

A Swedish Female Folk Healer

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE 18th CENTURY

by CARL-MARTIN EDSMAN

1. *The Historical Material*¹

Catharina Fagerberg was a tailor's daughter from Marbäck in Småland, South-Sweden, where she was born in 1700.² As a young girl she had worked in the household of a judge in Jönköping³ and in the same town later learnt linen weaving, continuing to practise this craft at Norrköping until this town was burnt down by the Russians in 1719. Here a leather-worker unsuccessfully proposed marriage to Catharina. Subsequently she earned her living as a linen weaver in the household of Baron (E. J.) Creutz (1675-1742)⁴ who was appointed Governor of Östergötland in 1721. For a period of seven years she was afflicted with severe vexations of spirit, and was visited by blasphemous and murderous thoughts. In January, 1727, physical weakness set in; she had a stitch in her side and other troubles that kept her sleepless for eleven weeks. For a while they stopped, but on Easter Monday while in church Catharina experienced great difficulty in breathing and mental

¹ Published in extenso by the present author with the title "Die weise Jungfer, Texte zur Geschichte schwedischer Volksfrömmigkeit und Heilkunde aus dem 18. Jahrhundert" (*Horae Soederblomianae* VI, Uppsala 1964, pp. 82-104). What follows is a short abstract of the sources which for a considerable part exist in German.

² Father was the tailor Peter Persson Fagerberg, possibly related to the Småland clan Fagerberg from the neighbour parish Barkeryd, cf. *Svenska Släktkalendern* 1930, utg. av G. Elgenstierna, 10 årg., Stockholm 1929, p. 245, also 1936, 11 årg., p. 286.

³ Erland Broman, cf. *Jönköpings historia* III, Jönköping 1919, p. 171, son of the Superintendent of Karlstad, "assessor" in the Göta court of appeal in 1703, "lagman" in the province of Kalmar in 1717, in the province of Jönköping in 1718 and in the provinces of Kalmar and Öland in 1719 (†1744), see *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor*, utg. av G. Elgenstierna, I, Stockholm 1925, p. 621.

⁴ *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* IX, Stockholm 1931, pp. 127 ff.

agony which lasted for nineteen weeks. Despite blood-letting and taking medicines, she grew worse, had to forego all medicine (food?), and on the 14th of June was paralysed in the left hand. During the last nine weeks of this difficult period Catharina was deep in ceaseless prayer. She stated that for three hours an hour-glass had been visible on the right side of her chest, a phenomenon which she interpreted as a sign of death.

On the 5th of August, 1727, as Catharina was sitting at her loom she had an attack of yawning and convulsions (*Strecken*), felt in an unusual state, and then was addressed by a 'good spirit', but from inside her and without her perceiving any voice: "You are puzzled by this yawning. I want now to tell you what is the matter with you, namely, that several unclean spirits dwell in your body and cause your illness and your pains."

On the 12th of the same month at 6 o'clock in the morning Catharina set off on horseback to get advice and help from a woman called Greta at Gullringsstugan, who had lived in a doctor's house, and taught herself a variety of things. When she came to a bridge in the parish of Råby in Södermanland, she was unable to make the horse cross it. At the same time a swarm of insects of all colours except white, with four wings and snake-like tails, were seen flying in the air. When she prayed ardently, the spirit mentioned before again spoke inside her: "Get down from your horse, for otherwise you will not be able to cross this bridge, as these devils flying in the air intend to drown you in the water." On being asked why, the spirit answered that it was because Catharina had been delivered up to them. She examined her conscience but could not remember any great intentional sins, only sins of weakness. When she asked if God had delivered her up to the devils, the answer was no. It was her earlier suitor, Lander, who had done it using a black magician called Måns Jonsson, and whom she had herself once questioned without result about a stolen linen cloth. Catharina descended from her horse, and led it across the bridge and rode on through the wood but was followed all the way to and from the house by the winged insects which also pestered the animal.

Now followed seven additional weeks of sleeplessness, disturbance and steady prayer. Catharina was tormented by noises, dreams and visions in which she could see small boxes and a black book. The good spirit interpreted this as meaning that the evil spirits she had seen were offering their

services to her either through *spiritus familiares* or black magic. She was also acquainted with the reputed advantages of the one or the other, and faced with a choice between them.

Catharina, however, rejected both, and declared that she was going to stand by her baptismal covenant. The spirit then wished her God's blessing in her resolve, and advised her to stand by it. Catharina then asked how in fact she should regard the spirit. It replied that it was from God. When asked why in that case it had appeared as an interpreter for the Evil One, it answered that it did not itself have the power of speaking. At Catharina's renewed accusations the spirit protested that it was good, again asked Catharina to refuse the services of the Evil One and instead trust in God. With its comrades it would then serve her. And after Catharina had rejected black magic, God would reveal a great deal to her which He had concealed from others.

In spite of this decision Catharina's pains lasted for some further time, although she devoted herself to steady prayer and Bible-reading. Her petitions were slow in being answered, because she prayed unconditionally. But finally she altered this, and then the good spirit assured her that just as the evil spirits had for long tormented her, so from now on and in her turn she would have God's permission to pain them and drive them from herself and from her suffering fellow-creatures. Catharina believed herself to be participating in this favour, as it is described in Mark xvi, 17 and other places in the Bible which she pointed out.

Catharina had her own opinion of the spirits. Inside a human being there were several such spirits of various kinds and numbers. The number of 'vital spirits' (*Lebensgeister, livsandar*) increased with age. Furthermore there were good and bad, and spirits in-between, which were not damned but hoped for salvation. Thus these last were more good than evil, and were created at the same time as the angels. In another place in the documents Catharina takes account of certain earth-spirits that dwell in the earth. She claimed to be able by divine authority to call forth whatever 'vital spirits' she wished, that is, not only evil ones but of other people present, but also to be able to send one of her own 'vital spirits' to absent people in order to bring another person's 'vital spirit' to herself. This spirit in the presence of several people was thought to be able to answer her clearly out of her own mouth, but without

moving her tongue or lips, when she asked about a person's condition or illness.

Then follows an enumeration of the cures and achievements effected by Catharina in the vicinity of Nyköping, after she had finished working for Baron Creutz on the ground that her capacity for work was diminished by her melancholy and her tribulations. Approximately the same pattern is observed in her dealings with Johan de Boo, the master furnaceman at Näverkvärn foundry, as in all such cures.

When Catharina was summoned to him, she answered that it was neither in her power or in any other human being's, but only in God's to cure illness. But the vicar could be told, and if he approved of it, she would then come. Thus it happened, that a fortnight later Catharina was fetched and on her arrival she found the master furnaceman in great tribulation and despair. She did not want, however, to have anything to do with him except in the presence of the vicar. After conducting the Sunday-service, he also appeared along with the foundry owner and the bailiff.

Catharina then sat down by the sick man's bed, put her hand on his chest, and exhorted him to consider the origin of his illness, as it could hardly be regarded as physical. He ought to ask God's forgiveness for his sins. At the same time she also called on God to show mercy and help him, having ardently prayed herself for the past fortnight ever since she had got to know of his illness. Gradually the patient became calm, and on the following morning felt so well that he was able to accompany her at her departure and thank her for his recovery. This she would take no credit for, and told him to thank God only.

Intercession, the laying on of hands and trust alone in God Almighty recur in the healing of a man who had lost the power of speech, and a little girl who had lost her sight. A man suffering from rheumatic joints was also soaked in a steaming 'ant-bath', and advised to rub himself with distilled spirits and camphor, a method which Catharina is said to have successfully used on herself. But it did not seem to help, and half a year later the man was so desperate and despondent that he wanted to kill both himself and others. Catharina told him to fear God and to avoid such madness. But in the middle of the night the man ran into the woods, and only after a long search was he found with two large knives in his hand. On returning

to his house five evil spirits are supposed to have left him and instead harassed and shook Catharina, who became unconscious, but retained her senses and power of speech, so that she was able to continue praying. In court she related that she had not seen the spirits, but that they had spoken out of her mouth, telling how many they were and for how long they had tormented the patient. The sick man's son testified that he heard a voice coming from Catharina's mouth saying: "You who will not let me alone are damned." When Catharina left the following day the man was well.

In the following case, concerning a girl from the parish of Tuna Bergslag, it was again a matter of evil spirits. But in addition, these spirits according to Catharina were sent out by a witch called Karin in Kolmässen, in order to torment the girl. Catharina demanded that enquiries and an investigation should be instituted against the person causing the evil, and so set in motion the machinery of the law. In the presence of the rector and the curate Catharina drove out 5 (6) evil spirits which, according to her own statement in one version of the event, entered her. When the clergymen appeared suspicious, an answer came out of Catharina's mouth: "Shut up you hypocrite (or fool), you don't know what you're saying!"

The wise maid's reputation had spread widely so that people turned to her from as far as Östergötland, where apparently she had journeyed over the bay Bråviken both in summer and winter. As a result she came into conflict with the ecclesiastical and secular authorities in various dioceses and counties. The matter therefore eventually came up before both the Svea and Göta courts of appeal. Largely as a result of the testimony of the pietistic rector of Skeppsholmen in Stockholm, Eric Tollstadius, and the use of all possible biblical and Christian interpretations of Catharina's doctrines and miracles, the female healer was completely acquitted. The good spirit became an angel for the pious country folk and their fellow-believers in Germany, and the cure of sick people became faith-healing. Now a time other than that of the witch-trials had arrived, so that it was also possible to consider her statement as the manifestations of a sick fantasy. The legal treatment of her case, which in itself is of small interest, can in this context be omitted.

A peasant of Lundby in Östergötland suffering from severe constipation sent his brother-in-law to Catharina to ask for help. She gave herself up to waiting for God's mercy, but asked if the afflicted man had any enemy. She

then learnt that there was discord between him and a neighbour. On another visit made soon after by the brother-in-law, he was told to advise the sick man to reconcile himself with God and his neighbour, abandon all worldly preoccupations, and prepare himself for death. The sick peasant died and the wise maid's power to see into the future evidently caused an understandable sensation. In court she explained this power by saying that one of the spirits assigned to her after intensive prayer goes to God, not leaving Him until its request (for an answer) is fulfilled. This takes up about a day and a half.

On another farm in Östergötland it was a housewife who had suffered from convulsions for the past six years. Her 13-year old sister also had recently been afflicted by the same strange disease. The wise maid blamed this on a boatman who with the aid of a book of black magic he had received 13 years earlier from a German dragoon, was supposed to have bewitched both of the sisters. The accusations were made in the presence of the two clergymen from the parish of Östra Husby and the evil-doer himself, Olof Berggren. Catharina said that the magic shot had been aimed at the father but hit the younger daughter, who had come in its way as she was serving his food. Concerning the origin of this knowledge the wise maid referred even in this case also to the "living, invisible, indwelling spirit" that had been assigned to her after urgent prayer during the eleven years of her affliction when she herself had been bewitched. When at that very moment the elder sister underwent an attack, Catharina said that the arrival of the tormenters had just been announced in the usual way, "through bad and heavy yawning." She had kept them at a distance, however, so that the clergymen might see the dreadful pains. One of them related that everyone had knelt down and during song and prayer had called on the Lord for help against the enemy. At the same time and despite these words he denied a little inconsequently that it was a case of "possession by Satan."

After evening prayers with the farm people that same day, the wise maid said that she had 'received a message' (*fått skickning*) by which it would soon be disclosed whether it was evil or good. The detailed account which now follows is of such great interest that it deserves to be quoted in full: "Thereupon she began to yawn and her chest heaved greatly. At that moment she got up out of her chair, asking: 'Who sent you here?' Out of her throat, with-

out mouth, lips or tongue moving, came the answer: 'Olof Berggren'. 'How many are you in number?' The answer came likewise out of her throat: '53'. 'What do you want to do with me?' Responsio, likewise from the throat: 'To make you furious.' Questio: 'Why so?' Responsio as before: 'You are disclosing us.' Thereupon she answered: 'You know, Satan, that at great cost I have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, mine and the whole world's Saviour, and you that before could not hurt my soul and mind, shall not now injure me in the slightest, so be off!' She then lamented her ignorance of the district, or otherwise she could have kept Satan under arrest: 'Instead I will now direct him back to Berggren who sent him out.' All this was heard by myself, my wife, children, servants, together with the mother and her sick daughters.

