directing stints led him to the Repertory Theater of St. Louis, New York Theater Workshop and the Theater Communications Group, where he decided the "playwriting thing had to be addressed."

His early plays include, *A Bright Room Called Day* (1991) and an adaptation of Corneille's *The Illusion*. His career as a playwright was solidified with the theatrical epic of the 1990's: *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*. This massive work, which explores disease, politics, sex, death and religion, won the Pulitzer Prize for drama, two Best Play Tony Awards and other prestigious awards.

Kushner, an agnostic and political activist, says he adapted *A Dybbuk* because the play deals with some of his concerns: sexual confusion, the metaphoric power of angels and demons, and the continuing resonance of Jewish culture in a changing world. He says:

"I've realized that there's a kind of resurgence within the progressive community of Jews who feel a need to rediscover and make friends with Judaism. I've become interested in that and *A Dybbuk* has been part of that whole process."²

HASIDISM: The Social and Religious World of *A Dybbuk*

The setting of *A Dybbuk* is Poland at the turn of the century. This community was a closed world, remote from modern times. One reason for this isolation was that Jews were restricted to living in certain areas of the country (the "Pale of Settlement") and only a small number were allowed higher education. They were also subjected to "pogroms," riots organized for the specific purpose of slaughtering Jews and looting their property.

Hasidism was a popular religious movement that began in the extreme southeast of Poland-Lithuania and was shaped by the tension prevailing in Jewish society in the difficult circumstances created by the breakup of Poland-Lithuania in the late 18th century.

Israel B. Eliezer Ba'al Shem Tov, also called the Besht, was a popular healer who worked with magic formulas, amulets and spells. He attracted to his court, first at Tolstoye and then at Mezibezh, people who came to be cured, to join him in ecstatic prayer and to receive guidance from him.

Many of the themes in the Besht's teaching became the central emphasis in Hasidic movement that his follower's developed. One ancient Jewish doctrine that was given particular emphasis by the Ba'al Shem Tov was based on a verse in Isaiah: "The whole world is full of his glory," (6:13). He interpreted this to mean that even physical pleasures could bring about spiritual growth. Because of this doctrine, the Besht believed that a person should always be joyful. This insistence of Hasidism on joy as the essential element of worship led to the importance of dance and song as expressions of Hasidic piety.

The basic pattern of Hasidic leadership and succession emerged in the third generation of the movement (c. 1773-

1815). The spread of Hasidism contributed to the decentralization of leadership of the Hasidic world and consequently to an ever-growing diversification of Hasidic thought. From this generation onward, there were always a number of leaders called tzaddikim, each claiming the allegiance of his followers.

The tzaddik, whose charismatic personality made him the paramount authority in the community of his followers, provided the spiritual illumination for the individual Hasid and the Hasidic community from his own all-pervasive radiance, attained through his mystic union with God. The tzaddik was a mystic who employed his power within the social community and for its sake. A wonder-healer and miracle-worker in the eyes of his followers, he was a combination of confessor, moral instructor and practical advisor. This relationship of the tzaddik to his community marks the first time in Judaism that one man was allowed to develop the relationship between God and a community. This belief in the power and greatness of the tzaddik became one of Hasidism's strongest and most controversial ideas.

By the 1830s, the main surge of the spread of Hasidism was over. It had become a way of life and the leadership structure of the majority of Jews in the Ukraine, Galicia and central Poland.

The sorry conditions of the Jews in the lands in which Hasidism was born was keenly felt by the

Hasidic masters who considered it a duty of the highest order to alleviate their people's sufferings. In the Hasidic court, the wealthy were instructed to help their poorer brethren, they learned not look down on their untutored fellows. The unity of the Jewish people and the need for Jews to participate in one another's joys and sorrows was repeatedly stressed. Through their community, Hasidism found in life not only comfort but also the "holy spark" of God present in all living things.



***Tablets with the Ten Commandments
recall God's covenant with Israel***

SPIRIT POSSESSION IN HISTORY AND CULTURE

In the last decade of the 20th century, many may consider it superstitious to believe in spirits of the dead. This fact is particularly true today, since the majority of scientists are committed to finding biological causes for nearly all human disease, mental as well as physical. However, a brief glance at global literature reveals that throughout history, people frequently have attributed the roots of illness and/or bizarre behavior to possessing spirits and many different rituals have been used to exorcise them.

