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To rend and teare the bodies of men: Theology and the body in demonic possession; France, England, and Puritan America, 1550-1700

Julianne Siudowski Cooper-Forst
University of New Hampshire, Durham

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**To rend and teare the bodies of men: Theology and the body
in demonic possession; France, England, and Puritan America,
1550–1700**

Cooper-Forst, Julianne Siudowski, Ph.D.

University of New Hampshire, 1992

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TO REND AND TEARE THE BODIES OF MEN
Theology and the Body in Demonic Possession
France, England, and Puritan America 1550 - 1700

BY

JULIANNE S. COOPER - FORST

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

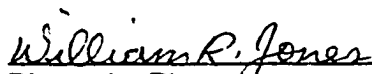
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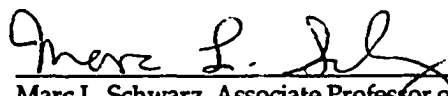
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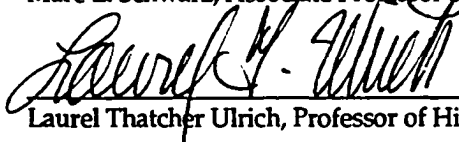
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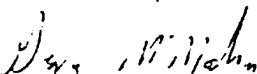
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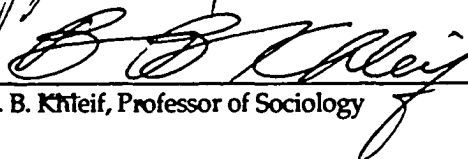
Marc L. Schwarz, Associate Professor of History



Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Professor of History



Gregory McMahon, Assistant Professor of History



B. B. Kheif, Professor of Sociology

NOVEMBER 30, 1992

Date

For
Jay and Alexandra
They believed in me.

PREFACE

This work began several years ago when I was working on a master's thesis about the ascetic use of the body by would-be saints and taking a seminar with Shigehisa Kuriyama on the history of concepts of the human body. When the time came to choose a topic for my dissertation, Laural Thatcher Ulrich suggested that I continue with my work on the human body and theology by exploring the behavior of the possessed girls at Salem, Massachusetts. I extended the scope of the topic both geographically and chronologically to include demonic possession in early modern France, England, and Puritan America.

Much has been written about the theological beliefs of the Reformation. Almost without exception the understanding has been that the Protestants made every attempt to recast their theology in opposition to the Roman Catholic system especially regarding the "magical" traditions of the transubstantiation of the host at the Eucharist, the cults of the saints, the performance of miracles, and the magical aspects of the rituals surrounding non-scriptural sacraments. There was one area of theology where this was not true: demonology and spiritual possession.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demonic possession became an important topic of discussion and speculation among members of the intellectual community. Incidences of the phenomenon rose during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, reached a crescendo by the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and except for a flurry or two, died out near the beginning of the eighteenth century. This dissertation examines the published materials relating to the physical phenomena of demonic possession in three categories: theology, law, and medicine. By separating the written material into a tripartite system and concentrating on the corporeality of the phenomenon, I have attempted to delineate the aspects of the problem which were most important to each of the professions, ascertain whether there were differences among the professions, outline the discernment of the spirits and the remedies prescribed, and offer some explanations for the dissolution of the interest in demonic possession as a diagnosis to certain behavior.

There was an attempt during the early modern period to codify the behavior patterns of demoniacs and to produce manuals for understanding and discerning the realm of the spirits. Catholic and Protestant alike confronted the rise of perceived supernatural activity. They asked much the same questions: Why do demons enter human bodies? How do they get in? Where do they lodge? How can they be expelled? What does demon possession mean for the community? In searching for the answers, both sides fell back on the authority of shared sources: the Bible, Church Fathers, Classical authors, and the scholastics. Therefore, while the Reformers struggled to change theology in most areas of Christianity, the demonology remained essentially constant

for both sides in the Reformation struggle. It was not whether one was Roman Catholic or Reformed but whether one adhered to the philosophical system outlined by Plato or Aristotle. Puritan thought on the subject was dictated by the scholastic education at Cambridge University and the lack of a systemitized theory of angelology to counterbalance the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Almost without exception, thinkers who diagnosed unusual behavior as demonic and sanctioned witchcraft persecution were Aristotelian in thought whether Roman Catholic or Cambridge Puritan. Neoplatonic thinkers tended to search for other, less chthonic origins of the same event. This has implications for the study of Protestant and Puritan theology. The questions as to why, for instance, the Salem events happened the way they did was not so much because of sociological or political problems, but because anomalous human behavior was interpreted in Aristotelian terms.

This work is an attempt to offer a broader insight into the intellectual history of the early modern period through a study of the use of the human body to explain theological assumptions. While other factors have clouded the picture for historians, I have concentrated on how these thinkers argued their beliefs through the medium of the human body. By doing so, I have concluded that the lines of demarcation dividing the Roman Catholic from the Puritan were not so clearly drawn as has been assumed. The changing focus of study during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows a growing importance for defining the insubstantial in the spirit, Neoplatonism, while moving away from consideration of the substantial in the human body itself, Aristotelianism. The literature relating to it is instructive in understanding the interrelationship between the intellectual world, the realm of reason, and the flesh and blood body of the individual. In the literature of demonic possession we have intellectual history with a human body.

I am grateful to my dissertation advisors, Charles E. Clark and William R. Jones, for reading and re-reading the various drafts. Also my thanks to my husband, Jay Forst and daughter, Alexandra Lin for their unending support.

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ABSTRACT

TO REND AND TEARE THE BODIES OF MEN:
THEOLOGY AND THE BODY IN DEMONIC POSSESSION
FRANCE, ENGLAND, AND PURITAN AMERICA 1550 - 1700

by

Julianne S. Cooper-Forst
University of New Hampshire, December, 1992

During the Reformation, Protestants attempted to recast their theology in opposition to the Roman Catholic system. They succeeded in most areas. There was, however, one area of theology where this was not true: demonology and spiritual possession. Incidents of demonic possession rose during the second quarter of the sixteenth century, reached a crescendo by the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and except for a flurry or two, died out near the beginning of the eighteenth century. This dissertation examines the published materials relating to the physical phenomena of demonic possession in France, England, and Puritan America from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in three categories: theology, law, and medicine. By concentrating on the corporeal aspects of the phenomenon, I have delineated aspects of the problem which were most important to each profession, outlined differences between the professions in discernment of the spirits and the remedies prescribed, and offered explanations for the dissolution of the interest in demonic possession as a diagnosis.

In searching for answers to the rise of demonic possession, both Catholics and Reformers resorted to shared sources: the Bible, Church Fathers, Classical authors, and scholastics. Therefore, the demonology remained constant for both sides. It was not whether one was Roman Catholic or Reformed but whether one adhered to the philosophical system outlined by Plato or the one by Aristotle. Puritan thought was dictated by the scholastic education at Cambridge University and by a lack of a reformed angelology to counterbalance the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas. Thinkers who diagnosed behavior as demonic and sanctioned witchcraft persecution were usually Aristotelian in thought. Neoplatonic thinkers searched for other origins. This has implications for the study of Protestant and Puritan theology. The Salem events, for instance, happened the way they did not so much because of sociological or political problems, but because anomalous human behavior was interpreted in an Aristotelian manner. Finally, this work is an attempt to offer a broader insight into the intellectual history of the early modern period through a study of the use of the human body to explain theological assumptions.

INTRODUCTION TO REND AND TEARE THE BODIES OF MEN¹

In 1571, when the demoniac Catrina Gaulteri voided "from her back passage a live eel," a physician stood by ready to examine the evidence. He described it. He measured it. He dissected it. It was skinned and hung out to dry. Later "it vanished."² Over a hundred years later, in 1678, the thirteen year old boy Abraham Mechelburg began to void stones "at the Oriface of the Penis." Again the medical profession was represented. One of the attending "chirurgeons" was anxious to verify the truth of the reports and so "held his hand under the *Penis* . . . and there dropt a very odd Stone, broad and angular into his hand."³

At the end of March in 1633, Sister Clair of the Ursuline Convent of Loudun, France was asked to get some water from the kitchen. Her reaction was most unexpected. She "fell on the ground, exposing her person in the most indecent manner, without a blush, and with foul and lascivious expressions and actions, till she caused all who looked on her to hide their eyes in shame."⁴

¹From John Cotta, *The Tryall of Witch-Craft* (London, 1616), p. 27. "Was not the Divell seene to rend and teare the bodies of men by him possessed, in an extrodinarie and supernaturall manner and sort?"

²Cornelius Gemma, *De Naturae divinis characterismis*, (Antwerp, 1575), II, 4. Quoted in Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, The Montague Summers Edition, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), p. 108-109. See also Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith, eds., (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1941), p. 175.

³Anthony Horneck, *An Account Of what happen'd in the Kingdom of Sweden In the Years 1669, 1670. and upwards. In Relation to some Persons that were accused for Witches.* (London, 1688) and reprinted in Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus: or, Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions.* (London, 1689, Reprinted Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1966), pp. 591 - 597. This case and the one above are discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

⁴des Niau, *The History of the Devils of Loudun Told by an Eye-witness*, translated and edited by Edmund Goldsmid (Edinburgh: Privately Printed, 1887), Vol. II, p. 31. Another account of the Loudun case is Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun: A Study of the Psychology of Power Politics and Mystical Religion in the France of Cardinal Richelieu* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1952).

Margaret Rule, a young girl of Boston was attended in 1693 by Cotton Mather. Signed testimony by six eye-witnesses claims that she was "lifted up from her Bed . . . while yet neither her Feet, nor any part of her Body, rested either on the Bed, or any other support, but were also by the same force, lifted up from all that was under her, and all this for a considerable while, we judg'd it several Minutes. . . ."⁵

Each of these incidents was concerned with an anomalous situation, a situation that was interpreted as some form of contact with the demonic. The individuals were diagnosed as possessed, obsessed, or bewitched. All displayed the evidence of this demonic contact through the use of their bodies. The first two by expelling unusual materials from the body; the third by displaying behavior out of character with her position; and the last by performing feats beyond the physical abilities of the natural human. Yet the manner of healing depended on the perceived threat exhibited by the demoniac. For Catrina Gaulteri, an individual case, the medical profession was sufficient. Abraham Mechelburg, one of many stricken during the witch craze at Mora, Sweden, required a broader action of prayer by the clergy in addition to medical attention. Sister Clair and a number of other nuns at the Loudun convent were relieved by public exorcisms and the spectacular death of the sorcerer who had sent the evil into them. Margaret Rule recovered through the concerted efforts of as many as thirty individuals at a time fasting and praying over her in a community effort.

In the early modern world of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries anxiety over the state of the soul was on the rise. Theologian, lawyer, and physician all became involved in the theological phenomenon of demonic possession. At any given time, one or several of these professionals might be caught up in a case. This may seem an unlikely combination, yet what drew them together was a concern for the individual human being and his relationship within the society; a human being seen as an integrated whole: mind, body, and spirit; a human being capable of expressing the war with evil through the medium of the body. This study aims to focus on the physiological phenomenon of demonic possession and how the human body, when under the control of the Devil, could be understood by the society as a whole. The body became the visible metaphor for the corruption perceived within the society. Three models become apparent: the body as theological proof of human contact with the spiritual world; the body as legal evidence in the battle against heresy and the breakdown of the social structure; and the body as medical subject to the emerging scientific community.

Each of the three professionals, theologian, lawyer, and physician, interpreted the symptoms of demonic possession as best suited his position and interest. The theologian beheld the

⁵C. Mather, *A Letter of Mr. Cotton Mather*, in Samuel G. Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, 3 volumes (New York: Burt Franklin, 1866, Reprinted 1970), II: 68-69.

energumen and saw, at various times, a struggling Christian, a lost sinner, or a message from God. The lawyer observed the bewitched and discovered evidence of deviant influences within the community. The physician examined the demoniac and detected fleshly disease and decay. Each looked at a single set of behaviors and saw an enigma to be solved within his own profession.

The authors represented in this study looked to a cohesive set of materials for their sources but they chose different aspects depending on their particular need of authority. Most looked to the Bible since demonic possession was and is at its base a theological problem. Yet they each asked different questions of the literature. The theologian was concerned with the state of the human soul, with salvation, temptation, sin, and free will. He searched the Scriptures, the Church Fathers, the scholastics for authoritative sources. Where law was of utmost importance, lawyers and governors searched for the rules with which to counteract the evil forces. Physicians pointed out that Christ had healed the body as well as the spirit and returned to the Greek physicians Galen and Hippocrates, the medieval writer Avicenna, and the Renaissance Neoplatonists.

Where the theologians and the lawyers were constrained by their particular traditions from deviating from the authority of the past, the physicians, set free by the rebirth of classical learning and the religious Reformation, began to apply new theories to the problem of demonic possession—secularizing it so to speak. Then, with the influence of Enlightenment thought, and the rejection of traditional religious doctrines, the theological implications were transformed. No longer were many physical ailments caused by demons (although I might argue that 'germs' was just a post-Enlightenment term for them). No longer was the soul chained to the body through religious dogma. Rather it was unfettered to wander the earth both before and after death in the form of a ghost.

The long-standing theological comprehension of demonic possession came to a dramatic end in the spectral evidence controversy in New England at the end of the seventeenth century. René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Increase and Cotton Mather, Henry More, Joseph Glanvill, Richard Bancroft, Robert Calef, Thomas Brattle are just a few of the players whose work seems to have contributed to the downfall of the centuries-old theory. The theoretical demons who entered New England in the bodies of young girls in 1692 exited at the end of the following year as mere ghosts of their victims. Thus the battle against evil spirits was transformed into the quest for a spiritual existence.

What was most extraordinary was that the Puritan theologians were as steeped in medieval scholastic demonology as were the Thomistic Roman Catholics. In the works of Increase Mather and Cotton Mather there are repeated references to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Jean Bodin, Nicholas Remy and Henri Boguet as well as appeals to Aristotelian philosophy. When considering the Puritan handling of the witchcraft scare at Salem, my first response was to look to Puritan theology.

However, in the case of demonic possession, this proved unfruitful. For in this particular area the Puritan and the Catholic were in agreement. The common denominator was Aristotle. With the Council of Trent the Catholic Church had accepted the theological work of Saint Thomas Aquinas as the authoritative position. For all the Puritans who had passed through the gates of Cambridge University, Aristotle's thought had provided the basis for their entire education.⁶ Through theological expertise, the jurists became Aristotelian. Aristotle was also the starting point for medical practitioners through the work of Hippocrates and Galen who were the authorities for medical education through the middle of the seventeenth century. Therefore, until the shift away from the materialist theories of "the philosopher" and toward the idealism of the Neoplatonists, most of members of the intellectual communities who were involved in the diagnosis and cure of demonic possession were confirmed in the fact of supernatural causes for the phenomena.

The Science of the Demonic

Other authors have glanced at the possession literature looking for clues to the causes of the witchcraft crazes. I am concerned with the effects of possession on the individual and the immediate surroundings. This study aims to collect and analyze for the first time a major body of materials from the point of view of the interrelationship among theology, law, and medicine from the standpoint of the effects on the participants, and for the particular somatic experience of the demoniac during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in France, England, and Puritan America. It also demonstrates something of interest to cultural historians. Cultural history has often drawn a line between the "the people" and "the elite" with the intention of showing the divisions and differences. Usually there is a realization that the elites were those theologians, philosophers, scientists, or physicians who were opposed to the superstitious practices of the people.⁷ In the theological dilemma regarding demonic possession is a situation where the elite and the people come together. The possessed come from all levels of the society and the theories developed for explaining the anomaly make no distinctions as to education, genealogy, or social status.

Something else is revealed in reviewing these sources: a developing system and 'science of the demonic.' In the middle of the scientific revolution, in the midst of the drive of the rationalists

⁶The Code of Cambridge University allowed a teacher to "supplement his labours on Aristotle by readings by Pliny or Plato," but the authority of Aristotle was held as late as 1854. See James Bass Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge*, 3 Volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1884; Johnson Reprint Edition), I:110; II: 134-137. For an extended discussion of scholasticism at Cambridge University see William T. Costello, S.J. *The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958).

⁷David Hall, "Introduction," *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Steven L. Kaplan, ed., (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), pp. 5-6.

to separate the mind from the body, one group of scientists, the medical doctors, were aligning themselves with the theologians in an effort to treat the whole person during the invasion of evil. They too were participating in the revolution in science. This new 'science of the demonic' owed much to the Scientific Revolution in the concept of organization, of regularity, and of the understanding that the universe was not an arbitrary and unknowable system but was governed by a body of discernible and unchanging natural laws. Using the theological authorities of the Christian Church, the early modern authors fashioned a series of symptoms and remedies for demonic possession.

What is chronicled here is this attempt by western intellectuals to develop a coherent body of knowledge, organized and intelligible, that would not only allow them to explain anomalous elements of experience, but would also enable them to predict the outcome of the event so that these things could be controlled. What they created was a 'science of the demonic.' This was a science whereby chaotic and destructive elements could be defined and interpreted; their movements and changes could be charted and diagrammed; and therefore a set of regulators could be instituted, if not to eradicate the problem, at least to keep it under control. Resources could be marshaled and more often than not they could be trusted to be effective in combating the demonic. Evil was not an abstract fancy, it was real and tangible and pervasive. Intellectuals conceptualized evil in much the same way they had conceptualized good. A reverse hierarchy of the Devil and demons was envisioned opposed to God, the angels, and the saints. The sixteenth century individual had the same ability to encounter the presence of evil directly as to experience the existence of good. The incidents described here are those of the encounter of the individual and the demonic through bodily possession as seen through the eyes of the intellectual elite of the period. Admittedly this is only one manifestation of the perceived problem of evil in the world, but one in which the 'science of the demonic' can be traced from its beginnings in the early Christian centuries to the decline of its usefulness at the end of the seventeenth century.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in response to a parallel development in science, the theologians, physicians, and judiciaries began to systematize the demonic. Since the inside of the human body was inaccessible to direct observation, the battle between good and evil during demonic possession in the form of the demon minions of Satan was taking place out of sight. The cause of the unusual behavior was contained within the obscure recesses of the body. The plight of the medical practitioners is aptly described by John Cotta: "Many diseases . . . being fearful and terrible accidents, and afflictions unto the body, yet for the most part are never detected; because they have not onely no true certaine likely, but no possible means of indication or notice . . ." ⁸ Cotta continued by comparing the "diseases of the Common-wealth" to the "former problems with the body of man." For he said:

⁸Cotta, *The Tryall of Witchcraft*, p. 17.

Many offenses also there are, neither manifest to sense, nor evident to reason, against which onely likelihood and presumptions doe arise in judgement; whereby notwithstanding, through narrow search and sifting, strict examination, circumspect and curious view of every circumstance, together with every material moment and oddes thorowly, and unto the depth and bottom of subtile disquisition fadomed . . . as certaine proofs and evidences of the limitations of mans knowledge . . . Almighty-God oft-times decreeing to hide some truth from the sight of man . . .⁹

The only method by which those concerned with determining the corruption within either the human body or the body of society was to search for authoritative signs. Again I quote from Cotta: ". . . the generation of worms, stones, and the like in the gall, heart, longs, and other parts, of which no art or knowledge can possibly take notice, until the have proved themselves in a fight."¹⁰ The symptoms by which the corrupting agents 'proved themselves in the fight' and the indication in the bodies of the victims became the basis for the developing 'science of the demonic.'

The writers encountered here attempted to build a set of metaphors to explain the unexplainable, to make known the unknowable. They endeavored to create images for the invisible and by doing so to make it a part of reality—to make it capable of being studied or even of being controlled. By creating a metaphor and turning the changeable into the immutable Word, the unseen could be envisioned. By creating the images of evil, the powerful and overwhelming was identified. It was the demonologists who articulated the rules for controlling Satan. They read the signs and patterns of behavior, compared them with the received knowledge of the chlothian and labeled them for identification. They found in the possessed exactly what they expected to find by way of the Galenic humoral theory. The problem was that the work of the theologians, the doctors and the lawyers was purely noetic. The volumes they produced were attempts to reason the invisible into reality. However, the experiences of the possessed were not reducible to metaphor or written text. They were physical and they produced visible bodily responses. Explaining these situations became the realm of the educated leadership.

We must be careful in making assumptions about the sanity and credibility of the possessed or the believers who took part in the early modern battle between good and evil. From the distance of several centuries we might forget that we have developed a whole vocabulary for discussing our bodies as machines, something the intellectuals of the Reformation would have taken as unnerving. Of course in this post-Enlightenment, post-Freudian world we resist explanations seen as antimodern or superstitious. We are loathe to admit that there are

⁹Cotta, *The Tryall of Witchcraft*, p. 18.

¹⁰Cotta, *The Tryall of Witchcraft*, p. 17.

unconquerable forces, often unseen, lurking in the world around us that work against our concept of technological progress. The writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had no such problems or doubts. One of the greatest authorities on maleficium of the seventeenth century said: "Everything which is unknown lies, as far as I am concerned, in the cursed domain of demonology; for there are no unexplained facts. Whatever is not normal is due to the Devil."¹¹

Not only was it believed that the very air teemed with spirits but that these spirits by definition had no permanent corporeal dwelling. When they found it necessary to have a corporeal presence, they were forced to take up residence in whatever housing presented itself or that could be appropriated by devious means. Often they took possession of the bodies of human individuals. These ethereal beings were not all presumed to be maleficent, for the Holy Spirit could require a corporeal body as well. That the human body was capable of playing host to several guests at once was presumed to be a possibility as the "body harbors the eternal as a host harbours a guest."¹² And regarding the number of demons which might be found in one man, Calvin said: "One man is said to have been possessed by a whole legion. By this, then, we are taught that the number of enemies with whom we have to war is almost infinite, that we may not form a contemptuous idea of the fewness of their numbers," However, he went on to say that when one reads of "Satan or devil being often mentioned in the singular number, the thing denoted is that domination of iniquity which is opposed to the reign of righteousness."¹³ In other words, the "legion" may also be spoken of in the singular.

Throughout Christian history, the problem for the religious has been to identify spiritual possession, discern the source and intent of the spirit, identify it, and either accept it as a representative of God or exorcize it as an agent of the Devil. But the definitions changed. As the view of the world expanded and as social and intellectual circumstances altered, the assessment of what constituted possession, how it could take place at all, and what means might be used to counteract it, came to be perceived differently.

Christian writers tackled the question of possession from two sides. First, they could not deny the possibility of possession by the Holy Spirit since the disciples received the tongue of flame in the upper room at Pentecost. To be reborn in the spirit of Christ was to receive the in-

¹¹Nicholas Remy, quoted by Rossell Hope Robbins in *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1959), p. 408.

¹²Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, edited by Jolanda Jocobi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 194. Hereafter Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*.

¹³Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, 2 volumes (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Erdmens Publishing Co., 1983) I, 14, p. 151.

dwelling Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Neither could they deny the naked existential experience of Paul on the road to Damascus. Yet, if the spirit of God could inhabit the body of man, so could the spirit of evil.¹⁵ The reverse of the question of Christian conversion became the possibility of diabolical possession.

In the West, the Catholic Church for centuries has taught that its members should "believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen."¹⁶ The Church has taught the existence of a host of angels who serve as messengers of God and sometimes appear as apparitions of God himself. Through the influence of Zoroaster and Mani, it has taught about the existence of an army of evil demons who oppose good Christians on a nearly one to one basis. Since the beginnings of Christianity the forces of goodness and light and the evil forces of darkness have waged an unrelenting battle for the souls of mankind. According to Paracelsus: "God's enemy is the devil, Satan and Beelzebub. For the truth cannot be without adversaries. God is the supreme truth and the devil is the supreme lie."¹⁷

The existence of the Devil has been an article of faith from the beginning. So that the illiterate would not be uninformed as to the shapes that the Devil and his demons might take, the

¹⁴The term indwelling, is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: The abiding of God or the Divine Spirit in the heart or soul. Wycliff, rendered *inhabitatio* (Wisdom ix.15) 1382. Ertheli indwelling presseth down the wit. [Vulgate, *inhabitatio*] That which dwells within, inhabits, occupies, or possesses.

¹⁵The concept of demonic possession is older than the Old Testament, but what I am referring to here is the Christian tradition in the West. There are two variants of possession existing in the world: the Eurasian type which is seen from China, through India, and of course in the European West, and the African type seen in Africa as well as in such African cultures as Haiti. In the African type the "relationship between the spirits and humans is one of reciprocity." It is often a positive possession used for healing, divining, social control, or to provide a measure of influence to powerless people. In this form, the possession is not associated with evil. However, the African model does also contain an evil form of possession which involves sorcery and the spirits of the dead. This is manifested in sickness of the possessed individual, in spitting blood, an inability to eat, and almost certain death. This *ghost* is nearly impossible to dislodge.

The Eurasian model differs from the African type in three important aspects: first, while in the African variant the offending spirit is always a ghost, in the Eurasian system there is a great variety of evil beings. From Satan and all his followers, to fallen angels, to unredeemed human beings, there are a myriad of demons waiting to possess, corrupt, and harrass the human population; second, the African *evil* possession is *signaled by a single, acute, and devastating illness*, but the Eurasian type has various symptoms though not all may be present in any one case; third, evil African beings are passive spirits who attack the individual through the use of sorcery. In the Eurasian model the demons are intrinsically the enemies of man and exhibit clear and active personality traits. They are rational, thinking beings. Felicitas D. Goodman, *How About Demons? Possession and Exorcism in the Modern World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 88-90 and 95-98.

¹⁶ Opening lines of the Nicene Creed. Also may be rendered: "... maker of heaven and earth and of all things, visible and invisible."

¹⁷ Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, p. 189.

cathedrals, inside and out, the prayerbooks, the paintings, and the preachings of the priests and ministers have been liberally strewn with representations of the fantastic fauna of the nether world. Demons await their due in depictions of the last judgment; they hover over death beds; they peer from the recesses of rooms; and they dance with glee at the witches' sabbaths. At times they might be conjured and summoned by the believer through spells and incantations, at other times they could arrive uninvited and wreak havoc on the unsuspecting. "Although a single demon is appointed for each man, that does not stop him from being set upon by an entire horde of demons."¹⁸ In fact demons were believed to be in the very air around the individual, yet one was not always able to tell how many thousands could be around at any given moment.¹⁹

But demons were not the only spirits to inhabit the hidden world. Angels of God, the army of the Light, were present too. They too could be perceived in the paintings, the sculpture, and the sermons of the ministers. They too could be called forth by the faithful through prayer and supplication. They too could appear to the initiated and uninitiated alike to protect, advise, and deliver messages from above. "Indeed, not the least paradoxical thing about medieval Christian ideas is that the soul itself was envisioned in corporeal form. It was usually represented as a homunculus or child but sometimes assumed even more disturbing forms. . . ."²⁰ Manifestations of the supernatural could intrude in the lives of ordinary men as well as the religious. "For the men of the Middle Ages the sacred often revealed itself in . . . disconcerting interactions between the spiritual and the corporeal. . . . The cadavers of saints revealed their sanctity by giving off a fragrant odor"²¹ while those possessed by the devil tended to exude an offensive stench. These very same sentiments were carried into the following centuries.

The phenomena surrounding the possession of the human body by demonic forces has been a topic of theological study since the first centuries of Christianity but historians have not considered the human body as important to historical understanding until recently. In the last several years, interest in concepts relating to a history of the body has opened new areas of historical inquiry. This interest has led to numerous studies on aspects of somatic history from the history of surgery to the ascetic practices of saints and mystics. However, one aspect of the history

¹⁸ Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. Janos M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 187.

¹⁹ Hugh Latimer, *Sermons of Hugh Latimer*, ed. G.E. Corrie (Cambridge: P.S., 1844), p. 493 and quoted by Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 471.

²⁰ Jaques LeGoff. *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 84.

²¹ LeGoff, *Imagination*, p. 85.

of the body has been much discussed but thoroughly neglected. That is the phenomenon of demonic possession.

I say 'much discussed' because of the surge in witchcraft studies and the occult and their connections with Satan and bewitchment. Possessed individuals played a central role in many of the witchcraft trials as evidence of the presence and power of the accused witches. Scholars have posited several theories pertaining to the causes of the possessions assuming that the anomalous behavior had either sociological or psychological causes. In conjunction with these theories, anthropological evidence has been used.

What seems to have been lacking from all this material has been a concentrated effort to analyze the sources relating to demonic possession and the case studies discussed in those sources. There was virtually no change in the theological understanding of demonic possession from A.D. 100 to 1700. Of the two major periods of western history where demonic possession was discussed at length and in depth, the first centuries of Christianity and the Reformation, the most relevant sources for my argument come from the early modern period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The line between the two periods is a direct one, for the later thinkers were totally dependent on earlier theologians for their materials and authority.

That demonic possession was a real possibility for the early modern inhabitant of Europe and the Puritan American colonies is understood. That the possession necessitated that the demoniac be dispossessed was another given. The reasons for possession, the implications for the possessed, and the methods of exorcism were not so clear however. For the evidence and clues surrounding a demonic possession, the individuals charged with determining the fate of the possessed were forced to look beyond the ancient sources and witnesses.

The period between the end of the fifteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century saw the most concerted efforts, since Aquinas in the twelfth century, to develop and employ a system to counteract evil. Most of the leading intellectuals of the day were concerned with the problem of evil and its manifestations in the earthly world. They speculated on it, they theorized about it, and they built on the traditional foundations of thought laid down by the classical authors. They saw nothing irregular in the attempt to systematize the problem of evil just as they had theologized the understanding of good. The system worked. It worked because everyone understood it and believed in its efficacy. The possessing agents were Christian demons who behaved as expected. The origins of the demons, their organizational structure, their names, and their behavior patterns had been received from the Babylonian, Judaic, and early Christian traditions. Whereas it was known how they would act, predictions could be made as to what the demons would do. Therefore the possessed individual knew the prescribed demonic behavior. It was codified and written out for consumption by the public, whether they read it or had it read to them, and could be digested through the myriad of pamphlets churned out by the presses of

Europe.²² The exorcist too was well versed in his role. He knew the limits of the evil agents and he was educated in the correct containment and expulsion procedures. The 'science of the demonic' was a well designed system.

Three sets of authorities were concerned with this problem in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the theologians, the physicians, and the lawyers. All searched their sources for relevant theories and remedies in order to combat what was seen as the incursion of evil. On a society-wide basis, the question was either caused by or was exacerbated by the Protestant Reformation. In any event, these two centuries saw a rise in the cases diagnosed as demonic possession and a corresponding rise in the amount of published literature addressing the problem. The most influential force in the production of literature was the Reformation.

With the coming of the Reformation and the demand for a less 'superstitious' religious system, the Protestants attempted to restructure the 'science of the demonic,' but it was so firmly entrenched that they succeeded only in removing the effective controls and changing exorcism from a direct, participatory, and interventionist expulsion procedure to an indirect one of fasting and prayer, passive, and in the end only marginally effective. The other two aspects of the system, the explanation and the prediction, remained in place because they were built on a long heritage and tradition claimed by both the Roman Catholics and the Reformers. This disruption of the final and dramatic climax in the system may be blamed for some of the failures in the integration of the individual into the communion of saints. The differences between the concepts of the Catholic Church and the developing Protestant sects led to the animosity that produced much of the vitriolic anti-Catholic or anti-Protestant literature published by each side. Along with the initial question of the possibility of possession by demons, came the quandary of who was qualified to expel the demons, if in fact they were deemed to exist and to possess persons. Whichever exorcist, minister or priest, who managed to expel the offending spirit could claim his church as the rightful heir to the Kingdom of God.

This leads to a number of questions which surface when attempting to sort out the beliefs pertaining to spiritual possession after the middle of the sixteenth century. One of the major problems seems to be the breakdown in the traditional remedies for the malady. First, the diagnosis and the discernment of spiritual possession had been easier without opposition in the form of a competing theology. Not that the members of the Roman Church hierarchy had been lax in

²²See Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, Original paper printing, 1975), pp. 189 - 226. Robert Scribner, "Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas," *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 237 - 256, 1984. Richard Gawthrop and Gerald Strauss, "Protestantism and Literacy in Early Modern Germany," *Past and Present*, Vol. 104, pp. 31 - 55. For literacy in Puritan New England see David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement, Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).

their diagnosis, rather they had had fewer factors to consider before the sixteenth century. With the Reformation came the end to the universal remedy of exorcism. For the Protestants, the saints and their cults were no longer viable, the possibility of miracles was abolished, and the position of the exorcist was eliminated. Thus, for the next two centuries, the people who were plagued by those symptoms that had previously indicated demonic intervention were deemed victims of witchcraft, insanity, melancholia, or of some other physical or mental disease. The confrontations between the two disputing religions were often manifested in the arguments amongst the theologians and the physicians.

During the Reformation, exorcism served a function similar to the one it had served during the first centuries of the Christian Church. The ability to cure demoniacs became a clear sign of a true Christian, a true proof of orthodoxy. The inability of the Protestants to facilitate such a cure was fuel for the Catholic Church to allege divine displeasure at their heretical behavior. But the Reformers did not give up the use of exorcism all at once. The Lutherans retained baptismal exorcism and practiced demonic exorcism into the seventeenth century. The Calvinists, on the other hand attempted to do away with exorcism altogether, claiming that it was valid only for the apostolic church. The English, however, on all sides, Puritan, Anglican, and Catholic alike, continued to exorcise demons throughout much of the seventeenth century. None actually forbade exorcism, just the Romanist ritual. The Anglican Convocation of 1604 passed a canon which condemned the practice by any Anglican clergyman without the express consent of his bishop obtained beforehand. After this, any clergyman who used exorcism in any fashion, under any pretext, without express permission, risked being counted an impostor and deposed from the ministry.²³

Early Modern Sources

The voices that speak to us from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are remarkably consistent. The evidence of possession, the diagnosis of possession, and the responses to the cures are within minor degrees of being the same. The thinkers we are reading here took for granted that angels and devils, the Holy Spirit and Satan were alive, available, and given the right circumstances could invade the lives of anybody. The only questions that were argued by these men were the ways in which the manifestations of the spiritual world were to be understood.

Three categories of writers are presented here: theologians/clergy, medical doctors, and lawyers, although it may sometimes be difficult to ascertain which was which. The theologians

²³Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 - 1718* (Washington: Oxford University Press, 1911), p. 87-88. This situation was affirmed by the 1958 Convocation of the Church of England and the suggestion that the doctrinal status of the devil be examined was voted down decisively. Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft: The Development of Christian Beliefs in Evil Spirits* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 85.

worked from established criteria based on the Scriptures, the Church Fathers, the scholastics, and a long line of traditional thought. The medical doctors, in a growing area of study, attempted to use rational "scientific methods" in order to comprehend the irrational and evil. However, they too were tied to the long-respected theories of Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna. Again and again they were trapped by the random and chaotic nature of possession and for an explanation fell back on the demonology already in place. The lawyers offered advice on the decision-making process for judges while simultaneously presenting a telling commentary on their own prejudices which were based on the same line of traditional Roman Catholic demonology that was assumed by the theologians. Everyone, it would seem, was attempting to fit a set of irrational behavior patterns into a codified set of criteria that would be predictable and controllable.

For the experiences of the demoniacs themselves, I must rely on the words of the theologians, the lawyers, and the doctors for there are few existing autobiographical accounts of the demonic experience. Unlike, for example, the saintly women of the Middle Ages and the Counter Reformation who either dictated or wrote treatises on their mystical experiences, the demoniacs were mostly silent. This can be attributed to any one of several factors. Sometimes the possessed were illiterate and would not have had the means to compose an account of their battle with evil. Also, while the quest for the mystical experience could offer instruction and illumination, demonic possession was not a state sought by members of the community. The practicing mystics became tutors for their communities, with many seeking their advice and personal illumination through them. They were expected to offer records of their journeys. They were expected to act as exemplars. Demoniacs were not. There is the work of Jeanne des Anges, the leading demoniac of the Loudun case. Sœur Jeanne attempted a rational and intellectual explanation but she was lost for words since no tradition existed with a vocabulary for describing the possessed condition. There is also an autobiographical account by Madelaine Bavant, the prominent demoniac of the Louviers occurrence.²⁴ An English Protestant, Hannah Allen, left a journal detailing her feelings during a period of demonic possession.²⁵

As for possession by the Holy Spirit, the Church had always been ambivalent about its manifested acceptance. Typically, in the case of the mystics and the would-be saints, personal revelation rather than doctrinal authority was claimed as proof of spiritual intervention and while it could not be denied by the Church, it was held in suspicion. When the possessed claimed divine revelation, it was circumstances surrounding the incident rather than theological

²⁴*Histoire de Magdelaine Bavant, Relisiuse du Monastere de Saint Louis de Louviers* (Paris, 1652).

²⁵Hannah Allen, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled. A Narrative of God's Gracious Dealings with that choice Christian Mrs. Hannah Allen.* (London, 1683).

doctrine which determined the outcome of the ordeal for the authorities. During the Reformation it was deemed a necessity to repress those groups who stressed personal revelation or enthusiasm rather than traditional ritual and scriptures. Fear of factionalism and the resulting chaos, led authorities to insist on conformity to official and sanctioned forms of religious experience.

While the somatic manifestations between the mystics and the demoniacs may seem remarkably similar, the experience itself differed. For the mystics, the expectations were that upon returning to an earthly existence they would be able to recount their visions and offer assurances of the divine presence to those around them. The demoniac was different. Demon possession may also have offered evidence of a spiritual world, but it was a chthonic one. Where the true mystical experience was supposed to bring a sense of peace and serenity, the demoniacal experience generated a feeling of chaos and turmoil. Such a state was not conducive to an organized recounting of the ordeal. Thus, instead of the possessed themselves offering the explanations for the elusive signs and symptoms of the hidden presence within the human body, the observers presented the stories to the public often in the form of propagandizing tracts; the relation concerning Joyce Dovey and the dispossession of seven members of one family in Lancashire are just such tracts.²⁶

Herein I will depend on the words of the people directly involved as eyewitness to the incidents discussed. The behavior patterns remain remarkably constant through France, to England and across the Atlantic Ocean to Puritan America, although one can discern a growing penchant for discounting the bodily manifestation in favor of the mental or spiritual experience. Whether we are discussing a Catholic saint possessed with the Holy Spirit in the sixteenth century, or the demonic possession of a transient adolescent in Boston, Massachusetts, at the end of the seventeenth century, the physical evidence holds. Even the literature used as sources of authority, translated into Italian, Spanish, French, German, or English, finds its way onto the bookshelves of most of the writers.

Something must be said about the connections between the developing scientific methods and the refining of the science of the demonic. Irving Kirsch has argued in two articles that histo-

²⁶*A Strange and true Relation of a Young Woman possest with the Devill. By the name of Joyce Dovey, dwelling at Bewdley neer Worcester. With a particular of her actions, and how the evill spirit speakes within her, giving fearefull answers unto those Ministers and others that come to discourse with her.* (London, 1646).

George More, *A True Discourse concerning the certaine possession and dispossession of 7 persons in one familie in Lancashire, which also may serve as part of an Answer to a fayned and false Discoverie which speaketh very much evill, as well of this, as of the rest of those great and mightie workes of God which be of the like excellent nature.* By George More, Minister and Preacher of the Worde of God, and now (for bearing Witnessse unto this, and for justifying the rest) a prisoner in the Clinke, where he hath continued almost for the space of two yeares. (1600).

rians have developed misconceptions about the chronology of the scientific revolution.²⁷ The myth of science versus superstition that we inherited from the eighteenth century rationalists "is sometimes portrayed as a struggle between opposing forces." On one side can be found religious dogma and belief in supernatural causation for physical phenomena. On the opposite side are rationalism, empirical observation, skepticism, and "a commitment to the universality of natural causation."²⁸ In this need to discover the laws of science, astrology was seen as much more 'scientific' than reliance on theology. Causation attributed to "physical rays emanating from planets and stars" was much more subject to observation than was reliance on free will.²⁹ As the sciences gained ground, superstition died, or so the myth goes. Kirsh argued that the dichotomy was not so clean as has been accepted.

As will be seen in the evidence presented here, not only did both the Scientific Revolution and the 'science of the demonic' develop together, they faced the future hand in hand. The same individuals were often concerned with both. The lines between science, medicine, and demonology were drawn centuries later; they did not exist in the early modern world. One could argue as Amos Funkenstein has that the seventeenth century saw the "assumption of a secular theology. . . a peculiar idiom, or discourse, in which theological concerns were expressed in terms of secular knowledge, and scientific concerns were expressed in theological terms. Theology and science were almost one."³⁰

Historians have interpreted past events in terms of their relations to modern beliefs and standards and as to their usefulness to modern concerns. For instance, Jolande Jacobi, in her Preface to the selected writings of Paracelsus said: "We have kept the texts free from the paraphernalia of superstition, which for so long obscured the true image of Paracelsus."³¹ The witchcraft craze as misogyny has become a focus of the historical community for its value in demonstrating contemporary feminist doctrine. Study of the accused women and their roles in the persecuting society has underscored the ongoing exclusion of particular women from the

²⁷Irving Kirsch, "Demonology and the Rise of Science: An Example of the Misperception of Historical Data." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 14 (1978) 149 - 157; "Demonology and Science During the Scientific Revolution." *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 16 (1980) 359 - 368.

²⁸Kirsch, "Demonology and the Rise of Science," p. 149.

²⁹Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 54.

³⁰Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the middle ages to the seventeenth century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 346.

³¹Jolande Jacobi, editor, *Paracelsus, Selected writings*, Bollingen Series XXVIII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951, first paperback printing, 1988), p. xxvii.

mainstream of society. As social problems such as homelessness, mental illness, drugs, and the plight of the physically disabled have multiplied so too have studies of the participants in the witchcraft dramas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These studies have either drawn parallels to modern dilemmas or have served as historical sources for modern attitudes.

Robert Boyle instigated the translation and publication of the French ghost story of the "Devil of Mascon." He later contributed the story to Joseph Glanvill for inclusion in his *Saducismus Triumphatus*. Boyle believed that the search for empirical evidence of demonic activity was a legitimate branch of the natural sciences. In a contribution to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* his questions to be answered in a study of the natural history of a country included: "Whether the diggers [of mines] do ever really meet with any subterraneous demons; and if they do, in what shape and manner they appear; what they portend, and what they do, &c.?"³²

Isaac Newton grew up in the years of the ascendancy of the Cambridge Platonists and benefited from their work. The Cambridge Platonists harkened back to such sixteenth century scientists as Paracelsus and the Florentine Platonists. Their connections to the Puritans of the seventeenth century can be seen in the rise of the 'moderns' over the 'ancients' as Charles Webster has said in *From Paracelsus to Newton*.

The late revival of Neoplatonism in the seventeenth century and the eager absorption of this philosophy by the *avant garde* also brings into question the characterization of seventeenth century science in terms of the ascendancy of the 'moderns' over the 'ancients'. Paracelsus and the Neoplatonists were 'moderns' to the degree that they opposed the authority of scholasticism in theology and science, but 'ancients' in the manner of their adoption of a source of wisdom more venerable than scholasticism. The revolution towards which they worked was firmly rooted in the search for means of reviving the wisdom possessed by Moses, or Adam before the Fall.³³

Newton applied Henry More's conception of the nature of space in his *Opticks*,³⁴ a conception developed while attempting to prove the existence of a spiritual world. His "attractive

³²Robert Boyle, "General Heads for the Natural History of a Country, Great or Small," *Philosophical Transactions* 1 (1666):343, and quoted by Kirsch, "Demonology and Science," p. 360.

³³Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton. Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 2. For a recent discussion on the primitivist motives of the New England Puritans see Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Livess* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). The return of the Puritans to the primitive church as seen by Bozeman would seem to coincide with the Neoplatonic revival of the "wisdom possessed by Moses, or Adam before the Fall." Just as the seventeenth century Platonists were looking backward for future answers, the New England Puritans, according to Bozeman, were ". . . laying fond plans for further reformation" and "their thought centered on retrieval and enclosure within the one horizon of biblical history"(p. 347).

³⁴Flora I. Mackinnon, ed., *Philosophical Writings of Henry More* (New York: AMS Press, 1969), p. 294, and mentioned by Kirsch, "Rise of Science," p. 360.

and repulsive forces" was borrowed from the Hermetic philosophy and was condemned by the Cartesians as "occult." The New England ministers used Cartesian physics in arguing the case for harmful contact between the witch and the accuser in the courtroom. The witch's glance or movement caused pain for the victim since all space was filled with matter and the "doctrine of effluvia" maintained that the "venomous and malignant particles . . . ejected from the eye," as in the evil eye, could be transferred through space to the victim.³⁵ Johann Kepler appropriated Tycho Brahe's astrological charts to formulate his theories on the universe and his detection of elliptical orbits developed as a result of the Neo-Platonic search for the music of the spheres. Kepler was also known to have cast horoscopes.³⁶ John Napier, the Scottish mathematician who is famous for the invention of the first system of logarithms, stumbled on it as a consequence of his efforts to calculate the numbers of demons in the Devil's hierarchy.

Theology and medicine were often closely joined in the same individual because "many doctors, particularly physicians, were members of the clergy."³⁷ Because of this, the church and at least one aspect of the developing field of medicine were joined in 1511 when the bishop of London was given the right to issue surgical licenses.³⁸ Such noted anatomists as Thomas Willis, who besides being a founding member of the Royal Society and well-known for his work on the brain, contributed to More's and Glanvill's collections of stories of the supernatural. Also in his own work he occasionally resorted to supernatural explanations as in his *Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes* where he admits that nightmares may be caused by devils.³⁹ Johann Weyer spent as much time in his book examining cases of the influence of demons and spirits as he did investigating cases of illness from 'natural causes.' Demonic diseases were as integral a part of the medical literature as any other natural phenomenon. Joseph Blagrove's medical text that relied on astrology claimed "to cure all Kinds of Diseases and Infirmities which are Naturally incident to the body of man," and included an extensive section on healing demonic diseases.⁴⁰

³⁵Thomas Brattle, October 8, 1692, in *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases 1648 - 1706*, ed., George Burr (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), p. 171. Brattle felt that this was a misuse of Cartesian physics and suggested that it might better be called "Salem philosophy."

³⁶Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 54.

³⁷Robert S. Gottfried, "English Medical Practitioners, 1340 - 1530," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 58 (1984), pp. 173 - 174.

³⁸Gottfried, "English Medical Practitioners, 1340 - 1430," p. 171.

³⁹Thomas Willis, *Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes, Which is That of the Vital and Sensitive Man* (1683) (Gainesville Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1971), p. 142. See note in Kirsch, "Demonology and Science," p. 368.

⁴⁰Joseph Blagrove, *Astrological Practice of Physick discovering the true way to cure all Kinds of Diseases and Infirmities which are Naturally incident to the body of man* (London, 1671).

If, as the modern myth asserts, superstition gave way to science during the early modern period, the scientists should have been antagonistic toward the demonologists. Yet they were not. The case studies of the demonically possessed were as much a part of the empirical and scientific evidence of the day as any of the other studies. Thomas Sprat, in writing a history of the Royal Society commented:

It is not unfit employment for the most judicious experimenter to examine, and record the most unusual and monstrous forces, and motions of matter. It is certain that many things, which now seem miraculous, would not be so, if once we come to be fully acquainted with their composition and operations. And it is also as true that there are many qualities, and figures, and powers of things, that break the common laws, and transgress the standing rules of nature.⁴¹

Time and again the case studies were signed and attested by groups made up of physicians, theologians, and interested parties. Cures were attempted by both the medical profession and the doctors of the spirit. Sometimes both were present and it was always prudent to have a medical doctor examine the patient first. All evidence, whether medical or theological, was carefully examined, noted, catalogued, weighed, and used in the diagnosis.