They said aloud when this occurred: 'God does not allow himself to be mocked. It is the Maid herself who is talking, and who answers herself.' 'That is true,' she said, 'God does not allow himself to be mocked,' and thereupon began to call on Him in the name of Jesus, praying ardently that a sign be granted her that it had been another that had answered. She then made a long and memorable prayer, praying in the name of Jesus that the truth would be revealed. 'Then it will be clear that Olof Berggren has bewitched these people.' She was prepared to testify to this in the highest court, even if it meant that she would undergo fire and hell."

Two days after this the boatman was reminded at Catharina's request of the temporal and eternal punishment for witchcraft. This was effected by quoting from the Holy Scriptures in the presence of witnesses. Berggren said he was aware of this, and added sarcastically that the maid should be asked to take away the black magic book from him, since she knew that he was the owner of it. Moreover the clergymen exhorted the people to remember the awful sin and gross idolatry of which they made themselves guilty by using unlawful means against their childrens' illness.

The district court of Östkind as well as the Svea court of appeal demanded visual proof of Catharina's alleged ability to consult spirits. Before the first-mentioned court these again talked out of her throat. They were herewith conjured to confirm the truth of her statements with signs on the maid herself or on the boatman. At the same time convulsions were noticed in Catharina. The court, however, regarded these as well as the talking of spirits as

assumed and invented, and in addition the speech of the spirits was quite well imitated, although without the wise maid herself being able to detect any resemblance.

2. *Contemporary and Later Supernatural Interpretations of Illness*

It occurs naturally to an historian of religion, an ethnologist or a folklorist to relate Catharina Fagerberg's experiences with the phenomena of shamanism,¹ especially the role of the helping spirits. Similarly one thinks of the Ancient Scandinavian concept of 'sendings' (*sendingar*), which can also be included in shamanism in its widest sense. But before such comparisons can be made, the material must be set in its Swedish and historical context.

It can best be classified among the type of descriptions that in large measure form the basis of B. Gadeliuss' famous book on belief and superstition in ancient times (*Tro och öfvertro i gångna tider* I-II, Stockholm 1912-13), partly reprinted. Since the critical treatment of sources in this book is secondary to the psychological or rather psychiatric analysis, it is not always clear whether it is based on manuscripts or printed books.

The material he uses can, however, to a great extent be found in the biographical file in the Westin-collection of the University Library of Uppsala, entitled *Berättelser om underliga pigor* etc. (Tales about Strange Maids etc.). Among the ten or so documents to be found there, one may note in particular the detailed account concerning a shoemaker's daughter, Sara Stina Schultz from Fogdö in Södermanland, who in 1782 caused a sensation and who was the object of a series of investigations involving the religious, medical and legal authorities. Clearly not all of them were noticed by Gadelius. The title of one of the printed works from 1818 is characteristic: "A Truthful Story, that the great Dragon, the old Snake, that is the Devil, and Satan have bodily ruled over people, even in our days" (in Swedish). An expert in this field and a collector of broadsheets dealing with remarkable events (which partly resemble the experiences of Catharina Fagerberg), is the deceased lawyer J. Pape. In a posthumous work on a wise girl (*Kloka*

¹ For a similar approach, see M. Bouteiller, *Chamanisme et Guérison Magique*, Paris 1950, containing material from North American Indians who are compared to the French "panseurs de secret" and "jeteurs de sort."

flickan från Vallåkra, Lund 1949) he has himself described a case from the 19th century, which offers several analogies with the story of Catharina Fagerberg. His work is, however, incomplete, for when it comes to interpretation it suffers, like that of Gadelius, from the limitations of rationalism or from outmoded judgements confined within psychiatric theories fashionable at that time. As collections of material, however, these monographs are of great value.

It was not only ordinary people or country-people who in the 1720's and 1730's shared Catharina Fagerberg's belief that illness could be caused by witchcraft and evil spirits. As an example of the views held by educated people of that time we shall cite the celebrated rural dean from Hälsingland, O. Broman. In his great work, *Glysisvallur*, that incomparable goldmine of historic-cultural material, he has devoted just over 50 pages to a "Disquisitio de MORBIS ACCIDENTALIBUS MALIGNIS" concerning illnesses and indispositions that are called 'caught by evil' (*råka i ondt*)¹. It is partly a learned inquiry, partly a reflexion of the ideas of Broman and his time, which shows that we are at the commencement of the Age of Reason. Accordingly Broman refers a great deal back to natural causes, but at the same time is of the opinion that the activity of evil spirits is a truth to which the Bible testifies. A short account of some points in Broman's work that throw light on Catharina Fagerberg's case will therefore be given.

To 'be caught by evil' means to be attacked by any illness whatever, but especially when it is sudden and is believed to be caused by the devil, evil spirits, trolls, ghosts and the instrument of Beelzebub. This is also called 'to be bewitched' (*at warda fjäjad*) (p. 785).

There is a good deal of writing, with varying import, on the created spirits or angels. According to Broman, however, it is sufficient to establish from the clear words of the Bible that the fallen angels or evil spirits really do exist in incalculable numbers (Mark v, Luke viii). They are "strong, agile, subtle, cunning by nature," and, in a word, "masters of thousands of arts." They are forever intent on evil, even if the Evil One can transform himself into an angel of light and the Devil is, according to Luther, aping God. He

¹ O. Broman, *Glysisvallur* I-III, Uppsala 1911-54, I, pp. 785-835.

and his crew, however, cannot without God's consent perform anything extraordinary as, for example, appearing in the shape of a revenant or an animal (pp. 785-89).

In spite of the fact that the Devil is harsh in his treatment of human beings, Broman had himself only seen two or three people possessed by the Devil. Although quite a few imagine themselves, or are imagined by others, to be possessed, the fact of the matter is that they have suffered from severe diseases. Among the ghosts, considered by some to be unclean spirits and whose existence Broman does not completely deny, he includes local spirits, bugbears, changelings, ghosts of the murdered, hill-side spirits, trolls, the green-haired wood-nymphs, lake-sprites, underground spirits, the water-spirit Neck, mermaids, and others (p. 791).

The vassals of the Evil One include sorcerers, sorceresses, witches of different kinds 'dragon-flies', rune-sayers, sibyls, sooth-sayers, wise folk, wise Finns, Lapp fortune-tellers, and others. These have existed in great numbers throughout the world, especially among the heathens, and therefore formerly also in Scandinavia where they still exist in secret. Some people know that the Evil One is acting through them, others do not understand this but believe that they practise a lawful and beneficent function especially as they use the prayer Our Father and the name of Jesus in their charms. Broman has a collection of such recitations, not, of course, for use but "for ridicule's sake". The question as to whether magicians should be consulted in cases of illness is answered with a curt No, by referring to God's word and to teachers of Christianity. The punishment that ought to be imposed on those using spells (*gan* or *galdur*) or witchcraft is set down in the royal edicts against such devilry (pp. 792-99).

In general it is held that one is afflicted with evil at certain times and on certain days, and at special places. Examples of this are given, and Ps. xci, 5 cited. The old Swedish Bible translation speaks here of "the evil of the night and the shots that fly by day." Such things usually happen when one is alone, but several people at a time have been known to see the same "ghostly disturbances" (p. 800).

The examples of magic shots and related phenomena which Broman describes recall sometimes almost word for word corresponding phenomena and episodes in the life of Catharina Fagerberg. Thus the rural dean from

Hälsingland tells us about a maid from Österbotten that she “came here to me in the year 1726 to be cured of bad eyesight, saying that it was caused by ‘Finnish darts’ (*finntyre*) or Finnish shot which another maid had threatened her with because they both loved the same young man. The shot came in this manner: just as she was going through the door a crack was heard, and at that moment a thick fog came before her eyes so that she could hardly see with both eyes” ... (p. 808).

Broman describes also how such a magic shot is made: “For it is a small ring made of an entwined soft twig taken from a certain kind of tree. This ring is placed on a stone which is stuck in the ground, and inside this ring one spits three times. Then a glowing coal is placed on it, and some charms are recited. Then another stone or axehead is taken, and with one powerful blow the ring is smashed asunder, and a crack is heard. This shot can be aimed at both man and beast, and often hits its mark. *But others can also be caught by the same shot, even although the employed marksman was not aiming at them*” (the italics are ours).

Broman adds “that in summer Lapps and Finns collect flies of the largest sort, bluish in colour, blowflies here mentioned ... These flies are kept in a box, and taken out one by one with special charms when the shot is going to take place, and sent out when a strong wind is blowing in the direction of the place where the harm is to be effected; far or near, the person or beast must then be mentioned to whom the shot or fly is going to be sent.”

Instead of flies a small hollow ball made of reindeer lichen can be used (cf. p. 774). The person who sees such a shot come flying through the air and can move out of its way can consider himself fortunate. It is also possible to find the shot after it has completed its journey in the shape of a spent musket- or rifle-bullet, and so direct it back to the person who sent it. That person is then injured. What it is like to be the target of a Finnish shot is described by Broman out of his own experience.

In the year, 1704, he accompanied the district judge, Gyllenschöld, and his father, who was a Crown public prosecutor, on a visit to inspect a Finnish cottage in the parish of Hassela. Because the boundary was not marked as the owner wished, he said at their departure: “Ha! ha! We’ll now see how your journey goes!” They laughed at him. But when in the calm of the evening they were sitting in a small boat, the flies came as thick as midges,

the water began to rise and the waves enter the boat, so that the travellers thought they were going to sink. They had a narrow escape from drowning, arriving at the shore before the boat had time to sink (pp. 814 ff., 819).

We shall now take two cases from the same year in which Catharina Fagerberg was tried in court, that is, in 1732. It is true that psychologically they are of another type, since in one case the afflicted person was surrounded by the spirits and they did not dwell inside him, while in the other case it is rather a question of a person's experiences at the hands of supposedly evil-minded enemies. These documents, nevertheless, provide a vivid insight into the beliefs concerning the Devil's pact and into witchcraft, beliefs that also occurred in Catharina's case. But it will be evident from the much-abridged stories related below that these beliefs were found not only among country women, but even among highly educated people in the capital, irrespective of whether in our opinion they should be regarded as mentally ill or not. Thus, the pietistic major, Count Nils Gyllenstierna, (b. 1710) tells about the scourges he underwent which might well also throw light on the agonies suffered by Catharina, as well as reveal a world of spirits equally as rich.

Despite a consuming hunger for God, Gyllenstierna was unable to find Him, discovering inside him only the darkness and wickedness of hell. In his own words, his experience was as follows: "One day I felt a strong magical power attracting me, like a mighty tempestuous thunderclap, which in a second rapt me into an ecstasy, and hurled me into a dark eternity. This ecstasy which was a terrible vision completely opened my spiritual eyes and mind ... Before my deliverance was granted, I spent more than one and a half years in that state."

On occasions the sorely tried man saw the evil spirits, usually invisible, that aroused sinful thoughts in the human heart. He "felt with horror their magic arrows in him." Now and then he glimpsed the spirits of the departed in the shape of black and dejected human beings. They sighed so piteously that even Gyllenstierna's host and hostess heard them. He also saw another variety, especially at night. They were bodiless, and had only a winged human head.

In addition Gyllenstierna beheld a kind of whitish-grey spirits, five

quarters long, resembling small naked children. These spirits were as quick as lightning, wicked, and came in heaps floating over the floor of the room, striking the poor man's legs, and setting up a high-pitched thin cry. "If I had wished to practise black magic, these spirits would have given me enough service, for although they did not speak ... they had, as it were, written on their foreheads all that happened in other places."