In early civilization, the Babylonians and Assyrians were obsessed with demons. To them, the world appeared gloomy and full of calamities; their exorcisms are so numerous that they constitute the major part of cuneiform religious inscriptions. At the time of the Babylonian captivity, these demonological beliefs passed into Judaism and then to Christianity. Indeed, the Bible gives evidence of spirit possession and exorcism. For example:

"Jesus preached and cast out devils." ~ Mark 1:39

"A certain man which had devils a long time—Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man—He that was possessed of the devils was healed."

~ Luke 8:27-33

"Jesus gave his twelve disciples power against unclean spirits, to cast them out." ~ Matthew 10:1

The ancient Egyptians believed that the dead affected the living, especially the spirits of people who were mistreated or dishonored after death. The ancient tombs are testimonies to their belief that life continues after death, while the practice of mummification preserved the inner organs so they could be used again. The tombs also held household articles, food, seed, animals and servants to continue their way of life.

During the Middle Ages, Christianity spread throughout Europe, and with it, many written accounts of possession. Indeed, there seemed to be epidemics, for belief in the devil reached its height. In 1491-1494, a convent of nuns in Cambrai, France were affected; in 1552, at Kintorp, near Strasburg several townspeople were seized; in 1555 in Rome, 80 girls in an orphanage were possessed. The most famous epidemic occurred between 1632 to 1638 when the convent of the Little Ursulines at Loudun were infected and spread the affliction to other women. Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun* chronicled this event, which later became the 1970's film *The Devils*. Exorcism seemed to consist of fasting and prayer and a true belief in God.

More recently, an ethnologist named Froebenius collected numerous documents relating to possession in Central Africa. A man in the Bori culture who goes out at night may be befallen by a "babaku" (a spirit) who deprives him of his intelligence. To rid the victim of the spirit, a "magadja" (priestess) is called. She prepares a broth of chicken and tree root for the patient to drink; he also must inhale a particular smoke. Then a goye-player (a violinist) plays a series of tones and harmonies until the patient cries the spirit's name. Then he is bathed

and the exorcism is completed with the sacrifice of a white ram and wild dancing. Similar situations have been documented among the Ba-Ronga in Southeast Africa and the Bantu people of South Africa. All the exorcisms are filled with much music and dancing.

Certain Asian cultures have ideas about where possessing spirits originated and why they interfere with people's lives. The Chinese have a tradition of ancestor worship dating back more than 10,000 years. In their view, a person goes through many cycles, or lifetimes. One must remain on good terms with one's ancestors because they continue to exist in another world—and, if angered, can return to exert harm.

The Japanese, too, have practiced ancestor worship and believe in earthbound spirits. In 1970, the Mahikari, an exorcist cult, had over 400,000 members throughout the world. Known as the True-Light-Supra-Religion, they believe that possessing spirits causes more than 80% of human ailments—physical as well as emotional. Their exorcisms are claimed to be able to restore the possessed person to health.

One of the most highly developed philosophies of the spirit world and its relation to living people comes from India. An ancient religion based on Bedas (holy scriptures) is the forerunner of modern Hinduism and Buddhism. Often, according to Vedic theory, ignorant or malicious incarnates seek out living people to possess in order to continue their earthly life. They are able to gain access because the astral body had some defect through which they can enter. After they have entered, they exert control, which is always negative.

Some of the beliefs of the ancient Vedic tradition resurfaced in the West during the 19th century in two movements: Theosophy and Spiritualism. These movements had their influence on some American doctors. An early Spiritualist psychiatrist, Carl Wickland, M. D., worked for 30 years with severely disturbed patients he felt were possessing spirits to "speak" to the doctor. Dr. Wickland would try to persuade them to leave; with recalcitrant spirits he resorted to something more drastic—a kind of electroshock therapy.

In more modern times, Edgar Cayce brought the issue of spirit possession as a cause of disease to the attention of the public. Cayce used hypnotic trance "readings" to help sick people for whom standard medicine had not helped. In trances, Cayce channeled past-life and mystical reading that discussed concepts of karma, reincarnation, meditation and much more. The cures he prescribed for possession include the internal use of gold, low-voltage electrical devices, chiropractic adjustment to close off entrance to the nervous system, massage and dietary reform.