Yet still twentieth-century historians have neglected to focus on what have been termed the 'irrational' works of many of the great thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Jean Bodin, the French judicial scholar, wrote one of the most influential of the demonologies which has been virtually ignored by modern scholars and termed an embarrassment. "To turn over the pages of Bodin's *De la démonomanie de sorciers*, to see this great man, the undisputed intellectual master of the later sixteenth century, demanding death at the stake not only for witches, but for all who do not believe every grotesque detail of the new demonology, is a sobering experience."⁴² Henry More of the Cambridge Platonists, one of the most influential thinkers of the seventeenth century, a theologian and a scientist, was much concerned about evil and the spiritual world. More's work in the field of the spiritual has not received the kind of recognition it deserves from either American or British historians. Yet clearly, his work foreshadows the nineteenth century spiritualist movement and lays the groundwork for such concepts as vengeful ghosts and apparitions of relatives who had passed on. Increase Mather and Cotton Mather, influential Puritans involved in all three fields discussed here have been called superstitious and medieval in their works focusing on the spiritual world.

Modern Historiography

⁴¹Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society* (1667) (St. Louis: Washington University Studies, 1958), pp. 199f, 318. Quoted by Kirsch, "Demonology and Science," p. 365.

⁴²Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1967), p. 122.

Demonic possession has been presented by modern historians in three ways: the psychological, the sociological, or the anthropological. Most studies which purport to explain the phenomenon do so in twentieth-century terms as understood through these disciplines. Depending on the period, they use such terms as epilepsy, hysteria, schizophrenia, repression, neurosis, psychosis. There have been studies which explain possession in terms of sociological influences. If the writers have an anthropological slant, they have produced comparisons to other cultures. There have been very few historical accounts published that focus primarily on demonic possession, and none that specifically focus on the somatic experience as interpreted by the sixteenth and seventeenth century participants. One does not have this impression, however, when surveying the literature listed under "possession" in the library catalogues. There was a great interest in demonic possession at the end of the nineteenth century in connection with aspects of spiritualism. It was studied by the medical profession where the usual diagnosis was either hysteria, neurasthenia, or depression. Recent interest, aside from the witchcraft association, has been in the revival of demonology through the fundamentalist churches.⁴³

Of the treatises presenting the overall aspects of spiritual possession, perhaps the best known and most often mentioned is the work of T. K. Oesterreich entitled *Possession Demoniactal & Other Among Primitive Races, in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times*.⁴⁴ When this classic work was first published in 1921, Oesterreich was head of the department of philosophy at Tübingen University. Although he recognized the universality of the possession experience, he rejected any spiritualistic interpretation in favor of the belief that possession was "part of a pathological process" where the sufferer is "deluded as to the identity of the other person."⁴⁵ (The "other person" being an aspect of the sufferer's own personality.) Oesterreich includes discussion on a number of cases of possession, primarily from the nineteenth century including many from areas outside the West. He discusses Biblical possession, but dismisses the account of Jesus sending the demons into the herd of swine as simply a story.⁴⁶ The seventeenth century case of the nuns at Loudun is one of his most prominent studies, yet he rejects the theological and social implications and focuses only on the sexual repression of Jeanne des Anges. Oesterreich draws the

⁴³As I researched the current literature I found such titles as Merrill F. Unger, *What Demons Can Do to Saints* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991) and Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Satan, His Motives and Methods* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Kregel Publications, 1990). These and others like them are concerned with evil in the modern world and offer advice for combating it.

⁴⁴T. K. Oesterreich, *Possession Demoniactal & Other Among Primitive Races, in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1966).

⁴⁵Anita Kohsen Gregory, in the Introduction to Oesterreich, *Possession Demoniactal and Other*, p. viii.

⁴⁶Oesterreich, *Possession Demoniactal and Other*, p. 4.

conclusion that he calls "another of the fruits of the 'Age of Enlightenment,'" when he says "that no spirit, either pure or possessed only of an etheric body, exists in this world."⁴⁷

D. P. Walker, in *Unclean Spirits, Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late sixteenth and Early Seventeenth centuries*, concentrates on the use of the cases as propaganda and finds fraud in the majority of the incidents. Walker offers this method of viewing the primary material from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. He says: "Faced with a case of supposed possession a sixteenth-century observer had the choice of three possible kinds of explanation: first, a supernatural cause, a devil; second, disease; third, fraud. . . . Now, as an historian (which is what I am trying to be), the first possibility, a devil, must be excluded. Whatever their personal beliefs, historians should not ask their readers to accept supernatural phenomena."⁴⁸ He concludes that mental disease and fraud are the only explanations and proceeds to document the possession cases he finds as fraud more often than disease, because, as he insists, most diseases do not appear instantly, "and disappear at an hour and day predicted by the patient several weeks before, as often happens in a successful case of exorcism." He does concede that they are probably not all pre-mediated attempts to deceive as much as instances where a young person finds himself the center of a great deal of attention and is loathe to relinquish the stage. He ignores completely the possibility that at least some of the participants in the drama assuredly believed in the objective reality of spirits and demons.

Walker's work is important in documenting the use of possession in the pamphlet war of the sixteenth century between the Catholics and the Huguenots in France, and the Anglicans and the Nonconformists in England. Since his focus is not on the experience of possession itself, he can be forgiven for such statements as that the "use of medical experts to examine demoniacs . . . did not occur until 1602."⁴⁹ While he is probably referring to medical examinations demanded by the court, he does not make the point that the procedures for the use of possessed individuals as evidence in witchcraft trials was just developing at the time. The use of a medical examination for suspected demoniacs had been required by the religious authorities since the first centuries of Christianity.

⁴⁷Oesterreich, *Possession Demonical and Other*, p. 376. A second early twentieth-century study sometimes cited, depending on the bent of the author, is *Demon Possession and Allied Themes* by Reverend John L. Nevius, a missionary to China at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevius, as might be expected, does not question the theological interpretation of demonic possession and attempts to show how it manifested itself in Christian China. John L. Nevius, *Demon Possession and Allied Themes. Being an Inductive Study of Phenomena of Our Own Times* (New York: Fleming H Revell Company, Second Edition, 1896).

⁴⁸D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and exorcism in France and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries* (London: Scolar Press, 1981), p. 15.

⁴⁹Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, p. 79.

Keith Thomas, in his important work *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, ties the cause of demonic possession to religion and makes two major points about it during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵⁰ First, that it usually took place in a religious context. Thomas says: "A conspicuous feature of the cases of possession about which details survive is that they frequently originated in a religious environment. . . . Possession was seldom diagnosed in circles where religion was regarded as a thing indifferent" ⁵¹ There can be no question that this is true since possession is at its basis a theological problem. His second interpretive insight attributes the state to the repression of the individual in an environment of an "intensive régime of religious observance" such as in the nunneries of France. He focuses on the individual in opposition to the society and analyzes the phenomenon in societal and in Freudian terms, classifying demons as "bad and reprehensible wishes, derivations of instinctual impulses that have been repudiated and repressed." Thomas focuses much more on the belief in witchcraft and the social implications than on the importance of possession itself. While incidences of witchcraft decline considerably by the end of the seventeenth century and are explained away by resort to natural causes, the underlying belief in the influence of demons and spirits to cause possession did not disappear so quickly.

For American historians, the focus has been on the Salem trials. While John Demos has claimed to study New England witchcraft, not for its own sake, but as a "window on the irrational," he was the first and only one doing so until Richard Godbeer's *The Devil's Dominion* was published this year. Research for the most part has centered on attempts to explain the incidents in Massachusetts rather than on the experiences themselves. Several authors do, however, devote some time to demonic possession.

Of the recent Salem witchcraft material, Carol F. Karlsen in *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* devotes an entire chapter, "Brands Plucked Out of the Burning," to the possessed individuals. Her analysis of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the afflicted is based on the work of a number of anthropologists and relies on cross-cultural comparisons. She frequently cites the work of I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* in his model of the dissatisfied female for whom possession becomes a way to power and attention and Vincent Crapanzano and Vivian Garrison, editors of *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, "The possessed," she says, "were rebelling against pressures to internalize stifling gender and class hierarchies."⁵² John Demos, in another of the latest studies of Salem, *Entertaining Satan*, using modern psychological technique and lan-

⁵⁰Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).

⁵¹Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, pp. 480-81.

⁵²Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1989), p. 251.

guage, analyzes the demoniacs at Salem as having undergone the "psychiatric concept of conversion" which he says is "surely recognizable in this light even to laymen."⁵³

Richard Godbeer, in assessing demonic possession in *The Devil's Dominion*, agrees with Keith Thomas that the "spiritual intensity" of the surroundings and the urge toward "culturally illicit" behavior contributed much to the event. However, it is with the third of his "fundamental characteristics" of possession that Godbeer avoids the repetition in the other studies. He stresses the clash between an obsession with "moral condition" and the entertainment of "sinful urges" in the lives of the possessed.⁵⁴ Basing much of his work, correctly I think, on the sermons of the New England ministers, he concludes that conflicts erupted in the minds of the people because of the "ambiguity and inconsistency in clerical statements." On the one hand, Puritans were exhorted to search their own corrupt natures for evidence of "liability for sin." On the other hand, the Puritan preachers had a penchant for externalizing evil through the emphasis "on each [church] member's responsibility to watch over the behavior of others" thereby encouraging individuals "to identify sin as lurking around them rather than emerging from within themselves." "Possession," according to Godbeer, provided "a medium through which individuals could confront evil within the self." And, since the possession behavior was a public event, "through another's possession, people could experience vicariously the emotional release provided by the temporary fusion of self and Satan."⁵⁵

Demoniacs from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been diagnosed by twentieth-century historians in one of two ways: either they have been seen as victims of some sort of mental illness that created illusions in the mind or they were seen as victims of a superstitious system that perceived an objective and physical enemy that attacked the flesh and blood of the body. The first of these treatments has been aggressively studied as the history of madness. The second has been dismissed as irrational and unworthy of prolonged attention except as evidence of the superstitious nature of pre-Enlightened man.

Two names stand out in the history of the idea of madness: Roy Porter and Michel Foucault. Roy Porter began his study in *Mind Forged Manacles* with the decline of what he called the "culture of terror, marking the age of melancholy." An age which "was to be comprehensively repudiated by cosmopolitan elites . . ." with a new ideology that expressed "a resolve to replace the

⁵³John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, paperback edition, 1983), p. 117.

⁵⁴Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 108 - 109.

⁵⁵Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion*, pp. 119 - 121.

kingdom of darkness by Enlightenment."⁵⁶ Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* is a study of the concepts of reason and non-reason, sanity and foolishness, rather than an inquiry into the theological questions of demons and demonic possession.⁵⁷ While both Michel Foucault and Roy Porter have contributed greatly to the literature on mental illness, madness, and the insane, it is Michael MacDonald's work that comes closest to targeting demonic possession.

Michael MacDonald's *Mystical Bedlam, Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* is often mentioned in relation to possession.⁵⁸ He focused his attention on the papers of an "astrological physician" and "one of the last Renaissance magi" by the name of Richard Napier. Of the "more than two-thousand obscure rustics" treated by Napier, demons were mentioned in 148 of the cases.⁵⁹ All the patients, including those claiming to have contact with devils, were treated for "mental disorders." Somatic symptoms were assumed to be psychosomatic for "some people thought they had detected visible proof of the presence of the unseen world" and even "the language with which the sick described . . . their diseases blurred the distinction between metaphor and reality."⁶⁰ A distinction discerned today that was not so readily seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Demons, the Devil, and evil were understood as aspects of reality by much of the populace.

Mystical Bedlam is an important contribution to the study of the history of madness. MacDonald stresses the importance of the developing attitudes toward the mentally ill as outlined by Michel Foucault and he points to the absence of medical remedies and the "glaring inadequacies of medical science" as the reason. MacDonald quotes Bacon in remarking that "medicine had made very little progress since the Greeks."⁶¹ While I do not argue with MacDonald's findings, I would suggest that the physicians, at least in the areas of possession, were using the new scientific methods in conjunction with their ancient texts. The use of psychological healing that was

⁵⁶Roy Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles: A history of madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 66. Porter's *A Social History of Madness, The World Through the Eyes of the Insane* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1989) is a collection of essays on the autobiographical testimonies by individuals diagnosed as mad. The work includes assessments of the writings of such people as Margery Kempe, Friedrich Nietzsche, Clifford Beers, and Sylvia Plath among others.

⁵⁷Michel Foucault, *Madness & Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1973).

⁵⁸Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

⁵⁹MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 201.

⁶⁰MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 203.

⁶¹MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 226.

usurped by the laity, had been two thousand years in the making through the ministrations of the church and clergy. The treatment of demonic possession was but one area of experimentation and observation open to the medical profession.

A frequently used source was the collection of essays edited by Sidney Angelo, *The Damned Art*. Although the volume is primarily dedicated to witchcraft, the essays on particular works within the milieu of their publication served as an important secondary source. Angelo points out that many ". . . of these books are well known and frequently cited; yet there has been little analysis of their structure, arguments, language, and interrelation."⁶² As a result of *The Damned Art*, the authors whose works are analyzed therein have had their work taken seriously for the first time in modern history. Essays included in *The Damned Art* cover several of the primary sources used here: *The Malleus Maleficarum*, Johann Weyer's, *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, Jean Bodin's *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, King James's *Dæmonologie*, and Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*.

This study may suggest additional avenues of discussion. Already some other studies are under way. James Sharp of the University of York in England is in the process of researching demonic possession in connection with the law. He is studying the ages, family conditions, and pamphlet history of major English cases. Louis J. Kern of Hofstra University is studying the specifically sexual aspects of witchcraft in the possession literature included here.⁶³

First, I am interested in looking at the bodily experience as endured by the participants in the ordeal. And an ordeal it was. For the individual who was suddenly stricken with uncontrollable spasms, who spoke in a foreign voice, who looked like a different person, who was bruised and battered, who encountered the face of evil, the experience of demonic possession was all too real.

Second, I am concerned with an exploration of the theological implications of bodily possession. For the clergy/exorcist, the doctor, and the demoniac's family, the experience was also real. I am interested in the experience as it was understood by the individuals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This presents the problem for the historian. Demonic possession is a phenomenon that does not present a clear cause and effect solution. There is no concise way to separate the bodily experience from the intellectual theories. I think it can be assumed that without an anomalous set of behaviors, there would have been no development of possession theory;

⁶²Sidney Angelo, ed., *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 2.

⁶³Both Sharp and Kern attended the Tenth Salem Conference at Salem, Massachusetts in June of 1992 and delivered preliminary papers on their subjects: James Sharp, "Child & Adolescent Victims in Early Modern English Witch Trials" and Louis J. Kern, "Eros, the Devil, & the Cunning Woman: Sexuality & the Supernatural in European Antecedents & 17th-Century New England Witchcraft Cases."

on the other hand, without the underlying belief that spiritual beings existed and could infiltrate the human body, unusual behavior might have a completely different explanation.

Although there is much literature on the connections between Renaissance magic and the folklore of the peasants, I have not included either the ideas or the alchemical, astrological, or magical practitioners. Such individuals as were involved in the alchemical practices are often mentioned in the works under discussion but do not contribute to the literature on possession as much as to the understanding of sorcery, astrology, and witchcraft. Where they were involved in a somatic sense, I have used them.

I have extracted from a number of primary sources from the period the portions relevant to the somatic experience. This is not a study of witchcraft, as there are already more witchcraft studies than one can read in a reasonable period of time. There are, however, precious few studies on the phenomenon of demonic possession and none that I have found concerned particularly with the bodily experience itself. I am not in any way interested in the *facts* of the cases in twentieth-century terms. Whether or not we can diagnose the behavior in modern psychological jargon is of no interest to me. I am seeking the *facts* according to the men and women of the period under discussion; in the extraction of the *reality* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the *metaphor* of the twentieth century. My goal is to relate the physical evidence and to allow the victim, wherever possible, and the observers to evaluate it in the hope that this will elicit a better understanding of the importance of the experience to the participants. Where the evidence will allow I shall examine all sides of a given episode and will offer an account of the arguments proposed by both the physicians and the theologians as well as the laity. Since this was a period of intense scientific exploration, many of the writers attempted to answer questions surrounding demonic possession by developing experiments to prove or disprove their hypotheses. All of the authors examined expressed an absolute belief in the existence of demons and this would be the case since they were attempting to show the effects of spirits on the human world. Many do, however, express disbelief in the possibility of witchcraft.

In the end, this highlights an instance where the intellectual meets the physical. Unlike most of the supernatural evidence from other sources, the understanding of demonic possession is peculiarly in the realm of the elite. While the possessed individuals may come from any strata of the society, those charged by the society to codify, diagnose, and cure them were the intellectuals. This is not a case of an attempt by the elite to eradicate an irrational and superstitious behavior but an attempt to verify the existence of a spiritual world.

The dissertation is organized into five chapters in addition to the introduction and epilogue. The first two chapters focus on the historical development of the theories and the source materials for this study. As intellectual history, they trace the development of the components that became the foundation for the changing, dynamic, and evolving 'science of the demonic.'

The first chapter follows the idea of spiritual beings and offers a history of human and spiritual contact. It also presents an overview of the changing ideas of evil in the West. Beginning with the classical concepts of the diamon and the genius, the story continues through the Old and New Testaments, the Church fathers, Augustine and Aquinas, culminating in the positions of the Reformers in the sixteenth century. Chapter Two gives the reader a summary of the primary source materials and the authors who codified the 'science of the demonic.' What is most striking is that differences between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant understanding of the phenomenon are virtually nonexistent. Both sides were constrained by the scholastic, and especially the Thomistic concepts of angelology and demonology. Although every author is not represented here, I have chosen to quote those most often cited by writers in the last half of the seventeenth century.

The next three chapters are directly concerned with the bodily experience of demonic possession and serve as the evidence through which the theologians, lawyers, and physicians prove and develop their theories. In the course of examining the evidence of particular possessions, this study will explore the way the experience of the demoniac is interpreted by one or more of the three professions represented. What were the images produced by the body which transfered the messages of indwelling of the holy spirit or appropriation by the devil? The authors the reader will encounter in this essay were all involved in one way or another with the problems presented to the society by the appearance of spiritual possession within the household, the community, and in some cases the continent at large. They asked themselves many of the same questions we would ask today. What does this behavior mean? Is it good or evil? What does it do to the possessed individual? What is the impact of the incident on the non-possessed people? Can they be "cured?" In what way can this "cure" be achieved? Underlying the question of the two types of religious possession are the differences between religious ecstasy, demonic possession, and illness, mental as well as physical.

Chapter Three, outlines the theology of demonic possession as understood by the religious writers of the early modern period. Then, by way of comparison, I outline some of the ways an indwelling of the other possessing spirit, the Holy Spirit may be discerned. Finally individual cases are discussed as examples of clerical involvement with the phenomenon. Chapter Four examines the victim of possession by bewitchment as interpreted through law. Here the sources relate to witchcraft and the use of the possessed as evidence in the courts. Chapter Five relates theories and techniques for expelling the spirits from the possessed body through medical treatments. In both Chapters Four and Five the theology explained in Chapter Three serves as the underlying principal for the lawyers and the physicians. Throughout the material covered in all three chapters it is apparent that philosophical understanding at the intellectual level of society had much more to do with the diagnosis of demonic possession than did any popular cultural

belief. Chapter Six offers a new reading of the problem of spectral evidence at Salem, Massachusetts. Through an analysis of the argument in terms of scholastic philosophy, it is obvious that the single most important change in attitudes about spiritual possession came with the acceptance of Neoplatonic thought and the subsequent abandonment of demonic possession as an option in diagnosing human behaviors.

In sum, my argument focuses on the human body as the staging ground for a theological concept of evil and moves through the writings of the early modern theorists. The speculations of the physicians of the body and the doctors of the spirit were both concerned with the unseen, the hidden interior of the body and the invisible realm of the spirits. Possessed individuals experienced the demons on a material level, with their own bodies. The changing focus of study during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows a growing importance for defining the insubstantial in the spirit while moving away from consideration of the substantial in the human body itself. The body becomes less and less important in and of itself and increasingly more important as an indicator of the presence of the spiritual world. The legal, medical, and theological assumptions and the point of intersection where the received theories meet the lived experience in the human body are the subject of this study.

I believe this study will offer a broader insight into the intellectual history of the early modern period and add another piece to the construction begun by such historians as Caroline Walker Bynam⁶⁴ in attempting to understand the history of the individual not only through the intellect but also through the physical body. By continually denying the aspect of human psyche that has need of and contact with the spiritual world, modern scholars have effectively ignored a major aspect of the past. Two things have happened. First, by labeling all unexplainable phenomenon as 'superstitious' these writers have reduced the world to the quantifiable. Second, in reducing the intellectual world to the realm of reason, the flesh and blood body was neglected in a way never before known. Then, by attempting to produce histories based on the new enlightened assumptions, reading backward in a Whig interpretation of history, they have produced a one sided and stilted version of the past. A history without bodies. The authors encountered here do not have that problem. They were aware of the human body and saw in it signs to the individual personalities. With Catrina Gaulteri and her "live eel" and with Abraham Mechelburg and his "very odd Stone," the human body was a clue to the spiritual state of the individual and of the community.

In terms of the history of the Reformation, this study proves that received theological beliefs may not permeate every aspect of a particular society. Whereas the Protestant reformers have been understood as having thoroughly redefined their theology in opposition to the Roman

⁶⁴Caroline Walker Bynam, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

Catholic stance, at least in one area, they did not. This oversight or failure led to some important cultural changes. Protestant involvement in the pursuit of witches might be partially attributed to this theological stance. The growing need for medical expertise in diagnosing abnormal behavior may have helped to further the advances in medicine. Concurrently, the development of anatomy and dissection could have been enhanced by the importance of obtaining proof of the proper diagnosis of demon possession. Finally, this is a study of intellectual and cultural history. By viewing the work of individuals who have been identified as important contributors to intellectual thought through the totality of their work, both the irrational as well as the rational, instead of only through the portions that contribute to twentieth-century concerns, we may be able to come closer to the past in all its guises. It is also a study of the importance of the use of the human body in determining the cultural beliefs of a society.

CHAPTER ONE ASSEMBLING A WORLD OF THE SPIRIT

When the thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries set out to discover a solution to the puzzle of demonic possession, they had access to a wealth of sources. These sources were their authority. Beginning with the Old Testament and continuing through the long and complicated history of Christian demonology and spiritual possession, this chapter will trace the intellectual heritage of the demonologists of early modern Europe. Almost all the writers began their works with a chapter or two outlining beliefs of the early authorities on demonology. They refer to Zoroastrian beliefs, classical Greek and Roman thinkers, Jewish, Christian and scholastic authors and consistently use these as their base. For this reason, it is important that the reader have an understanding of the intellectual heritage available to the demonologists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This intellectual heritage begins with the concept of the source of evil.

Evil and the World of Western Man

The problem of evil, theodicy,¹ and the roots of the concept of demonic possession in the west can be traced to two sources: the earliest of these was the Persian and Zoroastrian concept of the origin of good and evil from a single source; while the alternate and what became the predominant idea in Christianity developed from the Platonic understanding of evil as the absence of good. For Zoroaster, the basic fact of existence itself was the universal opposition of good and evil. Daily conflict both within man and within the universe were only individual incidents in the ongoing cosmic war. This war, according to the doctrine, was destined to end with the triumph of good and the cosmic destruction and fiery end to the forces of evil and the establishment of a new and perfect world order. This idea had a strong influence on Christian eschatology.

¹The word used today that encompasses the question of evil in the world, theodicy, was coined in 1720 by G.W. Leibniz in his *Essais de théodicée sur la bonté Dieu* as a response to Pierre Bayle's argument that the existence of evil is incompatible with the goodness of an omnipotent God. The etymology is based on the justification of God and is often known today by its synonym, Natural Theology. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed., F.L. Cross, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

But it was through the predominance of Augustinian thought and the rejection of the duality of the Persian Manichean doctrines that the Platonist ideal of divine unity prevailed. For Plato, truth, perfection, and even reality were the product of proper reasoning in man. God alone represented perfection and all else, by definition, carried varying quantities of imperfection. The corrupt, material aspects of life were obstacles to be reshaped, controlled, and finally overcome by the rational mind.

During the upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these two opposing doctrines mingled, intertwined, and eventually became so fused that it was difficult to distinguish them. Through the influence of the Neoplatonic schools of the Italian Renaissance and the Reformers rejection of the Roman Catholic traditions, the Zoroastrian dualism with the Devil and Christ as opposing forces were reasserted. Objective evil in the form of Satan and his demon minions again became a reality.

While the Christians were developing the belief in the Devil as an important tenet of their doctrine, the Jewish thinkers were retreating from a stance where there was an objectifiable evil. In Jewish teaching each individual harbors two antagonistic spirits: the good and the evil. The Jewish Devil was actually no more than a metaphor for the evil within each individual. Christianity developed a different concept. In the New Testament there is one God, God the Father, and Jesus Christ, His Son. There is also a second spiritual power, the adversary Satan, who is of primary importance to Christianity:

To deny the existence and central importance of the Devil in Christianity is to run counter to apostolic teaching and to the historical development of Christian doctrine. Since defining Christianity in terms other than these is literally meaningless, it is intellectually incoherent to argue for a Christianity that excludes the Devil. If the Devil does not exist, then Christianity has been dead wrong on a central point right from the beginning.²

In the question of the metaphysics of evil for the Christian Church it was the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) that fixed evil irrevocably into the doctrines of the Christian universe. When the Council asserted that it was through the fall of an angel that good became evil, the dogma of the actual occurrence of the event became fixed as a part of our Christian heritage. The origin and meaning of evil in the world has occupied philosophers of every world religion. In the West, the long history of the question begins in Indo-Iranian mythology well before the birth of Christianity. Like other religions, Christianity wrestled with the problem of evil and by the end of the fifth century had developed a system that served to hold the Devil at bay for nearly a thousand years. Then in the waning years of the fifteenth century, the hold of the Church loosened. Reformers of

²Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Satan. The Early Christian Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 25 - 29. Russell's four studies on the concept of Satan in western culture were the basis for much of the material in the early sections of this chapter. Direct quotes are footnoted.

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bypassed the traditional medieval Catholic doctrines and returned to the New Testament, to the early church fathers, to Saint Augustine of Hippo, and finally, through the authors chosen as sources, even to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Most of these sources contained remnants of the earliest images of evil. Many of the pre-Christian assumptions of evil show up in the work of Luther and become important to the understanding of early modern demonic possession.

There were some basic questions concerning the notion of evil. Was evil introduced into the world of man by God, by an agent of God, or by man himself? How does man control evil? How was it that Satan came to have so much power in Reformation Europe? Finally, what did men do to counteract and finally overcome the evil force that manifested itself in Europe and Puritan America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

There were four possible paradigms for looking at the problem of evil. The first was atheism, which as the Puritans defined it was the denial of the existence of any spiritual beings. The Puritans saw this denial as an anathema because of the necessity in Christianity for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The second possibility was to see both good and evil in a paradoxical way as two sides of the same principle, as do several of the eastern and early near-eastern religious systems. A third way of encountering the question, absolute dualism, was the belief that there were two independent powers of nearly equal strength who battled each other for control of the cosmos. This is the Gnostic/Manichean belief asserted by the Cathars of the European Middle Ages.

The fourth method of explanation was mitigated dualism³ which explained evil as having no existence in and of itself but as the absence of good. This was the position taken by Augustine and subsequently carried forward by the Roman Catholic Church. It was this last metaphysics of evil, the Augustinian view, that asserted that nothing in the God-created universe, the human community and all its institutions included, can be either evil or wholly depraved. Augustine used a somatic analogy to explain:

In the bodies of animals, disease and wounds mean nothing but the absence of health; for when a cure is effected, that does not mean that the evils which were present — namely, the diseases and wounds — go away from the body and dwell elsewhere: they altogether cease to exist; for the wound or disease is not a substance, but a defect in the fleshy substance — the flesh itself being a substance, and therefore something good, of which those evils — that is privations of the good which we call health — are accidents. Just in the same way, what are called vices in the soul are nothing but privations of natu-

³Mitigated dualism was a term coined by Jeffery Burton Russell in *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 187.

ral good. And when they are cured, they are not transferred elsewhere: when they cease to exist in the healthy soul, they cannot exist anywhere else.⁴

It was within this understanding of evil that the early church Fathers and the medieval theologians concerned themselves with the problem of Satan and the idea of sin. Whereas the human being was created in the image of God and since it was therefore impossible for that human being to exist unless there was a manifestation of good within, then while Satan may tempt this good individual to sin, it would only manifest itself in a twisted and tarnished person, not one who was depraved and damned. It was impossible to separate the doctrines of sin and salvation from the doctrines of demonology and Satan for they stood within a doctrinal continuum. This continuum was a hierarchical structure beginning at the earth with matter and ending in heaven with spiritual existence with ascending possibilities between. The road to salvation passed through the possibility of demonic possession for the unclean individual, moved to sin itself and the willful nature of all humans, to cleansing and rebirth through confession and absolution in the sacraments, continued to salvation, perfection, the beatific vision for all Christians, and finally to the possibility of the mystical marriage with the divine as a foretaste of the final end in heaven. In this vision of the life and salvation of the Christian, the demoniac and the saint complement each other. The experiences of each may manifest themselves identically through the body, but in the spiritual realm they are quite different indeed. One represented the suffering of the tainted, tarnished and isolated sinner as set against the ecstasy, purity, and mystical unity of the saint. The existence of demons in the world was part of the struggle with sin for all temptation and willfulness was the result of Satanic action. For this reason, the early writers and the medieval theologians appeared to take the Devil for granted.

Two aspects of Augustinian philosophy on evil, Satan, sin, and demons are important here: one, evil is always a result of the free choice of man; and two, God is in control and can mitigate free choice if He wishes. Even though He is not the author of evil, He has the power to control the means of producing evil.

It was the above continuum that the radical Reformers of the sixteenth century repudiated and upset. By denying the efficacy of the church in the mediation of evil in the sinner, they permitted the dualism that had been for so long the crux of the doctrinal battle fought by the Church to come again into the forefront of their theology. Evil became a force to be reckoned with. Satan and his demons arrived in the European world as the enemy of God and man. The absolute power of evil was alleviated by the understanding that God, the creator of all, held the reins of Satan and his demons. On occasion, God would allow the rope to lengthen and Satan would intrude far into the human realm.

⁴Saint Augustine, *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*, ed. Henry Paolucci (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1987), p. 11-12.

Two ideas that weigh heavily on the question of the source of evil in the world and the pervasive idea that the Devil was loose and free to harass man resurfaced in the Reformation period. The first was the re-emergence of the expectation of the millennium and the apocalyptic battle; and the second was the teaching of the radical Reformers against the sacramental church as the salvation of man. Although the second of these concepts was fundamental to the Reformation, the first can be traced to the very earliest of the speculations on evil in the West in Zoroaster and his predecessors.⁵

In the first century of the Christian era virtually everyone, pagan, Jew, Christian, and Gnostic, believed in the existence of spiritual beings that functioned as mediators, whether they were called demons, angels, or simply spirits.⁶ Belief in the existence of non-corporeal beings who peopled the concealed spaces of the earth, air and, water was almost universal until the eighteenth century. It was a minority who questioned the validity of the belief. The spiritual beings who inhabited this system were rational, intelligent, usually gendered, and they had their own likes and dislikes. In short, they often had recognizable personalities. Interaction between the divine world and the earthly world was carried on by these mediating beings. Sometimes they communicated at night through dreams; at other times they presented themselves during the day through the prophets; and finally, in the course of taking an active role in the happenings of the material world, there were times when the spirits would even assume a corporeal body that could serve as their abode.

The idea of using the human body to commune with a divine presence has existed as long as there have been shamans, priests, prophets. Many shamans enacted a ritual for the expressed purpose of calling the god into himself. In these circumstances the spiritually possessed individual served as a divine vessel through whom the god spoke or acted. The oracle at Delphi spoke through the priestess or pythoness. She induced the spirit of Apollo to possess her and he spoke through her in answering the questioners like Socrates when he journeyed to Delphi for the purpose of calling on the gods. The members of both the Dionysian cult and the cult of Cybele became possessed of the god or goddess during their sacred rituals. These possessions were expected, anxiously awaited, and welcomed by the participants. But the spontaneous infusion of one or several spirits who had separate personalities in their own right and who imposed these

⁵For the earliest myth of the birth of the dual nature of good and evil from which Zoroaster developed his dualist religion see Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, 2 volumes, translated by William R. Trask (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), II: 311 - 315.

⁶E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in the Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience From Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965, First Paperback Edition, 1990), p. 38.

personalities onto the possessed, seems to have been an invention of early Judaism and Christianity.

The nature of the possessing spirits and how they could affect the human body, their perceived role in the religious milieu, and the development of the doctrines that would influence ideas about them until the eighteenth century were essentially in place by the time of Augustine (354 - 430). Aquinas (1225 - 1274) added interpretations, especially regarding the abilities of angels, aided by the philosophy of Aristotle (384 - 322 B.C.E.), but for the most part, he was content to allow the concepts to remain unchanged. Thereafter no important changes were made even during the Reformation although the Protestants stressed one aspect of possession and the Roman Catholics stressed another. While the Protestants struggled to modify the Catholic demonology, all they managed to do was to insist on the primacy of scriptural authority. Although they frowned on extensive new speculation on the nature of demons, the received information was consumed and digested almost without criticism.

The early Christians developed three basic methods for challenging evil when encountering it in spiritual form: expulsion, renunciation, and repulsion.⁷ The first, expulsion, pertained to the realm of the body and was used when the spirit caused physical harm to the individual by either entering the body itself (possession) or by harassing the individual from outside the body (obsession). One who was under the power of evil, either by possession or obsession, was believed to be incapable of helping himself and required the intervention of another who possessed the power to command demons. Christians were believed to hold that power. Exorcism was the usual counter to bodily possession or obsession where a series of commands were designed in order to induce the demons to depart. The second defense against the evil demons, renunciation, pertained to the moral sphere. Voluntary allegiance to or repudiation of thoughts and actions offered by demons in contradiction to the will of God was believed to be concerned with the free will of the individual. Here it was the responsibility of the individual to counteract the temptation or to refrain from involvement in the first place. Finally, repulsion, although similar to renunciation, involved the use of spiritual aids against the advancement of evil. The Christian was to put on the armor of God "in order to stand against the wiles of the devil."⁸

The Classical Heritage

Western ideas concerning the spiritual inhabitants of the world are derived from the legacy of Greece and Rome. Since Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy played such an important role in the doctrines developed by Augustine and later by Aquinas, we must first examine the spiritual

⁷Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 20.

⁸Ephesians 6:10-18.

beings as seen by the classical thinkers if we are to understand the nature of the early modern spiritual world. We know the debt owed to this period because the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors refer to them again and again. The first century C.E. writers used the Greek and Roman constructs of the *daemon*, the *daimon*, and the *genius*, elaborated on the ideas, and produced a full blown Christian angelology and demonology out of this heritage.

The *daimon* was, for the Greeks, a supernatural spirit, usually associated with an individual as an attending spirit, later known as the guardian angel; the *daemon* was the messenger-spirit of a Greek divinity and as such was a mediator between the gods and men. *Genius*, on the other hand, requires a bit more explanation for its meaning changed considerably over the centuries.⁹

The god *Genius*, or the concept of the *genii* appeared in many forms throughout its long existence in the Greek and Roman worlds. Plautus mentioned belief in a *Genius* in the third century B.C.E. and there are almost continual references to him until the end of the fourth century C.E. when the worship of *Genius* along with a number of other pagan gods was condemned in the *Codex Theodosianus*. There is even evidence of earlier worship of a *genius*-like figure in the burial art extending back several centuries before Plautus.¹⁰

In the beginning, the Latin *Genius* was the begetting spirit of a family. The *paterfamilias* embodied the *Genius* first as the male head of the family. Later it came to be associated with any man, married or unmarried. It accompanied the man from birth and signified his life force, his energy, his vitality, and eventually even his personality. Women had no such personal god or guiding spirit. Through its exclusively male association, the idea was transferred to any "father" embodiment from the founding father of a city, to a god, to the leader of an institution, to the Emperor, to the State itself. This *genius* was finally deified and became the "personal god" of each man and as such was worshipped and celebrated on the individual's birthday as his own personal guardian of life and fortune. As time went on, the image of the figure extended to the role of birth god and became associated with the birth star and the horoscope.

This "genius" or life-energy was believed to depend on the life-fluid that circulated throughout the body that was called the "sucus." This fluid was connected to the sexual power of the man and therefore also to the "genius." The *sucus* needed nourishment in order to be kept healthy. It was believed that "to deny food or comfort to the *genius* is to defraud or cheat oneself"

⁹The discussion of the *genius* is from Jane Chance Nitzsche, *The Genius Figure in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) (hereafter cited as Nitzsche, *Genius*); see also *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas*, 5 vols., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), "Genius, Renaissance to 1770" by Georgio Tonelli, II: 293-97.

¹⁰Nitzsche, *Genius*, p. 7.

of the very stuff of life.¹¹ This idea became entwined with the Greek concept of the "soul" that was believed to come into existence at birth. Each man possessed a soul (genius or daimon) at birth that contained the generative potential of the individual. "The god Genius was born with each man, lived until his death, was celebrated upon his birthday, and controlled his personal fortune or destiny."¹²

The Greek daimon, the supernatural attending spirit, came to be associated with the internal rational soul. For it was the daimon, according to Plato in the *Timaeus*, that was capable of lifting man from the earth and toward the heavens.¹³ While the food for the Roman Genius was material food, the food for the Greek daimon was a devotion to learning and a striving toward wisdom. With the conquest of Greece, and the appropriation of Greek philosophy by the Romans, the two terms, "genius" and "daimon" became synonymous. By the beginning of the second century A.D. and throughout the period of development of Christian doctrines, the "genius" was relegated to the physical body and bound to the earth. It was human nature, materiality, concupiscence, and it was assigned the role of the evil demon with a corresponding relationship to astrology and the magic arts. In fact, Augustine speaks of the genius as the "rationalis animus." Here we see the beginnings of the demonization of a positive spiritual entity that fails to fit the necessary positions in the Christian world.

The necessity to further differentiate the spiritual world can be followed in the development of the individuality of the angels and demons of the spiritual world and seems to have begun with Plato as there was no known systematized demonology prior to his writings.¹⁴ Diotima, in discussion with Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*, defines the position and function of spirits:

To interpret and convey messages to the gods from men and from men to the gods, prayers and sacrifices from the one and commands and rewards from the other. Being of an intermediate nature, a spirit bridges the gap between them, and prevents the universe from falling into two separate halves. Through this class of being come all divination and the supernatural skill of priests in sacrifices and rites and spells and every kind of magic and wizardry. God does not deal directly with man; it is by means of spirits that all the intercourse and communication of gods with men, both in waking life and in sleep, is carried on. A man who possesses skill in such matters is a spiritual man, whereas a man

¹¹Nitzsche, *Genius*, p. 11.

¹²Nitzsche, *Genius*, p. 15.

¹³Plato, *Timaeus* 89E - 90A.

¹⁴J. Den Boeft in his commentary in *Calcidius on Demons*, Volume XXXIII of the *Philosophia Antiqua: A Series of Monographs on Ancient Philosophy*, Edited by W. J. Verdenius and J. C. M. Van Winden (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), p.2.

whose skill is confined to some trade or handicraft is an earthly creature. Spirits are many in number and of many kinds. . . .¹⁵

The Christian angel and demon both grow out of the classical concepts of the daemones. There were two classes of daemones: "the fortunate or messenger daemon who carries good news from the gods to man; and the careless or idle daemon who is the executioner of the gods and delivers bad news from the gods to man."¹⁶ Already by the fourth century B.C. we can discern the beginnings of classifications.

Plutarch's student Apuleius describes Socrates' genius, his daimon, as a "private patron and individual guide, an observer of what takes place in the inner person, guardian of one's welfare, he who knows one most intimately . . . one's individual judge, irrefutable and inescapable witness, who frowns on evil and exalts what is good. If one seeks ardently to know him . . . and honors him religiously," then this spirit will demonstrate an ability "to see to the bottom of uncertain situations, can protect us in dangerous situations, and can come to our rescue when we are in need." Through dreams or signs, as in a mystical experience, or even by appearing personally in order "to fend off evil, to reinforce the good, to lift up the soul in defeat, to steady our inconstancy, to lighten our darkness, to direct what is favorable toward us and to compensate what is evil," the daimon would intervene in life. This was a personal indwelling spirit concerned with the personal welfare of the individual.¹⁷

With Christianization came a new ordering of the spiritual world. The aspect of the daemon that was the messenger of the gods was assimilated as the idea of the angels; the dynamic, lustful, and vital qualities of the genius were attributed to the Devil and his minions; and the aspect of individuality as seen particularly described by Apuleius above, the guardian and intercessor, continued in Christianity as the equivalent to the image of the guardian angel or the patron saint. Yet the names remained. Throughout the literature of the theologians and the demonologists in the West, the spiritual entities of the Classical world and the Jewish Diaspora have survived even though their tasks and relationships may have altered to accommodate the Christian beliefs.¹⁸

¹⁵Plato, *Symposium*, 202d, pg. 81, (Penguin, Hamilton trans.). See also Jeffrey Burton Russell, *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 44 - 47.

¹⁶Nietzsche, *Genius*, p. 38.

¹⁷Apuleius, *De Deo Socratis*, Chapt. 16.

¹⁸Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1941), p. 174.

Early Christian Developments

The Christian Church has never questioned the existence of the spiritual world. While the official doctrine of the Church on the subject of angelology and demonology remained broad and non-committal, all of the major thinkers expressed theories on the subject. A brief look at the statements of the Church concerning the existence of the spiritual world may help to clarify the Christian teachings. The Creed of the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E. declared that God was the "maker of all things visible and invisible" as opposed to some earlier creeds that said "maker of heaven and earth." Then in 447 C.E., Pope Leo wrote that it was heretical to claim "that the devil was never good and that his nature was not of God's making but that he arose out of chaos and darkness For according to the true faith the substance of all things spiritual and corporeal is good, and nothing is evil by nature; for God, the creator of the universe, made nothing that was not good." This doctrine was upheld again in the battle against the Albigensians and the Cathars through the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Out of this council came the statement that God is "creator of all things visible and invisible, spiritual and corporeal; who by his almighty power, together at the beginning of time, formed out of nothing the spiritual creature, that is the angelic and the terrestrial: and then the human creature, composed of both spirit and body. For Satan and the other devils were created by God, and created good in nature; it is of themselves they have become evil."¹⁹

The New Testament makes continual reference to the demons and yet says nothing as to their attributes or their nature. That was left open to the imagination and the early church Fathers took hold of the scriptural suggestions. As the Messianic ideas grew throughout the Mediterranean so too did the elaborate doctrine of the great demon-Prince and his whole hierarchy of evil spirits. As the Kingdom of God took shape so too did the opposing kingdom of Satan. During the first three centuries, the conflicts with the dualistic Gnostic sects and their philosophical speculations on the nature of evil exerted no slight influence on the emerging faith of Christianity. "The warfare of paganism against Christianity became the warfare of Satan against Christ. Satan became essentially the prince of this world"²⁰

Developing Christian belief looked to other sources besides the classical texts discussed above, for inspiration on the subject of angeology and demonology. One important one was the Judaic tradition. During the last two centuries B.C.E., the literature of Judaism included a

¹⁹Kenelm Foster in his notes to the *Summa Theologica*, 60 volumes (London:Blackfriars in conjunction with McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), Vol. 9, p. 303.

²⁰William Henry Hudson, *The Satan of Theology and How We Came By Him* (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1891), p. 22.

number of apocalyptic works, among which was the *Book of Enoch*.²¹ Two aspects of the *Book of Enoch* account for its importance to the demonologists: first it has a detailed demonology; and second it is based on Genesis 6: 1 - 4 rather than on non-scriptural material. The *Book of Enoch* placed the origin of demons with the Sons of God and their lustful behavior with the daughters of men. The *Book of Enoch* is cited by nearly all the early modern authors especially when discussing the demon's lustful behavior.

A second important source for these authors was *The Shepherd* by Hermas. Hermas, in the second century, clearly defined the difference between the influence of the good and bad spirits. In the second book of *The Shepherd*, known as the "Commandments," Hermas gives as the Sixth Commandment: "How to recognize the two spirits attendant on each man, and how to distinguish the suggestions of the one from those of the other." In Chapter II of this section he continues to explain that there "are two angels with a man—one of righteousness and the other of iniquity." Whereas "both angels dwell with" the individual, he must learn to understand them.

The angel of righteousness is gentle and modest, meek and peaceful. When, therefore, he ascends into your heart, forthwith he talks to you of righteousness, purity, chastity, contentment, and of every righteous deed and glorious virtue. When all these ascend into your heart, know that the angel of righteousness is with you. . . . Look now at the works of the angel of iniquity. First, he is wrathful, and bitter, and foolish, and his works are evil, and ruin the servants of God. When, then, he ascends into your heart, know him by his works. . . . When anger comes upon you, know that he is in you; . . . and when you are attacked by a longing after many transactions, and the richest delicacies, and drunken revels, and divers [sic.] luxuries, and things improper, and by hankering after women, and by overreaching, and pride, and blustering, and by whatever is like these. When these ascend into your heart, know that the angel of iniquity is in you.²²

While the earliest of the Church Fathers, all acquainted with the angelology and demonology of both the Scriptures and the Jewish literature, affirm the existence of both good and bad spirits, it was the 'North-African School,' the Fathers of both Carthage and Alexandria, who were the most articulate on the notion of spiritual beings and their place in the Christian Church. Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine all contributed extensive commentary on the functions of angels and demons.²³ These writers agreed that devils were angels, and as such they were non-

²¹The *Book of Enoch* is a composite work, usually broken into four parts that contain revelations, divine secrets, prophecy, and information about creation. *Enoch* was favorite reading for the early Christians and Tertullian regarded it as scripture although he admitted that he knew some who did not. Tertullian devoted a whole chapter in *On the Apparel of Women* to proving the genuineness of 'The Prophecy of Enoch.' Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*, Book I, Chapt. III.

²²Hermas, *The Shepherd*, Book II, Commandment Sixth, Chap. 2.

²³The material for the discussion of the development of Christian angelology and demonology comes from a number of sources: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, "Demons and Spirits;" Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels Including the Fallen Angels* (New York: The

corporeal beings possessing a reasoning mind and free will. Just like the angels, they were gifted with quick and penetrating intellects and great will power. They had special capacities of comprehension and understanding in that they grasped concepts from the inside out. They understood intuitively, in the very inner core, within the very nature of things.²⁴

Origen (185 - 254) , perhaps following Hermas' lead, also proclaimed the existence of good and bad angels who may incite in us either good or evil actions. It is our own free will that may counteract suggestions from either. He also cited the *Book of Tobit* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* as sources in this discussion.²⁵ The idea of a guardian demon can also be seen later in the work of Peter Lombard and Francis Suarez.²⁶ Origen contended that God placed guardian angels over nations, but that He guarded Israel Himself. The power of these guardian angels was broken by the coming of Christ.²⁷ Origen explained that those angels displaced by Jesus were moved to

Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 1967, First Paperback Edition, 1971); *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*;

²⁴ Not all spirits as demons were bad even as late as the high middle ages. "A demon carried the knight Everhard on his back to various countries, including the Holy Land, and returned him home unharmed. Another demon, through the mouth of a possessed man, warned paupers about to attend a feast given by a rich man not to touch the food, since the dishes were prepared from the meat of calves five generations removed from a stolen cow. A unique scrupulousness, worthy not only of a demon! Demons can render people other services as well. A demon possessing a man was able to disclose all the unconfessed sins of those present." Gurevich, *Popular*, p. 191.

²⁵ Origen, *De Principiis*, III, 2, 4. The *Book of Tobit* is an influential source in the development of demonology. It is part of the apocryphal literature that is traditionally included in the Old Testament of the Latin Vulgate but is not part of the Hebrew Bible. Tobit is the story of a father, his son Tobias, and his son's future wife, Sarah. Sarah has been plagued for years by a demon who wishes to consummate his lust with her. The demon is identified as Asmodeus. Seven times Sarah has married and seven times the lustful demon has murdered her husband before the marriage can be consummated. Tobit's son Tobias becomes betrothed to Sarah. Tobit is convinced he will lose his son to the demon, yet God decides to step in and save the couple from further hardship. Before the wedding, Tobias must travel to a distant city in order to obtain a sum of money deposited there by Tobit. He wishes for a traveling companion and one appears precisely when needed. This companion is none other than the Archangel Raphael, sent by God to act as a guardian angel for Tobias. All ends happily when Raphael gives the couple a magical ritual that will rid them of the demon lover forever.