Gyllenstierna also saw others who were haunted by the same evil creatures, as, for example, "a woman who just got an epileptic fit ... At that very moment ten or twelve of those whitish-grey spirits came and caused the woman grievous pain." He is aware that this explanation of the illness cannot be accepted just as it stands: "I leave it to the respected doctors whether such convulsive paroxysms were caused by a mere deficiency of the physical organism."

One day the Tempter came in the horrible shape of one of the fallen angels or devils. He spoke a magical roaring language which the afflicted man understood in his soul: "You know", he said, "that you have sought God with all your heart. But now you see that he is not a person you can trust, for he has surrendered you into our power, and is not able to recover you from our realm. Therefore, now give him up completely!"

Gyllenstierna refused to surrender himself to the devil, and did not hesitate to use natural means to aid him. He opened a vein in his arm and found that the blood was thick and black. At the same time he derived consolation from a remarkable vision in which he was lifted high above the earth. With spiritual eyes he saw the great red dragon described in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. There it is told that with its tail the dragon pulls down a third of all the stars in heaven, and casts them down to earth. But in Gyllenstierna's vision (which, if one disregards the Christian background could belong to a description of a shaman's call; cf. also the mythical explanation of the eclipse of the sun in Hinduism), this part has undergone a strange reshaping. The dragon swallows a multitude of stars to satisfy his hunger, but he is unable to hold them, and they emerge from his tail in heaps. "Yes, he swallowed me too, several times, but I escaped him likewise. In this great anxiety when the dragon was pursuing me in the strangest fashion I cried out in a loud voice: Michael, Michael, come and help me!" At last and to the delight of the visionary there came a beautiful angel.

Gyllenstierna was not able to resist investigating the state of spirits after death, and this made his illness worse. But he obtained some refreshment from a light shower of rain which reminded him of Is. xxvi, 19. A few days later he had another marvellous vision in which he was lifted up to the heights of heaven so that he was able to see clearly the earth's globe and the seas. Amidst great thunder beheld from heaven and earth, he saw a white cloud in which the throne of the almighty judge was hidden.

His hardships, however, were not yet finished, and completely unable to sleep, he grew physically weaker. "The first death-dealing wounds of the Enemy's glowing shot could not be healed. A disturbed conscience and fresh arrows shot by sneering spirits, horrible thoughts, the sighing of the dead, the lowering of my strength and my anguish had all for one whole month so grieved my heart that I believed death to be at hand".¹

Gadelius characterizes Gyllenstierna as "a visionary hysteric of the type in folk psychology so common in the history of religion." He also stresses the psycho-biological significance of the hallucinations to be found at a lower cultural level, such as those of the Siberian shamans and Indian medicine men. Similarly Gadelius notes the existence of clairvoyants in connection with visionary ecstasy and possession.

A case of a completely different nature is as follows. A judge-advocate, J. Bjugg, in a writ sent to Stockholm's city-court on 12 June, 1732, accused his landlord and many other people living in the house of having bewitched him with devilish arts and caused him all sorts of suffering. They are said to have conspired together to accuse him of a variety of treasonable crimes, and at the same time by means of black magic—having introduced magic powder into drinks—they had learnt at a distance of all that Bjugg said or thought. They also constantly disturbed him at his prayers and devotions, blasphemed against God, mocked the Sacrament, denied Christ's divine nature, and repeated Bjugg's hymns and prayers backwards. They also pretended to be His Royal Majesty and other dignitaries, and read out false judgements.

¹ Gadelius, *op. cit.* I, pp. 85-92 (after a manuscript in the possession of Miss Sigrid Gyllenstierna, Elfdalen). See also *Anteckningar af Nils Axelsson Gyllenstierna*, utg. af M. Weibull (= *Skånska Samlingar* 1891, I: 2), pp. 6 f., 76 f., and *Förr och Nu* 5, 1890, pp. 38, 78 f., 110 f., 119 ff. (with some variants but without indication of source).

Bjugg, too, had the Rev. E. Tollstadius as his spiritual adviser, and before him declared his innocence. But he was obliged to undergo an official mental examination. Apparently no judgement was ever given in this case, and the unfortunate man ended his days at the Danviken asylum.

B. Gadelius, who brought these documents to light,¹ points to the difference between the enlightened spirit with which this case was treated and the superstitions existing fifty years earlier at the time of the witch-trials. The trial-account of Bjugg adduced by Gadelius is also one of our oldest psychiatric-medical documents. In addition the case is of clinical interest; "It is no longer a state of hysteria induced by the spirit of the times with demoniacal ideas and symptoms of possession of the kind we constantly meet with in the previous centuries. It is a case of *paranoia* with certain catatonic features . . . In its entirety the picture recalls nothing so much as alcoholic delirium." Gadelius finally emphasizes the importance of differentiating between hysteria and catatonia, which superficially are so similar. The modern forms of possession belong to the latter group, caused by a process of organic degeneration and which might not be within the power of a faith-healer to cure.

Similar in many respects to Catharina's case are the experiences of 'Wise Anna' of Vallåkra, just over one hundred years later. These include, among other things, what is called "hysterical stigmata", the apparition of an angel, and after the recovery from illness the healing of other ill people. Pape summarizes the story of 'Wise Anna' as follows:

"Ever since the upsetting experience during the rye-harvest in the month of August, Anna had felt sickly and uncomfortable, and at Michaelmas, at the end of September or beginning of October, she was afflicted with headaches and sickness, and from then on stayed in bed.

At about seven o'clock on the same evening that she had gone to bed, she fell into a doze which lasted for about an hour. When she woke up, she saw a 'glorified being', or a 'heavenly angel', standing by her bed for a short while, who during that time merely asked her to reveal what she had seen.

The second vision.

¹ "Psykiatriska sjukdomsformer i historisk belysning (jämte en sjukhistoria från år 1732)" (*Hygiea* 70, 1908: 1, pp. 97-118), pp. 108 ff.

Later in the night she fell into an 'unconscious state or doze', which probably lasted about two hours. Her breathing and blood-circulation had stopped, and her body became completely cold, but the red of her cheeks remained. She was believed to have died.

On awakening she suddenly sat up in bed and in a loud voice, running with perspiration, she read out some verses of a 'pious nature'. She repeated the reading over and over again.

Subsequently she told relatives and other people present who had been called in that during her 'death-sleep' she had been in heaven, hell and the 'world of the spirits'. — In the 'gloriously illumined heaven' she had caught sight of God and his attendants, among whom she recognized the angel she had seen before with 'natural eyes'. This angel (or Christ) had taught her the verses she had read out, and Christ had given her Communion. In the 'world of spirits' she had seen and talked to spirits of dead persons, who, according to a dead tailor's wife she had recognized, were condemned to hover between heaven and earth for a while as a punishment for sins committed during their life on earth. In hell she had seen both the devil and his evil angels. The devil appeared in the shape of a human being and was bound.

Even after waking up she saw the same angel by her bed, and continuously till five in the morning she was able to witness 'the heavenly glory' she had described to the people standing round her.

The third vision.

Immediately after waking she felt completely well, but thereafter she 'fell ill', having headaches and feebleness. For nine days and nights she stayed in bed but after that was able to resume her duties.

One night shortly before Christmas—in the middle of December—after having gone to bed, she fell once more into a 'death-sleep', which on this occasion lasted only a quarter of an hour. Anna's sister, who was lying in the same bed, heard her talking to someone that Anna later maintained was the angel. This angel had announced to Anna that she had been selected to heal ill people. Apart from her sister, no one else knew of this episode.

This last vision made Anna worried and anxious, and caused 'loss of appetite'. Three weeks later—at the beginning of January, 1838—she revealed the angel's message to her parents, and thereupon began healing

the sick. It was not until then that her health returned, and with it her characteristic good humour.”¹

As in the apocalypses of the Early Church and in medieval literature on visions, we find here visions of hell and heaven, as well as communication with spirits and angels. But the point of contact between popular Christian visionaries and their counterparts among the non-Christian shamans is that the gift of faith healing comes after a victorious struggle with both physical and psychological tribulations.

3. *The Biblical and Christian Background*

It is not difficult to find historical or phenomenological analogies to the experiences of the wise maid. But what are the facts about the direct origin of Catharina's own, far from simple spirit doctrine, which has been described above from the German manuscript? If a comparison is made between the account there given and corresponding parts in other documents, certain variations are to be found. Since the German Summary refers to different documents, its own description also varies. On the one hand the clairvoyance of the wise maid is explained by saying that she compels one of the evil (or good) 'vital spirits' dwelling in someone present, to speak out of her own throat. On the other hand she can despatch one of her own 'vital spirits' in order to bring her someone else's 'vital spirit'.

But before the district court of Östkind Catharina stated that one of the spirits which had been given to her departed to God when she earnestly prayed for it. Arrived there it persists until it has had its request granted, which takes about one and a half days. This variant is more consonant with the concept of the 'vital spirits' as guardian angels. With his positive approach, the pietistic clergyman, Tollstadius, is unable to reject Catharina's spirit-belief when presented in this shape. He says, however, that he cannot understand how she is able to summon other spirits and obtain an answer from them through her own throat, even although much that is incomprehensible to us is possible to the Almighty God. Even before the district court of Östkind, Catharina had given evidence of her abilities, but had apparently

¹ Pape, *op. cit.*, pp. 66 f.

refused to repeat this before the Svea Court of Appeal because she had promised the clergymen never to do it again. According to the same source, Tessin, Catharina sends "her 'vital spirit' to experience what happens in other places." If the wording of this is not to be regarded as a shortened account of one of the above-mentioned methods, he thinks that the wise maid obtained the information herself without using the roundabout way of using other spirits or the Throne of God.

One asks oneself where a simple country girl could have obtained her spirit-beliefs. It is true that it was the century of Swedenborg, but Catharina has chronological priority. It is possible that she came under the influence of radical pietism, mediated through the upper-class families with whom she was in service. But in these circles, as far as I have been able to discover, no corresponding spirit doctrine is to be found, even if different kinds of apparitions of spiritual beings are common. We could also follow Tollstadius' line of thought and ask: what were the demonology and the belief in angels of contemporary Protestantism, and what possibilities were there of their becoming linked with a pre-Christian folk belief?

The preceding patristic and even the medieval tradition are indeed not without significance since even Lutheran theologians of the 17th century were well-versed in it. Their learned works did not, of course, have any direct influence on the people, but the knowledge contained in them reached the general public through catechisms, homilies and sermons. The Fathers of the Old Church have in their turn handed down much from late classical non-Christian philosophy, even if this was done by way of polemics. Thus, for example, Augustine in his *De Civitate Dei* (X: 9) describes in detail the spirit belief of the neo-Platonist Porphyrios, in which the Church Father himself interprets the pagan angels as demons.

According to Porphyrios the spiritual as opposed to the intellectual part of the soul obtains the ability to entertain spirits and angels and see gods by means of consecrations. Both late-Jewish rabbinical and patristic teaching, already put forward in the Old Testament Apocrypha (Tob. xii, 12 ff.), said that it was the angels who brought the people's prayers before God. According to the men of the Early Church both angels and human souls are entities created by God, and are therefore related to each other. Origen even states that angels can also be called souls. Further, angels are considered to be

able to bring about thoughts and visions in the human soul, as well as foretell coming events and reveal secret things.¹

Luther in fact opposed both saint- and angel-worship. The Schmalkaldic articles of 1537 bear traces of this polemic (II: 2 § 26). But the Reformer did not therefore deny the existence of angels; on the contrary, in a series of sermons delivered in connection with St Michael's Day² he strongly stressed their many-sided tasks, necessary for human beings, which had been set them by their Creator. It is, however, characteristic that their activity is constantly contrasted with that of the devil and demonic spirits. For these also are angels, created by God, who have, however, fallen away and entered the service of the Evil One. A limit is set to their power, and the good angels as spirit guardians are both greater in number and stronger.