This belief in possession has cut across all boundaries in terms of time, social structure and education. Like reincarnation, life after death, and the soul, spirit possession cannot be proved—but speculation about it has produced some disturbing literature for those who believe and those who don't.

ON BEING A MENTSH

A frequent warning to Jewish children (and adults) is "Be a mentsh." Its literal meaning is "be a human being" or "person," but it is a call to strive for certain qualities that Jews value in human beings.

One of these qualities is a Jewish heart. To have a Jewish heart means to have compassion and sensitivity; to feel distress at the infliction of needless pain on man or beast. Hunting as a sport, for example, is frowned upon; shaming a man before his fellows is a wrong of great magnitude. A mentsh has a great aversion to violence and, instead, admires gentleness, kindness and modesty, and repudiates violence with reason and morality.

If Adam's disobedience haunts the Christian imagination, it is Cain's haughty assertion of his irresponsibility that exemplifies the outrage to a Jew's moral sense. It is Cain's defiant question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" that is more grievous than his crime, for his question repudiates the sole path to atonement and morality. As compassion is one of the prime qualities of a mentsh, so is responsibility for another one of the prime obligations. And as one man is responsible for another, so are all men responsible for one another; we are all bound together in a responsibility that is social as well as individual.

Being a mentsh also requires a Jewish head. A mentsh has a respect for learning, the study of the *Torah* for its own sake and the pursuit of learning for its rewards and fulfillment.

In a world of suffering, the mentsh ethic imposes an order, which makes life significant. The imposition of this moral order upon behavior is intended to affirm the values that enable man to endure the anguish of life. This morality becomes a compensation for suffering and a way to moderate its effect.

Kushner/Ansky illustrate the "mentsh ethic" or the lack of it in *A Dybbuk*. Chonen, the young rabbi, has a "Jewish head" for studying, but he is immersed in studying the Cabala for a selfish reason—to find the secret of obtaining riches. He ignores others in his quest and they, in turn, ignore him. He has no sense of social responsibility and neither do the people of Brinnitz as far as Chonen is concerned. The synagogue crowd pays him no heed until he dies in their midst.

But it is Sender who epitomizes the "Anti-mentsh." We never see him studying *Torah* or *Talmud*; he exhibits no "order" in his life other than finding a wealthy husband for his daughter. And, most grievous of all, he is irresponsible when he forgets his promise to his old friend, Nissen. For his lack of compassion, he must begin his own redemption by acts of charity and by his acceptance of responsibility for the memory of the deceased. Then, the principle of a person's responsibility for another has been reaffirmed.

Perhaps Kushner adapted this play because he is dismayed by the lack of individual and social responsibility in this society. In his epic, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*, he deals with this subject in his characters. Roy Cohn, the lawyer, has no feeling for anyone but himself. Likewise, Louis Ironson

CABALA, CABBALAH, KABBALAH

Cabala is the Jewish mystical movement; the complex and esoteric body of Jewish mystical tradition, literature and thought which tries to fathom the awesome, fearful mysteries of God and creation.

Cabalism's use of intricate numerology remained in the shadows until the 13th century when a metaphysical text called *The Zohar* (Book of Splendor) appeared. The cabalists believed that reason alone could never penetrate the experience involved in the perception of God and His mysteries. Esoteric formulas, numerological acrobatics, theological arguments were all a part of the cabalists' efforts to understand God's will. *The Zohar* is steeped in supernaturalism and astrology. Indeed, rabbis often warned the lay person not to court mental danger by reading it.

The physical center of cabalistic teaching was Safed in Palestine, which, in the 16th century, was the site of a sizable community of mystics. Isaac Luria, the outstanding cabalist, presided over a circle of fervent disciples to whom he expounded arcane formulas and invocations; their prayers contained many secret hidden names of God, upon which the faithful were urged to meditate.