This motif of the demon lover was widespread and closely parallels the story of the watchers in the *Book of Enoch*, angelic beings who come to earth and mate with human women (1 Enoch 6 - 11). This story provides Scriptural authority not only for the guardian angel story and exorcism rituals, but especially for the Incubus/Succubus beliefs found to be so prevalent in the later middle ages and the early modern period.

²⁶ According to Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology and Witchcraft. The Development of Christian Beliefs in Evil Spirits* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 104.

²⁷ Origen tells the story of a woman who had known the Hebrew tale of a certain angel who had power over children until their blood was shed. Thus, after the circumcision of her son, she is assured that the angel has no more power over him. Origen, commenting on this belief, says: "For this angel might have had power, I think, over those people who were not circumcised . . . and this power lasted so long as Jesus had not assumed a human body. But

anger and in turn stirred up persecution among the preachers of the gospel. Origen also took literally the *Angels of the Churches* discussed in Revelation²⁸ and he echoed the Roman idea that each individual also received a guardian angel who was entrusted with the soul of the believer at the time of baptism. This angel "lawfully dwells along with the soul which is worthy of the guardianship of a divine angel."²⁹

Origen explained a number of finer points in the understanding of demons. "Blood," he said, "especially the odour arising from blood, is said to be the food of demons."³⁰ Tertullian agreed saying that while demons may "disclaim being unclean spirits, it can be easily proven otherwise by their relish for the blood and fumes and fetid carcasses of sacrificial animals. . . ."³¹

Origen denied the beneficial aspects of demons in his refutation of Celsus claim that human beings may not drink, breathe, nor even eat without being in the company of demons as they are present in all nature. By being present in all nature they act as the guardians for man. Yet whereas Celsus deemed the spirits beneficial Origen denied this possibility and countered with:

. . . we would say that if demons have any share at all in these things, to them belong famine, blasting of vine and fruit trees, pestilence among men and beasts; all these are the proper occupations of demons, who in the capacity of public executioners receive power at certain times to carry out divine judgments, for the restoration of those who have plunged into wickedness, or for the trial and discipline of the souls of the wise.³²

Origen, in this statement showed his indebtedness to the ideas expressed by the Greeks and quoted above when discussing the two types of spirits and their roles and functions. Origen continued:

We do not, then, deny that there are many demons upon the earth, but we maintain that they exist and exercise power among the wicked, as a punishment of their wickedness. But they have no power over those who "have put on the whole armour of God," who have received strength to "withstand the wiles of the devil," and who are ever engaged in contests with them, knowing the "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."³³

when He had done this, and had undergone the rite of circumcision in His own person, all the power of the angels over those who practice the same worship, but are not circumcised, was abolished. . . ."Origen, *Contra Celsus*, V, 48.

²⁸Angels of the Churches can be found in Revelation 2:1, Ephesus; 2:8, Smyrna; 2:12, Pergamum; 2:18, Thyatira; 3:1, Sardis; 3:7, Philadelphia; 3:14, Laodicea.

²⁹Origen, *Commentary on Matthew*, XIV, 21.

³⁰Origen, *Contra Celsus*, VIII, 30.

³¹Tertullian, *Apology*, Chap. XXIII.

³²Origen, *Contra Celsus*, VIII, 31.

³³Origen, *Contra Celsus*, VIII, 34.

The understanding of the relative cosmological positions of humans and spiritual beings became a source for the spiritual hierarchical system in early modern Europe. Diotima explained in the *Symposium*, spirits dwell on the middle between men and gods. Accordingly Augustine quoted Plato and Ephesians 2:2, "the gods have their abode in heaven; mankind lives on earth; demons dwell in the air."³⁴ The hierarchical position dictated the rationality of the beings. Thus, while demons had immortality like the gods, being closer to earth, they possessed the passions of mankind. In having such passions, they did not correspondingly possess the *goodness and integrity* by which humanity shows superiority to demons. Demons could participate in the most demeaning and obscene aspects of life on earth yet were incapable, according to Augustine, of even the most rudimentary moral reasoning. For Augustine, Plato's discussion of the daimon of Socrates as a god was beyond all possibility.³⁵ While Augustine agreed that there were levels of demonic authority, he was unable to admit the existence of more than one God and Plato had posited that all daimons were gods. As to the order of the angelic hierarchy and the powers designated to the various levels, Augustine claimed ignorance. He also maintained that "they do not require worship for they have no wish that we honor them as our gods." For it is 'the holy angels who have invited us into the society of the Holy City . . . they feel no jealousy toward us — but rather they extend their love to us . . . and desire that we should join them in the worship of their God and ours.'³⁶

It was Augustine who established the importance of the angels to Christianity since according to him they formed the initial heavenly City of God³⁷ and it was this division of the Holy City which assisted the members of the Church here below. It is the good angels who deliver God's messages to man on earth; for "God often acts through the medium of his angels . . . and he sends

³⁴Augustine, *City of God*, Book VIII, Chapter 14.

³⁵The most complete discussion of the demons of Socrates in existence was Apuleius' *De deo Socratis* and, it was the only Middle-Platonic monograph available. Augustine paid ample tribute to it. Boeft, p. 5. Of the Neo-Platonists, Plotinus did not take a special interest in demonology although there are references to demons throughout much of his work and Porphyry, his pupil, was especially interested in demonology according to Eusebius, but none of his work survives.

³⁶Augustine, *City of God*, X, 25.

³⁷While it was the angels who first peopled the City of God, later saints and holy men would be included (*City of God*, XIV, 28). Augustine later argued, based on the Book of Enoch, that the Sons of God who had intercourse with the Daughters of Men and "begot children for themselves" were the 'fallen angels.' However, before they had fallen in this way, as angels of God they "had begot children for God" in order to produce citizens for the City of God (*City of God*, XV, 23).

angels to men for various purposes"³⁸ Augustine also affirmed that the angels have been entrusted with the care of the material world, yet nowhere did Augustine assign guardian angels to individuals.³⁹ Augustine defined the angels and their mental ability as consisting of incorporeal substance that was invisible and yet sensible, rational, intellectual, and immortal.⁴⁰ According to Augustine, the position of the evil angels stems from the fall of Satan that occurred at the very beginning of creation. Their office is to deceive men and bring them to perdition, but their power is limited and "the evil will that refused to keep the order of its nature . . . does not escape the laws of God who orders all things well."⁴¹

The 'North African School' having established the theological importance of angels, it was a Syrian author, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite (c. 500 C.E.) who definitively elaborated on the subject of the hierarchy of the spiritual world. Known as a mystical theologian, he produced a series of writings, that aimed at achieving a synthesis between Neo-Platonic thought and Christian dogma.⁴² His *Celestial Hierarchy*, the detailed classification, organization, and description of the spiritual realm should probably be regarded as the basis for all the subsequent speculation in the West. The Reformers of the sixteenth century contested the authenticity of his work on mysticism, but there was no mention made of the *Celestial Hierarchy*.⁴³ Working obviously from the

³⁸Augustine, *City of God*, VII, 30.

³⁹Cassian, however, does attribute the choice between good and evil angelic counselors to man's free will (*Collat.* viii, 17) while Origen further developed the notion of the guardian angel.

⁴⁰A definition of an angel at the end of the eighth century might serve to summarize the development of the idea of angels: "An angel . . . is an intellectual substance, always mobile, endowed with free will, incorporeal, serving God, having received, according to grace, immortality in its nature, the form and character of whose substance God alone, who created it, knows." (John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa*, II, 3.) Both Peter Lombard and St. Thomas Aquinas invoked his authority.

Very little changed in the nine hundred years that intervened between John of Damascus and the early modern period. Compare the above quote with the description of angels from an author of the seventeenth century: "The angels are intellectual and free substances in their will and no corporeal capability of glory and immortality through grace and not through nature." (Bavent, p. 4.)

⁴¹Augustine, *City of God*, XI, 23.

⁴²Although not of importance here, Pseudo-Dionysus' most influential work was probably his *Mystical Theology* which describes 'the ascent of the soul to union with God.' It describes a three step ascent: purgation, illumination, and union, that became the groundwork for most subsequent treatises on the mystical life.

⁴³Davidson, in *The Dictionary of Angels*, claimed that "Calvin summarily dismissed it as 'the vain babblings of idle men,'" (p. xxiii). He does not, however, offer a source for his assertion.

Book of Enoch, Dionysius ranks the celestial dwellers in three orders of three divisions.⁴⁴ The ranking was a hierarchy of illumination with the highest rank nearest to God and the lowest rung nearest to man. Members of each triad were in equality with each other, but each of the lower triads depended on the one above for interpretation of God's word.

This question of the existence and ranking of spirits, linked to the world of ideas, was to become by the end of the seventeenth century one basis for the differences between the Neoplatonists and the scholastic philosophers. For the scholastic philosophers, as was demonstrated by Thomas Aquinas, demons, as fallen angels, could assume material form; for the Neoplatonic thinkers, Plato had argued that the world existed of a hierarchy of ideas, arranged so that at the uppermost point was the *Idea of the Good* and that it was these ideas that contained reality. Aristotle resisted this explanation and asserted that an idea did not have reality in its own right but only through the matter in which a form manifested its existence. The conjunction of form and matter was explained by Aristotle using what he called four causes: "material cause" or the matter upon which the form is imposed; "formal cause" or the conjunction of the form and matter which makes up the new entity; "final cause" or the end which is determined by the process of growth; "efficient cause" or the motive power which produced the change in the first place. In pure Aristotelian thought then, angels and demons, non-material beings, cannot exist. However, in the hands of Thomas Aquinas and using the Aristotelian system of form and matter, it was matter that gave form its individuality. Although all individuals of any given species had the same form, the matter of which they were composed gave to each a particular individuality. Angels, including the fallen ones, had no corporeality and therefore no matter to give them individuality. Aquinas reasoned then that each angel was a separate species. The Questions of the *Summa Theologica* concerning angels, the Thomistic angelology, are most important for our study here. For it was this concept of fallen angels, demons, that dominated the intellectual thought on the subject throughout the early modern period.

The theological argument of the capabilities of demons rested on the accepted definitions of what was natural. If an action could be shown to be caused by nature it was therefore not a question of supernatural intervention. On the other hand, if the supposed natural causes seemed of too great a power, the Church as well as scholastic thinkers were all too ready to condemn the phenomena as supernatural. The Church allowed that there were only two forces which could produce a supernatural effect: God and the Devil. If then the Church had not sanctioned the act as having been performed by the hand of God, it must then be considered the Devil's work. In fact, it was the "Aristotelians rather than the Neo-Platonists who encouraged concern with

⁴⁴Thomas Aquinas used the *Celestial Hierarchy* as the basis for his argument on angels throughout the *Summa Theologica* and especially on Questions 108, The Array of Angels and 112, The Angels' Mission.

witchcraft, and it was Aristotelians who elaborated the specific notion of diabolism.⁴⁵ If the Aristotelianism of the medieval schools was unwilling to recognize magic as an independent reality, then it had to interpret it in religious terms.⁴⁶

The argument of what constituted a natural phenomenon hinged on the definition of a miracle. "To work miracles was a gift of freely given grace" but they could be performed "by bad men and bad spirits"⁴⁷ as well as good men and good spirits up to the limit of the powers which the individuals possessed. Miracles performed by good men or good spirits could be distinguished from those performed by the bad in three ways. The first was that the signs given to the good by Divine power, such as raising the dead, were accomplished in truth, not through the illusion that was the resort of the devils. The second characteristic of the miracles performed by the good was that they were of "a useful nature, as healing sickness and such things," rather than miracles done by the malicious which were of a "harmful and idle nature," such as "benumbing the limbs of men." The third method of discerning the good miracle from the bad related to faith because "the miracles of the good are [were] ordained for the edification of the Faith and of good living; whereas the miracles of the wicked are [were] manifestly detrimental to the Faith and to righteousness."⁴⁸

Returning to the early centuries, Augustine was a thoroughgoing Platonist in a number of ways. The first was in his explanation of the rationality of demons. "Demons," he said, "are at the mercy of passions." Following Apuleius in characterizing them as being "tossed about on the stormy waters of their imaginations, subject, like men, to such agitation of the heart and turmoil in the mind," Augustine explained that it was the mind that was affected in these demons, "the faculty that makes them rational beings, the where virtue and wisdom . . . exercises mastery over the turbulent passions of the lower parts of the soul."

The soul for Augustine was divided into two parts; the higher part, the mind, "the superior part of the soul," was what made the demon rational and it had the faculty that directed and controlled the lower parts of the soul; the lower aspect of the soul, the passions, was the seat "of desire, of fear, of anger, and the rest." In demons, the mind then, being *tossed on the stormy waters of imagination*, was no longer "capable of wisdom" or "of offering any example of morality" since it was "subdued under the oppressive tyranny of vicious passions, and employs for seduction and

⁴⁵Kieckhefer, p. 79. See H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London, 1967), pp. 123, 132, 184. Cf. also Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 255, 268.

⁴⁶ Kieckhefer, p. 80.

⁴⁷Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 1, Chapt. 9.

⁴⁸Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 1, Chapt. 9.

deception all the rational power that it has by nature. . . ."⁴⁹ The devils were then the supreme liars and the authors of sexual temptations and due to their very nature they were incapable of behaving otherwise. They also, through creating a similar circumstance in the bodies of those possessed by them, could be identified in the irrational behavior of the demoniac. This discussion of the passions as the expression of the demonic personality would then exclude the angels and in fact God himself, from feeling such emotions. Augustine commented that these passions "offer training in virtue, not an inducement to sin."⁵⁰

For Augustine, the gift of divine grace was the only path through which man had the use of free will. Without divine grace, there was an emptiness, a void, which left one open for possession by the devil. Therefore the individual, without grace and consequently without free will, had no defense against the onslaught of the Devil. Luther certainly saw this problem and drew from it his doctrine of the Antichrist as ruler of this world and the lack of participation possible by the ordinary man. This led to the notion that anyone who was lacking in divine grace could be overtaken by evil. On the other hand, it easily became Manichean in that divine grace was the gift through which the individual was saved from the clutches of the Devil. It was an either/or situation; a duality.

And this human race as Augustine presents it in his works against Julian (Julian of Eclanum),⁵¹ it is very like the invaded universe of Mani. Augustine had always believed in the vast power of the Devil: God has shown his omnipotence most clearly in restraining this superhuman creature, whose aggressive force was so great that he would obliterate the whole Christian Church if released. Now this Devil will cast his shadow over mankind: the human race is the Devil's fruit tree, his own property, from which he may pick his fruit, it is a plaything of demons. This is evil, thought of much as the Manichees had done, as a persecutory force. The demons may now have been enrolled as the unwitting agents of a superior justice: but it is they who are seen as active, and man is merely passive. Small babies are exposed to invasion by them in the form of fits, and men in general, to every imaginable temptation, disease and natural catastrophe.⁵²

Devils were known by all the writers as fallen angels, originally created good and equal to the rest of the other members of the celestial hierarchy. Angels fell from every order of the hierarchy, therefore, there existed a hierarchy of fallen angels as well as unfallen angels. However, a "rebellious and sinful spirit of life is subject to an obedient, pious and just spirit in life. Those creatures which are more perfect and nearer to God have authority over the others . . . therefore

⁴⁹Augustine, *City of God*, IX, 6.

⁵⁰Augustine, *City of God*, IX, 5.

⁵¹Julian of Eclanum was a disciple of Pelagius. Brown says: "In writing against Julian, Augustine found himself agreeing wholeheartedly with Mani (*Augustine of Hippo*, p. 394)."

⁵²Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 395.

the good angels who are nearest to God on account of their fruition in Him, which the devils lack, have preference over the devils and rule over them." Just as there were Angels charged with delivering divine punishments upon mankind, devils may be dispatched to cause "certain evil to be done . . . for the sake of the good that [God] draws therefrom."⁵³

Biblical Authority

Of all the sources available to the demonologists of early modern Europe, the Bible became the most important. It was on the words from these Scriptures that the later commentators, theologians, and apologists, especially the Reformers, depended for their authority. The theologians looked to the Old Testament for justification in the arguments concerning spirits, sorcery, and witches and to the New Testament for the most fundamental procedures in discerning and exorcising demons. Two important aspects of the 'science of the demonic' were based in the New Testament: the justification for the relationship between the theologian and the physician and the procedures for the Christian exorcising of possessing demons.

Theologian and Physician

Physicians could find little justification in the Old Testament for their calling. The Israelites were distinct from their neighbors in Egypt and Babylon in their attitude toward medicine. Egyptian and Babylonian physicians were highly regarded members of society who were capable of healing through a mixture of exorcism and magic, since disease was widely believed to be caused by evil spirits. To the Israelites, health was a divine blessing and illness was a symptom of a breach in the relationship with God. Only God gave health and only God could cure sickness.⁵⁴ Physicians were seldom recognized because there was little reason to search for the physical causes of disease and no place for medical skills.⁵⁵

Yet, in the New Testament, Jesus himself became the model for the physician/theologian paradigm. The perceived relationship in the realm of demonic possession stemmed in part from the dual role of Jesus as exorcist and healer. Jesus was careful to differentiate between illness and possession when He himself performed either exorcism or healing. "He healed many who were

⁵³Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, p. 28-9.

⁵⁴Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle & Magic in New Testament Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, first paperback edition, 1988). See Leviticus 26:14 - 16, Deuteronomy 7:12 - 15, and 2 Samuel 12:15 for examples of God's promise to send illness for transgressions and health for observance of His laws.

⁵⁵Indications of biblical attitudes toward medicine may be found in 2 Chronicles 16:12 where seeking help of a physician causes death by God's hand, or in Luke 4:23 ("Physician, heal thyself") among others.

sick with diverse diseases and cast out many devils."⁵⁶ Several of the possessed and the sick manifested the same symptoms as many of the deaf mute and blind cases Jesus saw. One deaf mute was cured by Jesus when he took him aside, "and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue . . . looking up to heaven . . ." he said, "Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed."⁵⁷ This affliction was clearly not diagnosed by Jesus as demonic possession. But in another incident, the father of a deaf and dumb boy begged Jesus to heal his son. Jesus "rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him . . ."⁵⁸ The same maladies obviously had two or more causes and these causes could be discerned by Jesus. In every case of demonic possession the individual manifested physical or emotional signs that could have been diagnosed as either illness or as a possessing spirit. Such symptoms as blindness, muteness, deafness, epilepsy, paralysis, or uncontrolled violence could have been caused by physical illness as well as by unclean spirits. Jesus ability to discern the causes of the deviant behavior and to either exorcise or heal the afflicted was later identified as a particular mark of the true Christian.

Jesus defined the later powers of the Christian when he sent his disciples out into the world to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils . . ."⁵⁹ Throughout His teachings, Jesus separated the healing acts into categories, differentiating spiritual maladies from bodily illnesses. When He explained what believers could expect in the future He said: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."⁶⁰ Again Jesus made a clear distinction between the casting out of demons and the identification of sickness. Even after exorcism, if the emptiness of the individual was not filled with righteousness, the demons would return.⁶¹

⁵⁶Mark 1:34. However, there was also an understanding that mental illness or 'fits' could be caused by the moon as in Matthew 4:24 where the word translated 'epileptic' literally means 'moonstruck.' In that same verse there is a differentiation between the demoniac and the epileptic, or the mentally ill.

⁵⁷Mark 7:33-35.

⁵⁸Mark 9:25.

⁵⁹Matthew 10:8.

⁶⁰Mark 16:17-18.

⁶¹Matthew 12:43-45. "When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse then the first."

Although Jesus was the model for the relationship between exorcism and medical diagnosis, there was no mention of healing techniques in the New Testament. The extensive medical tradition of the first century and the work of such physicians as Galen went unused by the Jewish community and the early Christians. There is no hint of diagnosis, prescription, or even magical formula in the healing stories of Jesus.⁶²

Christian Exorcism

There is little discussion of demonic possession in the Old Testament.⁶³ It would seem that the major reason for this was that the Old Testament had little to do with the kind of individualism discussed above. Spirits, angels, and Satan were discussed in terms of the existence of the spiritual hierarchy. Even King Saul's contact with the evil spirit was discussed but bodily possession was not. "And on the morrow an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved about the house, while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear, for he thought, 'I will pin David to the wall.' But David evaded him twice. Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul."⁶⁴ Whole nations might be given over to Satan, but except for Job, who was not possessed, individuals so affected seldom rated any particular notice.

Christianity, however, is a religion of the individual. The Christian converts to the religion individually, is baptized individually, sins individually, repents individually, receives salvation individually, is judged on his individual deeds, and is individually resurrected from the dead on judgment day. Finally, it was the individual personality who is predestined, saved, and raised bodily from the dead, with all the necessary personal distinguishing characteristics.⁶⁵ The identification of the individual became an important aspect of Christian thought with the work of Saint Augustine. While the Greek dictum, "know thyself," may have been a reflection of the advent of self-examination, "recognize thy fellow Christian" was the pronouncement of Augustine. In Augustinian thought, the memory and body of the individual were both aspects of the individual Christian experience. In discussing the body of the saved individual after the resurrection,

⁶²Howard Clark Kee, *Medicine, Miracle & Magic in New Testament Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, paperback edition, 1988), p. 79.

⁶³There are no cases in the Bible where a demon is sent into a human being through an agent of evil. The idea of a witch having that kind of control over demons came from other popular sources.

⁶⁴1 Samuel 18:10-12 (RSV). Many of the writers use this incident from the Old Testament as proof of the existence of evil spirits.

⁶⁵Grew out of a discussion with Stephen Meuse.

Augustine explained that "it is part of the Creator's design that each [individual] should preserve his own peculiarities of feature, and retain a recognizable likeness to his former self" under most circumstances. Albeit the body would be a spiritual one. Only if there were defects in the body which would interfere with the perfect enjoyment of the kingdom God would there be changes made.⁶⁶ On the other hand, those who were lost would rise again, "each with his own body, . . . whether they would rise again with all their diseases and deformities of body, bringing with them the diseased and deformed limbs which they possessed here," Augustine felt that "it would be labor lost to inquire."⁶⁷

How much then did individuality have to do with the concept of possession? In all the biblical references to possession, the clue to demonic intervention was the change in the individual behavior and countenance of the possessed. Time and again in the cases of early modern possession, the observers wrote that the demoniac behaved "in an unseemly manner," "spoke in a voice not her own," or displayed "facial features hardly recognizable." The demons of the New Testament not only caused changes in the individual personality but also tended to inflict the demoniac with illness. Possession and disease caused by demons are encountered only in the synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. This may be attributed to the idea that afflictions were caused by sin and the free access of the devil to humans before the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁶⁸ Theologically speaking, faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus came to be understood as a shield against demonic intervention. Luther later used this argument in his understanding of the relationship between Satan and God.⁶⁹

The term "possession" does not appear as such in the New Testament. A possessed person was known in the early Christian church of the first centuries as an *energumen* or one who is over-energized, uncontrollable. The word in Greek, *daimonizesthai*,⁷⁰ literally means "you have an unclean spirit" or "you have a demon" or it may combine the two as "a man with the spirit of an unclean demon." Mark twice refers to "a man with an unclean spirit." The incident from Mark 5

⁶⁶Augustine, *Enchiridion*, p. 104.

⁶⁷Augustine, *Enchiridion*, p. 106-107. These lost souls would be resurrected in a material body so that the devil and his angels could punish it.

⁶⁸A doctrine of "sin demons" had developed among a number of Jewish sects during the period and although this is not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures, it was more than likely one of the sources of later Christian demonology. Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism, Ritual Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), Chapter 3, "Sin Demons and Their Removal," pp. 45 - 56.

⁶⁹See Chapter Three.

⁷⁰Adolph Rodewyk, *Possessed By Satan*, trans. Martin Ebon (New York: Doubleday Publishing, 1975), pg. 24.

most often cited by later writers is the story of the possessed man who was reduced to living among the tombs.⁷¹ Besides this story where six of the above references to unclean spirits occur, there are several other instances in the New Testament:

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two by two; and gave them power over *unclean spirits*.⁷²

And they were all amazed insomuch as they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the *unclean spirits*, and they do obey him.⁷³

And *unclean spirits*, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried saying, Thou art the Son of God.⁷⁴

There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with *unclean spirits*: and they were healed every one.⁷⁵

For *unclean spirits*, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.⁷⁶

And I saw three *unclean spirits* like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.⁷⁷

The Gospel of John contains no stories of demonic possession or exorcism, but it does discuss the fact that Jesus was accused by his detractors of being possessed of unclean spirits.⁷⁸ The idea that possession was an accepted punishment for sin was further shown by the statement in John 13:27 that when Judas ate the morsel of bread offered by Jesus, "Satan entered into him . . ."

It was not only *unclean spirits* that were capable of possession in the Scriptures. In Acts 16:16 we read that "it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel *possessed with a spirit of divination* met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying . . ." Or in Mark 9:25-26,

⁷¹In this story, the people told Jesus that there was no way to control this demoniac. He had been bound with chains and fetters "yet the chains he had wretched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces." The man was always "crying out and bruising himself with stones." Jesus engaged in conversation with the demon who claimed: "My name is Legion; for we are many." The demons, however, begged that Jesus not "send them out into the country" but into a herd of swine they saw nearby. Jesus agreed and the two thousand head of swine plunged themselves into the sea and were drowned.

⁷²Mark 6:7 and Matthew 10:1. (italics mine)

⁷³Mark 1:27 and Luke 4:36.

⁷⁴Mark 3:11.

⁷⁵Acts of the Apostles 5:16.

⁷⁶Acts of the Apostles 8:7.

⁷⁷Revelation 16:13.

⁷⁸See John 7:20; 8:48; 8:52.

where Jesus "rebuked the *foul spirit*, saying unto him, Thou *deaf and dumb spirit*, I charge thee, come out of him . . . And the spirit cried, and rent him sore and came out of him."

The demons who were cast out of those first followers of Jesus had distinct and individual personalities with distinct and individual talents. In the earlier books of the New Testament, they have names such as Belial, Beelzebub, Satan, the Old Serpent, Rehab, and the Great Dragon, Leviathan. These names were not thought of as synonymous then as was later believed. An elaborate demonology and accompanying rabbinical theories had saturated the Jewish world. The spirits were individuals. However, as the messianic message with Jesus as the Messiah developed, so too did a corresponding belief in His counterpart—the Adversary, Satan.⁷⁹ By the later books of the New Testament, Satan had taken on the attributes of his Persian prototype. "Thus the old dualism came out in a new form. Instead of Ormuzd and Ahriman . . . we have now Christ and his angels with the saints on earth, pitted against Satan and his host . . ." ⁸⁰ In returning to the ancient sources and Hebrew texts, the Neoplatonists of the seventeenth century revived the individual personalities of the demons.

During the Middle Ages, the image of Satan split. For the theologians who adhered to the Church Fathers, Satan remained the adversary. But for the great mass of the population, he took on the attributes of any number of the pagan gods and figures of folklore. Aquinas claimed he appeared with the features of an Ethiopian; from Pan he received his goat-like body, hoofs, horns, and tail; from Thor he received his red color and pitchfork. By the end of the fourteenth century, Satan, the great adversary, was reduced to the depths of degradation. He could be manipulated by any number of practitioners and magicians.

With the coming of the Reformation and the writings of Martin Luther, the answers to the question of Divine control of the Devil and the influence of the godly over the machinations of demons were altered. Luther saw the world of the early sixteenth century as standing on the brink of Armageddon. The battle was about to be joined. Perhaps it had already begun.

Medieval Contributions

In the early Christian Church, Aristotle's thought had been looked on as highly materialistic and was regarded by many of the early Church Fathers with suspicion. Plato had been more popular. In the twelfth century when the medieval scholars received Aristotle's teachings from Arabic translations, having been lost for many centuries, the works were expounded upon by two

⁷⁹William Henry Hudson, *The Satan of Theology* (Boston, American Unitarian Association, 1891), pp. 20 - 21; Albert Réville, *The Devil and his Origin, Greatness and Decadence* (London, Williams and Norgate, 1871), pp. 22 - 23;

⁸⁰Hudson, p. 23.

of the most competent of the medieval Christian scholars, Albertus Magnus and his student Thomas Aquinas. While not immediately accepted by the Church, the work nevertheless gave an Aristotelian basis to much of the theological thought prior to the Reformation as well as beyond. Pope Leo XIII ordered that all Roman Catholic clergy "take the teachings of Aquinas as the basis for their theological position" as late as 1879. It is to Thomas Aquinas that we owe the most comprehensive outline of demonology for the scholastics and whose work provided much of the authoritative source for the authors of the greatest of the witchcraft manuals, the *Malleus Maleficarum*.⁸¹ Aquinas asserted a number of doctrines which were taken into Christian demonology and left unquestioned for nearly four hundred years.

The first of these doctrines was that demons are angels, albeit fallen angels. Demonic nature was then the same as angelic nature deprived of the good ministry of God as a consequence of their malice. Therefore, in order to understand the demons one must first understand the angels; and Aquinas devoted much energy to explaining the nature of angels.

For Aquinas, angels were non-material, spiritual, beings whose powers were not bound up in any body. Angels were the instruments through which God controlled the material world. Furthermore, "all natural bodies are controlled by angels," in other words, "all material effects are due to the power of angels, matter obeys angels in assuming its forms." However, matter of this world does not serve the will of rebellious angels except through obedience to the will of God. Now a higher power, in the sense of the material and spiritual worlds, can do anything a lower power can do, in "the same way but in a more perfect manner."⁸² "Material natures are below non-material natures, yet lower natures at their highest points can touch higher natures."⁸³

To the question of the ability of angels, and therefore demons, to work miracles, Aquinas answers that "non-material powers can effect anything that happens in the visible world." In continuing this argument, he used Augustine's theory of 'seminal causes' where all activity of material things was explained as the realization of latencies or virtualities already present in things. So while angels "can do things outside the usual course of nature," they were not able "to cause things outside the whole course of nature."⁸⁴ In short, for Aquinas they cannot work miracles.

Therefore, through the intervention of the spiritual entity into the material world, man was either inspired to good through the guidance of the angels, or tempted to evil through the en-

⁸¹Charles Edward Hopkin, *The Share of Thomas Aquinas in the Growth of the Witchcraft Delusion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), p. 1.

⁸²Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, 110, 2.

⁸³Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, 110, 3.

⁸⁴Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, 110, 4.

couragement of the demons. For Saint Thomas, man's whole existence was bound up in the forces of the good and bad spirits. Life was a constant struggle between the forces of good as manifested in the good angels and the forces of evil evinced by the fallen angels, the demons. Even temptation was not the sole domain of the fallen angels since the Bible speaks of God himself as the tempter on several occasions.⁸⁵ Where the demon "always tempts to do harm, to make men fall into sin," God tempts in order to know, "in the sense that one who makes others know is himself said to know."⁸⁶

This said, there are a number of points that should be made about the power of the demons in relation to humankind that appeared in the literature reviewed here but that do not have their source in Aquinas.⁸⁷ First, for Aquinas, there was no final apocalyptic battle between the realms of light and darkness. There were far more good angels than evil ones, enough in fact that were there a battle, the good would have no problem dominating. Besides, the demons shared the hierarchical spiritual world with angels. Second, such ideas as the witches' sabbat, metamorphosis, maleficium, magic, sorcerers, magicians, and animal familiars were completely absent. Third, the incubus-succubus theory was never connected by Aquinas to anything more than the ability of demons to produce illusions. And finally, demonic possession, was seen by Aquinas as a disturbance of the senses that caused a breakdown in the reasoning process. The demons were completely under the control of God, as were all the created beings in the universe, and there was no indication that a separate human agent was needed in order to have them possess humans. It was not until the such writers as Nicholas of Cusa,⁸⁸ and later the eminent thinkers of the Renaissance⁸⁹ forward, reintroduced Platonism to the European intellectual community that the changes came. With the development of Neoplatonist theory, and the return to the literature of the Platonic system of cosmology, the world of spirits, angels, and devils once again surfaced in the work of theologians.

The possibility of spiritual beings possessing the bodies of human individuals was never seriously questioned by the early modern writers. The quandaries come in arguments about

⁸⁵Genesis 22:1; Deuteronomy 13:3; Proverbs 16:2.

⁸⁶Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, 114, 2.

⁸⁷For a complete discussion of Thomistic theology and the witchcraft craze see Charles Edward Hopkin, *The Share of Thomas Aquinas in the Growth of the Witchcraft Delusion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1940).

⁸⁸Nicholas of Cusa (1401 - 1464) German cardinal and philosopher.

⁸⁹Such as Marsilio Ficino, Henry More, and Richard Hooker.

which areas and organs of the body were subject to possession. The soul, as might be expected, was of particular interest. However, the position of the soul within the body was also a matter of debate.

. . . God and our Soul, and all other Immaterial Beings, are in some sort extended . . . that the Operations wherewith the Soul acts on the Body, are in the Body; and that Power or Divine Virtue wherewith God acts on matter and moves it, is present in every part of the matter. Whence it is easily gathered, That the Operation of the Soul and the moving Power of God is somewhere in the Body, and in the Matter. But the Operation of the Soul wherewith it acts on the Body and Soul it Self, and the Divine.⁹⁰

Who in his right wits can acknowledge that a spirit by its Essence may be present in Matter, and yet be no where, unless the Matter were nowhere also? And that a Spirit may penetrate, possess, and actuate some determinate Body, and yet not be in that Body? In which if it be, it is plainly necessary it be somewhere.⁹¹

. . . a Soul or Spirit may be said by its Essence to penetrate and possess the whole body. . . That the whole Soul is in every part or Physical point of the Body.⁹²

For some, the soul resided in the center of the heart yet it communicated with all the members of the body through an outpouring of life. Saint Augustine insisted, however, that the soul was in every part of the body at once, including the head. "The work of the soul is in the body," he said, "to inform it and fill it with life; so that it exists not merely locally, but in the whole matter."⁹³ By either conception, the demon who possessed the body would have to take up residence in the same place as that which the soul filled. If possession was manifested in the head, for instance, it was clear that through the manifestation of the soul throughout the body the demon would have to compete with the soul for space.⁹⁴ However, since the soul and the demon were not performing the same task, reasoned the authors of the *Malleus Malificarum*, and since there was "no confusion between their respective operations," there was no reason why demons and the soul could not reside together in the same part of the body.

In both the Old and the New Testaments, in the Church Fathers, and in the work of Thomas Aquinas the devil was subject to the control of God. For in possession, as in all their acts, demons and devils were helpless to produce any effect whatsoever without the expressed permission of

⁹⁰Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus: or, Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions* (1689), "The true Notion of a Spirit," Sect. V., p. 139 - 40. This is a critique of the Cartesians and their theories of materiality.

⁹¹Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*; "True Notion," Sect. VI, p. 140.

⁹²Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*; "True Notion," Sect. XII, p. 153.

⁹³Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II. Qn 1. Ch. 9, 125.

⁹⁴Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II. Qn 1. Ch. 9, 125.

the Divine Father. In actuality, the devil would destroy mankind, "owing the malice he harbours against the human race," if he was allowed to so. "The fact that God allows him sometimes to do harm and that sometimes God hinders and prevents him, manifestly brings the devil into more open contempt and loathing." The devil, unwilling though he is to do the work of God, is used by God *as a manifestation of His glory* and he is no more than "a servant and a slave. . ." ⁹⁵ "for nothing happens save what is permitted by God."⁹⁶

Distinctive and recognizable individual identities were invented for the demons by the demonologists. Naming, categorizing, and classifying the spirits was the first step in organizing a science to control them. The image of the Christian Devil was established by the desert fathers of the third and fourth centuries and legalized by the Council of Toledo in A.D. 477. While the names might be interchanged and the characteristics may be altered through the centuries, later writers made few new contributions.⁹⁷

The name a demon bore explained "his importance, his characteristics, his natural inclinations; . . . every vice and sin that he takes care of and governs."⁹⁸ Jean Bodin described the attributes of spirits thus:

It is certain that the devils have a profound knowledge of all things. No theologian can interpret the Holy Scriptures better than they can; no lawyer has a more detailed knowledge of testaments, contracts, and actions; no physician or philosopher can better understand the composition of the human body, and the virtues of the heavens, the stars, birds and fishes, trees and herbs, metals and stones.⁹⁹

The distinguishing characteristics of a possessing demon were important to the work of the theologians, the doctors, and the lawyers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁰⁰ For

⁹⁵Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 1, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁶Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, p. 15.

⁹⁷Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft*, p. 132.

⁹⁸*Manual of Exorcism*, p. 39. Substantial portions of the information concerning the demons discussed here is from either Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels Including the Fallen Angels*, (New York: The Free Press, 1967); Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, (New York: Crown Publishers, 1959); Theodora Ward, *Men and Angels* (New York: The Viking Press, 1969).

⁹⁹Bodin, *Demonomanie*, quoted by Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft*, p. 127.

¹⁰⁰As early as the fourth century demons were being identified by certain traits. Jerome affirmed in his *Life of Saint Hilarion* that often demons emitted a foul stench, and that St. Hilary "was enabled by grace to tell from the odour of bodies and garments and the things which any one had touched, by what demon . . . the individual man was distressed." Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, gen. ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, 14 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Reprinted, March 1989), vol. VI: "The

Catholics, the proper intonations and addresses of the exorcism rite depended on having knowledge of the particular possessing demon. For Protestants, knowing which demon was present in the energumen offered clues as to what types of prayers were needed in order banish the offending spirit. The doctors were concerned as to the physical remedies to be used. Certain spirits were more susceptible to one type of remedy than to another. Lawyers involved in cases of witchcraft were interested in the possessing demons as clues to the powers of selected witches. When, as often happened, there were two or more evil spirits dwelling in one human body, each had to be identified and individually dispossessed. But the names for the Devil,¹⁰¹ Satan, and Lucifer familiar today have come to us after many changes. Depending on the particular sources, the lord of the underworld may answer to many names.¹⁰²

Personalities of Demons

The Christian demons most often encountered in the possession literature are fallen angels. The word angel derives from *angiras*, Sanskrit for a divine spirit; from *angaros*, Persian meaning a courier; and from the Greek *angelos* or messenger. Angels are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures but, except for two or three instances, they are never named. The archangel Michael is found in Daniel 10:13 and 21, and 12:1, in Jude 9, and in Revelation 12:7. The archangel Gabriel is also in Daniel 8:16 and 9:21, in Luke 1:19 and 26. Both Michael and Gabriel were lifted from the Persians by the Hebrews during the Babylonian Captivity. Raphael, another of the archangels, is found only in the apocryphal *Book of Tobit*. All references to angels by name come from the period after 200 B.C.E.¹⁰³ In order to discover the myriad of named demons so often mentioned in the early modern literature, one must look to the Hebrew and Jewish sources outside the canonical Christian scriptures. The names and personalities of angels began to appear in the extracanonical texts in the first centuries C.E. The study and categorization of angels, angelology, came into vogue during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Angels were prominent in the

Principal Works of Saint Jerome," par. 28, p. 312. See Chapter 5 for more complete discussion on the odor of possession.

¹⁰¹I have used the term "devil" to mean simply one of the demons, a minion of Satan; the word "Devil," capitalized to mean the ultimate embodiment of evil. I use the word capitalized when speaking theologically. For an explanation of the personalities of the demons most often encountered in the early modern literature see Appendix E.

¹⁰²Beelzebub was called the "chief of demons" in Luke 11:15; Apollyon was "the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon (the destroyer)," in Revelation 9:11; "Fiend" was the Anglo-Saxon word for enemy.

¹⁰³Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Angels* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), pp. ix-xvii; Theodora Ward, *Men and Angels* (New York: The Viking Press, 1969); Paul Carus, *The History of the Devil and the Idea of Evil* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, unabridged reproduction of the original 1900 edition, 1974).

Jewish cabalistic literature, Gnostic, and mystic writings. It was through the recovery of the Jewish and Islamic magical tracts during the fifteenth century that much of the vocabulary of Semitic angelology entered Europe.

Of the number of fallen angels, or demons, frequently mentioned in the possession literature, Satan was named most often although he was not the possessing agent as much as the controlling agent.¹⁰⁴ The name Satan is purely Semitic in origin and means 'to be or to act as an adversary' or 'to oppose.' The Old Testament speaks of *ha-satan*, the adversary. The term is a designation for an office rather than the name for an angel. In the literature of possession he was seen as perpetually against the health and well being of humankind, but the transformation of *ha-satan*, the adversary, into Satan, a lying spirit under the control of God seems to have taken several hundred years. In the Old Testament a Satan-like entity appears only four times as a separate and superhuman personality: I Kings 22:19-22; Zechariah 3:1; Job 1 and 2; I Chronicles 21:1.

In I Kings, God was sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven around him searching for suggestions as to how to get Ahab to go into battle. "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will entice him.' And the Lord said to him, 'By what means?' And he said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets.' And he said, 'You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go forth and do so.'" And I Kings continues, ". . . the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the Lord has spoken evil concerning you."

In Zechariah 3:1: "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him." This was not the incarnation of evil as can be seen later but literally "the Adversary" who as a member of the heavenly court acted in the role of accuser of men.

We encounter much the same Satan again in Job where he was a member of the council: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them." It was obvious from the ensuing discussion between God and Satan that Satan was acting as the earthly eyes and ears of God in finding men who were not standing in righteousness before God. Satan accused Job of acting righteously only because of the material goodness God has shown him. Again, Satan was the accuser of men before God. However

¹⁰⁴For material on the development of the concept of Satan see: Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology, A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine Its Origin and Development*, (London: The Epworth Press, 1949); William Henry Hudson, *The Satan of Theology and How We Came by Him*, (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1894); Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil, Demonology, and Witchcraft*, (New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1974); Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Satan, The Early Christian Tradition*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); Louis Coulange, *The Life of the Devil*, Stephen Haden Guest, translator, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930).

three things about the abilities of Satan stand out in the story of Job. First, Satan was on a mission by God as can be seen when he "goes to and fro on the earth . . . walking up and down on it." Second, Satan was powerless to act against Job without God's express permission. And third, if Satan had not yet become an agent contrary to the will of God, he was on his way for it was clear that he would like to have Job fail the tests so that it would hurt God. He was certainly becoming anti-human.

It is in I Chronicles 21:1 that we first see Satan as the individual malevolent agent. "Satan stood up against Israel, and incited David to number Israel." There was no mention of asking or receiving permission from God. This was a separate and capable agent that was no longer only an agent of God. There had been a theological shift in the years between the earlier books and I Chronicles for God now seemed to be considered as a god capable of doing only good.¹⁰⁵ This "new" god was very different from the one seen in the Book of Job where, for the sake of a wager, Jahweh assented to Satan's maltreatment of a good and just man. Sometime between the writing of the Old Testament and the formation of the New Testament, Satan changed from the enemy of man to the enemy of God.

In the New Testament, Satan is characterized as "prince of this world" and "prince of the power of the air."¹⁰⁶ According to the extracanonical texts of *Enoch*, he was once a great angel and chief of the Order of the Seraphim as well the head of the Order of the Virtues. During the first century of Christianity he became identified with the serpent as in Jewish literature. Although he was seen by some early medieval writers as tempting Eve through the use of the serpent, Peter Lombard (c. 1100 - 1160) in the twelfth century saw Satan in the guise of the serpent actually performing the temptation himself. Lucifer, as the morning star, was associated with Satan by Lombard in his *Sentences*.¹⁰⁷ Other sources claim that this was an erroneous affiliation through a misreading of Isaiah 14:12 which says: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning." The literature discussing fallen angels was of much later authorship than that of the Old Testament and nothing was known of fallen angels or evil demons when it was written.¹⁰⁸ Satan was earlier called Lucifer by Jerome and other Church Fathers as he was the "angel of light" before the Fall while they used the name Satan for this angel after the Fall. During the sixteenth century they became separate beings with Satan as the personification of the sin of anger and Lucifer identified with the sin of pride.

¹⁰⁵See note *Oxford Annotated Bible*, p. 518.

¹⁰⁶John 16:11 and Ephesians 2:2.

¹⁰⁷Russell, *Lucifer*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁸Davidson, *Dictionary*, p. 176.

The Jewish literature maintains that Satan was created by God on the sixth day, at the same time as Eve. He was associated with Sammael, the highest of the throne-angels and said to be even above the Seraphim in having twelve wings, while the Seraphim boasted only six. Jealousy and envy at the creation of man on the part of the angels led them to conspire against God and thus to cause the fall of Adam. So it was Sammael, leader of all the angel princes, who took a company of subject angels with him to earth. He selected the serpent as his instrument, he took possession of him and accomplished his mission. Eve was said to have seen him as the Angel of Death, another later image of Satan.

Tertullian described Satan as the first of the angelic spirits:

Indeed, before he became the devil, he stands forth the wisest of creatures; and wisdom is no evil. If you turn to the prophecy of Ezekiel, you will at once perceive that this angel was both by creation good and by choice corrupt. For in the person of the prince of Tyre it is said in reference to the devil: "Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the truth of the Lord God: Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty" (this belongs to him as the highest of the angels, the archangel, the wisest of all); "amidst the delights of the paradise of thy God wast thou born" (for it was there where God made the angels in a shape which resembled the figure of animals); . . . From the day when thou wast created, when I set thee a cherub upon the holy mountain of God, . . . thou wast irreproachable in thy days, from the day of creation, until thine iniquities were discovered.¹⁰⁹

Lactantius, one of the most esteemed of the Christian Fathers, gave a slightly different version of the creation of Satan and one that specifically calls into Christian thought the story of Zurvan and the birth of the dual Zoroastrian deities.¹¹⁰ He certainly portrays Satan as the

¹⁰⁹Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, II, 10.

¹¹⁰A god known as Zurvan has been identified in a bronze as a winged and androgynous being giving birth to twins who emerge from his shoulders. This myth has been interpreted as the father/mother, Zurvan, giving birth to the Zoroastrian/Avestan gods of Ohrmazd and Ahriman. The story of the birth of the twins is told as follows. Zurvan whose name means "destiny," had offered sacrifice for over a thousand years in order to receive a son. At one point he asked, "What good can all this sacrifice be?" So, because he had doubted the efficacy of the sacrifices, he conceived two sons instead of one. The consequences of doubt or a lack of foresight or vigilance on the part of the creator, can be seen in myths from around the world as the explanation for the origin of death and evil. However, evil freely chooses his mode of being and the wise lord, the good god, is not directly responsible for his appearance.

The first, Ohrmazd, was conceived by virtue of the sacrifices; Ahriman, the second, was conceived by virtue of the doubt. Zurvan decided that the first born of the children would be named king. Ohrmazd knew the thought's of Zurvan and communicated them to Ahriman who tore open the womb and emerged early. He announced himself to Zurvan as the first born son. Zurvan replied: "My son is perfumed and luminous, and thou, art dark and foul smelling." Soon after, Ohrmazd was born sweet-smelling and luminous. Zurvan wanted to consecrate him king, but was reminded by Ahriman of his vow to make the firstborn king. So, in order not to break his vow, Zurvan made Ahriman king for a term of 9,000 years after which Ohrmazd would reign supreme. Both Ohrmazd and Ahriman immediately fell to making creatures. All that Ohrmazd created were good and straight; all that Ahriman created were entirely evil. The negative contribution contained such elements as mountains, snakes, and noxious animals but they constitute an important aspect of most cosmogenic myths.

Therefore, at the beginnings of the speculation on the source of evil, it was assumed that the one all-powerful god was the source of all that is in the world, including evil, however, involuntarily it is produced. "Evil is the result of a technical accident, of an inadvertence on the part of the sacrificer. The Evil one does not possess an ontological condition of his own: he is dependent on his involuntary author, who furthermore, hastens to limit in advance, the terms of his existence."