This Lutheran angel-belief, which throughout is biblically sanctioned, underwent further development during the 17th century. Such an influential churchman as Johann Gerhard wrote a whole monograph with the title *Angelologia sacra* (Jena 1637). A work of his youth, influenced by J. Arnd, *Meditationes Sacrae* (1606) was, however, of greater significance as to the people's piety. A Swedish translation was produced with the subtitle "*LI Gudelige Helige Betræchtelser fordøm på Latin skrefne*" ("51 Godly Holy Meditations, formerly written in Latin"; 2 uppl. Stockholm 1696). The 26th meditation deals with the protection of the holy angels: "... They do not spare themselves in serving a human being, as they shall become brothers to him in eternal bliss. When Jacob was returning to his homeland, he saw on the way a great flock of angels ... Be certain that these watchmen are at hand and with you everywhere, because they are subtle and penetrating Spirits, that neither wood, iron or walls could shut out or resist ... that these heavenly spirits know and see your straits and perils, for they always see our heavenly Father's face ... We should regard the angels as if they were God's holy hands." "The evil spirit, the Devil" is contrasted with "the heavenly, pure and powerful Spirit."³

¹ See the article "Engel" in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* V, 1960/62, cols. 59, 72, 88, 163, 150.

² WA 32 (1906), pp. 111 f., 552 ff., 34/II (1908), pp. 222 ff.; 49 (1913), pp. 570 ff.

³ Gustav II Adolf brought with him this tract during his campaigns together with J. Arnd, *Wahres Christentum*. In the Swedish newprints of 1858 and 1896, in spite of the preface of Thomander, the wording is considerably enfeebled.

A few samples from original Swedish catechisms will show that for Paulinus Gothus (1648) the angels play a less important part. In Swebilius' catechism they are mentioned in the explanation of the Second Main Section under the First Article of Faith no 21 ff. There the angels are said to be spirits, both good and evil (1714 edition).¹ The subject is explored more thoroughly in German sources, as for example in D. Martin Luther's *Kleiner Catechismus* of 1737 (Stockholm 1737). J. Swedberg's personal familiarity with the world of angels is well-known and much discussed. It is reflected both in his hymns, and in a several other works by him.² Belonging here is the *Catechismi Gudliga Öfning* (Skara 1709). Under the First Article of Faith, no 19, in connection with Psalm xxxiv, 8, Swedberg, the father of Swedenborg, talks of the angelic guard (*vagnborg* = chariot wall) that God uses to protect the faithful even in the thick of battle.

The world of demons also appears frequently in the hymns, and in the devotional manuals issued during Sweden's Era of Power; the piety of the people is completely interpenetrated by the belief in the activity of the evil powers. This activity is particularly marked at night-time, but even during the hours of daytime and during all the vicissitudes of life thousands of evil dangers crowd ready to spring upon the Christian. According to one of the most wide-spread prayer books, the evil spirits wish to cause damage by means of "magic, shots and other evil actions." At the same time warning is given elsewhere against blaming "the hour of birth, the stars, the Devil, people or some ill-fortune" for sickness or mishaps. Help should not be sought from magicians or devilish practitioners.³ Here the insidious artifices of Satan are accepted as a firm reality. Swebelius also stresses this in his commentary to Luther's Small Catechism: "What is it to practise witchcraft? It is not only to hurt your brother with the aid of the Devil, but to

¹ For the different editions, see E. Lilja, *Den svenska katekestraditionen mellan Swebilius och Lindblom. En bibliografisk och kyrkohistorisk studie (= Samlingar och studier till Svenska Kyrkans historia 16)*, Diss. Lund, Stockholm 1947.

² See B. Wahlström, *Änglar och andar*, Stockholm 1957, pp. 30 ff. (popular); idem., "Swedberg och änglarna" (*Psalm och sång. Studier tillägnade Emil Liedgren*, Lund 1959, pp. 104-116; idem., "Karl XII:s änglar" (*Karolinska förbundets årsbok*, 1960, pp. 105-118).

³ D. Lindquist, *Studier i den svenska andaktslitteraturen under stormaktstidevarvet med särskild hänsyn till bön-, tröste- och nattvardsböcker*, Diss. Lund, Uppsala 1939, pp. 361 ff.

misuse through superstition God's word and name in order to drive away sickness, from people and cattle, to make oneself invulnerable, to fathom secret things, and such-like."¹

In Avianus' *Samvetsplåster* ("Plaster for a bad Conscience"), translated into Swedish in 1638 there occurs among other things the following sentence: "Does it seem to you that you see perpetual devils when you see butterflies, or that the Devil has taken possession of you when you step over a hole in the ground, do you then cross yourself and meditate on what is said in Is. xliii, 1." It is to be borne in mind, however, that the Devil is above all portrayed as the enemy of the soul, casting seeds of doubt concerning salvation.²

In a book of consolation dating from 1623, also a translation, there appears another frequently occurring "consolation for those that are temporarily possessed by the Devil." That is to say, the Evil One has with God's consent "the power to enter a person, to possess him, torment and afflict him." There is then described "the appalling spectacle of the Devil jerking a poor person hither and thither, making his face awful, treating his limbs terribly, lifting him up in the air and throwing him down again, tearing the clothes off his body" ... This God can allow partly in order to prove that the stories in the Bible about the evil spirits are no fables. In Avianus' *Samvetsplåster* there is a quotation out of Luther's Table Talks to the effect that the Devil and witches receive power over people either to punish the ungodly or test the pious.³

This latter explanation agrees with the current theology of the 17th century. C. E. Brochmand, professor of theology at Copenhagen, thus expresses it in his *Religionis Christianae Articulus qui est de Angelis bonis et malis, de Spectris, de Obsessis*, of 1629: *Diabolum ob peccata admissa aliquando ingredi in homines*.⁴ ... *Pios nonnunquam a Diabolo vexari et obsideri* ...

¹ In the explanation of the First Main Section, no. 24.

² Lindquist, *op. cit.*, pp. 364 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 368 ff.

⁴ Cf. W. von Siebenthal, *Krankheit als Folge der Sünde. Eine medizinhistorische Untersuchung* (=Heilkunde und Geisteswelt 2), Hannover 1950, pp. 48 ff. For the Christian demonology applied to cases which are similar to that of Catharina Fagerberg, and where she, too, is mentioned, see the contemporary E. D. Hauber *Bibliotheca, acta et scripta magica: Gründliche Nachrichten und Urtheide von solchen Büchern und Handlungen, welche die Macht des Teufels in leiblichen Dingen betreffen* I-III, Hafniae 1738-1745 (I, pp. 443 ff.), and H. C. Lea, *Materials Toward a History*

(Quaestio 22). The signs of bodily possession are, according to the same author, the ability to reveal things of a kind that are not accessible to natural knowledge (*occultorum revelatio*), further an insight into languages which the person in question has never been taught, and finally a cry, completely unprecedented and worse than an animal cry, an awful and wild look, tormented limbs, and astonishing, supernatural bodily power (Quaestio 21). These signs of possession accord quite well with the criteria given in the *Rituale Romanum* (see below!).

From this short survey it is evident that the main features of Catharina Fagerberg's supernatural conception of reality can be traced in current Evangelical Lutheran beliefs about angels and demons. But there is also a contribution from old Nordic folk beliefs, which seem to be pre-Christian.

4. *Magic Shots, Spiritus and Yawning*

In the evil dreams which harassed Catharina there were also included visions of some small boxes and a black book. The interpreting spirit construed this to mean that the maid had received an offer from the evil spirits or the Evil One to enter her service, and to leave her a free choice. However, she rejected this temptation to abandon her baptismal covenant, and instead by divine grace received power to fight the evil spirits. The yawning which is mentioned in several places is a sign that these spirits are present or are approaching. The vexation from evil spirits, that Catharina and her patients suffer, are ascribed to the black magic of wicked persons. In one passage, however, there is a statement that the 'shot' was meant for the father, but had hit his daughter, who accidentally stepped in its way (cf. above with *Glysisvallur!*). At first sight this method of bewitching people, well-known in folklore, may seem to contradict the idea that a disease was caused by evil spirits. An examination of the material shows, however, that this is not so.

The terms for this kind of bewitchment,¹ of which there are many parallels

of *Witchcraft* I-III, published posthumously at the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1939 (reprint 1957), p. 1285. Hauber's great collection of literature on magic matters is registered in the catalogue of his rich library, printed in Copenhagen in 1766-1767 (II, pp. 179-199).

¹ See N. Lid, *Trolldom*, Oslo 1950, pp. 1 ff.; L. Honko, *Krankheitsprojekte. Untersuchung über eine urtümliche Krankheitserklärung* (= *Folklore Fellows Communications* 178), Helsingfors 1959, pp. 41 ff., 65 ff., 97 ff.

to be found among primitive peoples, are, for example, 'magic shot', 'Lapp shot', 'weather shot',¹ and 'elf-shot'. Sympathetic magic consisting in bewitchment through an image is often an integral part of the method. The visible shapes in which the magic shots appear are, for example, magic flies and birds (*gandfluga* and *gandfugl*, to use Norwegian terminology also).² In Österbotten, Finland, the Lapp-shot is an insect that flies through the air, such as a wasp, a bee or a butterfly. In New Icelandic tradition there is mention of *galdrafluga*. This is probably connected with the Icelandic spirit belief and ideas on 'sendings' (*sendingar*) and 'awakenings' (*uppvakningar*), ghosts, that wizards were said to be able to call up out of the grave and send out to kill. These 'sendings' have also travelled in the shape of flies. In Norwegian or Swedish regions, the Lapp-, Finn-, or magic shot has also been called 'sending', like all evil things coming from the north.³

Parallel with this, there is now the idea that the Devil and the evil spirits appear in the shape of a bird or fly, or that the magician himself travels in these shapes. In the conjurations the shot is conceived of as a person, an evil spirit, that can be spoken to.⁴ The Norwegian scholar who has investigated the Scandinavian material, Lid, would have been able to link this series of conceptions together, if he had borne in mind that the master of the evil spirits, Beelzebul (Mark iii, 22), resp. Beelzebub (cf. II Kings i, 2) had been conceived as a fly-god. This was a flourishing idea during the 18th century, as is clear from the case of Hyphauff (see below).

It has been a general folk belief right up to our own century that prosperity, happiness, power and wisdom can be gained through a spirit which is in the service of the Devil. After death the employer of the spirit then belongs to the Devil. It is possible, however, to sell the spirit, which lives in a bottle or box, and in this way escape this fate. The name given it is *spiritus familiaris*

¹ Cf. the Swedish saying "to be out in bad (*ogjort*) weather", which has been completely misunderstood in current dictionaries. It does not mean that one has failed to insure one's journey by not arranging convenient weather by magic, but that someone is out in evil-intended (*ill-gjort*) weather, i.e. on evil business.

² Lid, op. cit., p. 38: Germanic **ganda-*, Greek *κοντός* ('pole', 'stake'), *κεντέω* ('stick'), hence the word *gand* means 'stick', 'twig', e.g. the arrow in the magic shot; cf. a series of Scandinavian dialect words.

³ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

(popularly, *imp* or *familiar*), the designation which is used also in the account of Catharina Fagerberg's temptation.

Samuel Columbus (1642-79) relates that the belief held in Livonia was that Stiernhielm (1598-1672) owned a *spiritus familiaris*, because he had such great knowledge. Professor Virginius could not rest until he had seen this *spiritus*. Stiernhielm therefore showed him a louse under a magnifying-glass! In 1695 a Småland farmer wished to buy himself a *spiritus* at a fair at Eksjö. In 1706 at Karlshamn two soldiers were gaoled for 8 days because, at the instigation of Satan, they had tried to obtain a *spiritus* for the purpose of getting themselves money. There was a similar case in Karlskrona in 1708. The belief in the *spiritus* was still alive a hundred years ago. At a fair at Hånga Hed in Västergötland about 1850 a bottle with a *spiritus* inside was on view. The man who broke the bottle was whipped. Eva Wigström tells about a farmer in Göinge who also wished to buy a *spiritus*, and was given a spider in a casket. He was very pleased with his purchase because his *spiritus* brought him 75 crowns every night.