The dispersion of Jews has made a consistent school of mystical practice almost impossible. The wonder is that, despite scattered and often culturally incompatible populations, Jewish mystical practices are so similar. With the *Torah* as its guide, the Cabala has flourished—sometimes darkly and sometimes brilliantly—for over 5000 years.

abandons his lover, Prior Walter, when he learns Prior has AIDS. At the beginning of *Angels*, Rabbi Chemelwitz is eulogizing Louis' grandmother, and he is reminiscing about her journey to America. "How we struggled and how we fought, for the family, for the Jewish home, so that you would not grow up here—You do not live in America. No such place exists. Your clay is the clay of some Litvak shtetl—and she worked that earth into your bones, and you pass it to your children, this ancient, ancient culture and home."³ Perhaps the Rabbi is exhorting us to look to our past, whatever heritage we possess, to find the qualities of "mentsh" we have forgotten.

DYBBUKS: SPIRITS IN JEWISH HISTORY

Excerpted from *Dybbuk* by Gershon Winkler, (New York: The Judaica Press, 1981)

Dybbuk is a fairly modern term, although the phenomenon it describes is very ancient and is described in Biblical and Talmudical writings. The word "dybbuk" appears in Jewish literature as early as the 18th century, but it was not until 1916 that the first production of S. Ansky's play *The Dybbuk* popularized the term in both Jewish and Western culture.

While Ansky's *The Dybbuk* was his own invention, he undoubtedly drew inspiration from the accounts of dybbuks, which abounded in Yiddish and Hebrew literature. The most popular of these were the chronicles of occult phenomena, which appeared in the *Maaseh Buch* (*Book of Stories*, 1602).

Possession: According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the phenomena of possession are known among civilized as well as primitive people and

instances have been reported from societies as far apart in space and time as those of ancient Greece, China and Western Europe.

Belief in demonic possession and its exorcism was common also among the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians. Cuneiform inscriptions dating as far back as the middle of the third millennium B.C.E. depicted many forms of exorcisms, incantations and prayers designed to cast out "devils" and "ghosts of the dead."

While dybbuk is the general term for all manners of possession, there are technically two forms of possession in Jewish lore: *dybbuk* and *gilgul* (reincarnation). A dybbuk was a departed soul who clung spontaneously to another person prior to its ascent for divine judgement. A *gilgul*, on the other hand, involved a soul who had returned to wander the

earth after having faced the heavenly tribunal. A dybbuk possession was not considered a total "takeover" of the victim's consciousness; both the dybbuk and the victim could remain conscious and co-exist. The dybbuk could remain dormant and harmless for months or even years and the victim might not even be aware of the dybbuk's presence.

In virtually all of the recorded accounts, the manifestation of the dybbuk occurred during a moment of melancholia or confusion. In valid cases of possession it has been recorded that the dybbuk was always able to report on a past event that the victim could not possibly have experienced or read about. In recent experiments, this type of "clairvoyance" has been demonstrated by certain individuals under hypnosis. There are also reports of people who see, in their dreams, actual events in the lives of other people, both past and future. When accompanied by other aspects of unusual behavior, which are consistently described in accounts of possession, and when the voice emanated from the victim without any movement of the lips or tongue, it was a strong indication of authentic "possession."

Although Ansky's play *The Dybbuk* hearkens back to a time and place quite removed from today's modern life, it reminds one of the continued existence of faith, something often ignored in the current scientific age. Dybbuks, like other invisible ethereal objects, require faith in order to exist. If the ability to believe in the intangible dies, dybbuks no longer have the essential ingredient for their physical manifestation. With *A Dybbuk*, the audience has the chance to live in a world in which the unknown is as familiar as the known and the spirits of the dead are able to live again.

GLOSSARY

Bimah—platform in a synagogue from which prayers are offered.

Cantor—clergy who sings the ritual at a Jewish service.

Dybbuk—(literally, a "cleaving" or "attachment") According to Jewish folklore, an evil spirit which enters into a living person. The entry of a dybbuk into a person was often times regarded as an indication of some moral failing in the living host. For over 1,000 years, popular Jewish folk literature has reported numerous incidents of dybbuk possession.

Kaddish—a prayer glorifying God's name, recited at the close of synagogue prayer; this is the most solemn and one of the most ancient of all Jewish prayers.

Mikvah—(literally, "a collection of water") A ritual bath holding naturally drawn "living" water, and in which observant Jewish men and women wash away ritual defilement. When the ancient temple stood in Jerusalem, immersion in the mikvah was the means by which Jews could purify themselves before entering the sacred precinct.