A second aspect of this early idea of the birth of evil was provided by Eudemus of Rhodes in the second half of the fourth century BC. He says that "the Magi . . . call the one and intelligible All sometimes 'space,' and sometimes 'time;' therefrom are said to be born Ohrmazd and Ahriman, that is light and darkness." Therefore, it would seem that the Iranians had speculated on the ideas of time and space and had designated these as the common source of both the good and the evil principles. Time and space are considered aspects of the material world. Plutarch, in his treatise on Isis and Osiris, delineates the doctrines of Zoroaster using fourth century BC sources, and explains that "Oromazdes, born of purest light," and "Aremanos, born of darkness" each has power over the earth for 3,000 years, after which they will fight each other for another 3,000 years. Therefore, the belief that the world would last for a specified period of time, 9,000 years (3,000 each for the dominion of the two gods, and 3,000 in battle) and that the period of time would be divided into three equal periods was current during the first and second centuries AD and had been available for the authors of the earliest apocalyptic literature some three to four centuries earlier.¹¹⁰

While Zurvan was not known to have been associated with an independent religion, he was nearly always mentioned in conjunction with Ohrmazd and Ahriman and he was always, in one way or another, connected with the doctrine of the millennia. He was either the cosmic god of time, or the personification of time. In some texts, Zurvan is surrounded by three "helper gods" whose names mean "the one who makes virile, the one who makes splendid, and the one who makes old." This would seem to be a reference to human time, time as lived in youth, maturity and old age. "On a cosmic plane, each of these three temporal moments can be connected with a period of three thousand years. This "formula of three times" can be found in the Upanishads and Homer."

The doctrine of the millennia and the concept of time are important aspects of the religious doctrines that present a dualistic view. While both Ohrmazd and Ahriman exist from eternity, only one, Ohrmazd, will continue outside time. Ohrmazd created the material world in order to imprison Ahriman and evil. The Adversary, Ahriman, will cease to exist at some moment in the future. In this myth, time is important for the banishment of evil. This Iranian cosmology assumes eschatology (or the doctrine of the last things) and soteriology (or the saving grace of man); the cosmos has a beginning and an end.

These ideas were taken up in one degree or another by Zoroaster and later by the Gnostic Christians of the early Christian centuries. Mithrism also owes considerable debt to the Zurvanian myths. But most importantly for the purposes here, are the doctrines drawn from the early Indo-Iranian roots and articulated by the Manicheans and inculcated to some extent even by Saint Augustine, although for Augustine, man's capacity for evil was inherent in his nature, it was impossible for man to be completely evil.

For Mani, man was by nature evil. In Manichean and Gnostic beliefs, man was actually made from demonic matter and existed in a most repulsive incarnation. However, within the vile body of man exists a spark of the divine, present from the cosmogenic act of the divine being at the moment of creation. Man's body, then, was destined to become the stage or battle ground for the dramatic war between the forces of light, the Good God and the allies of the Prince of Darkness where the "spark of light," man's soul, was the prize.

In this earliest doctrine of good and evil, we can see the basis for the reformed theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries concerning the presence of evil and the theory of the millennium. There is first the idea that evil came into being through an inadvertency on the part of God or through the assertion of free will by one of God's created beings. Evil came into the world through doubt and separation from the good. Second, each of the newly created entities was given an absolute domain, good was assigned the spiritual sphere and evil the material realm. While good may have been destined from the very beginning to be the victor, the battle must still be fought valiantly. For the reformers of the sixteenth century, the battle was destined to be played out to the fullest and the battleground was to be the body of man.

younger brother of the Word, "that first and greatest Son." This older brother, through his loyalty and good will, deserved his Father's affection while the younger son developed along evil lines.

God, before he commenced the business of the world . . . produced a Spirit like to himself, who might be endowed with the perfections of God the Father. . . . Then he made another being, in whom the disposition of the divine origin did not remain. Therefore he was infected with his own envy as with a poison, and passed from good to evil; and at his own will, which had been given to him by God unfettered, he acquired for himself a contrary name. From which it appears that the source of all evils is envy. For he envied his predecessor, who through his steadfastness is acceptable and dear to God the Father. This being, who from good became evil by his own act, is called by the Greeks diabolus: we call him accuser, because he reports to God the faults to which he himself entices us.¹¹¹

Satan was depicted throughout the early modern literature as the adversary of man and the symbol of the Antichrist. Weyer described Satan as possessing "great courage, incredible cunning, superhuman wisdom, the most acute penetration, consummate prudence, and incomparable skill in veiling the most pernicious artifices under a specious disguise, and a malicious and infinite hatred toward the human race, implacable and incurable."¹¹²

The Neoplatonic and Cabbalistic influences of the Renaissance helped to integrate the Jewish and Indo-Iranian demon lore into the Christian west. Asmodeus (Asmodée) was by far the most prominent of the possessing devils. He was one of the Fallen Angels, once of the Order of Seraphim, the highest order of angels. His name translates as "creature of judgment" and is of Persian rather than Jewish origin. In demonology, Asmodeus in Hell was in charge of all the gaming houses. In Jewish lore he was supposed by some to be the child of Adam's first wife, Lilith with Samael; or the child of incest of Tubal-Cain and his sister Naamah; others say he was the demon of impurity. He was the evil spirit of the Tobit legend.

By the end of fifteenth century he had acquired other vices. The authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* call Asmodeus "the very devil of Fornication, the chief of that abomination"¹¹³ and was cast by the sixteenth century writers as the representative of the sin of lechery. It was

Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas*, 2 vols. William R. Trask, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 311-314. (Jewish Apocalyptic literature dates from about 200 B. C. to about 100 A.D. and deals with the end of the present world order and the possibilities of the next. In some Indo-Iranian literature a fourth 3,000 year period of peace is added making the entire existence of the world 12,000 years instead of 9,000 years.)

¹¹¹Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, II, 9. Lactantius (c. 240- c. 320) was a tutor to Constantine's son, Crispus. His *Divine Institutes* was meant to be a more complete and formal treatise on the Christian religion and was designed to supercede those of Tertullian, Minucius Felix, and Cyprian.

¹¹²Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, p. 363.

¹¹³Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, p. 10.

Asmodeus who caused the overt sexual behavior in a number of the young girls, especially the nuns in the French convents.

Belial was one of the chief Fallen Angels. He was once partly of the Order of the Virtues, and partly of the Order of the Angels. Saint Paul regarded him as chief of the demons, or as Satan.¹¹⁴ He was called the demon without yoke or master, "because all his desires and wishes are directed toward being free."¹¹⁵ When he possessed an individual he caused idling, laziness, and an urge to shirk responsibilities. He is the demon most often cited by Cotton Mather in his writings because Mather was most concerned with how much leeway God had given to the demons in New England and with the shirking of religious responsibilities by the church members: ". . . who can be sure that the great *Belial* of Hell must needs always be *Yoked* up . . . ?" Mather asked in relation to the creation of specters of innocent persons during the Salem trials.¹¹⁶

Beelzebub, originally a Syrian king¹¹⁷ whose name translates "lord of the flies" or "lord of chaos," was once of the Order of the Cherubim. He was also called "the lord of the souls who sinned and abandoned their creator."¹¹⁸ While he has been thought by some to be Satan, he seems to be quite separate in the Biblical tradition.¹¹⁹ By the sixteenth century Beelzebub had come to represent the sin of gluttony.

Behemoth was the male chaos-monster and the counterpart to the female Leviathan. He was not one of the Fallen Angels as he was said to have been created on the fifth day. He was known as the principal of darkness and as such was also identified with Rahab, the primordial angel of the sea, and with the angel of death.

Leviathan, not always seen as a female especially in the later literature, was called the demon of pride because she/he tempted our forefathers with pride . . . and promised them the added gift of divinity.¹²⁰ The name in Hebrew means "that which gathers itself together in folds." In other traditions, she/he was said to have been created with Behemoth on the fifth day. It was she, in Mandaean lore, who was to be the final end of all purified souls as they will be swallowed up by Leviathan. Numerous images of hell with an open mouth swallowing the

¹¹⁴II Corinthians 6:15.

¹¹⁵*Manual of Exorcism*, p. 39.

¹¹⁶C. Mather, in *Drake* I: 22.

¹¹⁷II Kings 1:3.

¹¹⁸*Manual of Exorcism*, p. 39.

¹¹⁹Matthew 12:24-27.

¹²⁰*Manual of Exorcism*, p. 40.

damned appeared in the late Middle Ages and became a popular image during the Reformation. Luther commissioned one of the Pope and the cardinals attending a banquet inside the mouth of Leviathan. Leviathan was also cast as the representation of the sin of envy.

The name Mammon means "riches" in Aramaic and as such this demon was characterized as the Fallen Angel of avarice. It has been said that she/he holds the throne of this world. In medieval lore Mammon was the ruler of Hell and was considered to be of Syrian origin.¹²¹

Not only were major fallen angels named and characterized, but the unnamed hoard of demons were organized hierarchically and classified according to their dwelling places. The developing relationship among the various healing arts as apparent in the definitions related to the personalities of these demons. The mingling of ancient humoral theory, Renaissance astrology, and Christian demonology was typified by Guazzo in his *Compendium Maleficarum*. There were six kinds of spirits according to Guazzo: Fiery, Aërial, Terrestrial, Water, Subterranean, Lucifugous.¹²² Each had a distinct role dictated by his fixed dwelling place in the cosmos. The fiery spirits dwelt in the upper air and could not sink to the earth until the Day of Judgment. Therefore, according to Guazzo, they had no dealings whatsoever with men. But for Paracelsus this fiery spirit, or *spiritus*, was "the spark that God breathed into man" and he used the term to designate "the permanent and immanent radiating energy of an occult remedy."¹²³

The spirits of the second level, the aërial, were present in the air all around. These were capable of transporting themselves to Hell and of making a body for themselves from the denser air. In this form they were able to appear to men. They were usually responsible for the disturbances of the air, tempests, and thunderstorms. "They also conspire together for the ruin of the human race." Robert Burton, the English author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, agreed with Bodin that it was the aërial spirits that caused the sudden storms, winds, and other weather "though our Meteorologists generally refer to [them as] natural causes." Burton also claimed that it is these that "delight in sacrifices," "corrupt the air, and cause plagues," and "desire carnal copulation (*Incubi* and *Succubi*)." He also asserted that "they are now as much *respected by our Papists under the name of Saints*."¹²⁴ Asmodeus was probably one of these.

¹²¹Mammon was certified by a nineteenth century scholar as the demonic ambassador to England. Collin De Plancy, *Dictionnaire Infernal*, 4 vols. (Paris: Librairie Universelle, 1825 - 1826) and quoted by Davidson, p. 182.

¹²²Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, I, 18, p. 73. Burton uses the same six classifications, *Anatomy*, pp. 166-71. Weyer also mentions them, *De praestigiis daemonum*, pp. 62 - 86.

¹²³Paracelsus, *Selected Writings*, p. 263.

¹²⁴Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 167.

A third group of demons were the terrestrials who were cast from heaven for their sins. These sorts dwelt in the woods, fields, along roadsides and even among men. They delighted in causing all sorts of troubles. Burton said "they are the most conversant with men, so they do them the most harm." These were the demons who "counterfeited dead men's ghosts" and often appeared where some crime had been committed. It was the terrestrial demons that cause accidents, especially along the road.¹²⁵

The water spirits (Burton called them *Naiades*) were the fourth sort who dwelt in the rivers, lakes and seas. They were "wrathful, turbulent, unquiet, and fraudulent." They caused disasters at sea, sinking ships and destroying life in the waters. They were more often women than men because they resided "in humid places" and led "a softer manner of life."¹²⁶ Those who live[d] in drier and harder places usually appear[ed] as men." Paracelsus thought that these spirits lived in the water because it was "their Chaos." He added that the Succubi were probably water spirits and were most often those that deceived men because they appeared in women's shape.¹²⁷

The fifth sort of demons were Subterranean and were the demons of the worst disposition. These and the last category, Lucifugous, were the truly chthonic of the demons. They caused earthquakes, winds and fires. They shook the foundations of houses. They preyed on miners and people who dug in the earth and they were especially hostile to mankind. Paracelsus believed that their office was "to keep treasure in the earth" and earthquakes were the punishment for removing wealth.¹²⁸ Nicolas Remy agreed for he explained that the demons do not actually give their human followers "true Money, although they are said to be the Guardians and Keepers of the Treasures buried in the Earth."¹²⁹

The sixth and last kind of demon identified by Guazzo was the Lucifugous. These detested the light and never appear during the day, however, they were capable of assuming human form at night. They were malicious, restless, and perturbed; with the permission of God they killed men with touch or breath. The further down the dwelling place, the more material the connection, the less hospitable the demons who dwelt there. Burton said that their egress and regress was thought to be the major volcanoes of the world. He also felt that since they were "conversant

¹²⁵Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 170.

¹²⁶For a further discussion on the influence of the humoral theory on the demonology see Chapter Five.

¹²⁷Burton on Paracelsus, *Anatomy*, p. 168.

¹²⁸Burton on Paracelsus, *Anatomy*, p. 171.

¹²⁹Nicolas Remy, *Demonolatry*, Bk. I, Ch. IV, p. 7.

with the center of the earth," it was they who tortured "the souls of damned men to the Day of Judgment."¹³⁰

The way the demons and their personalities were interpreted by the possessed in the seventeenth century was clearly illustrated by Sœur Jeanne de Angès, the primary demoniac of the famous Loudun possession. The Augustinian conception of the void as allowing for the influx of either good or evil spirits was also clearly explained in her *Autobiographie*: "During an exorcism, an attempt was made to rid my body of the demons and to make room for God; six months had gone by and the demons had insinuated themselves into my spirit and into my inclinations, through a sort of evil disposition that they found in me, they made me one of them; they linked me so strongly to their operations that I even felt what they felt."¹³¹ She claimed that the demons had been able to enter her *spirit* and her *inclinations* through "a bad disposition that they found in her" and that in this way they have "made her one of them" even to the point of having her "feel what they feel."

The seven demons that inhabited the body of the Prioress at Loudun were each known by name and in the case of at least three, Sœur Jeanne explained exactly where they lodged. Each took possession of the place in her body that they were most suited, by their own personality type, to control. "Each of these seven demons that I had in my body took possession of that area which he judged best to be able to carry out. They succeeded through *ordinary conformity to the affections* that I had *in my soul*, which they did so subtly that I didn't think that I had any demons."¹³² They succeeded so well that for a long time Sœur Jeanne did not think that she had any demons at all. Here Sœur Jeanne seems to say that the demons may enter her spirit because her soul has a bad disposition. Therefore, she seems to equate a sick soul with the possibility that possession can take place at all; the less the soul is inclined toward the good and God, the more open it may be to the devil. The demons, however, do not take control of the soul.

¹³⁰Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 171.

¹³¹ "Ils firent semblant dans un exorcisme de sortir de mon corps de céder la place à Dieu; ils furent six mois sans paroistre, mais ils s'insinuèrent peu à peu dans mon esprit et dans mes inclinations, en sorte que par les mauvaises dispositions qu'ils trouvèrent en moy, ils me rendirent une mesme chose avec eux; il me lièrent si fort à leurs opérations que j'estois pleins de leurs sentiments." *Sœur Jeanne des Angès supérieure des Ursulines de Loudun. Autobiographie d'une hystérique possédée*. D'après le manuscrit inédit de la bibliothèque de Tours. Annoté et Publié par les docteurs Gabriel Legué et Gilles de la Tourette. Préface de M. le professeur Charcot. (Paris, 1886), p. 65-66. The 'bad disposition' is melancholy. For a more complete description of the relationship between melancholy and possession see Chapter Five.

¹³²"Chacun des sept démons que j'avois dans le corps prit la possession qu'il jugea pouvoir le mieux soutenir. "And they succeeded through "l'ordinaire conformément aux affections" that she had "dans l'âme." *Autobiographie*, p. 65-66.

Asmodeé, the chief demon, set up operation "in the imagination as in the spirit, that he filled with dishonest things."¹³³ Modesty, she said, stopped her from telling what these "dishonest things" were, but from other accounts of this possession, it is obvious that they are the actions of a nymphomaniac. Asmodeé also became visible to her on occasion in "des formes horribles." "Often this unfortunate spirit presented himself to me *in horrible forms* and as he saw that I did not take pleasure through the help of grace he beat me with such violence that often I was bruised."¹³⁴

A second possessing demon was Leviathan who was not at all violent, but who lodged in her head and ". . . accommodated himself completely with my natural disposition"; but he caused her to want to organize everything to such a degree "it seemed to me that everything must be bent to my laws and that the earth was not worthy to carry me."¹³⁵ This demon, said Sœur Jeanne made her constantly look for ways to ". . . to aggrandize myself in the world and to put myself in great esteem" and she also attributed her great interest in gold and silver to Leviathan.¹³⁶ Both Asmodeé and Leviathan acted on the spirit but were present in the head in order to do this. Later we will see that Asmodeé claimed to be lodged in the lower abdomen during one of the exorcisms.

The third demon to possess this unfortunate nun was Behemouth whose operation was to ". . . oppose all actions which concerned the ritual of God in my soul."¹³⁷ Here again we see the demon acting on the spirit from the head of Sœur Jeanne and affecting the work of her soul (*mon âme*). Behemouth held sway over Sœur Jeanne for two years during which time she said that she was very lax in her attendance to God and that this gave a great advantage in her heart to the

133 . . . en l'imagination qu'en l'esprit remplissoit de choses deshonestes." *Autobiographie*, p. 69.

134". . . il me battoit avec une telle violence que souvent j'en estois tous meurtrie." *Autobiographie*, p. 69.

135". . . s'accommodoit entièrement avec mon humeur naturelle" and ". . . qu'il me sembloit que tout devoit plier sous mes loys et que la terre n'estoit pas digne de me porter." She continues, ". . . he did not trouble me with great violence; and in truth he did not place me in great exterior disorder; on the contrary, when he was in my head, I wanted to put everything in order. . ." *Autobiographie*, p. 70.

136 " . . . m'agrandir dans le monde et de me mettre en grande estime" She says, "I felt a great inclination for gold and silver even though this was against my natural nature." *Autobiographie*, p. 70 .

137". . . s'opposer à toutes les actions qui concernoient le culte de Dieu en mon âme." *Autobiographie*, p. 70. (Again the operation of the soul is hindered by the possession of the demons, but the soul is not referred to as the possession site.)

demon who was holding her "in a continual spiritual insensitivity with an inconceivable hardness of heart"138

These three demons who possessed Sœur Jeanne conformed to their associations with the sins they were believed to represent. Asmodeus, the representative of the sin of lechery, caused her to consider "dishonest things" that modesty would not let her tell. At times he lodged in her head and created wanton thoughts; at other times he dwelled in the lower belly and created lascivious behavior; while under still different circumstances he treated her to violent beatings. Leviathan, who personified the sin of envy, displayed no violence. Sœur Jeanne, when under the dominion of this demon, was acquisitive, jealous of others, and greedy for recognition. Behemoth was often depicted as an elephant or hippopotamus, monstrous and slow-moving. He created a sense of lethargy or sloth, which Aquinas had defined as spiritual negligence.

The developments of Christian demonology from the opening decades of the first century C.E. were readily available in the texts and traditions of the Church at the close of the fifteenth century. Additionally, Neoplatonic and Cabbalistic influences had returned with the philosophers of the Renaissance. When the Reformation thinkers began to formulate their theological stance in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, they attempted to bypass the Catholic traditions by returning to the texts that had existed in the first centuries of Christianity. Unfortunately, much of the material on demonology had been organized and integrated into the available literature. Although they managed to peel away what they perceived as the Romanist influence, they were left with what was essentially the Christian demonology of western Europe.

A number of theories important to Reformed and Puritan thought were developed from this early material. Most importantly perhaps was the return to scriptural authority in the identification and exorcising of demons along with the rediscovery of the dual role of Jesus as teacher and healer. This gave authority to the early modern relationship between theologian and physician.

Another was the hierarchy of the spiritual world and the connections of the fallen angels as demons with the material matter of the earth was articulated by Augustine and Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite. Their theories were combined by Thomas Aquinas with the Aristotelian understanding of the relationship between form and matter to explain the role of angels in the world. Thomistic theology served as the basis for the attaching demons primarily to women,

A third concept with a long and authoritative history was the opposition of good and evil as manifested in the world. Through the mingling of Zoroastrian, Jewish, the work of such Chris-

138 ". . . dans une continuelle insensibilité spirituelle, avec une dureté de cœur inconcevable." *Autobiographie*, p. 71.

tian authors as Lactanius, and the Neoplatonic ideas about the dualist nature of existence, the Reformers, especially Martin Luther, developed theories of the pope as Antichrist and the role of the Devil and demons in the upcoming apocalyptic battle. Additionally the Neoplatonists helped to revive the individualistic nature of demons with their own powers and energies.

The early modern authors can be classified in their adherence to particular doctrines supported through Aristotelian or Neoplatonic thought. Those concerned with Aristotle and Aquinas, especially the Roman Catholics, Puritan students at Cambridge University in England, and the Galenic physicians tended toward a theology that condoned witchcraft and demonic possession in relation to it. Since for Aristotle anything that was not immediately identifiable as a natural occurrence was interpreted as supernatural, concern over the discerning of good or evil influence in supernatural incidents was always in the forefront of their thought.

Those thinkers who leaned toward Neoplatonic philosophies such as Paracelsus, many Anglican divines, Henry More and the Cambridge Platonists were more often willing to see alternative possibilities to witchcraft in the actions of the spirits. The understanding that spiritual forces were at work in the world and could be benevolent, sometimes might even the active souls of humans, gave these authors a more tolerant view.

CHAPTER TWO

FORMULATING THE SCIENCE OF POSSESSION

Whereas the last chapter was a discussion of the development of the theories concerning demonic possession based on biblical and classical sources, this chapter will examine the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors. The early modern materials chosen for inclusion in this study begin with a great handbook of witchcraft, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, and end with the writings of the American Puritan, Cotton Mather. The history of witchcraft is intimately tied to the subject of demonic possession in the period because of the use of possessed individuals by the courts in the attempt to expunge Europe of the evil of witchcraft. It was the witchcraft scare that helped to create the science of the demonic.

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, or *A Hammer for Witches*, is without a doubt the most important work on demonology and witchcraft published in the West. It, more than any other source, was the quarry for all subsequent treatises on the subject. But it was not just the content that was so important to the later understanding of the power of evil in the world; it was the underlying suppositions of the work as outlined in Part I, "Treating of the Three Necessary Concomitants of Witchcraft Which are the Devil, a Witch, and the Permission of Almighty God." The authors maintained three beliefs throughout: that witchcraft was a heresy and was real; that demons interfered in human life incessantly; and that both witchcraft and demonic activity were permitted by God for his own reasons.¹ In the *Malleus*, every possible illness, malady, misfortune, and natural disaster was attributed to demonic intervention. It became apparent that the Devil and his minions ruled the earthly realm, a belief still held in force at the end of the seventeenth century despite the teachings of theologians, churchmen, and medical doctors to the contrary. Cotton Mather's last great work concerning the Salem trials and the question of witchcraft was *The*

¹Sidney Angelo, "Evident Authority and Authoritative Evidence: The *Malleus Maleficarum*" in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, edited by Sidney Angelo (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 15.

Wonders of the Invisible World. It was also "the last important work" on the subject "to use the old language of the chosen people."²

The demonologists insisted that Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics and the Arabs all agreed on the existence of spirits. As for the Christian developments, Augustine, Tertullian, Origen, and others had written on angels, fallen and unfallen. The sources quote the Classical authors, the Church Fathers, Aquinas and Calvin, Ficino, Paracelsus, and Galen and each other. In addition to the writers return to the ancient authorities for validation of their theories, many also experienced the spirit world first hand. Jean Bodin had seen a spirit "spherically shining" in his room, John Dee had "heard" spirits in his house, and Johann Weyer had "witnessed" the manifestations time and time again.

Many of the writers discussed herein became well known in other areas of endeavor: Jean Bodin in law and history; Johann Weyer in medicine and as a forerunner of the discipline of psychiatry; Henry More as a philosopher, mystical poet, and Puritan theologian; Joseph Glanvill as a storyteller who was credited as an inspiration to Edgar Allen Poe; Increase and Cotton Mather as ecclesiastical leaders of New England. Only the Mathers have been singled out in the area of the 'science of evil' because of their involvement in the Salem trials. Yet, the problem of the battle with evil permeates the thinking of each of these men. While we in the twentieth century have relegated the question of the battle between mankind and the Devil, or between angels and demons, and in fact the whole question of objective evil, to the realm of the superstitious, that is not where it was for the inhabitants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Modern social and intellectual historians have glossed over the philosophical and theological arguments as inconsequential in terms of the everyday life and decision-making processes of early modern individuals. I would argue that the objective reality of evil was of great concern to those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as is evidenced by the vast number of writings on the subject during the period. As will be seen, many of these went into several editions. The accompanying chart illustrates some of the interrelationships between the sources.

The materials available as primary sources can be viewed as a chronological development in four stages. Initially, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries there were the Roman Catholic texts, usually produced as manuals for the ecclesiastical and civil courts since witchcraft was held to be both a sin and a crime. Much of this early material owes its authority to the *Malleus Maleficarum*. As the Reformation took hold, a second class of texts surfaced when the Protestants began to produce propaganda refuting the efficacy of the Roman exorcism rituals and adding disclaimers as to the possibility of the 'miracle' of possession at all. (Despite such early di-

²M. Wynn Thomas, "Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*: Some Metamorphoses of Salem Witchcraft," in Sidney Angelo, editor, *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 202 - 226.

vision, the ability to cast out demons eventually became one of the prevailing proofs used by Protestants and Catholics alike, for the discovery of which brand of Christianity was the 'true religion.') Once the freedom from Roman Catholic dogma allowed the new scientific thinking to emerge in the Protestant areas of Europe,³ a third set of materials surfaced, the scientific attempts to explain the phenomenon of possession. One final important source of material on the somatic experience of possession were the exorcism manuals produced by the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent (1545 - 1563) and the records of Protestant exorcists, especially from England. Important to the understanding of all the primary sources of the early modern period are the works of Saint Augustine of Hippo and Saint Thomas Aquinas.

I have chosen to concentrate on the literature most widely read in France, England, and Puritan America: the writers who became recognized as "experts" in one way or another; the ones whose names or works were mentioned most often.⁴ Some of the authors were German theologians and doctors; some were Italian clergy. While I am concentrating on cases of possession in France, England and Puritan America, the background authorities for the materials produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often drew on Italian and German sources.⁵

I have also chosen to center my discussion of the somatic experience on a few well-known cases of demonic obsession/possession: Loudon (1634), Louviers (1642), and Salem (1692). Several of these cases have both eye-witness testimony and published opinions of either theologians or medical doctors and sometimes both. In the case of Loudon, I have used an autobiography of the possession by the "cured" Mother Superior, Sœur Jeanne des Anges. The principal demoniac of Louviers, Madeleine Bavant, also left an autobiographical account that has served as a second important personal source. A Protestant autobiographical reaction to demonic possession can be seen in a tract written by Hannah Allen, a melancholic Englishwoman.⁶ Although I will use ex-

³See for example Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Magic, science, religion, and the scope of rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁴An English playwright, Thomas Shadwell presented a comedy in 1682 entitled *The Lancashire Witches and Tegue O'Divelly the Irish Priest*. While the play was meant to "laugh witchcraft out of existence," one of the characters lists the major authors concerned with the subject: Bodin, Remy, Delrio, Nider, Kramer, Sprenger, and More. Selma R. Williams and Pamela Williams Adelman, *Riding the Nightmare, Women and Witchcraft from the Old World to Colonial Salem* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992), pp. 124 - 125.

⁵For a discussion of many of these sources as they related particularly to witchcraft see Wayne Schumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), Chapter Two, "Witchcraft," pp. 60 - 107.

⁶Hannah Allen, *Satan his Methods and Malice Baffled. A Narrative of God's Gracious Dealings with that Choice Christian Mrs. Hannah Allen* (1683) and reproduced in *Her Own Life: Autobiographical writings by seventeenth-century Englishwomen*, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby, and Helen Wilcox, eds. (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 197 - 210.

amples from a wide range of authors, these and individual case studies detailed in the other sources will remain the focus of the study.

The diversity and volume of material available to both the general public and the intellectual community during this period was quite broad. There were hundreds of popular tracts that offered a "good story" to the lay reader. Students at the universities, especially the Protestant universities, were producing and defending tracts on witchcraft and demonology at a prolific rate during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The centers for the development of Protestant demonology were Wittenberg and Tübingen in Germany and Cambridge in England.⁷ Not that the Protestant theology differed greatly from the Roman view; it could not be particularly distinctive since it was based on the same sources as the Catholic doctrines: the Bible, Saint Augustine, and the written sources using Saint Thomas as the authority. The authors also returned to the traditions of the early Church Fathers. Later, as the influence of the Neoplatonists and experimental science seeped into the philosophical speculations, the demonology of the Christian world collapsed into the Age of Enlightenment.

A number of factors may have contributed to the creation of the climate for such an upsurge in interest in possession, not to say the increased number of possessions during the two centuries studied here. One factor is certainly the Reformation itself. For the first time since the Apostolic Age of the Christian Church, there was opposition to the received doctrines. Religious toleration, not having been an item of discussion since the end of the conversion period, was now in the forefront of the controversy. Demonic possession became, in France especially, a tool for propagandizing the populace.⁸

Martin Luther's stand on the Pope as the Antichrist and the Roman Church as the tool of the Devil reinstated the Manichaean concept of the battle between good and evil for the possession of men's souls. At the same time the Protestants moved from the visual world of worship and piety so important in the Catholic devotional practices to language centered services in which the sermon was the centerpiece of the worship. In the religious culture of Catholic Europe the

⁷See "Interest in the Occult at German Universities," in Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 volumes (New York, 1934 - 1958), vol. 7, chapter 12, pp. 338 - 371. Also Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition, and Society (c.1520 - 1630)," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft, Centres and Peripheries*, edited by Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 45 - 81 and H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Sin, Melancholy, Obsession: Insanity and Culture in 16th Century Germany," in *Understanding Popular Culture. Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Steven L. Kaplan, ed. (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), pp. 113 - 145. According to Clark, Swedish and Finnish universities were likewise producing dissertations on demonology.

⁸See such cases as the preaching demon Verrine, who spoke through the nun Louise Capeau in D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits. Possession and exorcism in France and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), 1981.

primary understanding of religious devotion was through visual and emotional participation in the images provided by the Church. It was an active participation in devotional practices, pilgrimages, good works, and the cults of the saints. One gauged success or failure in the devotion by the level of personal emotional reaction.

Luther and the other Reformers produced a radical shift when they rejected the effectiveness of images in the worship of God.⁹ For Luther, passivity was a necessity in worship as well as in the total dependence on God for the gift of salvation. Actions or good works were of no avail. Therefore devotional practices that were dependent on the active participation of the believer were thought to be dangerous and ineffectual. The Reformers maintained that it was not the image but the word that would affect the understanding of salvation in the worshipper. The understanding was a rational comprehending rather than an emotional affectation.¹⁰

The importance of language to the Protestant and the resulting emphasis on education produced, by the end of the sixteenth century, a literate public hungry for reading material. The presses of Europe were kept busy churning out popular pamphlets. While murals, statues, frescos, and relics were discarded as improper to the developing religious consciousness, pictures for teaching purposes rather than as devotional materials were not banned. Large images in the churches might distract the worshipper from the message of the Word, but printed images in the educational pamphlets and even in the Bible were acceptable. Luther had engaged the services of the artist Lucas Cranach to produce a series of woodcuts depicting the pope and the clergy as minions of the Antichrist.¹¹ There may have been as many as ten thousand tracts printed in the first half of the sixteenth century in a style and language that the ordinary people could understand. These usually included 'cartoons' for educational purposes.¹²

The sudden explosion of depictions of the demons and devils of Europe must certainly be attributed to the twin forces of the propaganda war and the development of a literate populace. During the Middle Ages, biblical scenes of exorcisms of the possessed commonly appeared. As the interest shifted from the Bible to contemporary existence and the immediate threat posed by the Devil in everyday life, the images of demons and their possible intervention in the lives of

⁹This concept of the Reformation shift from image to word and the impact on the worship service is from Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), pp. 95 - 125.

¹⁰The return to emotional affectation may be seen in such discussions as Jonathan Edwards in his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*.

¹¹See Appendix D.

¹²Steven Ozment, ed., *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research* (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1982), pp. 86 - 87, and quoted by Miles, *Image as Insight*, p. 115.

man.¹³ Demons and devils, possession and exorcism served a twofold purpose: it was religious in content and served an educational purpose, but it was also sensational, titillating, and exhilarating. It was devoured. There seems little doubt that it was also a contributor to the spread of information about the mechanics of possession and the ensuing drama that could develop.¹⁴ These tracts were written in the vernacular and were used to communicate a number of points depending on the religious bent of the reader: first, that demons and the devil were everywhere and that no one was immune to their attack; second, that Catholic exorcism could redeem the possessed for God; and third, that the Popish practice of exorcism was a tool of the Antichrist and useless in the face of evil.¹⁵

Protestant propaganda was clearly a motive in the case of Edmund Hartley, accused in Lancashire in 1596/7. Two children of a Nicholas Starkie were stricken with what seemed to be possession. A Catholic seminary priest attempted exorcism but failed. Edmund Hartley was called in, and for a fee, he agreed to tackle the case. Failing, the father consulted John Dee who suggested he seek out "godly ministers." It was asserted that Mr. Hartly had himself bewitched the children and that an additional five girls had been stricken after having been kissed by him. John Darrell and George More were sent for and after prayer, fasting, and the hanging of Edmund Hartley, now condemned as a witch, the demoniacs were dispossessed. The demons returned to at least one of the girls, however, when her "papist uncle returned bringing with him another seminary priest."¹⁶

The widespread circulation of the details of spectacular cases may have been responsible for the instances of fakery later found throughout Europe. In at least one situation the state took measures against printers, mostly unlicensed, who published the accounts of possessions, especially those later found to be counterfeit.¹⁷ Clearly the experience of one convent in France was

¹³Russell, *Lucifer*, p. 212.

¹⁴As has been thoroughly studied by D.P. Walker in *Unclean Spirits, Possession and exorcism in France and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries* (London: Scolar Press, 1981).

¹⁵Midelfort, p. 135.

¹⁶George More, *A True Discourse concerning the certaine possession and dispossession of 7 persons in one familie in Lancashire* (1600), and quoted by Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, pp. 186 - 187.

¹⁷Thomas, *Religion*, p. 482 - 483.

the model for at least two more.¹⁸ By the end of the sixteenth century, the list of possibilities of the causes of possession contains tests for fakery more and more often.¹⁹

Besides the printed material, a second major source of information possibly responsible for the spread of possession during the last half of the sixteenth century was the sermonizing of the clergy.²⁰ They were very successful in making their voices heard and understood among the people. While the sermons are not included in the study here, they would seem to make a promising study on their own.²¹

Printed Materials

The *Malleus Maleficarum*, the most important for our purposes here and the earliest of the major treatises, was designed primarily for use in witchcraft trials. It is arranged in three parts: Part I, "Treating of the Three Necessary Concomitants of Witchcraft Which are the Devil, a Witch, and the Permission of Almighty God" which was explained above; Part II, "Treating the Methods by Which the Works of Witchcraft are Wrought and Directed, and How they May be Successfully Annulled and Dissolved"; and Part III, "Relating to the Judicial Proceedings in Both the Ecclesiastical and Civil Courts Against Witches and Indeed All Heretics." Parts I and II are of the most use to this study. The authors summarized much of the available materials on folklore, superstition, heresy, church dogma, sorcery, black and white magic, natural medicines, midwifery, with a generous sprinkling of hagiography, history, and philosophy into the most important handbook for witch-hunters ever produced. The greatest source of previously compiled materials used by the authors came from the writings of a Dominican prior by the name of Johannes Nider (1380 -

¹⁸See Walker, *Unclean Spirits*.

¹⁹For a case by case study in the spread of behavior patterns in possession cases and the pursuit of fakery see D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits. Possession and exorcism in France and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981).

²⁰See Clark, "Protestant Demonology," for some discussion on the role of sermons. For a study that depends heavily on the content of sermons during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries see Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th - 18th Centuries*, Translated by Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

²¹See Joseph Klaitz, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) who discusses on a number of occasions the impact of sermons on the spread of particular mass possessions like Mora, Sweden and Salem, Massachusetts; and Richard Godbeer, *Devil's Dominion*, pp. 74 - 76. Godbeer claims to have read "clerical treatises and approximately five hundred sermons, half printed and half in manuscript." These sermons are all from Massachusetts and were analyzed for their references to the Devil's power in causing sin. Perry Miller's *New England Mind* was also based on sermons and their impact on intellectual life although he was not concerned with the Devil and his techniques of possession.

1438). He had completed his own book, known as the *Formicarius*, or *The Anthill*, about 1435. The fifth division of *Formicarius* described "witches and their deceptions" and was sometimes even appended in its entirety to the *Malleus*.²²

The *Malleus Maleficarum* outlined a strict code of treatment toward suspects of witchcraft for the church, for the courts, and especially for the inquisitorial courts of Europe. In the words of the authors, it was presented "in order, then, that the judges, both ecclesiastical and civil, may have a ready knowledge of the methods of trying, judging, and sentencing." Much of the reputation of the *Malleus* must be attributed to three factors: the scholarly reputations of the authors, the authority of the papal bull of 1484 issued by Innocent VIII, and the detail with which the authors present the materials.²³

The authors, both Dominicans, were widely praised for their scholastic abilities. Jakob Sprenger (about 1436 - 1495) was the Dean of Cologne University and Heinrich Kramer (about 1430 - 1505) was Prior of the Dominican House in his home town of Schettstadt, a town just south of Strasbourg. Sprenger was born in Basel and admitted as a novice to the Dominican house there at about sixteen years old. He quickly became known as a reformer and a scholar and by the time he was thirty he had progressed through the ranks of his order to lecturer at the University of Cologne. He was a specialist on the philosophy of Peter Lombard and his lecture-room was said to have been thronged with eager students. On June 30, 1480 he was elected Dean of the Faculty of the University and the following year he was appointed Inquisitor Extraordinary for the Provinces of Mainz, Trèves, and Cologne, then in 1488 he was elected Provincial for the whole

²²Nider's book did not contain any of the materials found in so many later volumes on witchcraft such as the sabbat, the devil's pact, flying at night, copulation with demons. In fact Nider was almost a skeptic for in his earlier writing, *Praeceptorium Divinae Legis*, he had said that *transvection was an illusion, that metamorphosis was impossible, and that visions of heaven and hell were superstitions created by devils*. Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 355. In this he sounds much like Johann Weyer. The *Formicarius* was reprinted six times up to 1692 but it never achieved either the readership or the authority of the *Malleus*.

²³One point seems worth mentioning here, the *Malleus Maleficarum* was in direct opposition to the *Canon Episcopi*, probably the most quoted document in the repertoire of the Catholic theologians. This document was erroneously attributed to a fourth century council and was not actually presented in the West until the tenth century. Gratian of Bologna incorporated it into the *Corpus Juris Canonici* in the twelfth century and it thus became integrated into the Canon Law of the Church. Its position was that the belief in the marvels and the acts of witches, which were simply illusions and dreams, constituted heresy. After a long list of beliefs in such things as transvection, night flying, intercourse with demons, and pacts with devils, the *Canon Episcopi* states:

"It is therefore to be publicly proclaimed to all, that whoever believes such things or similar things loses the faith, and he who has not the right faith in God is not of God, but of him in whom he believes, that is, the devil. For of our Lord it is written, "All things were made by him." Whoever therefore believes that anything can be made, or that any creature can be changed to better or worse or be transformed into another species or likeness, except by God himself who made everything and through whom all things were made, is beyond doubt an infidel."

German Province. He was known for his piety and learning which was said to have impressed all who came into contact with him. He became known as the "Apostle of the Rosary" after he wrote the treatise *The Institution and Approbation of the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, which was first erected at Cologne on 8 September in the year 1475*. He died rather suddenly on December 6, 1495 in Strasbourg where he is buried.²⁴

Kramer was born in Schettstadt a town in Alsace where he entered the Order of St. Dominic at an early age. In addition to being the Prior of the House, he also held the title of Preacher-General and Master of Sacred Theology. At some point before 1474, he was appointed an Inquisitor for the provinces of Tyrol, Salzburg, Bohemia, and Moravia. He was first active in Tyrol where his activities aroused the hostility of the local people. In order to justify his witch-hunting, he is said to have hidden an old woman in an oven, and by making believe that the devil resided there, had her denounce many people who were subsequently tortured.²⁵ He was a tireless preacher and he was summoned to Venice in 1495 to give public lectures and disputations which attracted large audiences. He returned to Germany in 1497 and was living at a convent near Rohr when in 1500 he was appointed Inquisitor of Bohemia and Moravia. He was empowered to proceed against the Waldenses and the Picards in addition to the suspected witches. Kramer died in Bohemia in 1505.

One of the most conspicuous aspects of the Sprenger and Kramer scholarship is their vehement misogyny. Women's inferiority can be seen by looking into their explanation of the etymology of the word *femina*. For, they say, *Femina* comes from *Fe* meaning fides or faith and *Mimus* meaning less; *femina* then means faithless, "since woman is ever weaker to hold and preserve the faith."²⁶ This even though they were ardent defenders of the cult of the rosary and the Virgin Mary. They also asserted that all the kingdoms of the world have been overthrown by women yet they name only three: Troy by Helen, the Kingdom of the Jews by Jezebel; and the kingdom of the Romans by Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. These writers mined nearly every source available for quotes in their campaign against women. They began with the Aristotelian arguments, then dug up Greek and Roman quotes against women, found a rich source in both the Old and the New Testaments, the Church Fathers, and the Scholastics. Finally they acquired an abundant resource

²⁴Kramer's name was later Latinized to Henricus Institor. Information on the history of the *Malleus Maleficarum* and its authors was compiled from a number of sources including the introductions to the 1928 and 1948 editions printed in the Dover Publications Edition of 1971; Russell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (Crown New York: Publishers, Inc., 1959); Uta Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven: Women, Sexuality, and the Catholic Church*, Translated by Peter Heinegg (New York: Penguin Books, USA, 1990).

²⁵Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 338.

²⁶Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 6.

in the Catholic traditions themselves. An example might serve here. Tears and the act of crying carried a double meaning for Sprenger and Kramer. On the one hand they quoted Cato in that "when a woman weeps she weaves snares; or she labours to deceive a man."²⁷ Yet on the other hand they said that one of the signs that the women were under the Devil's power was that they were unable to weep when under torture, "for it can be said that the grace of tears is one of the chief gifts allowed to the penitent. . . ."²⁸

The *Malleus* has been touted throughout the ages as having served as the answer to the papal bull of 1484 that it would seem Kramer obtained after he and Sprenger had collaborated on the beginnings of the handbook. As a sidelight, the letter that is often appended to the work, one that is purported to be the official letter of approbation from the Theological Faculty of the University of Cologne in 1487 is very misleading. Only four members of the faculty actually signed it and they signed it saying that there was nothing in it that was against Catholic teaching. There has also been speculation that the letter was a complete forgery and was used to add prestige to the book.²⁹

In 1486, the subjects that the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*³⁰ found important to discuss are the same questions that were later articulated by James II a little over a century later and the same problems that again surface at the end of still another hundred years with Cotton Mather and his correspondents. Each generation of philosophers, theologians, doctors, and scientists, until the nineteenth century, relied on the same sources of authority. For the most part they quote Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus, Tertullian, Jerome, and Augustine; they return to Gregory, Dionysius the Areopagite and Aquinas. For early medical authorities Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna lead the list. During the period under discussion, Ficino and Paracelsus are most often mentioned. Then of course there is the Bible.

The writers of the specific literature of the period under discussion were most fond of quoting each other as authorities. The importance of the *Malleus Maleficarum* cannot be overemphasized. It was used by almost everyone no matter which side of the argument they chose. Its success was almost instantaneous when it first appeared in 1486. Subsequently, it went into fifteen printings before 1520 and nineteen more between 1574 and 1669. The two waves of printing

²⁷Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 6.

²⁸Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part III, Question 15. We know today that it is a physiological fact that a person under torture is incapable of shedding tears. Ranke-Heinemann, *Eunuchs*, p. 237.

²⁹Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 340.

³⁰The date of the first edition is not given with any certainty as many of the early editions lack place and date of publication, however most sources favor 1486.

would seem to correspond to the periods of most intense witchcraft hunts. Copies were readily available throughout Europe (of the later editions ten appeared in Lyon, four in Nuremberg, three in Venice, and two in Paris) and Puritan America. It was also printed in pocket form for use by judges. A modern scholar claims that a copy "lay on the bench of every judge, on the desk of every magistrate."³¹ Bodin's explanations in his *Démonomanie* depend heavily on the arguments advanced in the *Malleus* and even a skeptic like Johann Weyer mentioned the work as an authority numerous times.

The theologians were active in explaining the position of the Church on ideas of possession, demonology, and the work of Satan in the world. But by far the most prolific from the Catholic standpoint were those involved in the inquisitional arena. The *Malleus Maleficarum* published in 1486 falls into this category since it or its direct descendants were said to have been on the bench of every important magistrate in Europe and Puritan America through the end of the seventeenth century, yet it was never officially sanctioned by the Church in Rome. A second and most important volume the *Compendium Maleficarum* was produced in 1608 by Francesco-Maria Guazzo a monk of the Milanese Ambrosian Order. Guazzo had acquired a great reputation throughout the Archdiocese of Milan as "a most acute Judge and Assessor" in the prosecutions of witchcraft. In 1605 he was summoned to Cleves to advise the Serene Duke John William of Jülich-Cleves, who "it was feared had been sorcelled by an aged Satanist."³² An obvious admirer of Guazzo, since he paraphrased at least one section of the *Compendium Maleficarum* in his own *Demoniality* written about 1701, was Lodovico Maria Sinistrari. Sinistrari's work was not published until 1875, but it contains one of the most interesting explanations of the materiality of demons and it must not be discounted as a source for the prevailing system of beliefs at the time it was written.

A second category of writers were the jurists and the authors who wrote for the benefit of the magistrates as the secular arm of the Church. Among these were Jean Bodin (1529 - 1596), the philosopher/historian who wrote *La Démonomanie des sorciers* in 1582; Henry Boguet (c.1550 - 1619), the chief justice of Burgundy who produced the *Discours des sorciers* in 1590; Nicholas Remy (1530 - 1612), who was known as the "Torquemada of Lorraine,"³³ once bragged that he

³¹Montague Summers, quoted by Robert H. West, *Reginald Scot and Renaissance Writings on Witchcraft* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), p. 16.

³²Montague Summers in the editor's introduction of the *Compendium Maleficarum* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), p. viii - ix.

³³According to a note by Montague Summers in Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 104 n. Remy's work, according to Lea in *Materials*, p. 604, overtook the *Malleus* as the most important work on the subject. Remy's work was in turn superseded by the work of the Belgium Martin Antoine Del Rio, who was referred to in the Introduction of Mather, as a *Jesuit of Loraine* (*The Invisible World . . .*, Vol. I, p. xiii). While this may have been so in the courts, I did not find a substantial drop in mentions of the *Malleus* as authority although I began to see references to Remy and DelRio more and more.

had executed nine hundred witches between 1576 and 1591,³⁴ and published his *Dæmonalatreiæ libri tres* in 1595 as a handbook for judges; and James I of England (1567 -1628) who published *Dæmonologia* in 1604. The abundance of sources from France seems to have arisen from the conflict between the Huguenots and the Catholic Church.

Jean Bodin, born in Angers, was well educated in the classics, law, economics and philosophy. As a young man he became a Carmelite monk, but left the order to attend the University of Toulouse where he studied for twelve years, later becoming a professor of Roman Law there. In 1561 he was in Paris to serve the king and began to write his learned dissertations. Fifteen years later he lost favor after the publication of his *Republic* where he argued that the royal domain was vested in the people, not in the king who was but another citizen.³⁵ In the same year, 1576, he married and became a provincial lawyer and later a public prosecutor.