The owner of a *spiritus* can talk to it, and receive answers from it. It can perform practically anything, and for this reason sorcerers are almost always provided with a *spiritus*. Other draught creatures with different names and functions also belong here (cf. *bara*, *bära*). Apart from Sweden the name is found only in Siebenbürgen. But it probably has a literary origin, as can be seen from the *Höllen-Zwänge* which are connected with the name of Faust.¹ *Spiritus*, was, according to Norlind, originally an ancestral soul in the form of a snake which was first a guardian spirit, then a servant spirit, and finally got demonized. This short survey of the belief in the *spiritus*² shows abundantly that Catharina Fagerberg also shared to the full contemporary ideas concerning such a belief.

Regarding Catharina's yawning when evil is being performed, it is possible to point to Ancient Nordic descriptions of related phenomena. Thus the

¹ Cf. E. Delcambre, *Le concept de la sorcellerie dans le duché de Lorraine au XVI^e et au XVII^e siècle I-III*, Nancy 1948-1951, III, pp. 193 ff.

² I have here followed T. Norlind, "Spiritusglaube" (in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 25, 1915). Much has since then been published on this and related subjects, and abundant unpublished material exists in the Folk life archives and private collections, e.g. K. G. Gilstring after Rikard Ekström, Klostern, Vikingstad s:n, uppt. 1962 06 26.

sejðr had a peculiar psychic influence on the person at whom it was aimed.¹ In the *Laxdöla saga* it makes all those present sleepy and finally sends them to sleep. In the *Ynglinga saga*, Vanlandi who is far away from the malevolent Huld, 'sejðing' in Uppsala, wishes first to set out and afterwards becomes sleepy. This corresponds with the New Icelandic *aðsokn*, 'attack', 'nightmare', "vexation of a stranger's 'soul'" (*hugr* or *fylgja*, also *vörðr*). In *Njála* Suanr suddenly grows sleepy and yawns, when his enemies are advancing on his farm.² The same happens to Gunnar in Lidarände, who falls asleep and sees in a dream the *fylgjur* of the attackers as wolves that fall on him. In the *Sturlunga* cycle it is told how *Hallr Hallsson* became strangely sleepy before being attacked by Kolbein's men, so sleepy that he fell out of his seat. The mother-in-law also suffered from the enemies' *fylgjur*. Strömbäck gives further examples of this sleepiness in connection with *úfriðar fylgjur*. According to one saga both opposing sides go to sleep and are harassed or bewitched by the *hugr* or the *fylgja* of their opponents.

Harald Hårfagre's fosterer (*fostra*), skilled in magic, received a foretoken about the coming of men on a visit to her. That is to say, she sat before the fire and yawned heavily (*geispaðe miog*).

In New Icelandic folk belief these conceptions are still alive. They are linked there with the already mentioned belief in *sendingar*, in the shape of a dead man, a man's bone, or an animal's head, which is regarded as causing sudden weakness or tiredness. The evil injury which it is intended to inflict, need not depend on the agency of such material objects, but can be inflicted directly by means of the 'mind' or the 'follower'. An example of this is the story of the eighteen magicians on the Västmanna islands, which is referred to in Strömbäck's dissertation.

In current Swedish folk belief survivals of such Ancient Nordic concepts are to be found,³ though they have often got a secondary reinterpretations.

¹ See D. Strömbäck, *Sejd* (= *Nordiska texter och undersökningar* 5), Diss. Uppsala 1935, pp. 152 ff.

² Cf. also K. Schmeling, *Zur Geschichte des Zweiten Gesichts* (= *Veröffentl. des Provinzial-Instituts für Landesplanung und niedersächs. Landes- und Volksforschung Hannover-Göttingen* A II: 13), Oldenburg I. O. 1943, p. 68.

³ The Uppsala Dialect Archiv (ULMA), box 93 (everyday foretokens, signs of arrival). For both Ancient Nordic and contemporary Norwegian material, see also I. Reichborn-Kjennerud, *Vår gamle trolldomsmedisin V* (= *Skrifter utg. av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo*, II. Hist.-filos. Kl. 1947: 1), pp. 37 ff., and Lily Weiser-

The person who owns a powerful *hug* (*håg*, 'mind') influences other people either at a distance or in their presence. The influence manifests itself on the victim as sleepiness. This in its turn is taken either as a foretoken¹ that someone is approaching,² or as a sign meaning that the stranger, whether already present³ or on his way, is going to be rich,⁴ i.e. the person who is strong in spirit will have good luck, commonly regarded as the same thing as being rich! On the other hand, the saying goes, that the person who is sensitive to such influence, himself possesses a strong *hug*.⁵

Question-list no 168 of ULMA (answers not yet put on cards) is concerned with folk beliefs on the *vård* (=Isl. *vörðr*), and also contains ap-
positely the following question: "Could a person's *vård* make itself known to another person so that the latter felt sleepy (and yawned), felt itchy on a particular part of the body, and so on?"

In earlier folk literature on female faith-healers, possessed people and those skilled in magic, this phenomenon is also well-known. This is clear from the following passage out of Gadelius' collection of examples: "the boy Nils began to yawn and said: 'Right now the sorceress is coming'".⁶

5. *Possession in Evangelical-Lutheran and Roman Theological Theory and Usage*

During the first two decades of the 18th century, the daughter of a Skåne clergyman, Söster Hyphauff from Bara, caused a stir as a result of her afflictions and the resultant expulsion of the demons from her. Her father has described in detail these afflictions, and her brother, also a clergyman, has described the expulsion of the demons, in which he took part as the

Aall, "En studie om vardøger" (*Norveg* 12, 1965, pp. 73-112; with a summary in German), pp. 74, 77 f., 92 ff., 97, where the identification with the guardian angel is noted.

¹ ULMA 93: 17 (Smål. Hossmo), p. 740.

² ULMA 5622 (Dal. Sollerön), p. 41.

³ ULMA 192 (Vstml. Ramsberg), p. 57.

⁴ ULMA 5672 (Upl. Bälinge), p. 6; 1527: 3 (Ång. Arnäs), p. 28; 2376: 1 (Smål. Jät), p. 4; 6573 (Smål. Höreda), p. 12; 22: 25 (Smål. Hossmo), p. 18; 438: 2 (Vml. Grythyttan), p. 57; 25: 51 (Vgl.), p. 27; 197: 52 (Gotl.), p. 90; etc.

⁵ ULMA 1173 (Jtl. Frostviken), p. 105.

⁶ Gadelius, op. cit. II, p. 205; reprint Stockholm 1963, p. 102.

exorcist. For a whole year the Tempter often harassed her so violently, that it took four or five people to hold her down. He made her blind, deaf and dumb, twisted her mouth, and audibly snapped one of her ribs, laming and crippling her in such a terrible manner that she could neither walk nor stand but had to be carried to and from bed. Despite hunger, she had to abstain from all food and drink for whole days and weeks; on one occasion it was for as long as 18 days.

Alternating with this unspeakable torture, the sorely tried girl was seized with ecstasy and fainting fits several times a day. On waking up she was able to tell of wonderful heavenly visions, in which God's angels had strengthened her and told her patiently to bear her cross. Being in her senses she was able to describe what was happening in other places, and every now and then she proved right. On these occasions she said that her angels had revealed it to her.

Lars Terleander, curate, later perpetual curate, in Lund, was able during visits to Bara to release the girl from the Evil One without exorcism, but simply by the laying on of hands. Among other things the Evil One had ordered her not to address him familiarly with 'thou', so that she frequently called the Enemy "Monsieur Devil". A barber-surgeon, from the Admiralty in Karlskrona, who was son-in-law to the rector in Bara, was also able to have a good influence on the girl by using both spiritual and natural means.

Söster Hyphauff could also predict when her pains would stop or return. Once, for example, she asked if she could go up to the room of her brother, the curate. On entering, she said to him: "Dear brother, in half-an-hour Monsieur Devil will go away, and then I shall read and sing." But as soon as she had finished the last hymn, she said to those present: "Now I must go in, for right now he is coming back."

Among various peculiarities that marked the girl, one was that during her afflictions she spoke a distorted language so that, for example, she said *snalla* instead of *tala* (speak).

Since the pains would not stop it was concluded that the poor girl was an *obsessa*, that is to say, possessed by the Devil himself. He showed himself tangibly in the shape of a fly, as is clear from several passages in the girl's own account. During a sermon in church, a fly came and sat on her left shoulder; at the same time the Enemy struck her with a blast of wind that

knocked her against her sister so that she had to be carried unconscious out of the church. On another occasion, when she was asked to read out of a hymn-book, she cried out that "a fly came and whispered in her ear that she should not read."

Her brother, the curate, then took up the fight with the Devil both at home and, at his sister's request, also in the church in the presence of the congregation. This is described with a gruesome clearness. It begins with a dialogue between the Evil One and the exorcist. "She, or rather the Enemy through her, started to imitate all sorts of creature, roared like a lion, barked like a dog, crowed like a cock, miaued like a cat," etc. And when Hyphauff the Younger talked to her, a coarse voice answered through her mouth. At the question: "Who are you?", the answer was returned: "Monsieur Devil." "Is it you, wicked Satan?" Answer: "You should call me Monsieur Devil." "But I," writes Hyphauff, "spat at him saying," You damned, proud Spirit, you will never receive that honour from me, but you are the big Dragon, the old Snake, who is called the Devil and Satanas."

While the congregation sang Luther hymn "Our God is a mighty castle to us", read and prayed, "the tyrant was terribly furious, and tortured her poor limbs insufferably." After undergoing a paroxysm, the girl could talk for part of the time with her natural voice, although using her distorted words. The Tempter resisted the exorcist violently, and ridiculed him when he said: "You must depart out of here." When between the paroxysms the priest asked the patient whereabouts in her body the pain was, he was answered at intervals that the pain travelled from her thigh to her stomach, and from there up into her chest. This could also be detected from the movements of the girl's body. "This gave me good reason to hope that in this way the Enemy was approaching the mouth and outlet," commented Hyphauff. When in the name of the Trinity the Devil was ordered to depart, he spat, blasphemed and said: "God I do not respect very much." In his eagerness the clergyman put his foot on her mouth, and in that position recited a passage from the Book of Psalms: "Over lions and adders you will walk, you will trample on and smash young lions and dragons" (Ps. xci, 13). Hyphauff also reminded his opponent that he and his crew once had to obey Our Lord and enter the herd of pigs (Mark v, 1 ff). The priest also resorted to manual force, and prised open her mouth: "I spat as powerfully as I could

several times into her throat, so that the Tempter became exceedingly angry, fought and roared mightily.”

The exorcism was now approaching its completion, for shortly afterwards a fly was seen to sit in the corner of the patient's mouth. “From there it flew and came to rest on her nose, which was immediately taken *ad notam*, since it was remembered that the Evil One had twice visited her in the shape of a fly.” Hyphauff also refers to the Scriptures where Satan is called “Beelzebub, King of the Flies.” When the fly flew away, his sister had no more afflictions, her looks improved and later she burst into tears of joy.¹

In a letter to the Collegium Medicum, Hans Roslin, medical officer to a county council in Skåne, claimed that according to the definitions of Paracelsus, it was a case of *morbus magicus*, although natural causes were also involved. He hesitated about calling the illness possession, though the patient had been cured in church by God's Word alone, since *naturalis medica* had also helped. In addition, Roslin points out the remarkable fact that “the spirit that spoke on request in a deep voice through the maiden Söster Hyphauff, admitted that this was not intended for her but for the old man her father, Gottfried Hyphauff.”²

Behind this formulation we glimpse the same concept of a misdirected magic shot that we met earlier in Catharina Fagerberg's diagnosis of illness in Östergötland (above, p. 125), and in the chapter on illnesses by the rural dean, Broman (above, p. 130). Even the Collegium Medicum speaks of a “magic illness” in the Hyphauff case. For Gadelius it is the hysteria of an unmarried daughter of a clergyman caused by sexual repression.