Minyan—Ten male Jews required for religious services. No congregational prayers or rites can begin "until we have a minyan."

Mitzvah —1. commandment, divine commandment. 2. a meritorious act, one that expresses God's will; a "good work"; a truly virtuous, kind ethical deed.

Shevarim —three short calls on the shofar.

Sh'ma—the first word of the prayer that proclaims the Jews' faith: "Hear, O Israel the Lord Our God, the Lord is One."

Shofar—a ram's horn, 10 to 12 inches long, that is blown in the synagogue during the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Tallis—(also Tallit, literally "a cloak") The Jewish prayer shawl, a four-cornered fringed garment worn during daylight, and particularly during morning prayers, by males. Based on the Biblical commandment in Numbers 15:37-41, the fringes or Tzitzis serve as a reminder for all of God's commandments.

Talmud—(literally, "teaching") A massive compendium of rabbinic law and lore spanning a millennium, from 500 B.C.E. to 500 C.E., it is to Judaism as the Federalist Papers are to American democracy. Composed of a running commentary to the six orders of the ancient Mishnah, it is a massive collection of learned debates, dialogues, legends, and commentaries which constitute the essence of a wise sage's curriculum. Its loving study is at the core of a rabbinic education.

Tefillin—(literally, "prayer thing"; also known as phylacteries) Two leather boxes, each containing scriptural parchments, worn by Jewish males during morning prayers. One box is worn on the upper arm, with a leather strap wound about the arm in symbolic fashion; the other box is placed on the forehead. Based on the Biblical commandment of Deuteronomy 6:8, they serve as a reminder of God's words and commands. In some ultra-pious communities, sages would wear them all day long.

Tekiah—one long shofar blast.

Tekiah Godolah—one long continuous unbroken "Tekiah" blast on the shofar until the blower runs out of breath.

Teruah—alarm; a rapid series of short notes on the shofar.

Torah—(literally, "instruction") 39 canonized books which form the sacred corpus of the Jewish faith, the Torah in English is known as the Hebrew Bible and in Christianity it is referred to as the Old Testament. If the *Talmud* can be likened to the Federalist Papers, the *Torah* is the constitution of the Jewish faith. The most sacred books of the *Torah* are the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These five books are hand-written in a *Sever Torah* ("Torah Scroll"), the most hallowed ritual object in a synagogue, stored at the front of the prayer hall in a ceremonial ark. So sacred are they that their open parchment must not be touched - a reader uses a ceremonial pointer to keep his place.

Yeshiva—a rabbinical college or seminary.

Yom Kippur—the last of the annual Ten Days of Penitence; one of the two High Holy Days of the Jewish calendar.

Notes

1. Savran, p. 102.
2. Leiter, p. 16.
3. Kushner, p. 10

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A TURN OF THE CENTURY TIMELINE



Playwright S. Ansky

1895 - Cuba fights Spain for its independence. William Roentgen discovers the x-ray. The British begin to use gas for heating, lighting and cooking.

1896 - Queen Victoria celebrates her 60-year reign. The latest form of entertainment in New York City is the moving picture show or "Flickers," the result of almost simultaneous inventions by America's Edison and the Lumiere Brothers in France. Athens hosts the revived Olympic Games after an interval of 1500 years. Gold is discovered on a creek off the Klondike River in Canada. **The Hungarian Jewish writer Theodor Herzl publishes *The Jewish State*, in which he advocates the formation of a Jewish state to solve the "Jewish Question."** William McKinley is elected president of the United States.

1897 - **Leaders of the world's Jewish community meet to discuss their hopes for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.** Chinese fear that their country will be "sliced up like a melon" by the great powers. The Russians have extended the Trans-Siberian Railway through northern Manchuria. France has forced concessions in Indochina and Britain is enlarging its Hong Kong colony. Boston: an underground railway comes into existence.

1898 - Britain obtains the New Territories of Hong Kong under a 99-year lease. Floods of Yellow River in China are followed by prolonged and severe drought in China. This in conjunction with natural disasters and foreign aggression gives rise to the anti-foreign Boxer movement. The United States declares war on Spain. Eventually, Spain cedes Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines to the US for 20 million dollars. The marketing of Pepsi-Cola begins. Pierre and Madam Curie identify the components of radium.