He based *Demonomanie* on his own experiences in prosecuting suspected witches. But it was published in order to refute the more moderate views of Johann Weyer whose work had been reprinted in Basel in 1578.³⁶ Brutal in his treatment of suspected witches, Bodin, by his own admission, tortured children, infants, and invalids. He advocated no leniency for witches. It was the custom in Scotland, Germany and France to strangle the condemned before burning. In Italy and Spain heretics were burned alive. In England and Puritan America, condemned witches were hanged. Since the usual fire lasted only about half an hour, Bodin felt it was too good for witches. He endorsed maiming, cutting, and then building the fire from green wood so that the torment would last even longer. The question of Bodin's religious affiliations became suspect to the Roman Catholics when he advocated tolerance for the French Calvinists and his *Demonomanie* began to be accepted by the Protestants.³⁷ His work was therefore condemned by the Inquisition; he was listed for execution in the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572 but escaped.³⁸

Henry Boguet's work, *Discours des sorciers* or *An Examen of Witches*, is one of the most important to this study because it records his own experiences with several possessed individuals:

³⁴Klairs, *Seroants*, p. 137.

³⁵Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 54.

³⁶A concise discussion of the differences between Weyer and Bodin as delineated by Bodin can be found in Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVII^e siècle: Une analyse de psychologie historique* (Librairie Plon, 1968), pp. 126 - 137.

³⁷D.P. Walker claims that "by the end of his life Bodin had ceased to be a Christian, and believed in a kind of simplified, archaic Judaism." *Spiritual and Demonic Magic From Ficino to Campanella* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1958; reprint edition, Nendln/Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1976), p. 171.

³⁸Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 54.

"I have founded the following treatise upon certain trials which I conducted . . .," he wrote at the beginning of his work. Boguet believed that in the majority of cases the devils were sent into the possessed persons by witches and he was very detailed in his observations of the demoniac's behavior and appearance. Boguet's explanations rely most heavily on the *Malleus* but he also quoted Bodin's *Demonomanie*, and Remy's *Demonolatreia*. There is little known about Boguet except some background on his writings. He was an eminent lawyer and author of an extensive treatise on the Burgundian code that became a standard textbook on law and went into several editions.³⁹ He was Chief Justice of the entire region of Saint-Claude and a devout Catholic. Among Boguet's most prominent works was a life of Saint Claudius, *Vie de Saint Claude*, published in 1591. His *Discours des sorciers* surpassed in popularity several works by better known authorities and contemporaries like Bodin and Remy by virtue of its appendix, "The Manner of Procedure of a Judge in a Case of Witchcraft." This was called "a book of precious gold" and was adopted in general practice "by most local Parliaments and puisne courts."⁴⁰ The appendix codified the statutes, rulings, methods, and regulations more clearly and concisely than any other contemporary text.

Nicolas Remy came from a long line of lawyers and became one of the standard French demonologists with his *Demonolatreiae*, published first in Lyon in 1595 and reprinted frequently thereafter. He studied law at the University of Toulouse where Jean Bodin taught and may actually have met him there. He worked in Paris from 1563 to 1570 when he left to take up the position of Lieutenant General of Vosges when his uncle retired. He became Privy Councilor to Duke Charles III of Lorraine in 1575 and was elevated to Attorney General of Lorraine in 1591. From this position he was able to override the decisions of local magistrates who he felt were too lenient on witches. Unlike many of the other Roman Catholic authors discussed here, Remy was married and fathered at least seven children.⁴¹ Some of Remy's extreme animosity toward suspected witches might be attributable to an incident in 1582 when his eldest son died. Remy remembered that a few days before the death an old beggar woman had asked him for alms and he had refused her. Deciding that she had cursed his son, Remy himself prosecuted her as a witch. Remy claims in the frontispiece of his work that he had personally condemned 900 witches in fifteen years — however, he makes no reference to any trials before 1581 or after 1591 the year he

³⁹This treatise was: *In Consuetudines generales Comitatus Burgundiae observationes . . . auctore Henrico Boguet*. (Lugduni, J. Pillehotte, 1604).

⁴⁰John Rodker in the "Editor's Preface" of Boguet, *An Examen of Witches*, p. vii.

⁴¹For information on the life of Nicolas Remy see Remy, *Demonolotry*, ed., Montague Summers (New York: A Facsimile Reprint, Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1970), pp. xvii - xxxiii; Russell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1959), pp. 407 - 408.

became Attorney General. Although he was no longer personally responsible for the cases after 1591, he took to the roads examining suspects, and searching the most remote villages for evidence of Satan's influence for he said: "Everything which is unknown lies, as far as I am concerned, in the cursed domain of demonology; for there are no unexplained facts. Whatever is not normal is due to the Devil."⁴²

While all the above authors in this category were Roman Catholic, James VI of Scotland was a Protestant. His *Demonology* was first published in Edinburgh in 1597, six years before he ascended the throne of the united kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Wales. Supposedly James was first interested in writing the treatise because of the trial of the North Berwick Witches who confessed in 1591 to "going to sea in a sieve in order to raise a storm to wreck the King's ship en route to Norway for his bride."⁴³ In the Preface to *Demonology*, James himself said that he was writing against "the damnable opinions of two principally of our age wherof the one called SCOT an Englishman, [who] is not ashamed in publike print to deny, that ther can be such as Witchcraft [and thus denies the spirit]. . . and the other called WIERS, a German Phisition, [who] sets out a public apologie for these craftesfolkes, whereby procuring their impunities . . ."⁴⁴

After ascending the throne of England as James I in 1603, he brought out a new edition of *Demonology* and with'in a year pressed Parliament into passing a 'witch act' that became known as the Statute of 1604.⁴⁵ The king had a change of heart a few years later and became as ardent a hunter of impostors as he had been a pursuer of witches. Despite this change, the Statute of 1604 remained on the books until it was repealed in 1736. The Salem trials in New England were prosecuted under this act.⁴⁶

A third group who involved themselves with explaining aspects of possession were the physicians. Often without regard for the consequences to religious doctrines, physicians attempted to offer alternate explanations in medical terms for the strange and frightening behavior of individuals. One of the earliest of these men, Johann Weyer, a Protestant who was the court physician to William of Cleves, published his *De praestigiis daemonum* in 1563. Writers who fol-

⁴²Quoted by Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 408. This idea owes much to Aquinas.

⁴³Robbins, p. 277. Also see Selma R. Williams, *Riding the Nightmare: Women & Witchcraft from the Old World to Colonial Salem* (New York: Harper Collins, 1978).

⁴⁴King James, *Demonology*, pp. xi - xii.

⁴⁵See Appendix D.

⁴⁶Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 280. On December 14, 1692, the Massachusetts General Council passed a bill in order to "give more particular direction in the execution of the law against witchcraft" which substantially incorporated the Statute of 1604. It was repealed in 1695.

lowed him, like Reginald Scot with *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, published in 1584, and John Cotta, whose *The Triall of Witchcraft* appeared in 1616, both in England, gave Weyer much credit and helped his work develop a following which included such later authors as Robert Calef in Puritan America at the end of the seventeenth century. An anonymous work, *Daimonomageia, A Small Treatise of Sickness and Diseases from Witchcraft, and Supernatural Causes* (1665), with the title portion claiming to be "useful to others besides physicians, In that it Confutes Atheistical, Sadducistical, and Skeptical Principles and Imaginations."

Robert Burton's medical treatise, *Anatomy of Melancholy* written between 1606 and 1615, gave considerable attention to the problem of demons and spirits.⁴⁷ With its digressions on 'Spirits', it provided the reader with an "up-to-date review of ancient and modern opinion"⁴⁸ concerning the demonic. Burton was a devout Anglican who believed that the devil was perfectly capable of working in humans: "Many think that [the devil] can work upon the body, but not upon the mind. But the experience pronounceth otherwise, that he can work both upon the body and mind. . . . For being a spiritual body, he struggles with out spirits . . . and suggests . . . envy, lust, anger, and so on, as he sees men inclined." Demons "go in and out of our bodies, as bees do in a hive. . . ."⁴⁹ The book went into five editions before Burton's death in 1640 and nine more after having been touted by Samuel Johnson.

Johann Weyer is especially important to this study because of his position and knowledge of the medical and anatomical studies of the late sixteenth century. He studied at the University of Paris, one of the most active centers for the advancement of medical theory in the mid-sixteenth century and was a disciple of Cornelius Agrippa. While completing the four-year term of study in medicine, Weyer would have heard lectures on and read works by such ancient and medieval medical scholars as Hippocrates, Galen, and Avicenna. He traveled extensively in North Africa and the East before returning to settle down in Germany.⁵⁰ Andreas Vesalias, the great early modern anatomist, had matriculated at the University of Paris in 1533, just the year before Weyer, and evidence of Vesalias work can be seen throughout Weyer's writing. Weyer ex-

⁴⁷Mentioned by Cooper in *The Mystery of Witchcraft*, Drake, I: xxxviii.

⁴⁸Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 89.

⁴⁹Burton, *Anatomy*, 1,2,1,2, p. 173-4.

⁵⁰For biographical information on Weyer see Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, ed., George Mora (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), pp. XXVII - LXXXVII; Russell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1959), pp. 538 - 540; Christopher Baxter, "Johann Weyer's De Praestigiis Daemonum: Unsystematic Psychology," in *The Damed Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, Sidney Angelo, ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 53 - 75.

plained, for instance, that a demoniac was physically incapable of vomiting objects such as iron nails of fairly large size, iron and brass clasps, needles and pins, bones, and even undergarments. He explained that these and "other still more ridiculous oddities . . . surpass the size of the natural width of the esophagus, even when it is stretched and distended as far as possible in a living human." Yet, he says that this is most roomy passage available through the opening of the mouth, the only other passageway connecting the mouth and the rest of the body being the trachea. Often Weyer demonstrated his understanding of human anatomy by explaining the physical impossibility of the actions believed possible by diabolic intervention.⁵¹

Besides bringing anatomical expertise to the overall argument concerning demoniacs, Weyer strongly disapproved of witch-burning, although he never denied the existence of demons. He followed Aquinas in claiming that the incidents witnessed such as the vomiting of strange objects were, to use the title of his treatise on the subject, *The Illusions of Demons*. Weyer actually condemned not only the 'illusions' created by demons, but also the 'illusions' created by Catholics in their ceremonies such as their use of exorcism and the use of relics for healing. He was vehemently anti-Catholic and while upholding the assertions of the *Malleus* he simply changed the malefactor from the old woman to the Catholic clergy. Much of his argument was directed against "popish" superstitious magic. While Weyer believed in the existence of the Devil and in the magical arts, he did not believe that all the old women hunted by such fanatics as Bodin were witches. *De praestigiis Daemonum* was the masterpiece of Weyer's life and went into several editions in Latin, German, and French between 1563 and 1579.⁵² Weyer's theology was apparently the first to contradict the Thomistic argument that to deny the possibility of witchcraft one would have to deny the existence of spirits.

Reginald Scot, one of the best known figures in the English witchcraft controversy, was born to a well-respected family in Kent in 1538. He attended Oxford without taking a degree, and lived his life as a country gentleman in Kent active in public affairs, private business, and horticulture.⁵³ He was the first person to write on the cultivation of hops, *The Perfite Platforme of a Hoppe Garden*, which was published a decade before his most famous work. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) while as the first English language book on witchcraft was used by Shakespeare

⁵¹See Chapter Five for a more complete explanation of the medical arguments surrounding the anatomical possibilities of certain body conditions involving the powers of demon.

⁵²The edition used here is the 1583, sixth edition.

⁵³For biographical information of Scot see Robert H. West, *Reginald Scot and Renaissance Writings on Witchcraft* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984); Sidney Angelo, "Reginald Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft: Scepticism and Sadduceeism," in *The Damed Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, Sidney Angelo, ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 453 - 454.

in fashioning the witches in *Macbeth*. In *The Discoverie*, Scot directly attacked such continental authors as Kramer, Sprenger, and Bodin. By doing so he entered directly into the international controversy between those who championed witchcraft persecution and the skeptics. Generally his book it met with much disapproval but since it was probably the most comprehensive book on the subject of the occult published during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it had, as most English books did not, a growing readership abroad.⁵⁴ Scot followed the same methodical, empirical, and experimental base that he used in his *Hoppe Garden*. He liked to test things out for himself and took to interviewing the participants and witnesses in the trials. He himself experimented with feats he had seen or heard about; he studied the texts concerning demonology and magical practices, and even attempted to conjure up a devil. He argued that the earlier writers, when faced with a situation difficult to explain, fell back on the authority of Scriptures or ancient and patristic authors, none of whom could be questioned nor the assertions verified using experimental techniques. Finally he tackled the fundamental problem of the veracity of miracles.

Scot extended Weyer's argument against the possibility of supernatural happenings when he claimed, like the Anglican Church and the Protestants, that there were no longer any miracles. Citing Calvin, he asserted that:

. . . the grace of healing spoken of by S. James, is vanished awaie, as also the other miracles which the Lord would have shewed onelie for a time, that he might make the new preaching of the gospell mervellous for ever. . . . But he [God] dooth not so utter his manifest powers, nor distributeth miracles, as by the hands of the apostles, because the gift was but for a time.⁵⁵

But such things as seeme miraculous, are cheeflie doone by deceit, legierdemaine, or confederacie; or else they may be doone, and yet seeme unpossible, or else things are said to be done, and never were nor can be doone.⁵⁶

Scot also maintained that the gift of prophecy had ceased as had also the oracles of an earlier day. Yet, for all his ranting against the witchmongers and the belief in witches in general, he did not deny the possibility of demons. Although he insisted that they were not able to interfere bodily in the lives of men, he did maintain that they were capable of spiritual intervention. They could act upon men "by invisible and imperceptible communication of evil suggestions," through temptation.⁵⁷ Scot was especially hard on Bodin throughout his work and took every opportunity

⁵⁴West, *Reginald Scot*, p. 33. It was translated into Dutch and a 1609 edition was reprinted twice.

⁵⁵Scot, *Discoverie*, VIII, 1.

⁵⁶Scot, *Discoverie*, VIII, 1.

⁵⁷Kelly, *The Devil*, p. 103.

to ridicule him.⁵⁸ Scot was so thorough in elucidating the absurdities of the spells and methods of sorcery that his work subsequently became a source for new practitioners.

Yet another Protestant, Increase Mather, defended Bodin saying that "there are some that will give no credit unto what Bodinus writes, because they say he was a Papist . . . but, he was such an other Papist as Erasmus was, whom the Papists are wont to picture hanging between heaven and hell. . . ." Mather often quoted Bodin's *Dæmonomania* as an authority because he "was an ingenious & judicious writer. . ."⁵⁹ and no doubt because he was a particular source for the Cambridge Platonists who served as the theological underpinnings of the late seventeenth century New England divines.⁶⁰

An important shift from the Aristotelian philosophies of the above intellectuals was the move toward a Neoplatonic understanding. The Mathers, even though initially steeped in the Aristotelianism of their heritage, adopted new modes of thought through these Cambridge thinkers. In response to the developing rationalism of the last decades of the seventeenth century, the spiritual world found a new set of allies in the Platonists at Cambridge University, the mother of New England Puritanism. Without exception, the Cambridge Platonists came out of a Puritan background, but they abandoned the Puritan theology in favor of a more moderate position, called by some of their enemies, Latitudinarian. The amalgamation of a number of creeds was one goal of the Cambridge Platonists as they were willing to entertain many beliefs under the broader name of Christian. Cotton Mather seems to follow their lead when he says that "Persons

⁵⁸Scot, *Discoverie*, II, 10; III, 1; V, 2, 3.

⁵⁹Increase Mather, *A Disquisition Concerning Angelical Apparitions*, (Boston, 1696), p. 39. Robert Calef on the other hand, characterized Bodin as a perpetrator of "bloody Experiments." *More Wonders*, Drake, II:6. For biographical information on the Mather's see: Mason I. Lowance, Jr., *Increase Mather*, (New York: Twayne Publisher, Inc., 1974); David Levin, *Cotton Mather, The Young Life and the Lord's Remembrancer, 1663 - 1703*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978); Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596 - 1728*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

⁶⁰Background information on the Cambridge Platonists and their theological understanding in the late seventeenth century can be found in: Gerald R. Cragg, editor, *The Cambridge Platonists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); C.A. Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970); William Cecil dePauley, *The Candle of the Lord*, Studies in the Cambridge Platonists (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, reprinted 1970); Serge Hutin, *Henry More, Essai sur les doctrines théosophiques chez les Platoniciens de Cambridge* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966); Aharon Lichtenstein, *Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); John Passmore, "Cambridge Platonists," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume II (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. inc., 1967), pp. 9 - 11; Flora I Mackinnon, *Philosophical Writings of Henry More*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1925; "Henry More," *Dictionary of National Biography*, Volume 13 (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

of all those Perswasions, . . . Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Antipoedobaptist, . . . will be taken in our Fellowship, when visible Godliness has recommended them . . ."⁶¹

This group of Cambridge scholars embraced Plato and especially his disciple Plotinus—called by Henry More "the divine Plotinus."⁶² These thinkers rejected the "entire Western theological tradition from Saint Augustine" all the way through Luther and Calvin. John Worthington, an occasional follower of the Platonists, commented sometime after the Restoration, that the Cambridge Platonists harkened to "the ancient and wisest philosophers, as also the primitive fathers, the Greeks especially."⁶³ Where most Protestants avoided Origen and the writings of the other Greek Fathers except through the works of Tertullian and Saint Augustine, these men reversed the teaching. Henry More dubbed Origen "that Miracle of the Christian World," and in the minds of the Cambridge scholars, Aristotle was removed from his pedestal and surrendered his title of 'the Philosopher' to Plato. Luther and Calvin were virtually ignored. More claimed in his "Little Narrative of himself" that he took up philosophy against the Puritan theology "because he could not stomach the Calvinist doctrine of predestination."⁶⁴ The return to the 'the ancient and wisest philosophers' included more than just those above, it embraced all the Neoplatonists including those of fifteenth-century Florence, especially Ficino. The thinking was rooted in what Ficino called 'the primitive theology of the Gentiles'⁶⁵ that he believed began with Zoroaster, had been carried forward by Pythagoras and Orpheus, and had finally come to rest with Plato. More outlined this philosophy in his *Psychozoia* (I, 4):

Plato's school
 . . . well agrees with learned Pythagore,

⁶¹C. Mather, *Wonders*, in Drake, I:11.

⁶²More, *The Oracle*, 1. 17 and quoted by C.A. Patrides in his introduction to *The Cambridge Platonists* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 4.

⁶³John Worthington, *Discourses*, p. 36, and quoted by Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p. 4.

⁶⁴Richard Ward, *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr Henry More* (London: J. Downing, 1710), p. 6 and quoted in John Hoyles, *The Waning of the Renaissance 1640 - 1740, Studies in the Thought of Henry More, John Norris and Issac Watts*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, p. 3.

⁶⁵This idea was developed in a legend that claimed that Pythagoras was a contemporary of Moses, had read the Hebrew scriptures, and had incorporated them into his own philosophical work. More in fact assures us of the truth of the tradition in his *Enchiridion ethicum* (1666): ". . . that Pythagoras drew his Knowledge from the Hebrew Fountains, is what all Writers, Sacred and Prophane, do testifie and aver. That Plato took from him the principal part of that Knowledge, touching God, the Soul's Immortality, and the Conduct of Life and Good Manners, has been doubted by no Man. And that it went from him, into the Schools of Aristotle, and so deriv'd and diffus'd, almost into the whole World, is in like manner attested by all." Quoted by Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists*, p. 7.

Egyptian Trismegist, and th' antique roll
Of Chaldee wisdom, all which time hath tore
But Plato and deep Plotin do restore.

Cambridge Platonists became concerned about the rising prevalence of what they perceived as 'atheism and saducism' among the writers who were skeptical about the witchcraft phenomenon. The fear of the Cambridge Platonists and their followers was that the "eternal verities" of the spiritual battle between good and evil would be undermined in the rush by the rationalists and skeptics to discredit and ridicule what they called the "old wives' tales" of religion. The authors of the works against atheism recognized that to simply retell the old tales of the spiritual world was not enough. Because "things remote, or long past, are either not believed, or forgotten: whereas these being fresh and hear, and attended with all the circumstances of credibility, it may be expected they should have the more success upon the obstinacy of Unbelievers."⁶⁶ So new and current stories were collected and printed along with the ancient ones. It was under these circumstances that a wave of pamphlets and treatises with "modern relations" were published.

One of the most systematic and prolific leaders of the Cambridge Platonists, and the only member not attached to Emmanuel College, was Henry More (1614 - 1687). Born in Lincolnshire and educated at Eton and Cambridge, More was the son of a 'gentleman of fair estate and fortune.' Respected and learned, More spent his life in an almost cloistered existence at Christ's College at Cambridge venturing out, it is said, only for seances at the home of Lady Anne Conway.⁶⁷ He moved from one department of study to another looking for the one he felt suited him best. More attempted to reconcile the ever-widening breach between the spirit and reason. He believed in the authority of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit yet he never renounced Anglican orthodoxy. His inner-light writings prompted some to believe that he was in fact a Quaker but he disliked religious enthusiasts for he said: "God doth not ride me as a horse, and guide me I know not whither myself; but converseth with me as a friend."⁶⁸

⁶⁶Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, pp. 63-64.

⁶⁷ Robbins, "Pandaemonium," p. 176: "Glanvill and More and some other well-known persons, like Lady Roydon, like Robert Boyle, the celebrated chemist and physicist who demonstrated the circulation of blood and who became president of the Royal Society, and like Dr. Francis van Helmont, private physician to Lady Anne Conway, met at the latter's home at Ragley Castle in Warwickshire for informal seances." More dedicated his book *Antidote Against Atheism* to Lady Anne Conway who later became a Quaker, much to More's consternation. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz shared many mutual friends with More and the Cambridge Platonists although I cannot find any direct contact. See D.P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 122 - 127.

⁶⁸More, *Second Lash*, quoted in Hoyles, p. 41 - 42.

A contemporary says that More was "an open hearted, and sincere Christian philosopher, who studied to establish men in the great principles of religion against atheism [and] . . . to assert, and examine the principles of religion and morality on clear grounds, and in a philosophical method. In this, More led the way to many that came after him."⁶⁹ He twice turned down offers of bishoprics. More, probably to a greater degree than anyone else, accepted the writings of the most extreme continental demonologists, especially Bodin and Remy, and believed literally in all manner of claims against witches: metamorphosis, transvection, sabbats, familiars, incubi and succubi, and sexual intercourse with demons. He devoted his life to study and corresponded regularly with many of the greatest thinkers of the day including René Descartes.⁷⁰ More searched for ways to vindicate his theism, his belief in the spiritual realm, and the doctrine of immortality against the materialism of the rationalists. Drawing on the writings of Plato and Plotinus, he insisted that there was a higher principle and that it was possible to apprehend it "through the cultivation of a righteous disposition and a free intellect."⁷¹ He used the new scientific methods not like Scot to disprove "superstitious" beliefs, but to prove and certify the demonology of the day. He explained how a demon can materially change the possessed into another person or an animal:

For I conceive the devil gets into their body, and by his subtle substance, more operative and searching than any fire or putrefying liquor, melts the yielding compages of the body to such a consistency, and so much of it as is fit for his purpose, and makes it pliable to his imagination; and then it is easy for him to work it into what shape he pleaseth, as it is to work the air into such forms and figures as he ordinarily doth.⁷²

After the series of letters he exchanged with Descartes, More developed his theories over the next two decades. He began to shape and refine his ideas in his *An Antidote against Atheism*, first printed in London in 1652 and subsequently reprinted with changes over the next ten years.⁷³ His *Immortality of the Soul* was published in 1659 to a "generally enthusiastic" recep-

⁶⁹Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, *Burnet's History of His Own Time*, Vol. i, pp. 186 - 191 and reprinted in *Characters from the Histories & Memoirs of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), pp. 246 - 247.

⁷⁰More wrote a number of letters to Descartes and were published first in French as *Lettres de M. Descartes où sont traittées les plus belles questions de la morale, de la physique, de la médecine et des mathématiques . . .* (Paris, 1657) by Clerseilier and were then republished in England by More himself in his *Collection of several philosophical writings* (1662).

⁷¹*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 939.

⁷²More, *An Antidote Against Atheism*, Book III, Chapter 8, p. 134.

⁷³The designation "atheist" was a still a derogatory term imposed on others in the seventeenth century. There were no self-proclaimed atheists until well into the eighteenth century. Funkenstein, p. 346n.

tion.⁷⁴ It is reported that More's work was widely read "for twenty years together, after the *Return* of King Charles the Second, the *Mystery of Godliness*, and Dr. More's other works, ruled all the Booksellers in London."⁷⁵ More himself translated his works into Latin between 1675 and 1679 and *The Immortality of the Soul* was also translated into French and German before the end of the decade. More's impact on the thinkers at the end of the century was enormous. From letters we know that Leibniz read his work in Latin and commented on it. A report of a conversation between Samuel Johnson and James Boswell would indicate that More's reputation carried well into the eighteenth century. Boswell, it seems attempted to lead Johnson into a discussion on the future state of the soul and asked him if there were "any harm in our forming to ourselves conjectures as to the particulars of our happiness, though the Scripture has said very little on the subject." Johnson is reported to have replied: "Sir, there is no harm. What philosophy suggests to us on that topick is probable. What Scripture tells us is certain. Dr. Henry More has carried it as far as philosophy can."⁷⁶

More has much to say about the attitudes of new rationalists toward religion and he holds them in contempt because "*forasmuch a such course-grain'd Philosophers as those Hobbians and Spinozians, and the rest of the Rabble, slight Religion and the Scriptures.*" More claims that they barely mention angels and spirits but says that is probably because "*their dull Souls are so inclinable to conceit*" that it would be impossible for them to understand. He does look on the modern and "*fresh examples of Apparitions*" as a "*special piece of Providence*" that "*may rub up and awaken their benumbed and lethargick Minds into a suspician at least . . . that there be other intelligent Beings besides those that are clad in heavy Earth and Clay.*"⁷⁷

In the beginning, the Cambridge Platonists were especially partial to Descartes, "whose intellectualism appealed to them," yet within a few years they sought to purge his work of the materialist stand. More enthusiastically embraced Descartes as providing him with "a system, which, allowing for the existence of both a mechanistic universe and spiritual phenomena, could combine the theistic and spiritual emphasis of Christian Platonism with the mechanistic element of the new science, thus integrating religion, science, and philosophy in one grand synthesis."⁷⁸

⁷⁴ A. Jacob, ed., *Henry More. The Immortality of the Soul* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), p. xliii.

⁷⁵Jacob, *Henry More*, p. xlvii.

⁷⁶Quoted by Jacob, *Henry More*, p. xlviii.

⁷⁷From a letter of Henry More to Joseph Glanvill reprinted in Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, p. 16 - 27. [The italics are in the original.]

⁷⁸Aharon Lichtenstein, *Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 10.

They finally called him and others "Nullibists" or those "that boldly affirm that a *Spirit* is *Nullibi*, that is to say, *Nowhere*." About the Nullibists the Platonists say that:

. . . the chief Authour and Leader seems to have been the pleasant Wit *Renatus des Cartes*, who by his jocular *Metaphysical Meditations*, has so luxated and distorted the rational Faculties of some other wise sober and quick-witted persons, but in this point by reason of their over-great admiration of *Des Cartes* not sufficiently cautious, that deceived, partly by his counterfeit and prestigious subtilty, and partly by his Authority, have persuaded themselves that such things were most *true* and *clear* to them; which had they not been blinded with these prejudices, they could never have thought to have been so much as possible.⁷⁹

Joseph Glanvill (1636 - 1680) became the popularizer of the beliefs of the Cambridge Platonists and through his correspondence with the Mathers in America transferred many of Henry More's ideas to this continent. It was probably Glanvill's work with ghosts and the Mather's involvement with his stories that influence Cotton Mather in his understanding of spectral evidence. Glanvill was particularly appalled by the disbelief in the spiritual world and produced *Saducismus Triumphatus or, Full and Plain Evidence concerning Witches and Apparitions*. The work was published posthumously in 1682 after being edited and supplemented by Henry More.⁸⁰ Glanvill felt it important to refute those who through philosophical discourses had attempted to disprove the existence of witchcraft. He mentioned Thomas Hobbes and Reginald Scot by name and said that there is but one argument against Scot, "which is not to be dealt with," because Scot's belief system "is a mighty confidence grounded upon nothing, that swaggers, and huffs, and swears there are no witches." For such Philosophers as these, he went on to say, "let them enjoy the opinions of their own Superlative Judgments, and enter me in the first rank of Fools for crediting my senses" People like Hobbes and Scot were impossible to persuade and for his part, Glanvill said, he never attempted to convince them of anything for he said: "*Their Opinions come into their Heads by chance, when their little reasons had no notice of their entrance; and they must be let alone to go out again by themselves, the same way they entered.*"⁸¹

Glanvill claimed that such a work as his was necessary "for our age, in which Atheism is begun in Saducism: "And those that dare not bluntly say, 'There is no God,' content themselves to deny there are Spirits or Witches."⁸² Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus* was a direct attack on such writers as Reginald Scot who he said:

⁷⁹Glanvill, *The True Notion of a Spirit*, p. 134-135.

⁸⁰*Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, Volume I, Filmer, p. xviii; Cooper, p. xxxv.

⁸¹Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, p. 64.

⁸²Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, p. 63.

. . . doth little but tell odd Tales, and silly Legends, which he confutes and laughs at, and pretends this to be a Confutation of the Being of Witches and Apparitions. In all which, His Reasonings are trifling and Childish; and when he ventures into Philosophy, he is little better than absurd: So that 'twill be a wonder to me, if any but Boyes and Buffoons imbibe any prejudices against a Belief so infinitely confirmed, from the loose and Impotent Suggestions of so weak a Discourser.⁸³

Glanvill, an Anglican divine and rector of the Abbey Church at Bath from 1666, was also interested in natural phenomena and their relationship to religion. It was this curiosity which led he and Henry More to form a "virtual association for 'psychical research,'" and, he became close friends with the founders of the Royal Society to which he was elected a member in 1664. Glanvill himself visited the home of Mr. Mompesson at Tedworth, Wiltshire where he witnessed for himself the strange phenomena of drummings and spirit sightings. He was a frequent correspondent with Increase Mather with whom he traded stories of the supernatural for inclusion in their individual writings. Increase Mather's *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1684) better known later as *Remarkable Providences*, was based on a manuscript from 1658. Mather refers to this in the Preface of *An Essay*: "About six and twenty years ago, a Design for the Recording of Illustrious Provinces was under serious consideration among some eminent Ministers in England and in Ireland." In this earlier manuscript, the stories collected by "Puritan ministers [who had] set down incidents gathered in England and Ireland" were combined with cases from "the New England divines and Mather's commentary supplement." The final compilation was expected to prove both scientifically and evidentiary that the supernatural could intervene in the affairs of men. Mather's version of "The Tedworth Drummer" in his *Remarkable Providences* was taken directly out of Glanvill. Cotton Mather adopted the propagandizing narrative style that he used for *Wonders of the Invisible World* and the sixth section of the *Magnalia Christi Americana* directly from the literary style of Glanvill and More.⁸⁴

Glanvill's understanding of the importance of the American wilderness as a place for experiencing the spiritual world and as a metaphor for the spiritual world as a whole is emphasized by his advice to the Royal Society of Science in 1668: to explore "the LAND of SPIRITS," which "is a kind of AMERICA, and not a well discover'd Region."⁸⁵ "In America 'tis a common thing to see Spirits day and night."⁸⁶

⁸³Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, p. 108.

⁸⁴For a discussion of the move from the theological to the literary use of the supernatural story, see the Introduction by Coleman O. Parsons in *Saducismus Triumphatus* (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimilies & Reprints, 1966), pp. vii - xix.

⁸⁵Quoted by Coleman O. Parsons in the Introduction to *Saducismus Triumphatus*, p. xvi.

⁸⁶Richard Baxter, *The Certainty of the World of Spirits* (London, 1691), p. 107 and quoted by Robert Calef in a letter to Cotton Mather, reprinted in *Witchcraft Delusion*, II, p. 116. This kind of theological treatise was not new to the Christian west. Pope Gregory the Great had

Why would it not be the place to encounter the Devil and his minions? "It was a rousing *alarm* to the Devil, when a great Company of English *Protestants* and *Puritans*, came to erect Evangelical Churches, in a corner of the World, where he had reign'd without any controul for many ages."⁸⁷

Cotton Mather explained just how numerous the spirits were:

It is not *One Devil* alone, that has Cunning or Power enough to apply the Multitudes of *Temptations*, whereby mankind is daily diverted from the Service of God; No, the *High Places* of our Air, are swarming full of those *Wicked Spirits*, whose *Temptations* trouble us; they are so many, that it seems no less than a *Legion*, or more than twelve thousand may be spared, for the Vexation of one miserable man. But because those Apostate Angels, are all *United* under one Infernal Monarch, in the Designs of Mischief, 'tis in the Singular Number, that they are spoken of.⁸⁸

Saducismus Triumphatus is a collection of "ghost stories" in which Glanvill yet insisted: "I have no humour nor delight in telling stories, and do not publish these for the gratification of those who have; but I record them as Arguments for the conformation of a Truth." This type of literature, written for popular consumption either as entertainment or as a teaching device, included the tales of the supernatural such as that from Glanvill and the Mathers as well as autobiographies, accounts of episodes of possession, and exorcisms in the form of pamphlets or tracts circulated widely from the mid-sixteenth century on. These were used to reinforce belief in the truth of the spirit, because as More once said, "No spirit, no God," and hence, there would be no immortality. They taught by titillation through a blending of indoctrination and entertainment. But what was taught by the Mathers in Massachusetts was to become the New England orthodox view of the spiritual world.

Increase Mather and his son Cotton Mather both wrote works concerning the activities of the Devil on the North American continent. Since it was a common sentiment that "[t]he New

polled his fellow clerics, not unlike the collection procedure used by More, Glanvill and Mather, and had produced in the sixteenth century his *Dialogues*. The attempt to make the invisible world real and objective for the believer was an ongoing task for the Church. One legend told about Gregory himself reflects the belief that ordinary guests may turn out to be angels. Gregory, just after becoming pope, once invited twelve poor men to come to dinner, however, on counting the guests, he found that there were thirteen. Gregory said nothing, fed all thirteen, and afterwards dinner invited the last to his own room. There the 'guest' revealed that he was in reality an angel and had appeared to Gregory once before as a shipwrecked mariner. At that time, Gregory, a poor monk, had given the mariner all he had, a silver dish from his mother. Gregory was told that from that day on God had destined him to become pope.

Luther's *Table Talk* is infused with first-hand contemporary stories (some are related here) and there was no lack of other contenders in the war for the beliefs of the populace. See also Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*; David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement*.

⁸⁷Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, p. 94.

⁸⁸Cotton Mather, *Wonders*, in Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, , I: 218.

Englanders [were] a people of God settled in those, which were once the Devil's Territories; and it may easily be supposed that the Devil was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a People here accomplishing the Promise of the Blessed Jesus, That He should have the Utmost parts of the Earth for his possession."⁸⁹ Identification of the Christian Devil with American natives was a logical conclusion. The possessed girls at Salem often saw the devil as "a thing like an indian all black"⁹⁰ or as "a wretch no taller than an ordinary Walking-Staff; hee was not of a Negro, but of a Tawney, or an Indian colour; hee wore a high-crowned Hat, with strait Hair; and had one cloven foot."⁹¹

Increase Mather's *A Case of Conscience and A Disquisition Concerning Angelical Apparitions*, published in 1696, grew out of the Salem trials as did Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*. Should there still be any question about the influence of the Cambridge Platonists on Cotton Mather it should be answered when we read the Preface to *Memorable Providences* (1689): ". . . I can with a Contentment beyond meer patience give these rescinded Sheets unto the Stationer, when I see what pains Mr. Baxter,⁹² Mr. Glanvill, Dr. More, and several other Great Names have taken to publish Histories of Witchcrafts and Possessions unto the world. I said, Let me also run after them; and this with the more Alacrity because, I have tidings ready. Go then, my little Book, as a Lackey to the more elaborate Essayes of those learned men." It was written at the request of Governor Phips for use in addressing the questions and accusations stemming from the Salem incident. That was how it was used since "the govenor drew heavily on the book for information when writing his letter . . . to the government in London."⁹³

When it came to the Salem witches, Cotton Mather had an adversary in the matter of spectral evidence and in the general belief system then prominent among the Boston clergy. That adversary was the merchant and "clothier" Robert Calef. Little is known about the life of Calef but

⁸⁹Calef, in Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, , II:15.

⁹⁰Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, ed., *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of the Salem Outbreak of 1692* (New York: DeCapo Press, 1977), 2:610 - 611. The relationship between the witches of Salem and the natives American shamans in explored in an unpublished article by Alfred A. Cave, *Indian Shamans and English Witches in Seventeenth-Century New England*, presented at Plymouth State College, June 26, 1992.

⁹¹Cotton Mather, *A Brand Pluck'd Out of the Burning* (1692), in Burr, *Narratives*, p. 261.

⁹²Richard Baxter was another writer of 'witch stories.' He was an admirer of More and Glanvill and his *The Certainty of the a world of Spirits* (1691) was frequently read in America. Cotton Mather sent a copy to Robert Calef.

⁹³Thomas, in Angelo, *The Damned Art*, p. 209.

that he was probably an immigrant⁹⁴ and was in good standing in the community is certain since even after standing against the tide of public opinion almost alone, he was elected to several offices in and around Boston. Calef seems to have been quite proficient in refuting and arguing the finer points of law and theology as relating to the witchcraft controversy. He collected together his correspondence and 'matters of fact' concerning the individual cases at Salem in a volume entitled *More Wonders of the Invisible World*. Written in 1697 and published in London in 1700, the first American edition did not appear until 1796. Produced at Salem, this was a reprint of the 1700 London edition except for the addition of the case of Giles Cory. *More Wonders* is an important source for this work as it gives many details on the possessed girls and the trials not mentioned in the Mathers' writings.

Both Increase and Cotton Mather were also interested in the scientific approach. Although Increase Mather was not as prolific in the scientific field as his son Cotton, he nevertheless quoted extensively from *Philosophical Transactions*, the journal of the Royal Society of London. He once expressed the desire that "the Natural History of New England, might be written and published to the World; the rules and method described by that learned and excellent person Robert Boyle, Esq. being duley observed therein."⁹⁵

One widely respected Northampton physician, John Cotta, was a particular source for Cotton Mather in questioning the possession behavior of the Salem girls. John Cotta was another of the Cambridge connection having taken his A.B., M.A., and M.D. there. His treatise *The Triall of Witch-Craft* was published in London in 1616. Cotta was born about 1575 in Warwickshire, but after completing his studies at Cambridge in 1603, he settled in Northampton where he died in 1650.⁹⁶ His interest in the possession cases was to emphasize that what was wanted in cases of possession and bewitchment was not so much theological expertise but medical knowledge.⁹⁷

A Scotsman, George Sinclair, took upon himself in 1685 to publish many of Glanvill's and More's stories in his own treatise, *Satan's Invisible World Discovered* (1685). Sinclair was Master, Regent, and Professor of Philosophy at the College of Glasgow, a post he lost in 1666 for refusing to take the oaths of allegiance and Episcopal supremacy. He, like many of the other authors here, undertook the scientific study of supernatural phenomena. He was a mathematician, an

⁹⁴See Robert Calef's own statement about his search for reason, "*which is what I have been seeking in this Country in vain*" in the Preface of *More Wonders*, Drake II:4. The editor claims that this leads to the conclusion that Calef was not a native New Englander.

⁹⁵Mather, "The Preface," *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*, (Boston, 1684), p. xviii.

⁹⁶*Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 4, p. 1213.

⁹⁷Middlekauff, *The Mathers*, p. 156.

expert on mining and mineral deposits, a scientific experimenter, and an inventor of sorts. He was the supervisor on the project of laying water pipes in Edinburgh and he was employed by owners of salt and coal mines.⁹⁸

Besides the treatises described above, a body of materials was produced by the Catholic and Anglican churches in relation to the control of exorcists and exorcisms. On the continent, the most heated competition for supremacy in the validity of exorcism rituals was between the Huguenots and the Roman Catholics, while in England, it raged three ways among the Catholics, the Anglicans and the Puritans. Two texts relating to these questions will be examined here. The Roman impetus to regulate and codify the rituals associated with exorcism also seems to have been prompted by the Protestant attacks on Catholic 'superstitious magic.'⁹⁹ *The Rituale Romanum*, published in 1614, handled the question of qualified exorcists a bit differently, leaving more room for individual decision. The rule reads: "First of all he [the exorcist] should not easily believe that anyone is possessed by a demon, but let him know the signs whereby a possessed person can be distinguished from those who suffer from black bile [melancholy] or some disease." A second text, *A Manual of Exorcism very Useful for Priests and Ministers of the Church*, was written by an anonymous author at the close of the seventeenth century in Spain and gives practical advice to the exorcist gleaned from many of the sources already examined here. The manuscript was found recently in the Library of the Hispanic Society of America and from the handwriting, paper and orthography, it has been suggested that it was compiled during the reign of King Carlos II (1661 - 1700). In 1709 the Vatican placed a ban on the five existing manuals of exorcism and in 1725, comprehensive controls of the practice of exorcism were issued.¹⁰⁰

Education in the literature of exorcism, 'knowing the signs' of a possessed person, was stressed by the Catholic manuals again and again. Just to be sure that any would-be exorcist was as educated as he could be, the anonymous author of *A Manual of Exorcism* recommended that "any priest or minister of God, who wishes to engage in a work as pious and as acceptable to God as it is to befriend and help those who are possessed with a devil or with a demon and those who are bewitched and enchanted by the Devil, must read and learn well from the authors who deal

⁹⁸Coleman O. Parsons, in the Introduction to *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, p. vii.

⁹⁹Point raised by Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, p. 6.

¹⁰⁰Anonymous, *A Manual of Exorcism very Useful for Priests and Ministers of the Church*, Translated from Spanish by Eunice Beyersdorf, Translated from Latin by J.D. Brady (New York: The Hispanic Society of America, 1975), Preface.

with this material."¹⁰¹ One of the books on the suggested reading list, two hundred years after it first appeared was the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

The literature produced in England on both sides of the pamphlet war between John Darrell about (1562 - 1602), the Puritan exorcist, and Samuel Hasnett (1561 - 1631), who became Archbishop of York, was prolific. John Darrell is England's only known Protestant exorcist and his behavior and subsequent ill reputation prompted the Church of England in 1604 to enact Canon 72, which effectively prohibited exorcism. Some local dioceses passed laws similar to those of the Church of England in order to curb the practices. The existence of Canon 72 may also have helped to reduce the number of suspected demoniacs.

Samuel Hasnett's *A Declaration of the Egregious Popish Impostures*, published in 1603, was mostly a reiteration of Reginald Scot's work. Based on materials collected by Richard Bancroft, then Bishop of London but soon Archbishop of Canterbury, it was a vitriolic attack on the priesthood and on the supernatural in general. *A Whip for the Devil; or the Roman Conjuror* was published in 1683 for Thomas Malthus in London and claimed to discover the "intolerable Folly, Profaneness, and Superstition of the Papists, in endeavouring to cast the Devil out of the Bodies of Man and Women by Him possest."

Case Studies

Many of the later works of the English and the American authors are organized on the scientific method of "case studies." These were designed as either popular literature or as examples used as evidence for argument. Of the accounts written by eye-witnesses, I have chosen to incorporate only a few that offer insights into the most well-known cases. On the side of the Roman Catholics there are the cases at Louviers and Loudun. Both involved groups of nuns and culminated in the arrest, trial and execution of a member of the clergy accused of sorcery. Both cases also involved a single demoniac at the beginning and a spreading of the possession through a number of other women.

In reviewing the materials on the group possessions in France, one must ask why the major portion of these possessions took place in Ursuline convents. The number of afflicted Ursuline convents seems out of proportion to the number of possessions found in other older religious orders. While a study of the social conflicts surrounding the outbreaks of possession is outside the scope of the present work, it might at least be helpful to mention the history of the order in France. The relative infancy of the order may have contributed to the outbreaks.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹*Manual*, frontispiece. One work mentioned in particular was the *Malleus Maleficarum*.

¹⁰²The information on the history of the Ursuline order in France is from Elizabeth Rapley, *The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

The Ursulines were founded in Brescia, Italy in 1544 as a completely secular order modeled on the medieval tertiaries. The members lived in their own homes, took no vows other than the vow of chastity, and performed works of charity. Their primary purpose, however, was to educate young girls and women in the Roman Catholic faith. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the Ursuline order was established in France under different circumstances than those of Italy.

Protestantism had taken hold in France during the last decades of the sixteenth century. With the Protestant focus on education, for women as well as men, regents loyal to the new religion had taken over of a number of the better known educational institutions. By 1598 and the Edict of Nantes the viability of these schools was guaranteed. Catholics had no choice but to counter the heresy by establishing their own educational system. The members of society who proved to be most susceptible to the reformed religion were the women and they were also the most important factor in the lives of the young children. Therefore it became imperative to reach them with the Catholic education. At this point institutions of learning for females in any way comparable to the colleges for males did not exist. Religious teaching orders filled the gap. The Ursulines arrived in France from Italy via Provence and rapidly spread across the country. They were the anti-Protestant, Counter-Reformation answer to the educational crisis.

The houses depended on local support for their livelihood, for it was the boarding students who paid the bills. In a society unaccustomed to schools for girls, these boarders and their parents tended to dominate the policies of the convents. It was this close financial dependency and the access of the nuns to the outside world that caused much of the early opposition.

First, the absence of solemn vows, vows requiring that the girl would never return to society, opened legal questions for the families and possible inheritances. Then the loose financial arrangements of the houses and the lack of support from Rome meant that many of the convents and their inhabitants, nuns and boarders alike, lived in a state close to poverty. Finally, the uncloistered female, wandering the streets in a nun's habit, was felt by many to lack dignity and to provoke scandal. Walking to church with their students could be accompanied by jeering and charges of being women of ill repute. Ursuline nuns were ridiculed on the streets, their families turned and walked the other way when encountering them, and children threw mud and stones at them as they retreated.¹⁰³ The answer, as far as the Church was concerned, was clausura and the last uncloistered Ursuline community was clausured in 1658.

In the midst of the closure controversy, an Ursuline convent possession which followed the same course as an earlier one at Aix-en-Provence took place at Loudun. Here the Mother Superior, Sœur Jeanne des Anges, became possessed and accused a local priest of sorcery. By the

¹⁰³Rapley, *The Dévotes*. p. 55 - 56.

end of the drama, all the nuns of the convent had been possessed and the accused priest had been burned alive. Then in 1647 the Franciscan convent at Louviers underwent a similar vexation. Again male confessors were accused of bewitching the girls and two of the chaplains were burned alive at the stake.

However, when the Ursuline convent at Auxonne was attacked by demons in 1658, the outcome was quite different. As has been seen above, 1658 was the year the Ursulines were finally and completely cloistered. This time the charges of improper sexual behavior was as lurid as the others had been. However, it was now directed toward the mother superior of the convent. Charges of lesbianism were not usually publicized, so the case was not made public until 1660. When the case went to the Parlement at Dijon on March 18, 1661, it was dismissed and the accused was moved to another convent. The demons disappeared. What is of interest to this study is the fact that during the course of the examinations, the opinions were split on whether the problem was one of demonic possession or physical illness, bodily or mental. It was finally decided in favor of physical illness and the following report was filed by a medical doctor with the Chancellor:

I can assure your honor that in all their acts, whether bodily or mental, the nuns have never displayed any legitimate or convincing sign of true demoniacal possession, neither in understanding foreign tongues, knowledge of hidden secrets, revelations, levitation of their bodies in the air, movement from one spot to another, nor in their extraordinary contortions which exceed those normally found.¹⁰⁴

So it was not that the medical profession found any convincing evidence of physical illness but that there was a paucity of theological evidence to prove the existence of demonic possession.

The fifty or so sources on the possession at Loudun make it the best known of the continental group possessions. The autobiography of Sœur Jeanne des Anges, *Soeur Jeanne des Anges, autobiographie d'une hystérique possédée* (Paris, 1886) was edited by Gilles de la Tourette. Since no English translation exists, I have done my own.¹⁰⁵ The primary demoniac at the convent in Louviers provided an account of her possession in *Histoire de Madelaine Bavant, religieuse du monastère de Saint-Louis de Louviers, avec sa confession générale et testamentaire* (Paris 1652) with an English translation by Montague Summers entitled *Confessions of Madeleine Bavant* (London, 1933).