As late as the end of the 18th century, Sara Stina Schultze, a shoemaker's daughter, was the object of ecclesiastical exorcism in Sweden. In the year 1900, A. S. Poulson, the dean as he was then at Roskilde, wrote in the first published volume of the *Kirkeleksikon for Norden*, that in our day real possession can be neither denied nor affirmed. It is true that in each individual case it is extremely difficult to arrive at a conclusion, because the symptoms are to such a high degree similar to those of natural illnesses. Even Christian doctors take up differing standpoints in this matter, Poulson concludes.³

¹ Gadelius, *op. cit.* I, pp. 173–190.

² Gadelius, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 f.

³ The article “Besatte”, p. 278.

This view can probably be characterized as rather conservative. With the breakthrough of liberal theology the possibility of possession is denied in Evangelical-Lutheran quarters, when the question is not being wholly avoided. In free-Church circles where faith-healing is a reality, so too is the belief in demons. The reaction against liberal theology and its profane way of thinking has, however, brought about a certain change in the judgments made about the phenomena of possession. The discussion of this matter both among Protestants and Catholics is often associated with the pietistically inspired clergyman, J. Chr. Blumhardt (1805-1880) and his healing of the possessed maid Gottliebin Dittus in 1843, which Poulson also mentions.¹

There is in Scandinavia a widespread opinion that the Roman Church still remains at a more primitive stage of development, so that it includes a supernatural conception abandoned in more enlightened circles, comprising naturally a crass belief in devils and wonders. Therefore it will probably be appropriate to mention something about Catholic opinion on possession. Especially so as such an account will bring out new and important facts that have a bearing on the case of Catharina Fagerberg.

The big advance made by the natural sciences as well as medical science has been, according to A. Rodewyk, who on several occasions has returned to this question of possession in Roman, theological publications,² to bring about a change of view on this phenomenon. Through the investigation of nervous and psychic diseases it has been possible to prove that epilepsy is not dependent on a demonic influence. Other cases of devilish vexation have been found to be mental obsessions with, for example, schizophrenia as a

¹ For bibliography up to 1950, see the article "Blumhardt, J. Chr." in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3. Aufl. I, Tübingen 1957. Further: Johanna Catharina Schreuder, *De overwinningsgedachte bij Johann Christoph Blumhardt*, Diss. Vrije Univ. te Amsterdam, N. V. Kampen [1957]; W. A. Schulze, "Eschenmayer und Blumhardt" (*Theol. Zeitschrift* 14, 1958, pp. 261-281); E. Michaelis, "Der Heilungs- und Dämonenkampf J. Chr. Blumhardts" (*Magie und Wunder in der Heilkunde. Ein Tagungsbericht* hrsg. von Dr. med. Dr. phil. W. Bitter, Stuttgart 1959, pp. 51-67); J. Roessle, *Von Bengel bis Blumhardt. Gestalten und Bilder aus der Geschichte des schwäbischen Pietismus*, Metzingen 1959, pp. 394 ff.; A. Rodewyk, *Die dämonische Besessenheit in der Sicht des Rituale Romanum*, Aschaffenburg 1963, pp. 64 f.

² A. Rodewyk, "Die Beurteilung der Besessenheit. Ein geschichtlicher Überblick" (*Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 72, 1950, pp. 460-480), p. 478 ff. See also below.

constitutional background. In this connection it has become evident that much that was before regarded as demonic possession was in fact pseudo-possession.

One psychic abnormality in especial has had externally much in common with possession, that is, hysteria. Doctors towards the end of the 19th century identified these phenomena with each other. At the psychiatric clinic of Salpêtrière at Paris, Prof. Charcot and Richer compared old drawings and paintings of possessed persons with the hysterics they were treating. It is understandable that the rich variety of external signs of both possession and hysteria should have favoured such an identification of the two. Subsequently when modern medicine became more careful in its use of the term hysteria the psychological attitude towards the question of possession again came to the fore.

It was in this climate of opinion that T. K. Oesterreich (see below) made a comprehensive collection of comparative material from the whole world, and drew the distinction between somnambulistic and lucid possession. Under the first type hypnotism comes into the discussion. In addition, parapsychology made it clear that the greatest achievements of the mediums were effected by hypnosis. According to the *Rituale Romanum* (Titulus X, cap. I) it is just such a type of supernatural ability that is one of the main signs of possession: *vires supra ætatis seu conditionis naturam ostendere* (n. 3).¹ To the question of the relationship between hysteria and possession has thus been added in recent times the problem of how hypnosis and possession are related to each other. And finally one asks if a rational explanation is sufficient.

Modern psychiatrists also pose this question. A neurologist in Stuttgart, Dr Alfred Lechler, says on this matter: "I have myself no doubt of the occurrence of possession in our times, even if it is rare. During my years of practice I have personally witnessed some cases that neither from a psychological nor psychiatric standpoint can be satisfactorily explained. I had for a long time postponed accepting possession as an explanation of these cases,

¹ See now for a more detailed analysis A. Rodewyk, *Die dämonische Besessenheit*, Aschaffenburg 1963, pp. 93 ff., written after the revision of the *Rituale Romanum* in 1952, when Titulus X was changed into XII.

and during that time had tried to find if another was possible. Such an explanation could not, however, be found."

A French Roman Catholic neurologist, J. Lhermitte, is of the same opinion: "Le médecin qui veut rester un homme complet ne peut donc exclure, *a priori*, la possibilité d'une étiologie transcendante dans la production de certaines psychonévroses dont la source naturelle ne se découvre pas au savant."¹

An apparently Evangelical-Lutheran psychiatrist, Dr Walter Schulte, reaches a similar conclusion in connection with a study of Paster Blumhardt's well-known exorcism of demons during the 1840's: "Much remains an incomprehensible secret, even if we take advantage of the discoveries made in depth-psychology. What we are able to understand pathologically is in the main a part of hysteria. But the whole matter goes much further than this, and cannot be grouped under the same heading as an individual sickness. Here we reach the limits of medical interpretation, and we dare not give a course of events a complete explanation by means of experiences that are linked with mass-suggestion, self-deception, swindle and trickery, words that leave a bitter taste in the mouth. What purpose is served if as a result of exceeding our limitations we reduce what is happening to such an extent that only a ghost of weak character and self-deception remains, and all that is worthy of awe is brought into disrepute?"² There still remains an inexplicable element, since all immanent explanations have been exhausted, and medicine therefore needs to be complemented by philosophy and theology. So Rodewyk concludes his historic account.

The viewpoints put forward by Rodewyk can be regarded primarily as representative of the Roman Church's attitude towards possession in our time. As another Catholic authority in this field, Prof. J. Lenz, emphasises, Rome has not officially laid down any doctrine concerning the influence of evil spirits on human beings.³ The accounts of the Gospels are therefore basic to the opinion that possession is both possible and actual.

¹ *Vrais et faux possédés*, Paris 1956, p. 31. Cf. idem, *Mystiques et faux mystiques*, Paris 1952.

² *Evangelische Theologie* 9 (1949/50), pp. 151-169. Cf., for the same point of view, the Protestant theologian and clergyman K. Koch, *Seelsorge und Okkultismus*, 5. Aufl. Tübingen 1953.

³ J. Lenz, "Die Kennzeichen der dämonischen Besessenheit und das Rituale Romanum" (*Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 62, 1953, pp. 129-143).

When it comes to establishing a case as one of possession, Catholic churchmen are just as careful and moderate as with miracles and apparitions of various kinds. Both recent cases and classical examples out of the Church's history are rigorously sifted. Father J. de Tonquedec thus stresses that in our times belief in the activity of evil spirits has returned. They are few in number who are actually possessed, although many unhappy people come to those who discharge the office of exorcism and ascribe illnesses and ailments of various kinds to evil spirits.¹ The oft-mentioned Father Surin († 1665) is regarded as having been a victim of the contagious epidemic of possession prevalent in Loudun, thus a case of pseudo-possession.²

Lenz distinguishes between *circumsessio*, in which the devil afflicts the unfortunate person from outside, and *obsessio* or *possessio* in which the evil spirit affects the victim's body and soul from within. So long as the possessed person himself is conscious of this, and regards the demonic spirit as an alien personality, *obsessio* in a narrower sense or lucid possession exists. If, conversely, the possessed person's own personality is completely obliterated so that the devil alone has domination over body and soul, one then speaks of somnabulistic possession. These states can alternate, and a state of complete calm can occur. Thus Lenz links up with Oesterreich's terminology, and opposes Rodewyk who regards these different forms of possession as in fact different stages within the development of any case of possession, from calm to 'affection' and crisis.³

On the question of the criteria by which true possession is decided, the Roman Catholics hold that the precepts and distinguishing characteristics given in the *Rituale Romanum* are wholly valid, if they are interpreted in the correct way. Lenz draws attention to the following pronouncements (up to 1952):

¹ *Etudes Carmélitaines* 27: 2, 1948 ("Satan"), p. 493.

² Lenz, *op. cit.*, p. 136; cf. T. Andræ, *Mystikens psykologi*, Stockholm 1926, pp. 106 ff., where the case of Surin is referred to a doubling of the ego or pseudo-possession distinguished from real possession, total or partial. See now Lhermitte, *Vrais et faux possédés*, p. 129 ff. More popular descriptions in J. Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft. A Study in Medieval Superstition*, translated by A. R. Allinson, New York (1939) 1963, pp. 189 ff., and A. Huxley, *The Devils of Loudun*, London 1952, pp. 263 ff.

³ Lenz, *op. cit.*, p. 132. Since the Middle Ages this distinction between three different stages is a commonplace among the demonologues, see Delcambre, *op. cit.* II, pp. 91 f. (les simples ensorcelés — les obsédés — les véritables énergumènes).

In primis, ne facile credat, aliquem a dæmonio obsessum esse, sed nota habeat ea signa, quibus obsessus dignoscitur ab iis, qui vel atra bile, vel morbo aliquo laborant.

Signa autem obsidentis dæmonis sunt: ignota lingua loqui pluribus verbis, vel loquentem intelligere; distantia, et occulta patefacere; vires supra ætatis seu conditionis naturam ostendere; et id genus alia, quae cum plurima concurrunt, maiora sunt indicia (n. 3).

Belonging to the advances made by modern science, however, are:

1. The discovery made by psychopathology of personality-splintering, or occasional, resp. persistent personality-doubling with, above all, hysterical compulsive phenomena and convictions of incarnation and possession. Here it is also a question of subjective pathological possession, of the type that the French doctor, Marescot, as early as 1599, was able to expose with the statement: *Nihil a daemone; multa ficta; a morbosus pauca*. To be grouped with pseudo-possession are also certain cases of epileptic and especially hysterical accessory phenomena. Isolation and electric-shock treatment can help here, but exorcism is without effect.

2. The parapsychological study of the achievements of mediums, such as automatic writing and unconscious speech, telepathy or thought-reading, thought-transference, clairvoyance in space and time, prophecy, second sight, revealing secret things (cryptoscopy), moving things at a distance and without contact (telekinesis), floating in the air (levitation), bodily disappearance and reappearance (apports), the radiation of bodily shapes (materialization), sound and light phenomena.¹ Since one is here dealing with alleged spirit manifestations, one speaks of incarnation or possession phenomena. Some of these phenomena are achieved by trickery, while those that are undoubtedly authentic are explained by Catholic scholars as having been caused by the abnormal but natural power of the mediums. Only two occult phenomena, whose authenticity is, however, problematic, can hardly be included in a natural explanation, namely, a ghost phenomenon independent of the medium and the foretelling of coming free actions. For this reason it is necessary to be on the alert for such things in a possessed person.

¹ Cf. the interpretation of shamanism given by H. Findeisen, *Schamenentum*, Stuttgart 1957; idem, "Das Schamenentum als spiritistische Religion" (in *Ethnos* 1960), criticised *ibid.* 1962, pp. 47 f., by H. Stiglmayr.