1899 - At the Hague, a peace conference attended 26 states decides to set up a permanent international court of arbitration. Secretary of State, John Hay, embarks on an "Open Door" policy towards China. War breaks out between the British and the Boers in the Transvaal.

1900 - Puccini's opera, *Tosca*, is performed for the first time. The U.S. dollar goes onto the gold standard. British trade unions create the Labour Party. The quantum theory created by Max Planck. Freud explores our dreams. Paris: the Metro underground opens. The Boxer Rebellion starts in China. William McKinley is re-elected to the presidency.

1901 - Polish anarchist assassinates president McKinley. The Commonwealth of Australia comes into being. The Cadillac Motor Company comes into being. Gillette will market a disposable razor and Eastman Kodak Camera Company is founded. Marconi sends first wireless message across the Atlantic. Queen Victoria dies.

1902 - The Berlin underground railway opens. Coal strike in the United States May-October. Beatrix Potter writes *Peter Rabbit* children's stories.

1903 - Alaskan frontier settled. Russian Social Democratic Party splits into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Shaw writes *Man and Superman*, Jack London writes *Call of the Wild*. **Anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia.** Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully fly a powered airplane. Speed limit in Britain set at 20 miles per hour. Henry Ford founds Ford Motor Company. J. P. Morgan founds the International Mercantile Marine Company. **Sixth Zionist Congress declines offer for Jewish settlement in East Africa.** 1st crossing of the American continent by car: 65 days. First Tour de France (bicycle race).

1904 - Teddy Roosevelt elected president. James Barrie writes *Peter Pan*. Church and State Separated in France. Picasso and Rousseau are painting, Salvador Dali is born. London Symphony Orchestra gives its first concert. Rolls Royce company founded. Gorgas eradicates yellow fever in Panama Canal Zone and work begins on the canal. 10-hour work day established in France. New York: woman arrested for smoking a cigarette in public. Paris conference on white slave trade.

1905 - Demonstration in St. Petersburg brutally crushed by police (Bloody Sunday). There is a general strike in Russia. Sailors mutiny on the battleship "Potemkin." The Czar's "October Manifesto" establishes reforms. Norwegian Parliament decides on separation from Sweden. Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan founded in Canada. Sinn Fein Party founded in Dublin. Teddy Roosevelt elected for a second term. Shaw writes *Major Barbara*, Picasso begins "Pink Period." Einstein formulates the Theory of Relativity. Ty Cobb begins major league baseball career with the Detroit Tigers.

ACTIVITY PACKAGE

1. a. Read a book on possession, for example, Stephen King's *Christine*, *The Shining*, *Salem's Lot*, or *The Exorcist* by William Peter Blatty.

b. How is the theme of possession similar to the possession in *A Dybbuk*? What makes the possession possible, belief, chance, experimenting with the occult. Why are books on possession so popular? Do people need to believe in more than the physical and tangible?

2. The world in Poland during the time period of *A Dybbuk* is a world full of mysticism. The mystical world juxtaposes the physical world of the people. We now live in a technological age. The mysticism of past ages becomes lost in scientific explanation. But does this technological age believe in any alternate realities of its own? Have our scientific advances made us believers in different scientific realities. What comparative alternate realities do we believe in?

Try reading one of the following:

Neuromancer by William Gibson

Altered States by Paddy Chayevsky

The Doors of Perception by Aldous Huxley

The Teachings of Don Juan by Carlos Castaneda

3. Create a theory of a dybbuk in cyberspace including as many themes as possible from *A Dybbuk*.

4. Discuss the underlined purpose of religion or of religion and the power of beliefs in the construction of societies. Compare such religions and the time periods.

Compare:

The spirit of Hinduism

The path of Buddhism

The philosophy of China

The world of Islam

The law of Judaism

The faith of Christianity

5. a. Discuss other works dealing with complications surrounding arranged marriages. Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* is a great place to start.

b. Historically, which cultures customarily arranged marriages? Which societies still arrange marriages? Are the divorce rates of arranged marriages higher or lower than those marriages that were not arranged? Why?