Those deemed demonically possessed and individuals perceived as saintly sometimes experienced similar spiritual interventions. Therefore I have also chosen to use the hagiographical

¹⁰⁴Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁵M. des Niau published what he called *La véritable histoire de Loudun* (Poitiers, 1634). He was an eye-witness to the proceedings and tells the entire story including the background history. I was most interested in his descriptions of the behavior of the nuns and the progress of the exorcisms. This was translated by Edmund Goldsmid and published in very limited edition as *The History of the Devils of Loudun* (Edinburgh, 1887-88).

biography of a Catholic saint Saint Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi especially the relations to her encounters with the Devil or demons and her exorcisms. The Protestant possessions are represented by the girls of the Salem trials and various pamphlets published as propaganda throughout the period.

Finally there are the works written by the possessed themselves. This period from the middle of the sixteenth century on, is important for the writings of women for it was the first time that women began to publish literature in any significant amount.¹⁰⁶ Still there are very few sources to tell us what being a woman and possessed might be like. Most of the information, except that quoted as testimony in trial records and that of the few autobiographical writings like those of Jeanne des Anges and Hannah Allen, comes from the pens of male writers. The masculine delight in recounting the blasphemies, the sexual exploits, and the bodily injuries suffered by the possessed women is apparent throughout. The important Counter Reformation saints Teresa of Avila and Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi were both obsessed by demons. I have occasionally relied on the literature of these Counter-Reformation saints and others for further examples. While the experiences described in the literature have since been explained as mental illness, depression, sexual frustration, calumny, or revenge, they were believed by any number of witnesses to be genuine demonic intervention at the time of the individual episodes. And it is with that understanding that I approach the early modern literature of demonic possession.

The authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be divided further into philosophical categories regarding their demonology: the Aristotelians, including the heirs to Saint Thomas Aquinas with their theories of form and substantial matter; and the Platonists embodying the writings of Saint Augustine and the Neoplatonic schools of the Italian Renaissance. The Roman Catholic authors, the legalists, and the physicians who readily accepted demonic possession were almost universally Thomistic and therefore Aristotelian in their understanding. The Protestants showed more variation by splitting between the schools.¹⁰⁷ Presbyterians and Anglicans among others were more open to the newer Neoplatonic ideas and were the more radical Puritans. The physicians too were divided between the older doctrines of the Galenic school based on the theories of Aristotle and the emerging Paracelsian and Neoplatonic philosophies.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Womankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540 - 1640* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 4.

¹⁰⁷David Harley, "Mental Illness, magical medicine, and the Devil," in *The medical revolution of the seventeenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 114 - 144.

¹⁰⁸Lester S. King, "The Transformation of Galenism," in *Medicine in Seventeenth Century England*, Allen H. Debus, ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 7. See also

Weyer and Cotta must be classified as Galenists even though they were both willing to entertain chemical remedies for their patients.

Throughout the following chapters, I have confined my argument to the materials contained in those sources that pertain to the physical body and the physical phenomena of demonic possession. I have not, nor did I intend, to argue the psychological nor the sociological causes or their implications. As would be expected, theological concepts dominate each aspect. Where necessary for the understanding of the reader I have included the pertinent information in footnotes or in the appendices. The history of the development of the demonology that was available to the early modern scholar has been amply covered by other historians.¹⁰⁹

Owsei Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).

¹⁰⁹See especially the work of Jeffery Burton Russell.

CHAPTER THREE THE POSSESSED BODY AS THEOLOGICAL PROOF

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exhibited a remarkable preoccupation with the spiritual world that seems to have crossed all segments of society. Scientific studies of spiritual influences had been introduced by the Neoplatonists of the Italian Renaissance and were a growing aspect of the new scientific and medical communities. The judicial branch was occupied with the sorcerers and witches and their predominance in the secular sphere. There was a rebirth in the use of the "royal touch." English rulers during these two centuries claimed an amazing number of cures of "the king's evil" by touch. Charles II, while in exile in Holland demonstrated his divine right to rule through his healing abilities. Then after his restoration to the throne, according to records of the reign, he touched or "stroked" 22,982 sufferers.¹

The Reformation and the ensuing social upheaval was cause enough to expect the religious organizations to appeal to supernatural phenomena for justification of their positions. The rift in Christendom created the impetus for reform movements within the Catholic Church that pertained to the understanding of human contact with the spiritual world. The need to structure and codify the phenomena surrounding the supernatural became imperative. Structures and organizations were established such as the group of Jesuits gathered by Jean van Bolland (1596 - 1665) to coordinate and authenticate documents and accounts pertaining to the canonization process. A newly written and authorized ritual of exorcism was completed in the *Rituale Romanum* 1615. Pope Urban VIII reorganized the canonization procedures themselves in 1634. And Pope Benedict XIV categorized charismatic phenomena at the beginning of the eighteenth century.² At the same time human intercourse with saints and angels was being organized by the Catholic Church, the theologians as well as the laity of Europe were systematizing the communication

¹See R. Crawford, *The King's Evil* (Oxford: 1911), p. 112 and A.B. Laver, "Miracles no wonder! The Mesmeric phenomena and organic cures of Valentine Greatrakes," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* (January) 33:35 - 46. Cited in Michael Murphy, *Future of the Body* (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1992), p. 263. Discussed by Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, pp. 192 - 204.

²See Appendix C.

with the demonic world. Since the whole question of demonic possession is based on theological issues, this study will begin with the early modern developments within organized religion.

This chapter will discuss the theological implications of demonic possession with particular attention to spontaneous possession as opposed to possession caused by manipulation of the supernatural by human forces. We will analyze ideas about why the demons enter humans, how they were believed to accomplish the feat, and the methods sanctioned by the church to rid the body and the community of their influence. First we will consider the discussion over the question why God would allow Satan the freedom to attack human beings. Then we will examine the changes brought about by the Reformation and how the Protestants viewed demonic possession along with the modifications they attempted. The discussion will then turn to the discernment of spirits and the various signs identified by both the Roman Catholics and the Protestants as proof of demonic possession. Finally this chapter will examine the forms and usefulness of exorcism procedures. In every case, the focus will be on the implications as they affect the physical body of the possessed individual and the philosophical assumptions underlying the diagnosis.

The authors and the cases utilized as primary evidence in the theological aspects of possession were chosen for their religious character. Even though the group possession at Loudun became an issue for the courts and was finally seen as a bewitchment, the autobiographical writings of Jeanne des Anges were theological in orientation. The possessions of Hannah Allen, Joyce Dovey, Elizabeth Knapp, William Somers, the seven demoniacs in Lancashire, the Catholic saints and the numerous incidents mentioned by Johann Weyer and Robert Burton were assumed at the time to have been spontaneous possessions and not caused by agents of the devil.

Spirits Enter the Body

The human body was a focus of interest for the church because of the doctrine of the physical resurrection of the body. It was believed that the state of the soul could be discerned from the physical state of the body. The theological understanding of the integrated flesh and spirit was rooted in the Galenic medical theories of the first century A.D. The bodies of uncontaminated Christians beginning with the Desert Fathers were cleansed and dried by the ascetic life. They cleared their bodies of the wet and rotting humors by drying themselves in the torrid deserts. They emptied themselves of putrifying substances through rigorous dietary rituals and meals composed of uncooked and dehydrating foods. They disciplined themselves for death by mummifying their bodies and rationing their emotions. The sacred and sober diet "made their bodies most fair in appearance by abstinence from earthly foods and an abundant consumption of those which are bright, and made them tractable by instilling through their bodies the sensible and mo-

bile spirit of the intellect. . . ."³ By comparison, the bodies of the unregenerate were watery, corrupt, putrescent, and fetid.

This flesh . . . is no better than filthy rags . . . The flesh is in itself no better than froth and bubble, clothed with a gay, but frail and decayed beauty; and time will shortly come, when all its boasted charms will sink into a rotten Carcass, and be only food for worms . . . Consider a little those constant evacuations, the discharges of thy mouth, and nose, and other passages, without which the body cannot subsist . . . For indeed this gaudy creature is no better than a bundle of Corruption, and food for insects: First Blood, then Man, afterwards Worms and no Man.⁴

The pope of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, Pope Innocent III, characterized man in his widely read ascetical treatise *De Miseria Human Conditionis* as: ". . . the emanator of filth, excrement, urine, spittle, faeces, lice, worms and stench: a puny man formed . . . of foul sperm . . . food for worms which never cease to gnaw and consume; a mass of putrification, and horribly dirty."⁵ The human body was imagined by the medieval theologians as a "grotesque monster dripping with mucous and phlegm, contaminating the earth with his evil, pituous and scabious smells, ceaselessly scratching himself, an unholy mass of catarrh."⁶ This was the body that attracted demons. A body consumed by worms and foul parasites, a pit of putrification.⁷

Worms and foul parasites became tangible proof of the sordid state of the unclean body and were often manifested during the purging of the body or at death. While these worms were known to inhabit the stomach and intestines, they were perfectly capable of moving through the body and infecting other organs. In 1572 in Montpellier, the cadaver of a young woman who had died of dropsy was dissected. Two worms were found: "one occupied the passage leading from the gall bladder to the duodenum; the other—due to lack of nourishment—had entered the liver itself . . ."⁸ Worms could cause palpitations of the heart and when they grow "many in number"

³Thomas of Revenna, *De vita hominis ultra CXX annos protrahenda* (Venice, in the year of the Jubilee 1550), I: 47 quoted by Piero Comporesi, *The Incorruptible Flesh: Bodily mutation and mortification in religion and folklore*, Tania Croft-Murray, trans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 107.

⁴Bernard of Clairvaux, *Devout Meditations; with regard to the state of human nature*, George Stanhope, trans. (London, 1701), p. 365.

⁵Quoted by Comporesi, *Incorruptible Flesh*, p. 109.

⁶Comporesi, p. 110.

⁷See Chapter Five for further discussion on the attraction of demons especially in relation to the humors.

⁸Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, p. 321.

and "make a significant assault on the vital nature of the organ, the pulse becomes weak, unclear, irregular."⁹

For medieval theology, this body, unpurified and vulnerable to the ravages of rot and decay, awaited judgement for sin. Sometimes judgments came during life in the form of illness; sometimes in bodily possession by demons. Theologically speaking, for the pre-Reformation Catholic Church the Devil entered the human body for one of three reasons: to punish sinful behavior, to force a conversion to the true belief, or to strengthen and test the already righteous believer. These motives could be interpreted on a community basis as well as on a personal level, as they later were by Protestants in Salem, Massachusetts.

The *Malleus Maleficarum* lists five reasons why God might allow a man to be possessed: for his own greater advantage; for a slight sin of another; for a venial sin of his own; for another's heavy sin; for his own heavy sin.¹⁰ The *Malleus* also explained two ways a physical body might be inhabited by a demon. The first was possession of the senses, imagination, and the character of the person so that "he is moved by every stirring of temptation, like a ship in the sea without a rudder."¹¹ The second was essential possession, "as is clear in the case of frantic men." The first, possession of the character, related to the commission of sin in that the demon was able to provide "outer suggestions" in order to tempt the individual toward sin. The authors were very clear in the fact that the Devil could not cause sin, "which the Holy Spirit permits the soul itself to commit."¹² Bodily possession, on the other hand, "rather belongs to the question of punishment." These bodily punishments, however, are not "always the consequence of sin, but are inflicted now upon sinners and now upon the innocent. Therefore both those who are and those who are not in a state of grace can, in the depth of the incomprehensible judgment of God, be essentially possessed by devils." Because God would allow both the sinful and the righteous to be possessed,

⁹B. Codronchi, *De morbis qui Imolae* (Bononiae, 1603), p. 21 in Comporesi, p. 113.

¹⁰This list and the quotes throughout the paragraph are from Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Quest. I, Chapt. 10. A venial sin, which while it may dispose the soul to death, does not, like a mortal sin, deprive the soul of all possibility of grace. The authors of the *Malleus* admit that this type of possession was not within the range of their treatise, "not quite pertinent to the inquiry," but they included it anyway "lest it should seem impossible to anyone that, with God's permission, men should at times be substantially inhabited by devils at the instance of witches."

¹¹Biblical reference to James 1: 6. "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind." James is discussing a person without reason, looking for wisdom, as someone who is in need of guidance.

¹²This is a reference to James I: 13 - 16. "Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one; but each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire."

it became imperative for the Church to ascertain whether the demoniac was guilty or innocent before proceeding with the remedies.

In a Roman Catholic possession, the doctors might ask about the behavior of the individual just prior to the onslaught of the attack. Did the individual commit a sin? What was the individual eating? Where had the individual been? Did the individual lapse in performing the rituals? Had the individual performed the proper penances? If questions like these produced evidence of discrepancies in the performance of rituals required to fend off the demons, then the individual must repent and complete a set of counter measures. Stories of the ingestion of demons through eating unblest or non-exorcised foods abound in the literature.¹³ There are numerous reports of possession coming on as a result of having forgotten morning prayers.

If there was found to be no reason for possession within the behavior of the individual, it was assumed that God had chosen to manifest his power in this way as an example for others. Then the clergy sought evidence that the behavior would turn others to God and they often set up circumstances that would provide a platform for the public to benefit from this incursion of evil.

Until the Reformation, the second assessment of demonic possession, to force conversion, was rarely indicated since Europe was already seen as Christian. Then, with the first major split in the western church in centuries, this question of conversion or reconversion to the true Church became a great source of anxiety. Both Protestant and Catholic were masters of propaganda in the war for souls and were anxious to prove through tangible evidence that their system was approved by God. The anti-Huguenot propaganda literature used stories of public exorcisms to great advantage. One demoniac in 1566, a Nichole Obry whose performance on the stage of a cathedral was known as the *Miracle of Laon* and whose possessing demon preached a sermon, was cited as "a great miracle, sent from God, to confirm the Catholic faith which began then to fluctuate and waver in many, and also to convert Hereticks unto the truth."¹⁴ Many returned to the Catholic faith.

The important aspects of another case made use of in the religious propaganda war was that of a possession in the Ursuline convent at Aix-en-Provence in 1612 where sermons were

¹³See for example the story of the lettuce-eating nun in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great. Lapses in vigilance toward the ever present danger of demonic possession were often punished. Exorcism in cases where the possessed had brought the evil on themselves was still a possibility when the self-controlled counter-measures failed to bring relief. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, I,4. Retold in Chapter 6. The connection between food and demons is more fully discussed in Chapter Five.

¹⁴Sabestien Michaëlis in his *Apologie* for doubts about his assertions in *The Admirable Historie of the Possession and Conversion of a Penitent Woman* . . . translated into English by W.B. (London, 1613) and quoted in D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits* (Scolar Press: London, 1981), p. 77.

preached by the devil Verrine¹⁵ through a nun named Louise Capeau. Verrine spoke the sermons very rapidly in Provençal but would obligingly repeat them slowly the next day so that they could be taken down. He admitted that there were times when the devil, even though he was the master of lies, was constrained to speak the truth and so he proceeded to make good Catholic propaganda statements unprompted by a questioner: "A miracle, an un-heard of miracle, and which will never happen againe that the Divell will convert soules; or, Behold the last remedy is, that God would convert soules unto him by the Divell. Be ye therefore penitent."¹⁶

Protestants too insisted that God controlled the demons and that they were restrained from attacking mankind but the reasons differed as to why a possession would be allowed at all. When the Reformers, and especially Luther, declared that the end of the world was upon them and that Satan was loose in the world, the possibility that Satan's minions would and could attack the unsuspecting was very real. Demons were capable of insinuating themselves into the bodies of Christians at any time. With God "looking through his fingers"¹⁷ and refusing to intervene in the battle, the only hope for salvation was for man to look to Christ as the mediator and advocate. Luther's theology, at least in part, seems to have been based on his understanding of the role of Satan in the world.

Luther and the Reformers' Theology of the Demonic

After the Reformation, both Protestants and Catholics continued to believe that no devil or demon could cause any harm by their operations unless specifically given permission by God.¹⁸ Luther said: "The angels are very close to us and protect us and other creatures of God at his command." In fact, he revealed how steeped he was in Mediterranean demonology by asserting that these angels stood "before the face of the Father, next to the sun, but without effort they swiftly come to our aid. The devils, too, are very near us. Every moment they are plotting against our life and welfare, but the angels prevent them from harming us. Hence it is that they don't always harm us although they always want to harm us."¹⁹ Of the specific aspects of demon

¹⁵Verrine is one of the Fallen Angels who was once of the Order of the Thrones. According to *The Book of the Angel Raziel* there were seven throne angels; cabalistic texts list fifteen. These angels were invoked in the magical arts. See Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, also Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels* (New York: The Free Press, 1967).

¹⁶Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, p. 76.

¹⁷Luther, *Works*, "Table Talk," no. 1252, p. 129.

¹⁸The overarching example for this doctrine was the Book of Job.

¹⁹Luther's *Works*, Table Talk, 54: 172.

possession developed earlier by the Roman Church, the Protestants changed two: why demons were allowed to enter the body and methods of expellation.

The first disagreement between Reformers and Papists was over the reasons why the devil's actions were permitted and in how and in what part of the body the possession took place. While both the Catholics and the Protestants used the proliferation of cases of demoniacs to call attention to millennial expectations of the period, the Romans tended to look at the problem as a general message of degeneration of the society and as a call to return to the True Church while the Protestants interpreted it more personally and more in line with the biblical concept as punishment for the sins of the individual.²⁰ The Catholics concentrated on the doctrines of sin while the Protestants tended to accentuate the Devil's role in temptation. Either way, as the reward for sins, God was visiting catastrophe on the world.²¹

The Reformer's second change came in the methods for expelling the spirit once its identity was ascertained. Exorcism, the Roman Catholic ritual designed for Christian use in controlling the demon world, was relegated to the realm of magic, while the Scriptural command of "prayer and fasting" was elevated in the Protestant sects.²²

The demonology itself, remained unchanged. Protestantism did not rework the cosmology. There was no new science of the creation of the universe, no new physics, no new view of Nature. The Lutherans and the Calvinists embraced the Thomistic demonology based on Aristotelian physics although Luther himself looked more toward Augustinian ideas regarding evil. The fact that the basis of the demonology was part of the common inheritance of both Catholics and Protestants made its alteration unacceptable.²³ "There are," wrote Luther, "many demons in the woods, water, swamps and deserted places . . . Others are in the dense clouds, and cause storms, lightening, thunder, and hail and the poison of the air."²⁴ Luther understood as well as

²⁰By the seventeenth century the Puritans in America had combined the two concepts as can be seen in the Salem trials.

²¹For general discussion on the development of Protestant ideas of demonology see Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition, and Society (c. 1520 - c. 1630)," in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, editors, *Early Modern Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp. 45 - 81.

²²Mark 9:28.

²³H. R. Trevor-Roper asserts that the Reformers had pared away the incrustations of doctrine of the medieval church yet they remained a thoroughly conservative group. He notes Nikolaus Paulus in his essays, "Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess," as arguing that the Reformers looked to Germanic mythology for their demonology but insists that Paulus might have had an argument if he was discussing witchcraft, not demonology. The title essay in *The European Witch-craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Harper Torckbooks, 1964), p. 187n.

²⁴*Luther's Works*, "Table Talk," Vol. 54, p. 172.

his predecessors that the supernatural was ready to break into the natural world at any moment. His prime mentor Augustine had also had explained that when Satan is loosed on the world, three years and six months before the end of the world, he "will lead the nations astray. . . so that he can draw them into war." This, said Augustine, "is the last persecution, when the last judgment is imminent, and this persecution will be suffered throughout the whole world by the Holy Church, the universal City of Christ being persecuted by the universal city of the Devil, each at the height of its power on earth."²⁵ During this persecution, the Devil will no longer be bound and so "can persecute [man] with all his might."²⁶

Luther's profound theological change was to alter the perception of possession. As early as 1509, if we are to understand the marginal notes found in one of the surviving books of Augustinian writings from the library at Erfurt, Luther had begun to discover the differences between Augustine and Aristotle. In September of 1517, just weeks before he posted his ninety-five theses, Luther made his feelings about Aristotelian philosophy known in the disputation against scholastic theology and he issued the battle cry "contra Modernos," "contra Aristotelem." Notations can still be seen in Luther's copy of *The City of God* and *The Trinity*. The notes in *The City of God* end with this statement: "I find it more than astonishing that our scholars can so brazenly claim that Aristotle does not contradict Catholic truth."²⁷

Out of Luther's discovery of the "stupidity of the scholastics" in their adherence to Aristotle came his Wittenberg theology formulated against the whole of the scholastics: "The whole of

²⁵Augustine, *City of God*, XX, 11.

²⁶Augustine, *City of God*, XX, 13. Lest there be any question as to the importance of the ancient tenets of Zoroaster on the theological understanding of evil in the late seventeenth century, Henry More ended his discourse on the *Immortality of the Soul* with a return to the dualist understanding of the end of the world. After explaining that the soul of man must first subsist after death as an aëreal body before obtaining the ethereal body of perfection, he tells of the perils the soul escapes. Once obtaining the ethereal body, she, the soul, becomes "out of reach of the evil Principle whose dominion is commensurable with misery and death. Which power the Persian Magi termed Arimanius, and resembled him to Darkness, as the other good Principle, which they called Oromazes, to Light . . ." More, *Immortality*, Book III, Chapt. XIX, p. 307. More seems to be combining the works of Plutarch and Plotinus here.

²⁷D. Martin *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Abteilung Werke*, vol. I (Weimar, 1883 -) 9.27, 22 - 24 and quoted by Oberman, Luther, pp. 158 - 161. Aspects of the arguments presented here may be found in Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart, trans. (New York: Image Books edition, 1992); Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death, The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, Second Edition, 1985); Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Verso, 1990); Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther's Last Battles: Politics and Polemics 1531 - 46* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Steven Ozment, *Protestants: The Birth of a Revolution* (New York: Doubleday, 1992); Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250 - 1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

Aristotle is to theology as shadow is to light, he said."²⁸ Luther believed that man could never come to "know God" and he believed that when "God is silent, man should not speak; and what God has put asunder, namely heaven and earth, man should not join together."²⁹ The nominalist in Luther demanded the absolute separation between knowledge of this world and faith in God's realm. The only avenue of understanding to that other realm was through the Word of God in the Scriptures. As far as Luther was concerned, God's Word was being violated by the scholastic attempts to create an argument within philosophy instead of contributing to a greater understanding of the nature of God. Luther had no such interest. He had had first-hand encounters with Satan. His understanding of the power of evil in the world had come through his own combat with Satan's demons. Luther's experiential demonology and subsequent theology can be summed up in his statement: "It is through living, indeed through dying and being damned that one becomes a theologian, not through understanding, reading or speculation."³⁰

The problem this "new" theology presented to the Church was that much of the theological language Aquinas had formulated in the thirteenth century was now in use by the Church and it was based on terminology developed by Aristotle. Many of the central concepts of Church doctrine were Aristotelian in nomenclature: "God as the "prime mover"; the soul, as "form," determines the human being; justification takes place through the "infusion" of the "power of grace"; the sacrament of the mass transforms the "substance" of bread and wine; man is "free" to decide between good and evil."³¹ Finally this negation of Aristotelian philosophy did not mean that Luther automatically substituted Augustine for Aristotle; that would have meant simply replacing one philosophy with another. Luther saw Augustine as the greatest of the exegetes of the Holy Scriptures and a spokesperson for the methodical search of the Scriptures for an understanding of God.

Luther's first call to the Church was for the Church to mend her ways in the use of philosophy for theology. In terms of our discussion of possession and demonology, all that can be known and understood about Satan, devils, the soul, and angels is revealed in the Scriptures: "'Everything that is added to faith is certainly only imaginative speculation' --- unfounded and

²⁸Quoted by Oberman, *Luther*, p. 160.

²⁹Oberman, *Luther*, p. 160.

³⁰*Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar: Kritische Gesamtausgabe, 1883), vol. 5, p. 163, lines, 28-29, and quoted by Carter Lindberg, "Mask of God and Prince of Lies: Luther's Theology of the Demonic," in Alan M. Olson, ed., *Disguises of the Demonic: Contemporary Perspectives on the Power of Evil* (New York: Association Press, 1975), p. 87.

³¹Oberman, *Luther*, p. 160.

thus uncertain, pure invention."³² Thus, if the Pope was unwilling to make changes in the doctrines of the Church and to return to the purity of the Word of God he must be acting under an evil influence. For Luther the insistence on the sanctification of the words of man, no matter how important they may be to solving worldly problems, was satanic.

A profound influence on the theology of possession in the sixteenth century, then, was Luther's pronouncement that the pope was the Antichrist and the ruler of this world.³³ Luther published several tracts referring to the pope as the "right Antichrist" and he held the conviction that the fact that the pope was the Antichrist was "a life and death matter for the church."³⁴ Luther was so enraged by the rise of the Antichrist in the papacy that he attacked the Pope and the Cardinals with "violence and vulgarity." He did not see himself as "fighting against men but against the powers and principalities of darkness" and in doing so all manner of vulgarity was acceptable. Luther commissioned Lucas Cranach to produce a series of cartoons for inclusion in a

³²Luthers Werkes, 9. 62, 23f and quoted by Oberman, *Luther*, p. 160.

³³The Roman Catholic views on the subject ranged from arguing that the Antichrist had not yet come, to naming Henry VIII and later Elizabeth I as the Antichrist, and finally, seemingly in response to the Protestant emphasis on the antichristian pope, the Catholics began to identify the Antichrist as a Jew. In the medieval tradition, the Antichrist was to be a Jew, born in Babylon of the tribe of Dan. The Protestants, however, spent much time and energy attempting to prove that he could not be a Jew (Hill, p. 178-81). The Catholic Church claimed Luther himself was a product of the Devil. In 1565, in an attempt to minimize the work of Luther, a bishop told the following story during a public lecture.

"In the guise of a merchant who made and sold jewelry, the Devil came to Wittenberg, where he sought lodgings with one of the citizens because he dared not trust his precious wares to a common inn; at the same time he promised fair payment in return for the kindness. But when he lured the daughter of his host into his embrace by means of gifts and coaxing words and other inducements to sensuality, he finally made bold to lie with her, and then soon vanished, never to appear again. The girl's womb swelled more and more by the day, and when she was about to enter labor she displayed strange and terrible symptoms, and the evidence clearly indicated that the offspring had not been legitimately conceived. As a young lad, the boy progressed so rapidly in school that he easily outstripped his comrades of the same age, while still disguising the circumstances of his life. Then he became a monk at his "father's" prompting, and ravished a young nun (as reported by many well-informed persons), rejecting the monastic life. Coming to Rome in search of a better position, he failed in his hopes and incurred the hostility of the Holy Father the Pope and the Cardinals. He took counsel with his "father" as to how to gain revenge for the denial of his requests, and he was advised by him (he knew how easy it was to mislead the masses) to compose a brief commentary on the Lord's Prayer (which should be familiar to all Christians), so that he might in this way attain his wishes. His explication was woven so skillfully and boldly that it was commended not only by the mob, but also by many of the educated. . . . In sum, he is the font and origin of all heresy . . ." (Weyer, III, c. xxiii, pp. 243 - 244).

³⁴See Luther's pamphlet *Adversus execrabilis Antichristi bullam and De Antichristo* which was translated into English by John Frith in 1529. For a thorough discussion of the development of the idea of the Antichrist see Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth Century England* (London:Verso, 1990).

pamphlet for which Luther himself penned the satirical verses to accompany them. These cartoons depict the Pope and the Cardinals in the most lewd and vulgar fashion.³⁵

The almost universal insistence of this belief by the Protestants along with the related theory that in the guise of the head of the Roman Church, Satan ruled this world, led inevitably to a return to the Persian and Manichean position of dualism. Hence, since the pope was Satan on earth than the Catholic Church was the arm of the Devil and "men of holy works are Satan's captive servants, no matter how much they appear outwardly to surpass others in good works and in strictness and holiness of life."³⁶

For Luther, works such as those performed by the Romanists in the Mass and on holy days as well as penitence, pilgrimage, and confession were nothing more than acts of the Devil. They were nothing more than the sanctifying a belief in the words of man. Man, according to Luther, was helpless to save himself and powerless in the exercise of free will. Against the more humane structure of the Catholic tradition where a man who confessed his sins, even the sin of making a pact with the Devil, could redeem himself at the last minute by an act of penitence or by the intercession of the saints, stood the Lutheran notion of the helplessness and powerlessness of the Protestant in his own salvation. Nothing comparable to the Catholic procedure was available for the Protestant. All the established routes to salvation through the medieval church were blocked by Luther and his followers. Nothing could assure salvation short of the intervention of God in the gift of grace. The ultimate gift bestowed by God — this gift of grace — did not come through works, which were equated by Luther with reason, Luther also rejected the use of reason in relation to faith and attributed it to Satan. Natural reason in the Aristotelian and Thomistic traditions of the Church, as we have seen, was the mainstay of the idea of natural virtue which came directly out of the Aristotelian concept that good works make a man good.³⁷ Luther then, in the tradition of Augustine, rejected all connection of reason with faith and salvation and proclaimed that reason is the Devil's "bride and whore" and therefore any teaching of reason must be the work of the Devil. Under these conditions one can understand the Roman Catholic response to the attacks of the Reformers at the Council of Trent in doctrinal acceptance of Thomistic theology as recognized Catholic doctrine.

In order to counter the accusations of dualism that the theory of Satan's domination of the earth might suggest, Luther attempted to reconcile his beliefs with such formulations "as that God permits the Devil to rage or that God withdraws to leave space for the Devil." This with-

³⁵Edwards, *Luther's Last Battles*, pp. 189 - 199.

³⁶Obendiak, p. 187 quoted by Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 213.

³⁷See Aristotle, *Nichomechaen Ethics*.

drawing of God, the Augustinian prescription for evil as the absence of good, still had the net effect of recognizing "the Devil's power as a positive antidivine structure in its own right."³⁸ For Luther, God was not the real enemy of Satan, Christ was. While God allowed Satan to attack man, it was man's faith in Christ that repelled the attacks and allowed the Christian to triumph.³⁹

Building on Luther, Calvin said that "as the Church and the communion of saints has Christ for its head, so the faction of the wicked, and wickedness itself, is portrayed with its prince exercising supremacy."⁴⁰ Calvin then left no doubt as to the necessity for battle and the role man must play in this battle between good and evil:

One thing which ought to animate us to perpetual contest with the devil is, that he is everywhere called both our adversary and the adversary of God. For, if the glory of God is dear to us, as it ought to be, we ought to struggle with all our might against him who aims at extinction of that glory. If we are animated with proper zeal to maintain the kingdom of Christ, we must wage irreconcilable war with him who conspires its ruin.⁴¹

This dualism is also the gist of the belief echoed by Cotton Mather in 1693 where there is not even any mention of the "permission of God" in the battle against the Devil:

Now, the Devil whose Malice and Envy, prompts him to do what he can, that we may be as unhappy as himself, do's ordinarily use more Fraud than Force, in his assaulting of us; he that assail'd our First Parents, in a Serpent, will still Act Like a Serpent, rather than a Lion, in prosecuting of his wicked purposes upon us, and for us to guard against the Wiles of the Wicked One, is one of the greatest cares, with which our God has charged us.⁴²

Luther's separation of the individual into a twofold nature created another dualism within man of two distinct and separate beings: the inner man as the realm of spirit and grace and the outer man in the world of flesh and works. The inner man, "who by faith is created in the image of God and is both joyful and happy" has but one occupation which is "to serve God joyfully and without thought of gain, in love that is not constrained." However, while he is serving God in this manner, he meets "a contrary will in his own flesh which strives to serve the world and seeks its own advantage." This "contrary will, in the flesh" is Luther's outer man.⁴³ The outer man is also the portion of man ruled by Satan. The individual human body then becomes for Luther the bat-

³⁸Brown, *Life Against Death*, p. 214.

³⁹See Genesis 3:15, where there was believed to be a prophecy of this power of Christ referred to in the Romans 8: 35 - 39.

⁴⁰Calvin, *Institutes*, I, 14, p. 151.

⁴¹Calvin, *Institutes*, I, 14, p.151.

⁴²C. Mather, in Drake, I, p. 218.

⁴³Martin Luther, *Christian Liberty* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), p. 22.

tleground where the forces of God and the army of the Devil meet in combat for the soul of man.⁴⁴

There was no doubt that Luther took the Devil very seriously and was at great pains to explain his workings in the everyday life of the Christian. For Luther, the Devil controlled evil. Luther lived intimately with the Devil every day. He had two demons who accompanied him wherever he went; and certainly the incident in the tower is proof of the dogged consistency of those particular devils.⁴⁵ Again and again Luther makes his feelings about the dualistic tendencies manifested in the ability of the Devil to control the will of the individual.

The Devil is the Lord of this world. Let him who does not know this, try it. The World and all that belongs to it must have the Devil as its master. We are servants in a hostelry, where Satan is the householder, the world his wife, and our affections his children. The whole world is possessed by Satan. The World is the Devil, and the Devil is the World. Everything is full of devils, in the courts of princes, in houses, in fields, in streets, in water, in wood, in fire.⁴⁶

But Luther was not the first to expound this doctrine, Wycliff more than a century earlier had gone so far as to claim "that here on earth God must obey the Devil."⁴⁷ This offered the Devil an autonomy not granted in the medieval demonology of the Catholic Church. Luther's God, having placed Christ in the position of man's shield, loosed the Devil to do battle. As long as man retained a belief in Christ he was protected from the Devil. Since Luther denied man's free will in the act of Redemption, man was no longer an agent in the cosmic battle.

Luther came to believe that God was capable of hiding himself from man, turning away from man, actually attacking man. "When God works he turns his face away at first and seems to be the devil . . . It should seem foolish to you."⁴⁸ But man will not accept the Holy without first understanding the aspects of eternal damnation, fear, anxiety, hell itself. In other words, if there was no Devil, there was no God. Luther's experience of the demonic was only possible within the context of the extreme Holy. For Luther, this was a terrifying proposition. It is in fact God who

⁴⁴This dualism allowed for the Augustinian doctrine that "there can be no evil where there is no good and that an evil man is an evil good." For as Augustine asserted, there can be no evil where there is no good, "since every being, so far as it is a being," is good, if it ceased to contain any good it would also cease to be. Therefore, nothing that is purely evil can exist. Augustine, *The Enchiridion of Faith, Hope, and Love*, edited by Henry Paolucci, Gateway Edition (Washington D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1961), XIII, p. 13.

⁴⁵Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, pp. 211-12. The incident in the tower refers to the story that Luther threw an inkwell at the Devil. The story seems to have been apocryphal.

⁴⁶Obendiek, *Der Teufel bei Martin Luther*, pp. 53-57 and quoted by Brown, p. 210.

⁴⁷Brown, p. 215.

⁴⁸*Luther's Works*, Vol.7, p. 103-104.

has the power to hand man over to the Devil. Luther's understanding is clear from his answer to a question posed by a student. Asked whether "the Devil uses his power by Gods' permission or by God's command," Luther replied:" Oh, no. The power he uses is not commanded. Good gracious, no! But our Lord God doesn't stop him. He looks through his fingers. It's as if a great lord saw that somebody set his barn on fire, did nothing to prevent it, but merely winked at it. This is what God does to the Devil."⁴⁹

A similar sentiment is echoed by the medical physician Johann Weyer in a discussion about how a possessed individual should view the cause of his possession. The Devil is weak and feeble and does not have the opportunity to do all the evil he would like to do, Weyer said, because he is held in check by God. No, Weyer insisted, "it is not the Devil that should be feared, but God. . . ." for the Christian must "take account not of the rod that strikes him but of the father who wills it." It is the father who holds the rod in his hand and uses it. "He employs the rod as severely as he will, and as much and when he will."⁵⁰ Weyer believed that before the coming of Christ, the devil controlled the world, however with the advent of the Son of God, the devil's deceits such as the oracles and divination, began to disappear. Christ and his disciples managed to repress Satan, yet they were not able to completely overthrow him. When Christ's successors began to ignore the truths, Satan again returned to full power and it is only through the rediscovery of the Scriptural truths that have remained hidden through all these centuries that the shadows are being driven away.⁵¹

Satan, for Luther, was the instrument of God as well as the enemy of God.⁵² The wrath of God allowed for Satan intervention into the life of man. It was Christ, for Luther, who was man's

⁴⁹Luther's Works, "Table Talk," Vol. 54, pp. 128 - 129.

⁵⁰Weyer, Book 5, Chapter XXIX, p. 449-500.

⁵¹Weyer, *De Lamiis* (Basel, 1577) Preface, quoted by Lea, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, Volume II (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1939), p. 532.

⁵²The New Testament makes it quite clear that the Christian may expect to do battle with evil: "Draw your strength from the Lord and his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the Devil. Our battle is not against the human forces but against the principalities and powers, the rulers of the world of darkness, the evil spirits in regions above." Ephesians 6:10 - 12. As to the attacks of the demons on humankind, something should be said about the translation of Luther's term, *Anfechtung*. English translations especially have equated it with 'temptation.' However, in German the root actually means, "assail," "combat," "bodily struggle," therefore the English word 'temptation' is much too feeble for Luther's real beliefs. For Luther, *Anfechtung* is really God attacking man, whereas temptation is interpreted as man attacking man. Søren Kierkegaard made this distinction:

"Anfechtung is in the sphere of the God-relationship what temptation is in the ethical sphere . . . the orientation of the individual is also different in the two cases. In temptation, it is the lower that tempts; in *Anfechtung* it is the higher; in temptation, it is the lower that allures the individual, in *Anfechtung* it is the higher that, as if jealous of the individual, tries to

ally in the battle against Satan. The demons against which Christ fought are the agents of God in his chastisement of man. Christ was man's only armor in the battle against God's wrath. This did not mean that Satan and God's wrath were no longer present, not at all, rather they were simply held in check by the presence of Christ through faith. Where there was no Christ, there was no protection from the wrath of God and the intervention of the Devil. "There is nothing so good and nothing so evil but that it shall work together for the good, if only I believe."⁵³ Faith alone sufficed for salvation, the protection afforded the Christian who had faith was protection from the wrath of God through Christ.

The genius of Luther and his theology was that it was a true theology rather than a demonology in that it identified evil and Satan with God rather than as a separate entity. The demonic had no independent existence without God, holiness was expressed for Luther through the unholy. Although Luther differed with Augustine in the assignment of responsibility for God's withdrawal (Augustine placed the onus on man's free will), the Augustinian roots of Luther's theology is undeniable. Later Reformers, especially Calvin, were afraid of the demonic; anything that was unclean, was unholy.⁵⁴ This marked the end of the divine-demonic ambiguity found in Luther's thought and separated the Holy from the unholy, placing it into a realm of moral perfection, self-control, and repression. The Calvinistic Reformers unlinked the demonic from God and set it up with an independent existence.

There was yet another application of dualism that appeared in the work of the Reformers and certainly influenced all the Augustinians. That was the dualism of Platonic thought and Manichaeism that surfaced later in the ideas of Henry More in England and the Mathers in Puritan America. At the end of the seventeenth century, when Cotton Mather and Robert Calef corresponded concerning the belief in the Devil's powers and the witchcraft craze at Salem, Massachusetts, Calef invoked the history of dualist Christianity when he said:

Might a Judgment be made from the Books of the modern learned Divines, or from the practice of the Courts, or from the Faith of many, who call themselves Christians, it might be modestly, tho' sadly concluded, that the Doctrine of the Mariche, at least great part of it, is so far from being forgotten that 'tis almost everywhere profest. We in these ends of the Earth need not seek far for Instances, in each respect to demonstrate this. The Books here Printed, and recommended not only b the respective Authors, but by many of their Brethren, do set forth that the Devil inflicts .

frighten him back." In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 410. Quoted by Lindberg, p. 89-90.

⁵³Luther, *Christian Liberty*.

⁵⁴From discussion of *Paul Tillich and Systematic Theology, I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 216 - 217. Quoted by Lindberg, p. 101.

*Plagues, Wars, Diseases, Tempests and can render the most solid things invisible, and can do things above and against the course of Nature, and all natural causes.*⁵⁵

Puritan Refinements

Several important points of Puritan theology make their concepts of demonic possession different from both the Catholics and the rest of the Reformers. First, the Puritan return to the Neoplatonic roots of Augustinian Christianity kept dualism alive. Although Augustine had finally relinquished his interest in the Manichaeic dualism where God was a divisible corporeal substance and where evil was an independent reality, he accepted another kind of dualism, that of the Platonists. "The Platonists postulated a world of being . . . immaterial, invisible, and intelligible in Nature: a world on the order of the mind." This world was composed of eternal forms. Against this was the world of becoming, a material world, always in flux, and "composed of transient, particular physical things."⁵⁶ Thus the intelligible spiritual world, whether made up of benevolent or malevolent spirits, was a reality.

Second, the twin questions of grace and free will played an even greater role in the theological understandings of the radical Reformers on the continent, in England and subsequently in Puritan America. Luther had insisted that the Christian who found faith was shielded from the unpredictable wrath of God by Christ. Certainly for Luther the journey toward faith included instances of dread, fear, and trembling, the descent into hell and damnation, and an encounter with the very face of evil before reaching the protection of true faith in Christ. Where Augustine had stressed the individual's responsibility in the turning away from God and thus creating a void that allowed for the incursion of evil, Luther had placed the armor of Christ between God's wrath and helpless man. Augustine focused on the turning away from God and blamed man's free will; Luther stressed the turning toward faith in Christ as an antidote to evil, the ever present and unpredictable anger of God manifested in the actions of Satan. The Puritan, who was possessed by the Devil had clearly made a choice to forsake God and had opened the breach that the demon filled.⁵⁷ This is Augustinian rather than Lutheran.

⁵⁵Robert Calef, "A Letter to the Ministers in and near Boston, January 12, 1696" and reprinted in *More Wonders of the Invisible World* in Samuel G. Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, Three Volumes (New York: Burt Franklin, 1866, reprint edition, 1970), II:125.

⁵⁶Ozment, *Age of Reform*, pp. 44 - 48.

⁵⁷The radical reformers such as the Anabaptists returned to the most severe of the Augustinian constructs of evil and sin and ultimately to a dualist theory of evil.

"Now as God is the Spirit of truth, the devil is contriwise the spirit of lying and father of the same. Wherefore lying, sin and injustice, or the spirit of lies is a similitude of the devil wherewith he adorneth his children, even as God adorneth with his truth, that one might distinguish one from the other, as John declareth, "In this we recognize who are the children of

Third, the return of the Puritans to the Old Testament as the source for many of their doctrines also had an impact on their understanding of demonic possession. This can be seen in the controversy surrounding the witchcraft trials of 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts. God's removal of His protection, his turning away from the colony, was a punishment on the community as well as on any individuals who had purposefully turned toward the Devil. Like His punishment of the Hebrews in the Old Testament, God had unleashed his wrath on the chosen people for their failure to follow his commandments.

Puritan theology centered on the individual responsibility to guard one's own faith. While the Puritan community of saints rested on the foundation of admitting only members under the state of grace, it was particularly important that each individual display in some way the badge of his or her own salvation. Puritans who were members of the church and who became possessed found themselves in an awkward position in relation to the community. First, simply by being inhabited by an evil spirit they showed that they had turned away from God creating evil through a negation of God. Second, since this turning away demonstrated a lack of faith, the Holy Spirit had chosen to abandon them, and they were now left with a void that might be filled with one or more devils. Thomas Shepard wrote in his *Autobiography*: "On Sabbath I found my heart enlarged, and I saw it was Satan that filled it . . ." ⁵⁸ If the Puritan was capable of being possessed, then he was not one of the saints and might therefore be expelled from the community. When assessing the causes of the possession behavior, Protestant theologians and doctors were careful to take into account the social implications of the problem. Third, there was no means of relief other than prayer and fasting and frequently these were not necessarily sufficient to turn the individual back to God. Certainly in some communities, the resort to blaming

God and who are the children of the devil." Now he that chooseth sin taketh upon himself the likeness of the devil and forsaketh the likeness of God."

Anabaptists, like Luther, felt that the wrath of God was upon man. It had come upon him in the Garden. When Adam and Eve were created they were without evil. It was the Devil himself, in the form of a serpent who deceived and beguiled man. The "presumption and the will of the flesh" was raised up by this act, it grew out of the serpent's and therefore the Devil's counsel. This fall, the transgression of God's command, opened the eyes of the first man and woman and they saw that through the devil, they had been stripped of the grace of God, they were naked. "Therefore the wrath of the Creator came upon them and all their seed, nor could it be removed save through the promised seed, Christ." *Rechenschaft unserer Religion, Lehr und Glaubens, von der Brü dern, so man die Hutterischen nennt, ausgangen durch Peter Rideman*, (1545). Published in English as: *Account of Our Religion, Doctrine and Faith Given by Paul Rideman of the Brothers Whom Men call Hutterites*, Translated by the Hutterian Society of Brothers (Rifton, New York: Plough Publishing House of the Woodcrest Service Committee, Inc., 1970), pp. 54 - 55.

⁵⁸Shepard, *Autobiography*, published as *God's Plot: The Paradoxes of Puritan Piety Being the Autobiography and Journal of Thomas Shepard*, Edited by Michael McGiffert (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), pg. 97.

witchcraft for causing the possessions alleviated the pressure on the community to expel the demoniacs.

While the Devil was capable of much he could not, in any way, be believed to rival God in commanding unlimited power. He could not create matter as had God; he could not change matter as could God; and he could not perform miracles. However, his most potent weapon was his ability to create illusions and to make things seem to be different than they actually were. The scholastic point of view was that the Devil could tempt and deceive, but that he could not cause a person to renounce his Christian beliefs. Even if the Devil or one of his lesser demons possessed the physical body of an individual and transformed the human personality, there were two things the evil spirit was incapable of doing: the Devil could not possess the soul nor could he take away the free will. Thus for the Puritans, demonic possession was a punishment meted out to those who had freely turned away from faith in God.

The question of defining miracles was another crucial aspect of the literature of possession and important to the Puritan argument. The Puritan theologians, along with the Reformers, held that miracles had ceased after the Apostolic period.

The most learned Papists of this age doe teach and avouch, that there is in Gods Church an ordinarie gift and power, whereby some men may cast out devills, and help annoyances that come by Witchcraft. The Protestant is of a contraire judgment, and holdeth according to truth, that there is noe such ordinarie gift left to the church of God, since the daies of the Apostles.⁵⁹

Miracles claimed by the Romanists were then either fraudulent or they were acts of the Devil, and like most of the other Reformers, the Puritans interpreted them most often as acts of the Devil. This was an Aristotelian and Thomistic stance in that if the event was not susceptible to human reason and the organized nature of God, then it was attributable to the Devil and his chaotic dominion. The very fact that an event was outside the realm of nature was proof that it was not of God and must therefore, by definition, be caused by the Devil. In connection with possession, Luther said: "All sorrows, illnesses and melancholy come from Satan . . . for God never saddens, frightens, nor kills us . . . The melancholic humor is a bath prepared by the devil."⁶⁰ Loss of faith leading to despair or willfulness leading to sin, to guilt, and therefore to despair were thought to be causes of melancholy and hence would lead to the attraction of demons. Three particular aspects of the doctrines of demonology and possession that were developed by the Catholic Church grow out of the notion of personality and bear directly on the hu-

⁵⁹William Perkins, *Discourse*, p. 232 and quoted in Weisman, p. 68 - 69.

⁶⁰Luther's *Works*, Table Talk, 54:16. For a discussion of the relationship between sin, demons, and melancholy see Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture 13th - 18th Centuries*, Translated by Eric Nicholson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

man body: the concept of sin as revealed in the body, the idea of the Devil as the antithesis of truth, and justice as being acted out in the possession drama.

Spiritual possession, whether by the Holy Spirit or by the demons controlled by Satan, was and is a theological doctrine. The Christian demonology developed through the centuries was organized and systematized by Thomas Aquinas. Even though Martin Luther rejected much of the thought of the scholastics, it was within this tradition that so many of the arguments pertaining to the mechanics of possession were preserved and used by the demonologists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Again and again the arguments in New England at the end of the seventeenth century relied on Thomistic theological explanations for their authority.