3. Depth psychology has taught us that the following phenomena are associated with subconscious states, as are also hypnosis, trance, and the crises of hysterics, epileptics and possessed people: a memory which is out of the ordinary so that what arises suddenly out of the past is easily accepted as spirit revelations; an exceptionally heightened sensibility that overcomes both distance and obstacles that otherwise conceal; an exceptional suggestibility that can lead to unusual organic changes in the body; an increased ability to correlate and divine that reveals unsuspected connections between things. If in addition personality-doubling also occurs, an experience of a spirit dwelling within the person concerned easily comes about so that pseudo-possession results.

All this has to be taken into consideration in order that subjective, pathological and simulated possession can be excluded before a diabolic influence can be determined. Regarding this the pronouncements already quoted out of the *Romanum Rituale* up to 1952 ought, according to Lenz, to be read in the following way:

Nota habeat ea signa, quibus obsessus distinguitur ab iis, qui morbo aliquo sive organico (epilepsia, hysteria) sive psychico (obsessione pathologica) laborant vel viribus naturalibus anormalibus (parapsychicis) utuntur.

In order to eliminate unusual feats of memory and telepathy one should further read: *Lingua plane ignota pluribus verbis loqui et talem linguam intelligere*. No medium is in fact in complete command of a language which is quite unknown to him. This is why such a requirement is a sure criterion of something supernatural. In order to exclude clairvoyance and cryptoscopy, one ought to interpret the following words: *Naturaliter homini impervia patefacere, ut sunt valde distantia et plane occulta, præsertim futura libera*. Parapsychology requires also a clarification of the following sentence so that it emerges with this formulation: *Vires transcendentales omnes huius ætatis seu conditionis potentias naturales, etiam anormales seu extraordinarias*. The addition *Et id genus alia* leaves it open to the ingenuity of the theologian to work out criteria other than the main three.¹

C. M. Staehlin, another Roman theologian and psychologist, also stresses that whatever happens in any of the three divisions of the soul, the sub-

¹ Lenz, op. cit., pp. 135 ff.

conscious, the conscious and the superconscious, finds an echo in the others. The simple person is liable to attribute extraordinary experiences to extra-human influences, either divine or demoniac, when they are in fact natural. Extrapsychic criteria for supernatural phenomena are therefore essential. And so Staehlin is prepared to accept the classical rules of the *Rituale Romanum*.¹

What happens from a Roman Catholic point of view when, after taking all the necessary precautions, one believes oneself capable of defining true possession, lies outside the scope of this account.² The detail given in this chapter has been motivated by the desire to retrieve out of the past the case of Catharina Fagerberg and cases similar to hers, and present them as something more than merely picturesque curiosities.³ Further, it has been of some importance to show how many psychological interpretive possibilities in fact exist. The opinion of Gadelius which is dated and onesided, has as a result of the new impression of his book become topical once more. Furthermore, presentday psychology of religion has not been the first to try and define accurately the different sorts of possession.

6. *The Voices*

Where the speech of the evil spirits in the case of Catharina Fagerberg is concerned, one thinks primarily of the voices which are associated with

¹ C. M. Staehlin, "Mystische Täuschungen. Zur Beurteilung einiger mystischer Phänomene" (*Geist und Leben* 27, 1954, pp. 276-290); see further the detailed bibliography in Rodewyk, *Die dämonische Besessenheit*, and also *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, art. "Démon"; *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3. Aufl., and *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 3. Aufl., art. "Besessenheit"; E. Blickenstorfer, "Zur Psychopathologie und Therapie eines Falles von 'Geistesbesessenheit' nicht schizophrener Art" (*Psyche* 5, 1951, pp. 98-108); M. Waldman, "Trancen und Ekstasen in ihrer psychologischen Gegensätzlichkeit" (*Geist und Leben* 25, 1952, pp. 54-66); *Christus, Cahiers spirituels* 4/5 (1954/55): "Le discernement spirituel."

² A. Rodewyk "Die Teufelsaustreibung nach dem Rituale Romanum" (*Geist und Leben* 25, 1952, pp. 121-134).

³ For corresponding contemporary cases on the border between popular magic and Roman Catholic popular piety, see Bouteiller, op. cit., pp. 203 ff.; M. Leproux, *Médecine, Magie et Sorcellerie*, Paris 1954, and idem, *Dévotions et Saints Guérisseurs*, Paris 1957. Also the authorities of 17th century France—and the people—have had difficulties with the distinction between witchcraft and healing, cf. Delcambre, op. cit. III, pp. 9 ff., and R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm. A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, New York (1950) 1961.

different states of psychic illness, and which have the character of sense illusions. Among paranoids both illusions and hallucinations are common. The latter are perceived through all the senses.

“Indubitably, hallucination through hearing is the most common. This can either be simple as when the sick person seems to hear indistinct noises, knockings, etc, or more complex as when he hears words, statements, sentences, etc. Most important are hallucinations of the latter type. Very often the patients themselves call these phenomena ‘voices’, which seems to be the term that best corresponds to the experience, because it exists in all languages (‘Stimmen’, ‘voices’, ‘voix’, ‘röster’, etc.) ...

Less important though frequently occurring are the hallucinations of sight ...¹

A variant of hallucination of the touching is when the ill person believes he feels movements in certain parts of his body without them in fact happening. For example, he can believe that his tongue pronounces words and sentences without this actually taking place. (‘my mouth is talking on its own’), a phenomenon which in the old days was often interpreted as ‘possession’, not only by the sick person himself, but also by those in attendance.”²

The voices of Catharina Fagerberg, however, were not sense illusions, because they were also heard by those around her. On one occasion she was even accused by them of speaking herself when she claimed that it was the evil spirit which spoke. Here we have a phenomenon characterized and exemplified by Andrae in this way:

“The other principal form of true possession is characterized by the fact that the possessed person all along preserves his own personality, in full consciousness, but discovers in himself an alien entity, which has control to a greater or lesser extent of the motor-centres or dwells in a certain part of the body. The possessed person does not regard the demon’s thoughts and

¹ Cf., however, Catharina’s experience of the flying animals.

² V. Wigert, *Psydiska sjukdomstillstånd I-II*, Stockholm 1931–1932, I, pp. 194 ff.; cf. II, pp. 113 f. See also G. Dumas, *Le surnaturel et les dieux d’après les maladies mentales (Essai de théogenie pathologique)*, Paris 1946, pp. 30 f., 46 f., 55 f., 79 f., 156 f., 210 f., and E. Arbman, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance in the Experience of the Ecstatics and from the Psychological Point of View I*, Stockholm–Uppsala 1963, pp. 151 ff., 161, 173 f., 179 f., 211, with reference to B. Lagache, *Les Hallucinations verbales et la parole*, Paris 1934.

desires as his own. He first hears his words when the Spirit speaks through his own lips, or when he listens to the 'promptings' expressed by the 'voices', which speak through his head, heart, stomach."¹

The example given by Andrae of this phenomenon and which recalls Catharina Fagerberg and even more so Sister Hyphauff, is taken from the account of the suffering undergone by Madeleine de Mandol, a young nun in the St. Ursula nunnery in Aix. She succumbed to a terrible attack of possession in 1611 at the age of nineteen.

The devils afflicted Madeleine by forcing her to bend forwards and backwards down to the ground, twist her arms and legs and her whole body, so that there was a sound of cracking in her legs and all her entrails were shaken about. Asmodéus, the prince of lewdness, compelled Madeleine to make shameful movements. The doctors and surgeons were not able to restrain her. Beelzebub shrieked, interrupted confession and wanted to hinder the priest when he tried to give absolution. On another occasion as she was about to confess the devils plunged her into a deep sleep and made her as immobile as a copper statue. When Madeleine, humbly and obediently, swept the floor, the devil quarreled and screamed violently.

Andrae, who in this case talks of hysterical convulsions and fits, remarks that the chronicler of the case and also apparently the patient herself, could clearly distinguish between her own and the demoniac personality. He compares the states of hysterical fits to the abstruse imaginings of possession of the insane and distinguishes the former from the latter. A patient of Huet's who is possessed by a 'voice' relates: "It is as if I myself was talking. I feel a movement of my lips similar to that of a chewing rabbit, and I feel my tongue moving completely on its own" [reference missing]. With schizophrenes the idea of possession seems rather to be a systematization of sense illusions, which here seem to be primary. On the other hand, in the hysterical form of possession the idea of possession is rather the primary formative psychic attitude, which creates 'splintering of the personality', as well as eventual sense illusions. Therefore spontaneous hysterical possession has disappeared also with the dying out of the belief in the devil, while the mentally ill still interpret their experiences secondarily as possession. In this connection

¹ Andrae, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 ff.

Griesinger tells the story of one of his patients who did not wish to believe that an alien entity, a demon, had entered her body. But when she "hears it talking inside her", and notices that this voice is completely unlike her own, she is compelled to admit the true existence of the possessing "spirit".

The epidemics of possession among French nuns during the 17th century have now been thoroughly investigated by specialists in different fields of research.¹ First attacked by this spiritual epidemic were the Ursulines in Aix where it all began in 1609. Four years later it was the turn of the Birgittines in Lille, the Ursulines in Loudun in 1631, the Franciscans in Louviers in 1634, and the Ursulines in Auxonne in 1658.

In this spiritual milieu, with which we are now dealing, belongs Elizabeth de Ranfaing. She was called "The Possessed (l'énergumène) from Nancy" (1592-1649), but ended her days as the founder and head of a religious order. Her parents had given her away in marriage when she was fifteen years old in order to dampen her religious zeal. Her husband was a fifty-year-old professional soldier. In the course of her unhappy marriage Elizabeth gave birth to six children. In 1616 she became a widow. She then took a vow of chastity, but because of bad health was unable to enter a nunnery. During a pilgrimage in 1618 when she was accompanied by her doctor, Poirot, Elizabeth was suddenly seized by an irresistible passion for him. She blamed this on a love-potion which Poirot was said to have mixed in her food. Elizabeth's psychic and physical agonies increased, and she soon came to regard herself as possessed by evil spirits which the doctor was said to have set on her. From 1619 to 1625 the poor woman was submitted to frequent exorcisms. Then the Devil speaking through her mouth accused several named people of witchcraft. Among them was Poirot who was condemned to be burnt at the stake, and was executed in 1622.

The documents dealing with this case have been collected and critically edited by a French archivist, while a psychiatrist, professor of medicine, with a strong interest in the phenomena of possession has given a psycho-

¹ See above, and F. Bavoux, *Hantises et Diableries dans la terre abbatiale de Luxeuil d'un procès de l'inquisition (1529) à l'épidémie démoniaque de 1628-1630*. Monaco 1956. For contemporary information, see J.-P. Seguin, "L'information en France avant le périodique. 500 canards imprimés entre 1529 et 1631" (suite) (*Art et traditions populaires* 11, 1963, pp. 119-45).

pathological interpretation of Elizabeth's case.¹ An inherited nervous disability, the strict upbringing given her by her parents, her husband's brutality and inclinations unrecognized by the warm-hearted and talented woman herself, caused, according to Lhermitte, her notion of possession and her persecution mania that resulted in accusations of witchcraft and hysterical crisis. The exorcisms served only to reinforce these, and when Poirot died they disappeared.

In the context of this section dealing with "voices", what interests us most is that moment in Elizabeth's possession when the Devil speaks through her mouth and acts as judge and accuser of Poirot. The latter bravely stood up against the evil rumours that were soon circulating, and was himself present at the exorcisms. "He heard the demon through the mouth of the possessed accuse him of magic and loudly declare that it was his evil tricks that had caused this possession" (p. 64). The exorcists tried in vain to quieten the demon. Threatening severe punishment they ordered him to retract his accusations. But the demon screamed and clamoured that against his will he accused his fellow-men, forced to do so by the power of the Holy Mother of God. Similar dialogues took place on other occasions, although after the arrest of Poirot, Beelzebub and another evil spirit made their accusations in vaguer terms.