So, the Puritans returned to a dualist understanding of theodicy, to a belief in the eminent final cosmic battle, to an Old Testament understanding of the chosen people, and to the Neoplatonic influences. They created in Puritan America not only an environment where demons and mankind would wage a final battle but, through the growing influence of the scientific community, an atmosphere where a new and secularized understanding of man's spirituality could eventually grow and flourish.

The Character of the Holy Spirit

The other possessing spiritual entity besides the Devil and demons in Christian theology was the Holy Spirit. Like the Devil, it too had a distinctive personality. The major characteristic of the personality of the Holy Spirit was transparency. The Holy Spirit aims at being inconspicuous. Non awareness of the Spirit's presence is the best proof of its activity within the person. As in demon possession, the only way to discern the *indwelling*⁶¹ of the Holy Spirit was to observe the *workings* of the Spirit through the thoughts, actions, and bodily functions of the individual. However, while the indwelling of the Holy Spirit heightened the personality of the possessed individual, possession by a demon changed the character or substituted a new personality for the original one. This second demon-induced personality was usually in opposition to the primary character of the possessed.

Jesus gave the Holy Spirit two names: the first according to John the Evangelist, was Paraclete;⁶² the second was the "Spirit of Truth."⁶³ As the Paraclete, or advocate, or counselor, or

⁶¹Wycliffe invented the word 'indwelling' to explain the experience of the Holy Spirit within the individual.

⁶²Depending on the translation, the Holy Spirit is called 'Advocate' in *The Jerusalem Bible*; 'Counselor' in the *Standard Revised Version*; 'he who is to befriend you' in the *Catholic Knox Bible*; 'Comforter' in the *Tyndale New Testament* and the *King James Version*. The same Greek word παρακλιτοδ is translated as 'Advocate' in 1 John 2:1 when referring to Jesus and as 'Counselor' in John 14:16 when referring to the Holy Spirit in the SRV.

⁶³1 John 5:7.

comforter, the Holy Spirit was the intercessor on behalf of man with the Father as opposed to the adversarial position of Satan. For we are told by Jesus: "I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, . . . whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him for he dwells with you, and will be in you."⁶⁴ The Holy Spirit was also enlightening: "I write to you not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it . . ."⁶⁵ Depending on individual receptivity, the Spirit empowered the individuals to become the realities they were meant to be. The Holy Spirit in this form was much like the Aristotelian 'soul' in that it embodied the potentiality of the developing entity. First and foremost, one sees through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the truth of one's own being; in and through the Spirit, one sees who one really is. The Holy Spirit, then, is a personality enhancer rather than a spirit that changes the individual identity. This was quite different from the reaction expected when the possessing spirit was the Devil.

Spontaneous possession at the will of God for the purpose of chastisement or education was detected through the use of a set of criteria developed from the ancient sources and traditional wisdom. Physical indications were often the first and most apparent signs. Possession could be manifested in one or more of these recognized physical behaviors. The saintly possession of the Holy Spirit could be signaled by convulsions and contortions of the body, glossolalia, causing miracles of all kinds, spiritual healings, trances, visions, withstanding torture, surviving seemingly mortal wounds.

Signs announcing the presence of a demon might include fever, agitation, roaming, insomnia, the compulsive eating of repulsive substances, refusing food, repulsive bodily odor, foaming at the mouth, trembling, catatonic states, hallucinations, abdominal pain, grinding of teeth, abnormal strength, nearly complete change in facial features, aggression, autoaggression, screaming fits, and copious weeping were often present. Demons communicated through the victim in a deep rasping voice unlike the normal speaking voice, often degenerating into corprolalia sometimes interspersed with divinatory or prophetic utterances.⁶⁶ All of these actions have been believed by no small number of people through the ages to be manifestations of intervention by some supernatural force or being.⁶⁷

⁶⁴John 14:16.

⁶⁵1 John 2:21.

⁶⁶For a modern neurophysiological and psychological discussion of these symptoms see Felicitas Goodman, *How About Demons?* especially Chapter 8.

⁶⁷These physical behavior patterns were not new. In the fourth century A.D., Cyril of Jerusalem explained how the devil acted upon the body of the possessed: "His coming is most fierce; the sense of it most oppressive; the mind becomes darkened . . . for he makes forcible

Holy or Demonic Spirit

Once demons were suspected, the Aristotelian thinkers were concerned with discerning the attributes of the possessing spirits. Elaborate systems were developed in order to differentiate the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the incursion of demons. Many of the criteria used had roots in the early Christian or Classical sources.

The Language of the Possessed

Speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, was originally believed by Christians with evidence from that first Pentecost to be a gift of the Holy Spirit. Mention of it appears but a few times in the New Testament.⁶⁸ Tertullian, before his conversion to Christianity and while still a spokesman for Montanism wrote:

Let Marcion then exhibit, as gifts of his god, some prophets, such as have not spoken by human sense, but with the Spirit of God, such as have both predicted things to come, and have made manifest the secrets of the heart; let him produce a psalm, a vision, a prayer — only let it be by the spirit, in an ecstasy, that is in a rapture, whenever an interpretation of tongues has occurred to him . . . Now all these signs (of spiritual gifts) are forthcoming from my side without any difficulty⁶⁹

We have now among us a sister whose lot it has been favored with sundry gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the spirit by ecstatic vision amidst the sacred rites of the Lord's day in church: she converses with angels and sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears mysterious communications; some men's hearts she understands, and to them who are in need she distributes remedies.⁷⁰

Sometime later, probably in response to the Montanist heresy and concern over new revelations, the Church declared that speaking in tongues was a sign of the Devil. Perhaps for this reason, or because during the early Middle Ages literacy and access to the scriptures was so limited, there was little mention of it until after the Reformation. Increase Mather noticed this when he said: "Since the Reformation the Devil has play'd the old game over again."⁷¹

use of another's body, and another's instruments, as if they were his own; he throws him down that stands upright . . . he twists the tongue and distorts the lips; foam comes instead of words; the man is filled with darkness; his eye is open yet the soul sees not through it; and the miserable man gasps convulsively at the point of death." Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures*, XVI, 15.

⁶⁸Mark 16:27; Acts 2:3-15, 10:46, 19:6; I Corinthians 12:10, 28, 13: 1, 14: 5-40.

⁶⁹Tertullian, *Against Marcion*, Book V, Chapter 8.

⁷⁰Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, Chapter 9.

⁷¹Increase Mather, *Disquisition*, p. 26-7.

The evidence for possession throughout Catholic literature unanimously agrees that speaking in foreign languages or having knowledge of hidden information was evidence of demonic possession. Guazzo in his *Compendium Maleficarum* goes to great length to make certain the reader understands the importance of this symptom. First he says that an absolute and certain sign is when "the sick man speaks in foreign tongues unknown to him, or understands others speaking in those tongues" and additionally if he speaks "in a tongue foreign to his own country, provided that he is not living out of his own country." Or when, being uneducated and perhaps illiterate, "the patients argue about high and difficult questions." Or when the possessed discovers "hidden and long forgotten matters, or future events, or the secrets of the inner conscience, such as the sins and the imaginings of the bystanders."⁷²

"Some pretend to be stupid, and always grow even more so; but they can be detected if they refuse to recite the Psalm Miserere mei Deus, or Qui habitat in adiutorio Altissimi, or the beginning of the Gospel of S. John, In principio erat Uerbum, or similar passages of Scripture."⁷³ "It is a manifest sign when an ignorant man speaks literary and grammatical Latin, or if without knowledge of the art he sings musically or says something of which he could never have had any knowledge. . . or if they provoke them to quarrel without cause or become so furious that they cannot be bound or restrained by man strong men."⁷⁴

Some think that it is an infallible and inseparable sign when those who are possessed are unable to attend Divine worship, so that they can by no means be sprinkled with Holy Water, nor hear nor utter sacred words; but if they are compelled by force to observe the ceremonies of the Church or the Divine Offices, and chiefly if they are forced to be present at the most Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, then they are tormented far more violently. And in support of this opinion is the fact that they themselves testify that they wish to assist and be present at all these masses and offices, and to have the help of holy things, but that there is something within them which strongly prevents them.⁷⁵

The inability to utter sacred words was by no means limited to the Roman Catholic conception of demon possession. Cotton Mather related in the story of Margaret Rule that "there were several words which her Tormentors would not let her hear, especially the words Pray or Prayer." Further, when Margaret came to attempt to pray, she would find it impossible to say" the

⁷²Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁷³Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁷⁴Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁷⁵Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

words God, Lord, Christ, Good, Repent, and some other such, as her mouth would not utter them."⁷⁶

A report in 1574 discussed a maid, Veronica Steiner, was seemingly possessed of a demon because she spoke in "a course, manly, blasphemous voice" and "sang unchaste songs." A number of tests were tried on her in order to ascertain the truth of her possession. She apparently suffered strange swellings about her upper body, neck and face which were made to shrink with the application of holy water.⁷⁷

King James was of the opinion that ". . . the speaking of sundry languages, which the patient is known by them that were acquaint with him never to have learned, and that with such an uncouth and hollow voice, and all the time of his speaking, a greater motion being in his breath then in his mouth. But fra [from] this last symptom is excepted such, as are altogether in the time of this possession bereft of all senses being possessed by a dumme and blynde spirit, whereof Christ relieved one in 12. of Matthew."⁷⁸

The Aroma of Possession

There is no direct discussion by any of the possessed as to their ability to smell while under the power of the devils. However, the stench of sulferous material, their stinking breath and horrible body odor are mentioned often by the writers. Where the saintly possessed exude an odor of sanctity, often akin to the smell of violets, the diabolically tortured stink of decay. The corpse of Saint Catherine de Ricci was reported by some twenty or thirty nuns of her convent to have filled the death chamber with perfume. "Some of [them] described it as resembling the scent of . . . a species of violet."⁷⁹ Theresa of Avila, herself a skeptic about many religious claims, wrote of the Spanish ascetic Catalina de Cardona:

⁷⁶Cotton Mather, *Another Brand Pluct out of the Burning*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 36.

⁷⁷Midelfort, p. 136.

⁷⁸James I, p. 71.

⁷⁹H. Thurston, *The Physical Phenomenon of Mysticism*, (Burns Oates, 1952), p. 228. Quoted in Michael Murphy, *The Future of the Body*, (Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1992), p. 508. The corpses of a great many of the Catholic saints were said to have produced fragrant odors. Using the date of death as the criteria, a list of incorrupt cadavers of Catholic saints reveals that the period from the mid-fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century was responsible for 35 of the 41 listed by Thurston. Of the other six, three deaths occurred just prior to the mid-fifteenth century mark and three were into the eighteenth century. Levitating saints also cluster in the same period. It would seem that the rise in demonic possession is paralleled in a rise in sanctity and that both phenomena attest to a greater awareness of the body and a testing of its limitations.

All the nuns assured me that there was such a fragrance about her, like that of relics, that it clung even to her habit and her girdle, which, as they had taken then from her and given her fresh ones, she left behind. The fragrance was so sweet that it moved then to praise Our Lord. And the nearer they came to her, the sweeter it was, though her dress was of such a kind that, in that heat, which was very severe, one would have expected its odour to be offensive.⁸⁰

This odor was not confined to Catholic saints. One healer, an Irishman and former member of Cromwell's army, Valentine Greatrakes, found that he had a mysterious gift whereby he could cure people of the Evil Eye. He was accused by some of obtaining his power by diabolical intervention, yet as if to prove a more worthy connection, Henry More said that Greatrakes body had a natural "sanative contagion." Pursuing this line of reasoning, George Rust claimed "that Greatrakes's urine smelled of violets."⁸¹ More must have recognized the symptoms because he himself was quoted by his biographer:

He [More] hath told us . . . that not only his own urine had naturally the flavour of violets in it; but that his breast and body, especially when very young, would of themselves, in like manner, send forth flowery and aromatic odours from them; and such as he daily almost was sensible of, when he came to put off his clothes and go to bed. And even afterwards, when he was older, about the end of winter, or beginning of spring, he did frequently perceive certain sweet and herbaceous smells about him; when yet there were no such external objects near, from whence they could proceed.⁸²

Whereas the saintly and pious exuded "the odor of sanctity," a visit from the Devil, even though he was invisible, could often be detected by the smell of brimstone as in the case of Margaret Cooper where there "was such a horrible stink in the hall . . . that they were glad to stop their nostrils with clothes and napkins . . ." ⁸³ The very breath of Mary Glover "caused the faces of people to blister and swell" when "a great venomous and stinking blast" issued forth from her mouth during possession.⁸⁴ Mercy Short was seized by demons for a second time after seven

⁸⁰Saint Theresa of Avila, *Book of Foundations*, Chapter 28. Quoted in Murphy, p. 508.

⁸¹Thomas, p. 202 - 203. Increase Mather however calls him a "miracle Monger or Mirabilarian stroaker" in *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences . . .* (Boston, 1684), pp. 177, 253, 319. See also D.P. Walker, "Valentine Greatrakes, the Irish Stroker and the Question of Miracles," in *Mélanges sur la littérature de la Renaissance à la mémoire de V.-L. Saulnier* (Geneva, 1984), 343 - 356; and D.P. Walker, "La cessazione dei miracoli," *Intersezioni* 3 (1983), 285 - 301.

⁸²Richard Ward, *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr More*, (London: J. Downing, 1710), pp. 123 - 124. Quoted by Hoyles, p. 9.

⁸³*A true and most Dreadful discourse of a woman possessed with the Devill: who in the likeness of a headless beare fetched her out of her Bedd . . . on the fower and twentie of May last. 1584. At Diche in Somerstshire . . .* and quoted by Ewen, *Witchcraft*, p. 164.

⁸⁴John Swan, *A True and Briefe Report of Mary Glover's Vexation* (1603) and quoted by Ewen, *Witchcraft*, p. 196.

weeks of freedom. However, "just before which unhappy siezure [sic] shee thought shee felt the Threatenings of it, in unaccountable odours, and in a scent of Brimstone haunting of her lodgings."⁸⁵

In the case of Margaret Rule, unseen forces would sometimes pry her mouth open and "something *Invisible* would be poured down her throat." She could be seen to swallow or to fight swallowing, "one time the standers by plainly saw something of that odd *Liquor* itself on the outside of her *Neck*," and she subsequently cried out that "*Scalding Brimstone* had been poured into her." Immediately, the whole house would be so permeated with the smell of brimstone that the witnesses were barely able to endure the odor.⁸⁶

The Corporeal Manifestations

Changes in the appearance and state of the body were interpreted as signs of supernatural intervention. Sister Veronica Laparelli, a nun who died in 1620, was seen to elongate during recitation of the Office:

On one occasion, among others, [Sister Veronica] being in a trance state was reciting her Office alternately with some invisible being, she was observed gradually to stretch out until the length of her throat seemed to be out of all proportion in such a way as she was much taller than usual. We, noticing this strange occurrence, looked to see if she was raised from the ground, but this, so far as our eyes could tell, was not the case. So to make sure, we took a yard measure and measured her height, and afterwards when she had come to herself we measured her again, and she was at least a span (ten inches) shorter. This we have seen with our own eyes, all of us nuns who were in the chapel.⁸⁷

William Sommers' body was said to "extend to the height of the tallest man"⁸⁸ while Mary Glover's neck stretched in a fashion similar to that of Sister Veronica.⁸⁹

Body temperature was another sign repeated in the literature of both the saintly and the demonic tests. Saints were often said to have very warm bodies. Some were capable of warming the entire room in the dead of winter.⁹⁰ The Catholic Saint Philip Neri (1515 - 1595) felt the burning love of God so greatly that "in the coldest days of winter it was necessary, even in the midst of the night, to open the windows, to cool the bed, to fan him while in bed, and in various

⁸⁵Mather, *Brand* . . . in Burr, p. 278.

⁸⁶Cotton Mather, *Another Brand Pluct out of the Burning*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 33

⁸⁷Murphy, *The Future of the Body*, p. 516.

⁸⁸*A Brief Apology* . . . William Sommers. Quoted in Ewen, p. 101.

⁸⁹Sloan MS 831, quoted in Ewen, p. 102.

⁹⁰Murphy, *The Future of the Body*, 5.4, pp. 101 - 106.

ways to moderate the great heat."⁹¹ Saint Mary Magdelena de'Pazzi would throw herself into the snow and Saint Catherine of Genoa was inflamed to such a degree that her mouth and lips were so parched that it was impossible to eat.

While it was warmth, comfort, and sometimes excessive heat that was found with the saintly indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it was cold and dampness that was experienced by the demonically possessed. Testimony of the victims tells the writers what to expect. "If it as though wind descended from his head to his feet, and then again went from his feet to his head. . ." such as when "a very cold wind descends through his shoulders and reins."⁹² Or if "he feels as if cold water were continually being poured down his back" or when "a patient feels under the priest's hand something as cold as ice."⁹³

The Weight of Possession

Levitation, near weightlessness, and extreme heaviness were considered sure signs of supernatural intervention. Both future saints and condemned demoniacs exhibited these symptoms. Levitation can be seen for both the demoniac and the saint as the reaching of the possessed for the realm of the spiritual, for when floating, they are no longer tied to the earth but are hovering in the region of the spirits whether the spirits are believed to be either righteous or damned.⁹⁴

Probably the most famous of the levitating saints was the Franciscan Saint Joseph of Cupertino (1603 - 1663) who was said to have been observed levitating on more than a hundred occasions.⁹⁵ Saint Teresa of Avila (1515 - 1582) wrote that sometimes her raptures were so great that "my whole body has been . . . raised up from the ground."⁹⁶ Saint Teresa attempted to resist the

⁹¹Thurston, H., *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*, (Burns Oates, 1952), pp. 210 - 212. Quoted in Murphy, *The Future of the Body*, p. 104.

⁹²Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 167.

⁹³Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁹⁴Levitation seems to have been a phenomenon that manifested itself quite prominently beginning in the sixteenth century. The list of levitating mystics compiled by Herbert Thurston in *The Physical Phenomenon of Mysticism* contains a number of lesser-known mystics and begins in 1583. Although there were certainly some earlier than that such as Teresa of Avila, levitation became much more widespread as a symptom of contact with the spiritual world during the centuries under study here. Pope Benedict XV placed it on the list of criteria by which the church was to judge saintly marvels.

⁹⁵*De Servorum Dei beatificatione et Beatorum canonizatione*, III, pp. xlix, 9. in Murphy, *Future of the Body*, p. 110.

⁹⁶Saint Teresa of Avila, *Autobiography*, chapt. 20.

levitations on several occasions and explained these in her own writings. A seventeenth century Dominican nun described her own levitation:

I felt myself seized and ravished out of my senses, so powerfully that I found myself lifted up completely by the soles of my feet, just as a magnet draws up fragments of iron, but with a gentleness that was marvelous and most delightful. . . . Though I was quite beside myself, still, in spite of that, I knew that I was raised some distance above the earth, my whole body being suspended for a considerable space of time.⁹⁷

Saint Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi was credited with at least one spectacular feat of levitation. In the chapel of the convent was a crucifix on the wall above the choir. One day, Sister Mary was transfixed on it and to the amazement of the nuns present, "she flung herself, so to speak, up to a high cornice of the choir, a ledge scarcely a third of an arm wide."⁹⁸

The same phenomenon was present in those who experienced possession by demons. In the case of Margaret Rule of Boston, "once her tormentors pull'd her up to the Cieling [sic] of the Chamber," and held her there before "a very Numerous Company of *Spectators*, who found it as much as they could all do to pull her down again."⁹⁹ Signed testimonials by no less than six men¹⁰⁰ attested to the levitation asserting that they saw "her lifted up from her Bed . . . while yet neither her Feet, nor any part of her Body, rested either on the Bed, or any other support, but were also by the same force, lifted up from all that was under her, and all this for a considerable while, we judg'd it several Minutes. . . ." ¹⁰¹ Mary Glover, thrown into a fit that required her removal from court on December 1, 1602, became so heavy that "three strong men, who carried her out of court," would later claim that they "had never carried a heavier Burthen."¹⁰²

Joyce Dovey, stricken with melancholy after hearing a sermon was subsequently possessed and tossed about by the demons. She was visiting a neighbor when she was so badly stricken that she could not go home. As a group, "they were at prayer in the upper Chamber, she was in a sudden caught up into the window, and the greatest part of her body thrust thorow a great case-

⁹⁷Marchese, 1717, *Vita della v. Serua di Dio Suor Maria Villani*. in Murphy, *Future of the Body*, p. 519.

⁹⁸Minima, *Seraph*, p. 284.

⁹⁹Cotton Mather, *Another Brand Pluct out of the Burning*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 35.

¹⁰⁰The signers of the testimonies were Samuel Aves, Robert Earle, John Wilkins, Dan. Williams, Thomas Thornton, and William Hudson. Earle, Wilkins and Thornton are positively identified by Samuel G. Drake in his notes to *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England*, Volume II, pp. 68-70.

¹⁰¹C. Mather, in Drake, II: 68-69.

¹⁰²Ewen, *Witchcraft*, p. 197.

ment, but her Keeper having an eye onto her, stepped into her, and caught her by the coats, and took her in again." She was often thrown into the walls and at another time she was "cast into a great fire . . . and snatched out without human help, not having any hurt, or so much as the smell of fire on her."¹⁰³

Weightlessness was common at Loudun. The Mother Superior would be lifted to the height of twenty-four inches from the ground and would remain so for long periods of time. Sister Elizabeth Blanchard would stand on her head, feet in the air, without using her hands. Also, Sœur Jeanne and the other nuns were lifted to their feet from a lying position without moving any part of their bodies. Once during the exorcism ritual, the Mother Superior was suspended in the air only touching the ground with her elbow.

The Head and Heart

The head, along with the heart which is discussed later, were of special importance because of the belief that they were the repositories of the soul and the place of residence of the Holy Spirit. When the Priest's hand is placed upon his [the patient's] head, it feels very heavy and ponderous." Or when "his brain feels as if it were tightly bound, or pierced and stricken as if by a sword."¹⁰⁴ "Some are afflicted with violent fever and headache, and their whole body is weakened and in pain; but all these symptoms last a very little while, since a conjuration takes away the power of the demon."¹⁰⁵

Saint Philip Neri had such an enlarged heart, it would swell to twice normal size, that after his death an autopsy revealed that two of his ribs were broken and had been thrust outward. Mary took pain in the region of the heart to mean that demons had taken up residence there. "Some have their hearts punctured as if by needles" while others felt as if their heart is being eaten away." ¹⁰⁶ The kidneys were sometimes discussed along with the heart as having "great pain" and feeling "as if those organs were being torn by dogs."¹⁰⁷ The heart was believed to be one place the Holy Spirit might dwell and as such was particularly venerable to demonic possession.

¹⁰³*A Strange and True Relation of a Young Woman possest with the Devil. By Name of Joyce Dovey, dwelling at Bewdley near Worcester. With particular to her actions, and how the evill spirit speakes within her, giving fearefull answers unto those ministers and others that come to discourse with her.* (London, 1646), p. 3.

¹⁰⁴Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁵Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁶Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarium*, p. 169.

¹⁰⁷Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

For Saint Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi, the experience of the arrival of the possessing devils who would torment her for the five years of her 'trials' caused her heart to become "a pitch-darkened room wherein there remained only the very feeble light of good will, a light, . . . that was incapable of dispelling the darkness. And in this darkness lurked the monsters of evil."¹⁰⁸ "I do not know whether I am a human being or a little animal without reason," she said later.¹⁰⁹ Worms were known to cause a myriad of problems within the head and heart. Migrain headaches, "very violent and protracted" caused death in one young girl in Germany. When her brain was dissected "there was found in it a great mass of decay and worms."¹¹⁰

The Exorcisms

The Baptismal Ritual

Infants, according to the doctrine of the Christian Church, were born possessed since their entrance into the world was made under the auspices of the Devil. Therefore, the baptismal rites of the Christian sects included an exorcism.¹¹¹ Three exorcisms were included in the Roman Catholic baptismal rite before the actual baptism itself. However, by 1969 the Baptism of Infants contained only one exorcism, which could be omitted. The 1972 Order for Adult Initiation provides several exorcism throughout the rite, but none within the baptism itself.

The Reformation was a turning point in the use of an exorcism ritual in the baptismal ceremony itself. In Anglican usage, the First Prayer Book in England, 1549, initially retained the exorcism in the baptismal rite, but it was later eliminated under the influence of Martin Bucer in 1552.¹¹² The Lutherans maintained the exorcism in the baptismal rite and continued to exorcise the possessed for Martin Luther himself had believed absolutely in the material antagonism of

¹⁰⁸Sister Mary Minima, *A Seraph Among Angels, The Life of Saint Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi*, Translated by Gabriel N. Pausback, (Chicago: Carmelite Press, 1958), p. 73.

¹⁰⁹Minima, *Seraph Among Angels*, pg. 73.

¹¹⁰Cornelius Gamma, *Cosmocris*, in *Composi*, p. 117. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was introduced into the church in the seventeenth century by Saint Marguerite Marie Alacoque. She was born in 1647 and entered the Convent of the Visitation in 1671. The first consecration was performed by Père Claude de la Colombière on Friday, June 21, 1675, the date recognized as the birthday of the new devotion. Grillot de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic & Alchemy*. p. 214.

¹¹¹Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 254.

¹¹²Martin Bucer (1491 - 1551) a German Reformer, arrived in England in 1549 and was much honored by Edward VI and Thomas Cranmer. He was made Regius professor of divinity at Cambridge. It was Cranmer who asked his advice on many parts of the Anglican Ordinal.

the Devil.¹¹³ While the Puritan ritual as used in New England "made no direct reference to the Devil and retained none of the qualities of exorcism that lingered in the Anglican rite,"¹¹⁴ there can be little doubt that the nature of the service itself was meant to be a protection from the power of the devil. One might also argue that certain phrasing in the prayer used by Richard Brown, the Protestant minister at Reading in 1706, would serve the same purpose. Recorded in his journal at the baptism of his son, Brown asks that God take the newly baptised "into covenant" with him and "cleanse him with the blood of Jesus from his original uncleanness." Of what nature was this "original uncleanness?" The Devil was no longer addressed directly as in the Romanist ritual, but he was talked about with the assumption that the ritual would free the recipient from contagion of sin.

The Romanist Exorcism

The exorcism was given a clearly organized form in the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Since the *Malleus* was a witchcraft manual, the exorcisms presented were recommended for the bewitched. Exorcisms, said Kramer and Sprenger were "reckoned among the verbal remedies" and there were "three matters to be considered regarding them."¹¹⁵ First, what constituted a legal exorcist, what constituted the legality of the practice itself, the seven conditions that were to be observed during the process, and how was "the disease to be exorcised and the Devil conjured." Second, it must be considered what was to be done when the exorcism failed. And third, other practical and not merely verbal remedies were to be considered. All seven of the conditions to be observed when undertaking an exorcism betray the concern with sorcery and magic. They forbid, among other things, the use of "unknown names," any "invocation of devils," either tacit or expressed, use of charms, anything that might be untrue, and the last line defers to God as any effect must be left to the Divine Will, ". . . for he knows whether it is best for a man to be healed or be plagued, or to die."

An exorcism may be performed at any time, but the most effective time of day was in the morning, just after mass. Monday, was the most efficacious because it was the second day of cre-

¹¹³The renunciation of Satan remains in rituals of most Lutheran denominations today including the American Lutheran Church. Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, p. 257.

¹¹⁴David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement, Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 153. The Anglican rite does retain the renunciation of the Devil, however, in the words: "We receive this child into the Congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. Amen." Reprinted in Kelly, *Devil at Baptism*, p. 259.

¹¹⁵Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 2. Ch. 6. pp. 179 - 180.

ation and was the day, according to the Hebrews, that Lucifer fell. Feast days, especially of Our Lord, the Holy Virgin Mary, and of other saints, are the best days to perform exorcisms "because on such days victory and expulsion of the Devil can be expected more quickly."¹¹⁶ The ritual was considered a public affair because it could serve to reinforce the power of God in the church and the community of Christians as a whole. Often several priests were present, along with large numbers of spectators. In the case of the Loudun exorcisms, there were frequently several thousands in the audience.

Once demons had installed themselves in the bodies of the afflicted (sometimes legions of them would inhabit one hapless individual), it became the duty of the Christian exorcist to dislodge them. Convincing the devils to exit the bodies of the possessed was no small task and performing the exorcism again and again over long periods of time was draining on the possessed, the exorcist, and the witnesses alike. For an exorcism to work, it must be rigidly observed. Father Lactance, the first exorcist to work with Sœur Jeanne of the Angels, prioress at Loudun, labored "arduously and assiduously from May until September then God sent him a great sickness of which he died."¹¹⁷ Other accounts of the incident explained that he went mad.

The demons often give detailed instructions as to how they will leave the body of the possessed and in what way they will signal their departure. In the exorcism of the devils of Loudun and recounted by the exorcist the Révérend Père Surin, the demon Asmodeus,¹¹⁸ who was expelled on May 29, 1629, was made to write and sign a deed in due form attesting to the event. This was also signed by Père Jean Baptiste Gault, the Sieur Martin de Laubardemont, and Monseigneur Henry Loys Chasteigner de la Roche-Pozay, Bishop of Poitiers.¹¹⁹ The document reads as follows:

I promise in issuing from the body of this creature to make a slit the length of a pin below her heart and through the chemise, bodice, and cassock together, the which slit shall be bleeding, and this upon the morrow, Saturday, the twentieth [?thirtieth] of May, at five o'clock in the afternoon; and I promise also that Gresil and Amand will make each his opening in the same manner, although smaller, and I ratify what Leviathan, Behemot,

¹¹⁶Manual, p. 52. See also Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 2. Ch.6. p. 184.

¹¹⁷Sœur Jeanne, *Autobiographie*, p. 75.

¹¹⁸Asmodeus was one of the Fallen Angels who was once of the Order of Seraphim, the highest order of angels. His name translates as "creature of judgement" and is of Persian rather than Jewish origin. In demonology, Asmodeus in Hell was in charge of all the gaming houses. In Jewish lore he was supposed by some to be the child of Adam's first wife, Lilith with Samael; or the child of incest of Tubal-Cain and his sister Naamah; others say he was the demon of impurity. The authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* call Asmodeus *the very devil of Fornication, the chief of that abomination* (p. 30).

¹¹⁹de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic & Alchemy*. pp. 162-63.

and Beherie have promised to do, they and their companion, in token of their issuing, upon this record made the twenty-ninth of May 1629, in the Church of the Holy Cross. Signed Asmodeus.¹²⁰

An account of the exorcism itself is told by the eyewitness des Naiu. On the day named by the Devil, several doctors from the neighboring towns assembled along with the rest of the usual crowd. Des Naiu takes great pains to show that all possible examinations were performed prior to the exorcism so as no accusations of double dealing could be leveled later. The doctors were permitted to examine the clothing of Sœur Jeanne. Her side was uncovered in the presence of the assembly, they looked into the folds of her dress, her chemise, they examined the whale-bone stays. No weapon was found, only her scissors which were given to another for safe keeping. As the exorcist was about to tie her down, the doctors, who had not before seen the possessed behavior, asked to witness a convulsion. The Mother Superior went into a convulsion but "suddenly came to herself with a sigh, pressed her right hand to her left side and withdrew it covered with blood." On her side were three bloody wounds of the size and placement predicted by the Devil. The doctors rushed to examine her again. Her chemise, her stays and her dress were all pierced in three places, "the largest hole looking as if a pistol bullet had passed through." Sœur Jeanne was then entirely stripped, yet no instrument of any kind was found.¹²¹

Sœur Jeanne's own account differs considerably from the one told here. In her *Autobiographie* she tells of the exorcist who held great sway over the demons in that "he made them behave like slaves and he exorcised me with great fervor of spirit and much faith; in less than six or seven weeks he rid three demons from my body: Asmodeé, Aman, and Grésil and this in the presence of . . ." more than six thousand people. "For marking their exit he made three wounds below the heart¹²² in full view of all the assistants." Sœur Jeanne attributed the success of the exorcism to "the intervention of the Holy Virgin and the good angels." She went on to say that

¹²⁰The actual document is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris under the manuscript *fonds français* No. 7618. Translation from de Givry, *Witchcraft, Magic & Alchemy*. p. 164.

¹²¹des Naiu, Vol. II, pp. 47-48.

¹²²Later we will give the explication of the stigmas which affected Sister Jeanne in different reprisals and diverse parts of the body. We will see that it was truly about a pathological phenomenon. Nevertheless, we cannot remain silent about this fact that the marks of which she speaks about here were in this circumstance considered to have been made artificially by herself in an evident end of deception. Actually, other than the presence of the three stated one stated many holes in the shirt, and also in the body of the skirt and the dress which explains that one can find in the assistance "a gentleman strong enough to say that he would not wish to have it appear there and not to have had eyes to see what he had seen saying very loudly that he saw an iron instrument which she wounded herself with (See Legué, in his book *Urbain Grandier et les possédés de Loudon*, p. 236.) With hysterics the reality of symptoms does not exclude their simulation and this is evident in the present case.

God used this episode "to encourage the nuns who for the most part feared to get involved in this business where there were many difficulties."¹²³

The Protestant Exorcism

There are a number of procedural differences between the Roman rituals and the Protestant examples. Where the Catholics more often than not choose to perform the exorcisms in a church or chapel with many strangers in attendance, the Protestant cure was usually a private affair. This mirrors the theological stance of the two belief systems since the Catholic ritual was a communal affair reintegrating the demoniac into the community; the Protestant possessed was thought to be demonstrating a lack of belief or faith and was in danger of being expelled from the community.

The literature on Protestant possessions offers such scenes as the bedroom, or an upper room. Often the demoniac is in a bed with several friends, neighbors, and relatives in attendance. The rooms must have been crowded on these occasions for Cotton Mather comments that during at least one of the prayer vigils held in the case of Mercy Short "wee were perhaps Half a Hundred of us together singing of a Psalm in the Room."¹²⁴

In a number of cases a young pious individual, always a male, is stationed with the demoniac, almost always a female. Joyce Dovey had her male companion who was "procured" for the job: "a devout religious young man, to be in the house, and to be as a Keeper unto her. . . ."¹²⁵ Margaret Rule had the young minister who prayed for her every day.¹²⁶ The Catholic demoniacs were also regularly accompanied by their male spiritual advisors.

Luther recommended that demoniacs be cured by prayer alone. However, he must also have been of the opinion that the demon, being the personification of the lie, could be expelled through beating the body. On at least on occasion, when presented with a demoniac he showed his contempt for the possessing devil by vigorously kicking the person. From all accounts the shock treatment worked.¹²⁷ Another time, he was approached by a pastor who complained of

¹²³Soeur Jeanne, *Autobiography*, pp. 74-75. Asmodeus also tormented Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi and one time when she was assaulted by him in an attempt to rid herself of the demon, "she rolled herself naked upon faggots of thorn, which she found in the woodhouse." *Life*, sect. 32, p. 55.

¹²⁴Mather, *Brand* . . . in Burr, p. 275.

¹²⁵*A Strange and True Relation . . . Joyce Dovey*, p. 2.

¹²⁶Cotton Mather, *Another Brand Pluct out of the Burning*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 38..

¹²⁷Otto Snell, *Hexenpozesse und Geistesstörung* (Munich, 1891) and cited by Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 397.

"apparitions and disturbances caused by Satan." He told Luther that Satan was creating "nocturnal tumults and smashing the utensils in his house." Satan also laughed out loud. The noise had gotten so bad that the pastor's wife and children wanted to move. Luther assured him that Satan would not be able to inhabit his body since he was a believer in Christ, so let "Satan play with the pots."¹²⁸

While the Catholic Church provided a ritual for commanding the demons to dispossess the body of the victim, the Protestants had foregone all recourse to such 'magic' and had thus to rely on other seemingly less effectual methods. They fell back onto the Scripture and the words from Mark when Jesus was asked by his disciples why they had been unable to cast out a particular devil Jesus answered them: "this kind can by no other means come forth, but by prayer and fasting."¹²⁹ Not all early modern cases were handled by prayer and fasting alone. John Foxe, the martyrologist, was called in to conduct a special prayer-meeting for the sole purpose of reclaiming a demonic victim; there he spoke directly to the devil saying: "Thou most wretched serpent . . . O thou foul devil, I command thee to depart."¹³⁰ The victim, after some argument and counter-attack, was eventually saved. John Foxe was most certainly familiar with the Catholic exorcism ritual and felt it might prove effective as it reads: "I adjure thee, ancient serpent, by the Judge of the living and the dead, by the maker of the world, by him who has the power to cast you into Ghenna, that from this servant of God, who hastens back to the bosom of the Church, thou with the fears and afflictions of thy fury speedily depart."¹³¹ Dispossession such as this, which bore so much resemblance to Romanish magic, was viewed with suspicion by the leaders of the Protestant Churches and pamphlets containing accounts of the episodes were prevented from circulating whenever possible.¹³²

The Church of England fixed its position on the question in 1604 with the passage of Canon 72, conceived and carried through Convocation by Richard Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury. It read, in part: "No minister or ministers shall . . . without license or direction of the

¹²⁸Luther's Works, Table Talk, 54, p. 280.

¹²⁹Mark 9:29. The King James Bible reads: *This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.* The English translation based on the Vulgate states: *There is no way of casting out such spirits as this except by prayer and fasting.* The Revised Standard Edition however omits the word 'fasting': *This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.*

¹³⁰Episode related by Thomas, *Religion*, p. 482.

¹³¹Adjuro te, serpens antique, per Judicem vivorum et mortuorum, per factorem tuum, per factorem mundi, per eum qui habet potestatem mittendi te in ghenam, ut ab hoc famulo Dei, qui ad sinum Ecclesia recurrit, cum metu et exercitu furoris tui festinus discedas.

¹³²Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, p. 482. For further use of Romanists techniques such as beating the devil see the case of the Boy of Bilson discussed in Chapter 6.

Bishop attempt upon any pretense whatsoever either of possession or obsession, by fasting or prayer, to cast out any devil or devils, under pain of imputation of imposture or cozenage, and deposition from the ministry."¹³³

The exorcism ritual, while not labeled as such, can be detected in the writings of Cotton Mather when he explains the circumstances surrounding the possession of Margaret Rule. A young minister who began to pray for the recovery of Margaret complained that he had as much right to her as did the Devil since she was a member of his flock and "that he was to do the part of the Minister of our Lord for bringing her home unto God." Though Margaret heard nothing of the pleadings of this man, once he had begun the prayers, she began to refer to him as "Father." The cause of this according to Margaret herself was that the White Spirit had spoken to her saying: "Margaret, you now are to take notice that (such a Man) is your Father, God has given you to him, do you from this time look upon him as your Father, obey him, regard him as your Father, follow his Counsels and you shall do well . . ." ¹³⁴ For Margaret the message of the end of her trials came also from the "white spirit." The "Father" had been fasting for three days¹³⁵ and after Margaret had been "more than five weeks into her Miseries, this White Spirit said unto her, Well this day such a Man (whom he named) has kept a third day for your deliverance, now be of good cheer you shall speedily be delivered."¹³⁶

Cotton Mather was concerned with the theological meaning contained in the possessions and bewitchments but was, unlike others of the same doctrinal persuasion, not willing to wait for a possible cure. He developed his own method of exorcism. In *A Brand Pluck'd Out of the Burning* Mather gave detailed instructions on the method he had discovered and used for "The Methods that were taken for the Deliverance of Mr. Goodwins afflicted Family, four years ago, were the very same that wee now follow'd for Mercy Short . . ." Mather called his exorcism 'A Beseeching of the Lord Thrice' and explained that while unorganized prayer and fasting might work, "as I have had the opportunity to see, in some former Dispossessions, the People of God usually speed not" until they have observed the method outlined by this distinguished minister. The ritual "the Christians . . . were putt to" in the case of Mercy Short was "spending Three Days in Fasting and

¹³³Quoted by Montague Summers, *The History of Witchcraft*, p. 230 - 231.

¹³⁴Cotton Mather, *Another Brand Pluct out of the Burning*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 38.

¹³⁵Cotton Mather expresses great concern lest the reader take the number three as having some superstitious overtones and he counsels the reader not to be concerned to count the number of instances, Drake, II : 39.

¹³⁶Cotton Mather, *Another Brand Pluct out of the Burning*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 39.

Prayer one quickly after another." And it "was not long after the Third Fast" that the girl fell into a fit and after "Shee Shriek'd, shee Roar'd, shee Cry'd out," the Devil seemingly incited her to great fear: "This is worse than all the Rest! What? must I bee Banished from the Favour of God after all?" After which, Mather claimed, the demons were gone: "They had no further Power over her." She was not troubled with the spirits again very soon and the neighborhood "returned solemn Thanks to that Faithful God, who thus gave them to *Tread upon the Lion, and to Trample the Dragon underfoot.*"¹³⁷ But the devils returned in greater force only seven weeks later.

The quieting of haunted houses, and the exorcism of the possessed continued to be frequent activities of the Nonconforming clergy to the end of the seventeenth century. With the Anglicans effectively out of the exorcism picture, the Catholics too made strides to reconquer England. Both sides made use of the printing press for their propaganda resulting in innumerable tracts attesting to the successes and failures of both sides.¹³⁸ One of the most famous careers of a Protestant exorcists was that of John Darrell, who was prominent in England during the closing decade of the sixteenth century.¹³⁹ Although he was later proved to be a fraud, the tracts relating to these cases have yielded much material in explaining the use of the body in the medical aspects of fraudulent possession.¹⁴⁰

Blagrove, and Anglican physician offered a case study of his own ability to exorcise demons from a possessed girl, the daughter of a turner from Basingstoke, Hampshire who was stricken with fits for twelve hours every day. After determining that she was indeed possessed "by having mayde some tryall upon her by way of questions, and her answers, for she could not say, or once name God, Jesus Christ, or Deliver us from Evil, or the like but that she would immediately be tormented, falling into strange fits." He suggested that a minister be summoned. Assured that this had been done and to no avail, he proceeded to exorcise the girl himself. It is interesting here that Blagrove, an Anglican, would go about the casting out of demons in so Ro-

¹³⁷Mather, *Brand . . . in Burr, Narratives*, p. 276 - 278.

¹³⁸Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 487 - 490.

¹³⁹See D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Scolar Press, 1981), pp. 55-59, 61-73; see also, Thomas, pp. 483-86; G. R. Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage, The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), pp. 153-54. John Darrel's own writings include: *A Briefe Narration of the Possession . . . of William Sommers* (1598), *A Detection of that sinnful, shameful, lying, and ridiculous discours, of Samuel Harshmet* (1600), *A True Narration of the Starng and grevous vexation by the devil, of 7. persons in Lancashire, and William Somers of Nottingham. Wherein the doctrine of possession and dispossessionof demonikes out of the word of God is particularly applyed unto Somers, and the rest of the persons controverted: together with the use we are to make of these workes of God* (1600).

¹⁴⁰See Chapter 7.

manish a manner. After a prayer asking for God's blessing in the endeavour, he first asked the maid to say the Lord's Prayer "without stop or starting." She was also asked "to pronounce God, Jesus, Christ, and likewise say, I defy the Devil and all his works, and other such Godly expressions." Being assured by her inability to follow his instructions that she was really possessed of the Devil, he continued: "I laid my hand upon the Patient, but finding that she together with the Devil began to strive and so to get away from me, she being marvellous strong, yet I held fast, and desired her Father (who was by me all the while I was about it) to help me. . . ." Blagrove then prayed and repeated a most unusual exorcism: ". . . by this high and mighty Power and Name Tetragrammaton,"¹⁴¹ "and in the name of the blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I charge, and command the Devil and unclean Spirit to come forth of this maid, and to depart from her in peace, and not to molest or trouble her any more. . . ." This, however, did not work. So, Blagrove resorted to the Biblical prescription saying three times: "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth I charge thee to come forth." Yet the Devil stayed where he was. For more than two hours Blagrove continued, sometimes in prayer, "repeating those words before mentioned oftentimes, resolving not to give over to the Devil." At length, the Devil came forth "but invisible, with a great cry and hideous noise-raising a sudden gust of wind, and so vanished. . . ."

Considering the position of the Anglican Church on the subject of exorcism, this remedy, performed near the end of the seventeenth century by an Anglican doctor, certainly contained a number of Roman Catholic overtones. Blagrove asserted that there are "three principal causes or things considerable in casting forth of Devils, Prayer, Faith, and the especial gift of God thereupon, for except that you find that your Faith is strong, it is in vain to undertake this business. "Prayer, he said, was "the most substantial matter," for one must pray for the faith and the special gift. This special gift was reputed by the Puritans to have been given only to the Apostles in the first century and was no longer available to the believer. It should be noted that a Nonconformist minister, a Mr. Webb, was called in before Blagrove. After two tries at casting out the Devil through faith, prayer, and fasting, Webb was at a loss. Considering this failure, the doctor resorted to some of the old Catholic remedies that had proven to work in the past.¹⁴²

Sexual Implications

¹⁴¹*Tetragrammaton* is one of the names given by Girolamo Menghi in the *Flagellum Daemonum*, along with Jehovah, Elohim, Sadai, Adonai, and Sabaot which may be used in the course of the exorcism, *A Whip for the Devil*, p. 16. Several of these are used in the Spanish *Manual of Exorcism*, see p. 127.

¹⁴²This story is told by Joseph Blagrove, in *Astrological Practice of Physick discovering the true way to cure all Kinds of Diseases and Infirmities which are Naturally incident to the body of man*. (London, 1671), pp. 168-73.

Since the exorcists were invariably male and the possessed were more often than not female, there was much emphasis placed on the necessity of greater moral care during the exorcism itself. According to the Roman ritual, exorcisms must always be performed in a church or a holy place since demons had a greater fear of holy words in the house of God than they do elsewhere. In an emergency, however, the rite may be performed in a private house provided the servants and the women have been removed. There may, if necessary, be a woman or two present to help with the sick person, but no curious by-standers or "vain ladies" should be allowed. The people who are able to help the most would be other clerics, priests or monks all of whom could help with the prayers. The exorcist should avoid being alone with the possessed at all costs, especially if it was a woman, first in order to avoid any suspicion, and second because the Devil was capable of preparing some kind of trick.¹⁴³ One such "trick" was outlined by the author of *A Whip for the Devil*:

Sometimes if [the demoniac] happens to be a young woman that is to be exorcised, he feigns himself sick, and then the Woman desires the Priest to touch her face, and handle her breasts, to feel harder, yet harder, on purpose to put voluptuous fancies into the Priests mind; sometimes at the Devils instigation she desires the priest to ease her torments, but laying his cheek to hers, or his lips to hers, meerly, wicked Devil as he is, to debauch an honest vertuous Priest of the Church of Rome. And therefore it behooves a Romish Priest to be chaste of his Eyes, chaste of his hands, and indeed of every member, especially when he meets with the Devil & a Woman together.¹⁴⁴

Protestants were aware of the potential problem too. Even Cotton Mather was not above suspicion when it came to such situations concerning female demoniacs. In attending to the possessed Margaret Rule, a girl of about seventeen, both father and son, Increase Mather and Cotton Mather, arrived one evening to speak with her. On the whole there were about thirty or forty people with them. The father sat on a stool by the bed while the son sat on the bed beside her. Cotton Mather began to question her and when she was in a fit; "He laid his had upon her face and Nose. . . then he brushed her Face with his Glove, and rubb'd her Stomach (her breast not covered with Bedcloaths) and bid others to do so too, and said it eased her . . ." Mather asked another question and Margaret again went into a fit. . . and he again rub'd her Breast, &c. (about this time Margaret Perd, an attendant, assisted him in rubbing of her. The Afflicted spake angerely to her saying don't meddle with me and hastily put away her hand)." After several more minutes, ". . . the Afflicted desired the Women to be gone, saying that the company of the Men was not offensive to her. . . ."145

¹⁴³*Manual*, p. 52.

¹⁴⁴*A Whip for the Devil*, p. 20-21.

¹⁴⁵Robert Calef, *A Letter to Mr. Cotton Mather, Jan. 11th, 1693*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 49-52.