Time, milieu and the course of events otherwise distinguish Elizabeth's story from that of Catharina Fagerberg. In 17th century Catholic France a young widow of the upper classes overcame her afflictions and founded a religious order, where she pursued an active life in the service of humanity. In 18th century Protestant Sweden a young unmarried woman of the people repulsed the attack of the evil spirits and their temptations to practise black magic, and instead became the master of the spirits so that she was able to practise as a faith-healer among ordinary people, while not tolerated by ecclesiastical or secular bodies. But both have in common the final positive phase. Another similarity is that the presence of the evil spirits is blamed on the malevolent tricks of a loved and lovesick man. The unmasking of the evildoer through the spirit speaking in the throat of the possessed woman

¹ E. Delcambre-J. Lhermitte, *Un cas énigmatique de possession diabolique en Lorraine au XVII^e siècle: Elisabeth de Ranfaing, l'Energumène de Nancy, fondatrice de l'Ordre du Refuge*, Nancy 1956.

also happens in the same way. There is, however, a century separating the two cases, since during the 17th century the witch-fires were ablaze in both France and Sweden. During the Age of Reason, it is the accuser and not the accused who is the first to run into difficulties with official bodies. The Swedish peasants had become so critical as not to believe in the genuineness of the evil spirit's speech, but regarded it as the woman's own.

One of the most instructive examples of experiences of "voices" has occurred in our own time. The chemistry master at the Lyceum of Freising, near Munich, Ludwig Staudenmaier, has described in his book on magic as an experimental science (Leipzig 1912) a whole series of personally experienced phenomena which a few centuries earlier would most certainly have been regarded as terrible outbreaks of possession.¹ In fact one is here dealing with a person with an extreme disposition to psychic obsessions. Like Surin, Staudenmaier was able all the time to describe his state,² though he was not able in the long run to control it. In connection with automatic writing a series of obsessive personalities developed, who gained great autonomy, as well as hallucinations and other psycho-physical manifestations, the nature of which has not yet been clarified, and which have therefore be left out of consideration by Oesterreich.

In the experiment in automatic writing, Staudenmaier, in contrast to others, was wholly or partially aware of the content of what had been written, although the writing was completely passive and independent of his will.³ Soon acoustic sensations occurred, so that just before writing Staudenmaier heard what he was going to write. This experience gradually came to the fore, so that Staudenmaier stopped writing, content to listen to the inner voices with which he could hold a meaningful conversation.⁴ Some of these voices had an evil character. Although Staudenmaier was aware that they were not incarnated spirits, as had earlier been believed, he treated them in the same way as had the possessed in the old days, that is as autonomous

¹ T. K. Oesterreich, *Possession, Demonical and Other, among Primitive Races, in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times*, London 1930, p. 15 (German original from 1921).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 57 ff.

³ Cf. Andræ, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

⁴ Cf. Andræ, *ibid.*: impossible to concentrate on two kinds of experience.

beings which, among other things, he subjected to reproaches. This behaviour naturally increased the character of reality of these voices. From Staudenmaier's account of his experiences the following may be quoted: "In the end the inner voice made itself heard too often and without sufficient reason, and also against my will; a number of times it was bad, subtly mocking, vexatious, and irritable. For whole days at a time this insufferable struggle continued entirely against my will."

"Often the statements of these so-called beings proved to be fabrications." When S. accused his "spirits" of giving false information concerning a recently arrived neighbour, they answered: "It is because we cannot do otherwise, we are obliged to lie, we are evil spirits, you must not take it amiss! If I then became rude they followed suit. 'Go to blazes, you fool! You are always worrying us! You ought not to have summoned us! Now we are always obliged to stay near you!' When I used stronger language it was exactly as if I had hurled insults at a wall or a forest: the more one utters the more the echo tends back. For a time the slightest unguarded thought that passed through my mind produced an outburst from the inner voices."

Gradually Staudenmaier began to feel the sensations connected with the different voices. Thus, emperors from the past and present appeared, and took control even of his external attitude, interests and way of life. The combination of these personifications finally came under the notion of "My Highness", with a particular pattern of behaviour. Sometimes Staudenmaier defended himself against such personalizing feelings, which he experienced as alien to him, although they in fact belonged to his own ego.

At other times S. allowed himself over a long period to be passively dealt with by one such personification, as in the matter of "the child" in him acting as against its father and holding a conversation with him. In the child's role he then behaved as a child does before a toy-shop window, etc. Above all, however, he became happier and more spontaneous in the manner of a child. In the same way Staudenmaier's artistic personifications influenced his general interest in art, which previously had been minimal. Even his features were affected by these personalizing feelings.

Oesterreich points out the remarkable resemblance with the possessed: "Like Staudenmaier he addresses the demon in his soul, talks to him, petitions him. etc.; in short, treats him as an ordinary living person. And now

comes the most remarkable fact; the 'second' personality behaves as if it really were such a being. It gives replies, makes promises, feels repentance, just like a real person. Things may reach the point of an audible conversation between the possessed and his state of psychic compulsion," a heightened form of the dialogue that takes place between neurotic people of today and their pseudo-hallucinations. For the possessed not only hears in his fantasy another person answering him, but his own organ of speech cooperates automatically or compulsorily. And so there is played out the strange scene of two different people seeming to talk out of the same body. The alien compulsive person acts towards even an outsider as a real person, and talks, for example, with the exorcist, rages, scolds and answers questions. Oesterreich takes an example from 19th century literature in which a demon was subjected to an attempt at conversion both by the possessed woman herself and by the exorcist. A higher angel acts as an adviser.¹ There is, of course, no question in this or similar cases of deceit on the part of the possessed. The alien entity forces itself coercively on the possessed, which is why one cannot here speak of a divided will in the possessed.

In three lectures on Tantra-Yoga H. Zimmer has commented on and described in detail Staudenmaier's case, believing it to be a confirmation of yoga-experiences and of the important role played by the unconscious.² It is Staudenmaier's unlived life which takes shape in his experiences (p. 74), so that, for example, the father in him brought out the child in him (p. 75). But hell also together with its heavenly counterpart in the Christian version of the state after death, described in the Tibetan Book of the Dead as *Bardo Thödol*,³ arises from within him: the devils "Buck foot" and "Horse foot" oppose the reverend old man, God the Father. Staudenmaier experiences the temptations of St. Anthony as well as Faust's lovely Helen, who is found in Lamaism, too, where, however, she has been changed in the cult to "the fairy of all the Buddhas" (pp. 76 ff.). Staudenmaier did not experience what the

¹ Oesterreich, op. cit., pp. 62 f., cf. p. 84.

² *Eranosjahrbuch* 1933, pp. 67 ff.

³ See for that conception *Das Tibetische Totenbuch oder die Nach-Tod-Erfahrungen auf der Bardo-Stufe*. Nach der englischen Fassung des Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub herausgegeben von W. Y. Evans-Wentz. Übersetzt ... mit ... einem psychologischen Kommentar von C. G. Jung ... 5. Aufl. Zürich 1953; Lama Anagarika Govinda, *Grundlagen tibetischer Mystik*, Zürich 1957, pp. 127 ff., 281 ff.

Hindus call "all the gods at our body", although he was close to it. The chaotic cosmogonical occurrences within him did not become a cosmos, and Staudenmaier died finally in 1933 in a mental home in Rome, where he had been living as a Tibetan yogi (pp. 87 ff.).

Independent of the psychopathological interpretation of Staudenmaier as an example of a schizophrenic person or the use of his experiences by Jungian psychologists, they still remain of the greatest value for the understanding of similar phenomena. In this way they also offer an excellent analogy to some of the main features in Catharina Fagerberg's story.

7. *Conclusions*

From a phenomenological and psychological viewpoint the case we have studied offers striking parallels to some constitutive elements of shamanism. Especially is this the case if this phenomenon is defined as broadly as in, for example, a work on Indian Shakers: "In its broadest aspects shamanism is reflected in Shakerism by the fundamental notion that an individual can be imbued with supernatural power as manifested by trembling seizures—and that while in this state he is capable of mythic insight into the causes of disease and distress which the power directing his movements enables him to cure or alleviate."¹ All this applies perfectly to Catharina Fagerberg.

Such a sweeping definition, however, tends to become meaningless. The need to set limits to it has therefore been stressed in both scholarly and practical connections. When the Episcopal Study Commission in present-day America compares the enthusiastic gifts of the Holy Ghost with primitive spirit possession, a critical commentator recalls that even a cultural anthropologist such as Métraux has distinguished between divine and demoniac possession.² In distinction from possession the French scholar has further defined shamanism in this way: "Shamanism is, so to speak, the other side of the coin of ecstatic experience in religion; where possession presupposes a 'coming in' of the divine spirit (enthusiasm), shamanism

¹ H. G. Barnett, *Indian Shakers. A Messianic Cult of the Pacific North-West*, Carbondale 1957, p. 309.

² A. W. Sadler, "Glossolalia and Possession: An Appeal to the Episcopal Study Commission (*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 4, 1964, pp. 84-90).

presupposes a 'going out' of the individual soul of the shaman to visit paradise and communicate directly with divine persons. Both phenomena involve entrance into an ecstatic trance state. And in studies of both phenomena the question of the mental health of the practitioner has been raised."¹

This classification of the concept, however, seems too narrow where it concerns North American shamanism and Catharina Fagerberg. On the one hand Catharina Fagerberg was able to send out her 'life-spirit(s)' to discover what was happening in other places, and yet on the other hand both evil and good spirits were able to speak through her. The difficulty of establishing general definitions that are meaningful is illustrated by a single case studied in detail.

Other conclusions are mostly of the methodological type. Christian folk-religion has often become the plaything of comparative religious studies. Undoubtedly many comparisons are justified both from a psychological² and historical point of view.³ But sometimes they are shallow and unjustifiable, as, for example, the view that Laestadianism in North Scandinavia is a Christian survival of ancient Lappish shamanism. The case of Catharina Fagerberg is principally of importance because it offers an example of how 18 Century people—and not only day present scholars—have been able to interpret the same phenomenon as both Christian and non-Christian (=witchcraft). An anthropological, folkloristic and psychological interpretation must never dispense with historical analysis. A historical investigation also opens one's eyes to common or related traditions which have furthered cultural and religious meetings and an interpretation into new terms of a belief already given, in our case an *interpretatio christiana* (spirits =angels).

¹ A. Métraux, *Voodoo in Haiti*, New York 1959, p. 87. For possession in Voodoo see also: Maya Deren, *Divine Horsemen, the Living Gods of Haiti*, London 1953, pp. 247 ff. There she recounts how as an outsider she was ridden by a *loa*, and describes this experience as the 'white darkness'. See also H. Courtander, *The Drum and the Hoe. Life and Lore of Haitian People*, Berkeley, Los Angeles 1960, pp. 45 ff.

² Th. de Félice, *Foules en délire: extases collectives. Essai sur quelques formes inférieures de la mystique*, Paris 1947, pp. 52 ff.

³ H.-A. Junod, "Deux cas de possession chez les Ba-Ronga" (*Bull. de la Soc. Neuchatel. de Géogr.* 20, 1909/10, pp. 387-402), and A. Allard, "'Possession' in a Revivalistic Negro Church" (*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 1, 1962, pp. 204-13).

As well as the need to be on guard against historical anachronism, it is necessary also to be cautious as to modish psychological theories. They spring up rapidly enough to make scholars careful. In the end they always lead to scientific questions of a borderline nature. The requirement of religion—and irreligion—that its concept of reality be true can come into conflict with scientific interpretations. This is true whether it concerns the conception of Roman Catholic theology that the whole of reality is the sum of the natural and the supernatural or the liberal Protestant view that the concept of belief and scientific interpretation are different aspects of the same thing or the atheist denial of any spiritual world. The investigator's frame of reference here enters into the picture. This influences the choice of scientific theory either consciously or unconsciously.

These general propositions might appear to be truisms. If, however, the investigation that has now been carried out has made them into meaningful and significant statements, then it has fulfilled a function within the symposium.