Four days later, during another visit, she was calmed when "[t]hree or four Persons rub'd and brush'd her with their hands, . . . if they brush'd and rub'd in the right place; therefore they brushe'd and rub'd in several places, and said that when they did it in the right place she could fetch her breath. . . ."146

Robert Calef wrote down the above scenes which had taken place on September thirteenth and nineteenth, 1693, because "finding these Accounts to contain in them something extraordinary," he wanted to make sure he had two witnesses "to attest to the truth of it." "But," he says of the response from Cotton Mather, "[I] was much surprised with the Message you sent me, that I should be Arrested for Slander, and at your calling me one of the worst Lyers . . ." On January fifteenth, 1693/4, Mather is still protesting that it was as "false a representation 'tis, that I rub'd Rule's Stomach, her Breast not being covered."¹⁴⁷ Calef answered on January eighteenth, and discussed the matter of Mather's having been alone with Margaret for half an hour (excluding even her own Mother) and hearing laughter from her. Mather claims that he told her that "it was her laughing time."¹⁴⁸

Supernatural Remedies

Supernatural remedies were suggested by a number of the authors. This section will be concerned with only those specifically religious in nature. Guazzo offered a list: first was a true and lively faith, fortified with the love of God and His Son; second was a lawful use of the sacraments of the Catholic Church; third was to have recourse to holy men and to seek help from those who are known to possess the gift of working miracles; fourth was ritual exorcism; fifth was to seek a remedy by works of mercy, by fasting, by alms-giving, and prayer; sixth was devout invocation of the Name of the Saviour Jesus Christ, or of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or a prayer for help to the Guardian Angel; seventh was the sign of the Holy Cross; eighth was to find refuge in the safeguard of the Relics of the Saints; the ninth remedy was of the most ancient standing in the Church and was of wonderful efficacy, namely Holy Water blessed by the solemn rite ordained for its benediction; tenth was the use of the Catholic rite to bless other things such as the waxen disc called the Agnus Dei with the print of a lamb on one side, and of the same sort was Blessed Grain, Blessed Candles, Blessed Salt, and Blessed Bread; eleventh were pious writings or sacred

¹⁴⁶Calef, *A Letter*, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II :52.

¹⁴⁷Cotton Mather, *A Letter to Robert Calef*, Jan. 15th, 1693/4, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 64.

¹⁴⁸Robert Calef, *A Letter to Mr. Cotton Mather*, Jan. 18th, 1693, Drake, *The Witchcraft Delusion*, II : 73.

amulates hung around the neck such as the Apostle's Creed; twelfth was the ringing of the Bells of the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁹

The use of the sign of the Cross as a power against possession can be seen in the multiple use in the exorcism ritule itself.¹⁵⁰ The use of the Cross was not confined to the Roman Catholics as can be seen in the story of the young Huguenot girl of about eighteen years old who was using a small silver Cross in the possession of a little child. "The child was all bunched up in bed, with his nose pressed against his knees, well covered up. . . ." When the girl placed the Cross on his shoulders, the child would suddenly twist and stretch out, "grimacing and crying out against us."¹⁵¹ In the case of Joyce Dovey, some soldiers came to visit her to see a person possessed and were discussing the power of the papists in exorcising demons. They spoke of "Crucifixes, and Crosses, and presently appeared in her breast or throat two Crosses . . ."¹⁵²

Signing the cross saved a young virgin who was asked by an old woman whether she would like to go upstairs in a house where there were many beautiful young men. The girl agreed and was cautioned by the woman not to make the sign of the cross, nevertheless, the virgin crossed herself when the old woman was not looking. "Consequently it happened that, when they had gone up, the virgin saw no one, because the devils who were there were unable to show themselves in assumed bodies to that virgin."¹⁵³

Even when Protestant and Puritan theology negated the efficacy of "magical" symbols, it paradoxically found them necessary in practical terms. The sign of the cross and the Bible were prevalent. So too was the importance of reciting psalms and prayers. Again, non-Catholics discovered the need to rely on traditional Catholic remedies for combating the incursions of the Devil.

Reformers in the sixteenth century initially attempted to reorganize theology to eliminate Romanist influence. Martin Luther condemned the scholastics and Thomistic theology. Yet, when it came to understanding the workings of the Devil and demons, an important aspect of Lutheran theology, even he was hampered by a lack of a new angelology. Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite had organized the celestial hierarchy; Saint Augustine had proven the importance of spiritual beings in the Platonic development toward the Divine and their presence as inhabitants

¹⁴⁹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, pp. 177-80.

¹⁵⁰See Appendix B.

¹⁵¹Boguet, *An Examen*, p. 184-85.

¹⁵²*A Strange and True Relation . . . Joyce Dovey*, p. 3.

¹⁵³Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Quest. I, Ch. 4.

of the City of God; Saint Thomas Aquinas had created the physics of spiritual existence and answered the questions of the capabilities of angels both fallen and unfallen in the *Summa Theologica*. No new theories were discovered by the Reformers. Even today the Thomistic understanding holds.

The Aristotelian and Thomistic theological background of demonology created a need for both Protestant and Catholic to devise a system of discerning the spirits. Once the physicians and theologians had proclaimed the presence of supernatural cause in unusual circumstances, the determination of demonic intervention as opposed to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit had to be ascertained. They developed a list of dualities whereby similar behavior patterns could be classified as either good or evil.

In the theology of the Roman Catholics, the possibility of demon possession remains even today although in attenuated and carefully monitored form. The secularizing of the soul in scientific attempts to prove the existence of the spiritual world through seances, ghosts of the deceased, and even vampires in the eighteenth century undermined the scholastic demonology. For the Protestants, the possibility of possession by demons seemed to wane with the developments associated with the new religious movements like deism and new medical diagnostic techniques based more on scientific evidence than on theological dogma.

CHAPTER FOUR THE POSSESSED BODY AS LEGAL EVIDENCE

As long as religion and the state were partners in the organization of society, spiritual possession had societal and legal implications. Explanation of exterior signs on the body itself became an important political and judicial tool for those members of the society charged with maintaining the community. Group possessions tended to be treated more often as legal than as medical problems. The French cases involving nuns and the English trials with numerous possessed young people were usually concerned with state religions and religious choice. The group possessions in Sweden and Puritan America became proofs that the Devil had increased his efforts and was operating at the behest of God to punish the communities for their turning away from the proper religious observance.¹

The basis for the authority in prosecuting the accused perpetrators of maleficium came not so much through the theological works as through the legal writings of the Church. Catholic Europe's prevailing Thomistic theology, while it did contain some explanations of the spiritual world that were incorporated into the witchcraft prosecutions, was far removed in general tone from the witchcraft literature.² Two Biblical commands were cited again and again as religious justification for the prosecution of witches. "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;"³ and "Thou shalt not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, any one who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer."⁴ It was the authority of Saint Augustine as cited by Kramer and Sprenger that was the connection between demonic possession and the witchcraft trials." . . . S.

¹Individual accusations of witchcraft by aggrieved family and neighbors that do not involve demonic possession are not treated here. However, see Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) for an extended study of the use of magic and counter-magic.

²See Chapter 1.

³Exodus 22:19.

⁴Deuteronomy 18:10.

Augustine says that we must not pronounce sentence against any person unless he has been proved guilty, or has confessed."⁵ If the accused would not confess to witchcraft, even under torture, the demon-possessed individual sometimes became the evidence the court needed for conviction.

This chapter will explore demonic possession brought on through the maleficent actions of individuals within the society. Whereas spontaneous possessions showed certain physical symptoms and had prayer and fasting or exorcism for remedies, possession by bewitchment displayed a somewhat different assemblage of signs and required a different set of cures.

The authors and cases chosen for inclusion here were all connected in one way or another with courts of law. They range from absolute and adamant believers in the powers of witches to skeptics who denied all possibility of human power over the supernatural. All the possession cases were diagnosed as having been caused by another human being through the power of the Devil. On one side the writers are legalists, Sprenger and Kramer, Jean Bodin, Henri Boguet, Nicolas Remy, and James I, who were anxious to create handbooks for the courts. On the opposing side were the skeptics who denied the possibility of witchcraft and consequently possession by bewitchment, Johann Weyer and Reginald Scot being the two major authors studied here. Also there were those who tried to make sense of the situations and to justify them in terms of the knowledge of the period. This last category includes John Cotta, Increase and Cotton Mather, Henry More, Joseph Glanvill, Robert Calef, and Samuel Willard. The stories of the demoniacs and of the physical manifestations of bewitchment were culled from pamphlets and the writings of the authors above.

My purpose is not to analyze the cases for their psychological or sociological implications. It is to understand an aspect of the minds of the people of early modern Europe and Puritan America by discerning the differences, as they saw them, between the bodily manifestations of theological or spontaneous possession and that of bewitched possession. It is in cases of bewitched possession that the influence of popular culture can be seen. The cures were more often than not concocted through the knowledge of herbal remedies, counter-magic, and popular beliefs.

Possession and Witchcraft

Although this discussion is not concerned specifically with witchcraft, it must take into account the literature of witchcraft and the connection of the concepts of possession that go with it. Possession and witchcraft were not necessarily linked, although they did tend to become connected beginning sometime in the fifteenth century with the use of possessed individuals as evi-

⁵Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part III, Quest. 18.

dence in witchcraft trials. Except during the times of trial for the Church, possession and witchcraft tended to remain separated.

The belief in doing harm by magic or occult means, maleficium, had a long history among the European peasantry and had been a mainstay of the rural folklore. Demonic possession as it was known in the West was a product of Christian doctrine. The two came together when the peasant beliefs in witches and the evil eye were incorporated into the legal system by the clergy and the ruling class.⁶ Whereas witchcraft, maleficium, sorcery, and occult magic were seen by the Church as pagan practices, possession by demons was fundamentally Christian. Because the use of occult practices were eventually identified with heresy, suspected witches were perceived as pernicious and were linked with the Devil as accomplices in opposing God. Possession was seen as an instrument of God in the chastising of Christians and exorcism was understood as proof of the powers of the Christian faith.

Demons and devils were permitted by God to enter into the bodies of individuals, but the possessed were not usually suspected of being witches. Authors of later tracts on demonology held that one of the powers granted to witches was the ability to send demons into the bodies of innocents. Witchcraft has been discussed by most modern historians in a variety of ways: as a continuation of the folk beliefs, popular magic, herbalism and midwifery, and as a reaction against the acculturation of Christianization in the Reformation centuries. Some have even gone so far as to credit the same sources in the popular culture with the development of demonology.⁷ Yet, as we have seen, the heritage of Christian demonology was classical, Jewish, and Indo-Iranian in origin and was carried into Barbarian Europe by the Catholic Church.

Kramer and Sprenger explained how witches may cause a devil to possess a human being. Since the power of God in the use of devils for his own means is never limited, the authors of the *Malleus* set down the explanation "lest it should seem impossible to anyone that, with God's permission, men should at times be substantially inhabited by devils at the instance of witches." A priest was possessed by a devil and narrated the circumstances thus:

A certain witch brought this evil upon me. For I was rebuking her on some matter of discipline of the Church, upbraiding her rather strongly since she was of an obstinate disposition, when she said that after a few days that would happen to me which has happened. And the devil which possesses me has told me that a charm was placed by the witch under a tree and that until it was removed I would not be delivered.⁸

⁶See Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, (check); G. R. QuaiFFE, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage, The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987);

⁷See Clark, "Protestant Demonology."

⁸Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Quest. I, Chapter 10.

While there were numerous possessions before the period under study here, this period had an inordinate amount of witch trials involving charges by the possessed and accusations that a bewitchment had taken place. This has been extensively covered by numerous historians in recent years.⁹ Of the authors who concern us here, several wrote exclusively for the legal profession and were most concerned with finding, trying, condemning, and executing witches. Besides Kramer and Sprenger with the *Malleus Maleficarum*, other Roman Catholic authors were Jean Bodin, Henry Boguet, and Nicolas Remy. For the Protestant cause, James I of England and the English and New England authors along with the myriad of tracts offer us insight into the use of the possessed for witchcraft trials.

In a society imbued with the belief in an objective enemy waiting to attack the unsuspecting, the connection of possession with the crime of witchcraft offered a source of blame and a cure. The execution of the offending witch was believed to serve as a method to rid the community of the demons. A number of the cases discussed here, Louviers, Loudun, and Salem among others, sought cures for the possessions in the execution of suspected sorcerers or witches. Sometimes it worked and sometimes the power seemed simply to transfer to another agent. Neither the exorcisms of the Roman Catholics nor the "prayer and fasting" of the Protestants proved to be infallible in all cases of possession. Often the exorcism worked for a while, weeks and months at a time, but all too often, the demons returned. In cases where there was an epidemic of possessions, multiple executions might be needed to expunge the evil from the society. The reluctant demons could thus bring on a full fledged witch panic through their stubborn refusal to relinquish their hold on innocent members of the community.

The distinction between the demoniac and the witch was fundamental: the former was the devil's unwilling victim, the latter his conscious and sane ally. In the former the possessing devil was sometimes harshly treated; but only to drive him out and relieve the sufferer—never with mutilation or death. The latter was punished for crimes committed by his or her own volition; and for none more often than for having brought possession upon others.¹⁰

Although this was true in the continental cases of witchcraft, there were several incidents in Puritan America where the question of the possessed being a witch herself was entertained. In the case of Elizabeth Knapp it was broached early on and the idea was discarded. Her posses-

⁹See especially Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); H.R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks Edition, 1967); G.R. Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et Sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle: Une analyse de psychologie historique* (Plon, 1968);

¹⁰George L. Burr, cited by Robbins, p. 397.

sion, in fact, became the punishment meted out to her because "she would not seal a covenant with him [the Devil]."¹¹ The question of bewitchment was also raised by Elizabeth herself but the accusation came to naught.¹²

Many of the authors were anxious to make the distinction "betwixt the obsessed or possessed with evil spirits, and the bewitched by Ceremonies." While admitting that there is very little difference between the diseases caused by "some kind of obsession, and some kind of Incantation," they insisted that "Causes betwixt Possession and Bewitching, do commonly differ in Manner and Nature."¹³ There were a number of symptoms more common to possession than to bewitchment:

Flying, Leaping at an huge distance, Speaking, the Tongue of the Sick being held; and sometime they use his tongue; also speaking Blasphemy, Raving, and Lying, and telling things done far off at the moment, and what will be by Vaticination; also the sick Roar like Bears, Bark like Dogs, Mew like Cates, Grunt like Hogs, etc. They sometimes lie as if dead, stiff, their head wreathed backward, Chin and Nose drawn together, or whole Face drawn up like a Purse, with foaming and frothing, and raging most, and tormenting the sick Party exceedingly when any pray or speak of God.¹⁴

Johann Weyer, however, insisted that individuals who were thought to be bewitched were actually possessed by demons or visited by the Holy Spirit through no agency of a witch, sorcerer or other practitioner of magic. Weyer believed in all the evil phenomena as described throughout the period; he just did not believe in the necessity of an intermediary like the witch. For Weyer, the Devil was perfectly capable of carrying out all manner of maleficium himself. Weyer in fact knew this to be true because he had personally struggled with the Devil in an effort to prevent the fiend from carrying off a young virgin.¹⁵

John Cotta drew the same distinction as most of the other authors when he said: "The possessed and the witch, are both the habitacles of Divels; with this onely difference, that the Witch doth willingly entertain him."¹⁶ The reasoning attending this line of thought lay in the logic that since the prevailing legal thought differentiated between possession and bewitchment, then the

¹¹Samuel Willard, *A Brief Account . . . Elizabeth Knapp of Groton* (1672) in John Demos, ed., *Remarkable Providences* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), p. 426.

¹²I. Mather, *Remarkable Providences* (1679) in Burr, *Narratives*, p. 22 - 23.

¹³Anonymous, *Daimonomageia*, p. 10.

¹⁴Anonymous, *Daimonomageia*, p. 10.

¹⁵Weyer, i, c. 11.

¹⁶Cotta, *The Tryall of Witch-craft*, p. 96.

physical symptoms of the two must be different. This was found to be more and more true as the centuries wore on.

Possession by Bewitchment

Nearing the end of March in 1633, extraordinary physical symptoms declared themselves within the Ursuline convent at Loudun, France. The Mother Superior began to have convulsions. Soeur Jeanne des Anges had been Mother Superior for only a short time and the convent itself was just six years old. Soeur Jeanne uttered blasphemous language and behaved in the most unseemly way. The behavior spread to others of the convent and a Sister Claire, when asked to perform a simple task, "fell on the ground, exposing her person in the most indecent manner, without a blush, and with foul and lascivious expressions and actions, till she caused all who looked on her to hide their eyes in shame."¹⁷

At first the phenomenon displayed by the nuns was taken to be a "sexual disease." Determining whether or not a person who exhibited such unusual behavior was possessed by a demon or was suffering from a natural illness was an obvious concern. Physicians were called in to examine the women. Soon, suspicions arose that the behavior proceeded from a supernatural cause and physicians of the body, apothecaries, and medical men gave way to the physicians of the soul. The case was typical of the times. The nuns' behavior had crossed the line from normalcy to deviance. Usually the first assumption in these circumstances was that there was a medical explanation. When none could be found, the clerics turned to the principal signs of demon possession.

At the end of February, 1691, when girls in the house of the Reverend Samuel Parris began "to Act in a strange & unusual manner" physicians were called in to assess the situation. None of the accounts assumed a supernatural cause at the outset. However, when the physicians, none of whom is named in the literature, "could assign no reason" for the behavior, one of these doctors told the rest of those in attendance that "he was afraid they were Bewitched."¹⁸ Then and only then was the clergy called in and the process of exorcism by prayer and fasting begun. The cause was eventually found to be bewitchment in both cases. The first was found to be a practitioner of maleficium, a cleric-sorcerer in Loudun; and the second a witch, and finally several witches, in Salem.

¹⁷des Niau, *The History of the Devils of Loudun Told by an Eye-witness*, translated and edited by Edmund Goldsmid, Edinburgh: Privately Printed, 1887, Vol. II, p. 31. Other accounts of the Loudun case include Aldous Huxley, *The Devils of Loudun*;

¹⁸Quotes from Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, V, in Burr, *Narratives*, p. 341 - 343.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not only did the practitioner have to discern medical from theological symptoms, obsession from possession, good spirits from evil ones, but also determined how the possession had taken place: whether the demon had entered the body by permission of God through his own volition, or by use of incantations from a witch, bewitchment.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, Vincentius von Berg compiled a famous Catholic manual, his *Enchiridium*, with a list of tests for ascertaining whether the possessed was bewitched or not.¹⁹ The demonic possession was by the permission of God if the spirit:

Fled at the sign of the cross, holy water, the name of Jesus, etc.

Said anything against the Catholic faith.

Excited the mind of the possessed to pride, vainglory, despair, etc.

Refused to discuss the possession with a priest.

Appeared with a loathsome or dejected appearance, or departed leaving a stench, noise, frightfulness, or injury.

Approached mildly, but afterward left behind grief, desolation, disturbance of soul and clouds of the mind.

But Berg also listed the indications by which the demoniac could be diagnosed as having been bewitched.

1. The bewitched desire the worst food.
2. They are unable to retain their food, are irked by continual vomiting, and are unable to digest.
3. Others experience a heavy weight in the stomach, as if a sort of ball ascended from the stomach into the gullet, which they seem to vomit forth, yet nevertheless it returns to its original position.
4. Some feel a gnawing in the lower belly; others feel either a rapid pulsation in the neck or pain in the kidneys. Others feel a continuous pain in the head or brain, beyond endurance, on account of which they seem oppressed, shattered, or pierced.
5. The bewitched have trouble with their heart, which feels torn by dogs, or eaten by serpents, or pierced by nails and needles, or constricted and stifled.
6. At other times all the parts of their head swell up, so that throughout their body they feel such lassitude that they can scarcely move.
7. Some experience frequent and sudden pains, which they cannot describe, but they shriek aloud.
8. In others, the body is weakened and reduced to a shadow on account of extraordinary emaciation, impotency of vigor, and extreme languor.
9. At other times their limbs feel whipped, torn, bound, or constricted, especially the heart and bones.
10. Some are accustomed to feel something like the coldest wind or a fiery flame run through the stomach, causing the most violent contractions in their entrails and intense and sudden swelling of the stomach.
11. Many bewitched are oppressed by a melancholy disposition. Some of them are so weakened that they do not wish either to speak or converse with people.

¹⁹Vincentius von Berg, *Enchiridium* quoted by Rossell Hope Robbins, "Exorcism," in *Exorcism Through the Ages*, Edited by St Elmo Nauman, Jr. (New York: Philosophical Library, 1974), pp. 201 - 216.

12. Those injured by witchcraft may have their eyes constricted, and the whole body, especially the face, almost completely suffused by yellow or ashen color.

13. When witchcraft has by chance befallen the sick, he is generally attacked by some serious trouble, seized with fear and terror; if he is a boy, he immediately bewails himself and his eyes change to a dark color, and other perceptible changes are observed. Wherefore the discreet exorcist takes care to disclose the recognized signs of this sort to the relatives and those present to avoid scandal.

14. It is especially significant if skilled physicians are not sure what the affliction is, and cannot form an opinion about it; or if the medications prescribed do not help but rather increase the sickness.

15. Some times the only indications of bewitchment are considered circumstantial and inferential, as employing witchcraft for hatred, love, sterility, storm-raising, ligature, or [harm to] animals.

One major objection raised by the end of the seventeenth century to the use of the possessed, even the bewitched possessed, as witnesses was their supposed inability to maintain their human faculties, which were required for clear testimony in a court of law. Samuel Willard argued in his dialogue between "Salem" and "Boston" concerning the Massachusetts case that the girls were possessed rather than bewitched and should not be credited as witnesses in court. He argued that persons who are possessed are no longer in control of their human faculties, "such as were possessed by Devils, on the records of the Gospel History." Yet in this case the bewitched individuals remained in control of their faculties when not under the influence of the witch. Willard objected to their ability to witness on the grounds of their "incapacity to give a full Testimony, to the face of the Prisoner at the Barr; and yet that is required by Law and Reason." Even the fact that the witches "smite them down with their poisoned Looks" did not remove the objection. For if the "poisoned looks" took away their reason and even "sometimes their memory," then their memories must be "refreshed" by the court thereby cancelling the testimony of the witness.²⁰

If the witnesses were not capable of being believed, the court then must find other ways to obtain the truth. "Boston" warned that forceful means should not be used, to which "Salem" replied: "You talk of Spanish Inquisitions; I hope none of ours are chargeable with it, and yet I know there are some who plead for Examination by Torture."²¹ Examination by torture, while not sanctioned by the common law, was nevertheless practiced under the guise of obtaining the truth.

The Body and Truth

²⁰Samuel Willard, *Some Miscellany Observations On our debates respecting Witchcrafts, in a Dialogue Between S & B* (Philadelphia, 1692), pp. 8 - 9.

²¹Willard, *Some Miscellany*, p. 6.

While the writers of the New Testament labeled the Holy Spirit the "spirit of truth," the Devil became known as the "supreme liar." Jesus answered objections to his ministry by accusing those who denied him of being children of Satan: "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."²² Since each of these spirits may dwell within the individual, truth and untruth became spirits that resided within the human body.

For the ancient Greeks, too, truth had resided within the physical flesh rather than in the reasoning mind or the intellect.²³ In the beliefs in the Athenian system for extracting the truth we can find precedents for the ideas of the exorcism of the demoniac along with the necessity for torture later used on the accused witches. In a case before the courts of Athens the system was to torture a slave belonging to one of the litigants in order to ascertain the truth of the matter. The theory was that the slave, not having his freedom, did not possess free will of the kind that would give him the option of choosing between the truth and a lie. Therefore, when put to the torture, the body would involuntarily give up the truth embedded in it. Torture was considered the most reliable of all the tests in both private and public affairs.

Whenever slaves and free men are present and facts have to be found, you do not use the statements of the free witnesses, but you seek to discover the truth by applying torture to the slaves. Quite properly, men of the jury, since witnesses have sometimes been found not to have given the true evidence, whereas no statements made as a result of torture have ever been proved untrue.²⁴

Jesus had argued the "slavery" of lies and the "freedom" of truth. He pointed out to his adversaries that in their law "it is written that the testimony of two men is true, yet, he says, if I do bear witness of myself, my testimony is true . . ."²⁵ The trial scene in the Gospel of John, was a technical rewrite closely akin to the Greek trial mentioned above. Pilate was concerned to find the "truth" in the case. Jesus insisted that Pilate could believe what he said: "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Jesus, then, is the king of truth. But Pilate, still unable to

²²John 8:44.

²³The model I am applying here is from Page Dubois, *Truth and Torture*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), in which she says that her essay is not meant to explore modern torture, but rather to be concerned with the relationship between torture and truth in ancient Greece. "That truth is unitary," she says, "that truth may finally be extracted by torture, is part of our legacy from the Greeks and, therefore, part of our idea of truth" (p. 5).

²⁴Demosthenes 30.37 and quoted by Page Dubois, p. 49-50.

²⁵John 8: 14 and 17.

understand the charge, asked: "What is truth?" Receiving no answer, Pilate had Jesus scourged and tortured by the soldiers.²⁶ To what end was this performed, to extract the truth? Tertullian expressed the opinion prevalent in the late second or early third century the Holy Spirit had the power to elicit the truth.²⁷ Demons, he said, when commanded by a Christian filled with the Holy Spirit, must be truthful.

In Greek thought, the truth, as long as it resided within the body, was also inaccessible. It was something that had to be sought, rooted out, and brought into the light. Even though the truth lay buried within the body, there were signs that could be read on the outside, on the skin, that gave the perceptive viewer clues as to the information inside. The body contained secrets that had to be interpreted, even elicited, by its proper manipulation, usually through torture.

For Plato, the search for truth transcended the torture and test of the judicial arena and ascended to the realm of the philosophical. The immortal soul had the ability to reach the highest Truth through transcendence of the mortal body, but not without violence.

When one is freed from his fetters and compelled to stand up suddenly and turn his head around and walk and lift up his eyes to the light, and in doing all this felt pain And if he were compelled to look at the pain itself, would not that pain his eyes? And if, said I, someone should drag him thence by force up the ascent which is rough and steep, and not let him go before he had drawn him into the light of the sun, do you not think he would find it painful to be so hauled along, and would chafe at it . . . ?²⁸

The equation of the search for truth and the pain which accompanied it was enough to make most men opt for ignorance. Plato acknowledged this. The one who already had the truth must forcefully compel the other to learn the truth. Philosophical truth comes through the use of force and the infliction of pain.

This insistence that truth may be obtained from the body under torture was tested again and again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The 'devil's mark' proved a source of validation for the use of torture. Once the mark was identified and a pin thrust deeply into it without either visible pain or the drawing of blood, the victim was adjured to "tell the truth" of the origin of the mark. Often, as in the case of Claudia Bogarta of Brindisi, who in 1590 was closely shaved in readiness for torture, it was found that she had a scar on her head which had been hidden by her hair. She claimed that it was caused from an old blow from a stone, but the judges were certain it was the mark of the devil's claw. It was tested as above, and when no reaction was dis-

²⁶John 18: 33 to 19: 3.

²⁷Tertullian, *Apology*, Chap. XXIII. See full case under 'Conversing with Demons' in this Chapter.

²⁸Plato, *Republic*, 515c-d.

cerned, and "she persisted in denying the truth," she was brought to torture until "she not only acknowledged that the scar had been given her by the devil, but confessed to many other abominable crimes which she had committed."²⁹

In the case of the *Boy of Bilson*, Dr. Morton, Bishop of Litchfield, England insisting the possessed boy had been tampered with by Romanist priests, took him into his home. There, in an effort to obtain the truth, the Bishop, finding that verbal threats did no good, undertook to beat the truth out of him. ". . . taking him out of his Bed, and having one to hold him, the Bishop gave him six very smart Lashes with a Rod." This was to no avail so the torture was increased. The Bishop and his assistants "thrust Needles into his Toes and Fingers, and betwixt the Nails." Failing any response they "clapt burning Candles to his eyelids, till they singed the hair off."³⁰

The process of arrest was believed to affect the ability of the court to obtain the truth. The *Malleus Maleficarum* offers the suggestion that when the witch was arrested she should be placed in a basket or on a plank of wood "so that she cannot again touch the ground . . . because when they are taken in this manner they lose the power to keep silent."³¹ Henri Boguet claimed from the authority of the *Malleus* that many believed the witch should be prevented from touching the ground because it would "thus be easier to draw the truth from him [sic]." However, he later insisted that this was not necessary because the moment a witch was arrested, Satan momentarily forsook his own so that "it is easier at such time to draw the truth from him [the witch] than if he is left for some days in prison"³²

Torture was used at Salem for the purpose of extracting the truth. In the first case of witchcraft, the Indian woman, Tituba who was tried the beginning of March, 1691, began what

²⁹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 57.

³⁰*The Boy of Bilson: or A True Discovery of the Late Notorious Impostures of Certain Romish Priests in their pretended Exorcisme, or expulsion of the Devill out of a young boy, named William Perry . . .* (London, 1622), p. 5.

³¹Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Pt. III, Qu. 8, p. 215. The authors also maintained that witches sometimes requested that they be allowed to at least touch one foot to the ground before being burned because they said "that if they had touched the ground they would have liberated themselves, striking many other people with lightening." Nicolas Remy said that this was the same reason that "when a virgin is to be married and is about to receive the Sacrament of Matrimony, two of the strongest men make a chair of their folded arms and so carry her from the house to the church, believeing that by this they effectively guard against the spells and enchantments which may be woven to hinder marriage." Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. IX, p. 160.

For a discussion on the idea of women and contact with the ground see Eva Cantarella, "Dangling Virgins: Myth, Ritual, and the Place of Women in Ancient Greece," in Susan Rubin Suleiman, *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1986), pp. 57 - 67.

³²Boguet, *An Examen*, p. 213 - 214.

may be a long and unrecorded list of such treatment. Tituba "confessed that the Devil had urged her to sign a Book, which he presented to her, and also to work Mischief to the Children . . ." She was committed to prison and later sold for her fees. However, it was subsequently reported by her own account "that her Master did beat her and otherwise abuse her, to make her confess and accuse (such as he call'd) her Sister-Witches, and that whatever she said by way of confessing or accusing others, was the effect of such usage . . ."33

In a letter written to Cotton Mather and others by John Proctor from Salem Prison on July 23, 1692, Proctor refuted the confessions of five "witches." None of them would have confessed "any thing till they tyed them Neck and Heels till the Blood was ready to come out of their Noses." It was this torture which made them "confess that they never did." Likewise, in examining William Proctor, "because he would not confess that he was Guilty, when he was Innocent, they tyed him Neck and Heels till the Blood gushed out his Nose, and would have kept him so 24 Hours, if one more Merciful than the rest, had not taken pity on him, and caused him to be unbound." Certainly one would also place the pressing to death of Giles Corey in the category of torture.³⁴

Yet it was not just the use of torture in the witchcraft cases that proved the point. The ritual of exorcism, where the exorcist demanded the truth from the possessing demon, relied on a similar principle. Since the spirit of truth and untruth were manifested in the Holy Spirit and the Devil respectively, the belief that the possessing demon must tell the truth to the representative of God became one of the prevailing beliefs of the Catholic Church. The Church believed public whipping to be an effective form of ridding the body of demons. On August 27, 1566, King Charles IX of France witnessed the exorcism of a Madam Nicole Autry at Laon. The exorcism was performed by the monks of Vervins by tying the demoniac to a stake and publicly whipping her "to obtain through God the expulsion of the devils from her body."³⁵

Both theologians and physicians believed that by rendering the demons abode, the human body, an unfit place, the demon would retreat. To this end the use of fulmigrations to drive out

³³Calef, *More Wonders*, in Drake, III: 6. See also Samuel Willard, *Some Miscellany Observations On our present Debates respecting Witchcraft, in a Dialogue Between S. & B.* (Philadelphia, 1692) for extended references against the practice of torture of the accused witches, pp. 5 - 7.

³⁴Boyer and Nissenbaum, *Witchcraft Papers*, II: 689 - 690, I: 246. The treatment of the accused while under interrogation before the magistrates might truly be labelled torture. Nathaniel Cary gives this account of the trial of his wife: ". . . she was forced to stand with her Arms stretched out. I did request that I might hold one of her hands, but it was denied me; then she desired me to wipe the Tears from her Eyes . . . then she desired she might lean herself on me, saying she should faint. Justice Hathorn replied, she had strength enough to torment those persons, and she should have strength enough to stand." Calef, *More Wonders*, in Drake, III: 23.

³⁵Robbins, *Encyclopaedia of Witchcraft*, p. 395.

demons was employed because they were unable to tolerate the smells. Girolamo Menghi claimed that "it is lawful to exorcise *Demoniacs*, and kick the Devil about like a foot-ball."³⁶

Pretended demoniacs could often be cured by beatings. In the town of Well in Germany in the sixteenth century, "a foolish woman named Bartholomaea" was thrown into a possession-like state of distraction whenever the hymn which began *Gloria in excelsis Deo* was sung in German instead of Latin. The owner of the village, a Lady Anna of Virmont, invited Bartholomaea to visit her. During the visit, after the words to the hymn had been carefully translated for the peasant, at a prearranged time, the owner and her daughter began to sing the hymn. Bartholomaea fell to the ground. "Without any hesitation, the prudent mistress of the village (a wise woman), along with her daughter, lifted Bartholomaea's clothing and laid on a flogging with all proper zeal" Bartholomaea attempted to push her clothing back down in order to avoid this "tickling."³⁷ But she later admitted that this remedy had cured her of the demon.

Conversing with Demons

Tertullian, early in the third century, assured his pagan adversaries that when it came to the power of the Christian exorcist they were even capable of making the lying demons tell the truth. "Let a person be brought before your tribunals, who is plainly under demoniacal possession. The wicked spirit, bidden to speak by a follower of Christ, will as readily make the truthful confession that he is a demon, as elsewhere he has falsely asserted that he is a god."³⁸ The belief that demons were constrained to tell the truth before a Christian if forced to speak surfaces several times through the later centuries. It was for this reason that demons, once having "taken up their Quarters, love to lye very private, and to keep themselves either from speaking or trembling, for fear of being discovered."³⁹

³⁶Girolamo, Menghi, *Flagellum Dæmonum: Exorcismos Terribiles, Potentissimos, et Efficaces* (Bologna, 1582; Bonn, 1588; Venice, 1606, 1644) and quoted in *A Whip for the Devil; or, The Roman Conjurer*. (London, 1683), p. 19.

³⁷Weyer, Book 5, XXXV p. 461-2, Canon 60, Gratian *Decretum* c. 26, q. 5, c. 12. reads: *Concerning those who pretend to be seized by demons: Those who pretend to be seized by a demon, and who imitate in their corrupt behavior the appearance and condition of such possessed persons, should be subjected to the same sorts of toil and afflictions to which those truly seized by a demon are truly subjected in order that they be delivered of the devils workings.*

³⁸Tertullian, *Apology*, Chapter 23. In fact, Tertullian went so far in his assertion that he said that if the so-called Christian, when performing an exorcism, cannot command the demons to tell the truth, "if they would not confess, in their fear of lying to a Christian, that they are demons, then and there shed the blood of that most impudent follower of Christ."

³⁹*A Whip for the Devil*, p. 19.

Sometime in the fifteenth century, in the town of Hesse, the diocese of Marburg, a priest was possessed of an evil spirit. For three years he had endured the torment. The demon was questioned by the exorcist as to how long he had been inhabiting the body of the priest. "Seven years," answered the demon. The exorcist complained saying that to be untrue for the priest had been troubled for only three years. The exorcist then asked the demon: "Where were you for the rest of the time?" The demon replied, "I was hiding in his body, generally in his head." If this was true, queried the exorcist, why had the demon not reacted when the priest celebrated the Sacrament for the other four years? The clever demon had an answer for that, too: he had been hiding under the tongue and that had saved him, "Because," as he explained, "anyone may hide under a bridge while a holy man is crossing, and be safe, as long as he does not pause in his walk."⁴⁰

Carrying on conversation with the demons was an important method of obtaining information. Every effort was made to compel the devils to speak even when this required the use of physical force as has been seen above. It was generally believed that the strange voices emanating from the bodies of the demoniacs was certain proof of evil habitation, although this was not an essential aspect of possession. This ability of the demon to have a voice upon establishing himself in the body of a human meant that testimony was no longer confined to humans alone. The inquisitor could now converse with the spirit world.

Boguet devoted a chapter to "The Voice of Demons" and explained that "it would seem that they are incapable of speech, which is formed in the lungs, the palate, the tongue and the teeth, which are lacking in a spirit. However, since it could be seen on a daily basis that they spoke through the bodies of demoniacs, the spirit could use the parts of the body of the possessed for speech "just as he uses his other members in whatever manner he wishes. . . . But it has been observed generally that the Devil cannot control his voice so well as to imitate the human voice in such a way that it cannot be distinguished."⁴¹

Boguet further addressed the question of animals speaking and concluded that while it may seem strange, "when the Devil enters the body of a dog or a goat or a bird or any other animal, he can counterfeit the voice of a man." It is interesting to note that throughout the literature that the demons never speak in the voice of a woman. The most unusual question approached by Boguet is how a woman, and it is expressly a woman, can speak "when the person's mouth is shut, or when the tongue is thrust six inches out of the mouth;" or how the demon might speak "when he has no body at all, or one formed only of air." While it may be difficult to believe, said Boguet, "Satan can speak through the shameful parts of a woman." The oracle at Delphi was re-

⁴⁰Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 1, Ch. 10, p. 133.

⁴¹Boguet, *An Examen*, Chapter X, pp. 26 - 29.

ported to have "spoken through the lower and shameful parts" as did a number of other cases he cites. Here is Boguet's explanation:

. . . this thing is caused in a natural manner, just as if the voice were formed by an agitation and vibration of air; and it follows that Satan can in this way create a voice, seeing that he is well able to form a body of air. The echo gives us an example of this, when we see the valleys and hollow places reply articulately to the human voice so exactly that it seems as if those places were imitating our speech; and from this it is easy to understand that the human voice may be quite well counterfeited without the use of lungs, tongue, or teeth.⁴²

The witnesses to the cases take great pains to show that it would be impossible for the possessed themselves to have uttered the words. Case after case reads like the testimony about William Sommers who "spoke with mouth wide open, tongue drawn up into throat, and neither lips nor chaps moving. . . also with mouth shut closed." Some of the possessed say they themselves "hear a voice speaking inside them, but that they know nothing of the meaning of the words."⁴³

Sometimes the diagnosis of demon possession itself was based on the testimony of the demons in residence. In one Puritan possession, that of Joyce Dovey, the diagnosis became so difficult that the woman's "keeper" decided to appeal to God. He lifted up "his heart to the Lord in prayer, without uttering of words, that if she were possessed, the Lord would be pleased to make it manifest, which no sooner conceived, but the Devill answers with swearing, Wounds, Blood, &c. that thou shalt know. . . ."⁴⁴ Appealing to God became the appeal of last resort when all other possibilities had failed to create a consensus.

In the case of Elizabeth Knapp, during a particularly quiet period in her possession it was put to her whether she could actually be called a demoniac, "or person possessed of the Devil." The witnesses testified to the next sequence of events. "He [the Devil] began by drawing her tongue out of her mouth most frightfully to an extraordinary length and greatness and [making] many amazing postures of her body. And then [he continued] by speaking vocally in her . . ."⁴⁵

The dilemma caused by conversing with the Prince of Lies is not ignored by the writers. Sometimes the possessing demons prevent the possessed from telling the truth as in the incident with Rollande du Vernois of Chetserie in Savoy.⁴⁶ Although she had tried to offer some infor-

⁴²Boguet, *An Examen*, Chapter X, p. 28.

⁴³Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁴⁴*A Strange and True Relation . . . Joyce Dovey*, p. 2.

⁴⁵Samuel Willard, *A Brief Account of a Strange and Unusual Providence of God Befallen to Elizabeth Knapp of Groton* (1672) and reprinted in John Demos, *Remarkable Providences*, p. 432.

⁴⁶This is one of the most prominent cases in Boguet and references to it run throughout his work. *An Examen*, pp. 171 - 73.

mation, "she was prevented from telling the truth by the evil spirit which was possessing her, and which she felt like a lump in her stomach." Forced to drink Holy Water, the Devil finally began to speak himself, "You are burning me, you are burning me," he cried out with a bark like a dog after taking only one drop.

Joking with demons while in the process of exorcism can have unforeseen consequences. A certain Brother of a monastery in Cologne who was famous for his ability to cast out demons, was also possessed of a reputation for ribald speech. When this monk was casting out a demon from a man in Cologne, the demon asked that he be given a place to go after leaving the demoniac. Jokingly the Brother said: "Go to my privy." The demon left the possessed. Later that night, when the Brother arose "to purge his belly," the demon "attacked him so fiercely in the privy" when his rear guard was down, that he barely escaped with his life. Therefore, it should be remembered that "the casting out of demons is a sacred matter and should be undertaken most reverently."⁴⁷

The Sexual Laws and Crimes Against God

A substantial number of the demonic possessions seen in the centuries under study here were fraught with sexual overtones. Much of the adult possession on the continent was sexual in nature and seemed to occur under circumstances where the sexes were separated by religion or convention. Demonic possession in England, and the rest of Britain and Puritan America, tended to be less openly sexual than in France and Italy. The possessed girls in Salem, for instance, displayed no overtly sexual behavior. Occasionally we read of situations where the question was raised as to the appropriate behavior of the individual ministers and priests involved in the exorcism process. The Catholic handbooks, published near the end of the period, contained specific instructions for the male priest never to remain alone in the room with the female demoniac for fear of sexual assault.

The churchmen who authored the chronicles of demonic possession were presumed to be celibate, yet they shared the sexual fascination with most members of the society. The lurid details of contact with Satan were a near preoccupation of witnesses, torturers, lawyers, monks and priests. Cautions against all manner of eroticism probably contributed to this absorption which can be indentified in divine as well as demonic possessions. Of little concern here are the aspects of the witch's sabbot and the sexual orgies accompanying it. However, the ability of

⁴⁷Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 192. The same story is attributed to Nider by Ewen, *Witchcraft*, p. 109.

demons to reproduce through sexual intercourse with human women, not just witches, is an important theological subject.⁴⁸

The control of the sexual impulse was a significant aspect of Christian doctrine from the first centuries of the Christian era. Saint Anthony was accosted by demons in the guises of temptresses and whores. "[T]he power of the devil lies in the privy parts of men," insisted the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*.⁴⁹ Thomas Shepard prayed to God that: "Many whorish lusts, but that he would take me."⁵⁰

The sexual activities connected with demonic possession in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be categorized in two ways: first in situations where the individual was sexually assaulted by a demon in the form of incubi or succubi; and second in activities where the demon caused the possessed to act in an overtly sexual manner, as in the cases of the convents at Loudun and Louviers. The latter circumstance includes sexual relations with the exorcist, masturbation, and corprolalia.

Some general observations might be helpful. The demons discussed in the literature tend to be classified as male. Although they may take on the appearance of the female in order to gather semen from a male for use in sexual relations, the authors were not concerned to linger on any demonic sexual relations with the human male. The most important of the devils in the sin of fornication was Asmodeus who is mentioned by both the writers and the possessed. Also, it would seem that there was little question of the sexual relations taking place without semen since all the authors are interested in the manner of collection, the proper temperature, and the transportation of it to the site of intercourse. Kramer and Sprenger, however, do admit that if the woman is old or sterile the demon "associates" with her "without the injection of semen, since it

⁴⁸Sexual perversion was a common complaint in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with bestiality a particularly flourishing accusation. Intercourse with Satan in the form of a goat or other animal was not outside plausibility. Intercourse between a spiritual being in the form of a demon was much more difficult to resolve and gave rise to endless erotic speculations on the part of both laymen and churchmen for centuries. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies, Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, translated by Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991); Joy Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), pp. 210 - 250; Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches* (London, Routledge Press, 1992); G. R. Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), Chapter 7, pp. 97 - 112; Luran Paine, *Sex in Witchcraft* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1972); T.K. Oesterreich, *Possession, Demonical and Other* (Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1966), pp. 86 - 90;

⁴⁹Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 3, p. 26.

⁵⁰Shepard, p. 95.

would be of no use, and the devil avoids superfluity in his operations as far as he can."⁵¹ Finally there is great interest in the possibility of offspring following relations with a demon.

The Incubus and the Succubus

Guazzo began his chapter on copulation with demons with the assertion that almost "all the Theologians and learned philosophers are agreed" that humans and demons practice coition. "Plato . . . Philo, Josephus, and the Old Synagogue; S. Cyprian, S. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and others have clearly proved that devils can at will fornicate with women."⁵² While all these may have proven the fact, it was Augustine and Aquinas who are mentioned most often throughout the literature as proof of the possibility. But it was eyewitness accounts, empirical evidence, and the contemporary stories that received the most attention. The authors quote the *Malleus Maleficarum* and each other for proof in verifying the stories. Even so, many offer differing opinions as to the means by which intercourse is accomplished.

Incubus literally means one who presses upon or crushes. It was generally described as appearing while a person slept and the attack was characterized by three main symptoms: agonizing dread, a sense of oppression or a weight upon the chest interfering with respiration, and the illusion of helpless paralysis. The attackers were connected with lust in antiquity and the Greeks believed that the cause of their appearance in dreams was attributable to over drinking and over eating, epilepsy, or some other disease. Saint Augustine said of them:

. . . it is widely reported that Silvani and Pans, commonly called incubi, have behaved improperly toward women, lusting after them and achieving intercourse with them. These reports are confirmed by many people, either from their own experience or from the accounts of the experience of others, whose reliability there is no occasion to doubt. . . . Hence I would not venture a conclusive statement on the question whether some spirits with bodies of air (an element which even when set in motion by a fan is felt by the bodily sense of touch) can also experience this lust and so can mate, in whatever way they can, with women, who feel their embraces.⁵³

This view was continued by the Church Fathers as can be seen in the stories concerning Saint Anthony and was carried into medieval literature. The idea received official recognition through the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the first fully realized explanation for incubi and succubi.

Demons were universally referred to in the literature as males, therefore incubi and succubi are only male or female in the choice of their victims. If a woman is sexually assaulted by a devil, then by definition, the devil is an incubi, likewise a male is always sexually attacked by a

⁵¹Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Book I, Part II, Quest. 1, Chapt. 4, p. 112.

⁵²Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, XI, p. 30.

⁵³Saint Augustine, *City of God* 15:23.

succubi, the female form. The demon is the same, and is only distinguished as by name applied in agreement with the gender attacked human since "the functions of Incubi and Succubi being indifferently and equally to all unclean spirits."⁵⁴

The authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* believed that when demons had sexual relations with humans these "foulest venereal acts" are not committed for pleasure, but "for the pollution of the souls and bodies" of the men and especially of the women with whom they copulated. For Boguet, this coupling with humans was performed to cause the most greivous sin against God. "For if God abominates the coupling of an infidel with a Christian, how much more shall He detest that of a man with the Devil? Moreover, by this means man's natural semen is wasted, with the result that the love between man and wife is often turned to hatred. . . ."⁵⁵

Pleasure during the act was disputed by the authors. Although there were claims that no pleasure was derived from the relations, Boguet is certainly ambiguous when he said that the Devil used women because they "love carnal pleasures."⁵⁶ Yet in the very next chapter, he maintained that all women who have experienced the act affirmed "that this coupling is by no means pleasurable to them, both because of Satan's ugliness and deformity, and because of the physical pain which it causes them."⁵⁷

Sinistrari based his proof of the possibility of intercourse between demons and humans on the ability of the human to see and feel the incubus. He asserted, as did Guazzo, it may be inferred that the Devil or a demon copulated with a woman "if a sort of black smoke is seen to issue from the woman." Another clue was that if a woman was seen fornicating with a stranger who immediately disappeared after the act, one could be certain that it was the Devil. A third proof, related to the last, was that the demons tended to appear only to the mistress, however, if they are surprised in the act of carnal intercourse, they could take, "now one shape, now another." Kramer and Sprenger insisted "that in all the cases of which [they] have knowledge, the devil has always operated in visible form." Although to some bystanders only the woman could be observed and have often been seen

. . . lying on their backs in the fields or the woods, naked up to the very navel, and it has been apparent from the disposition of those limbs and members which pertain to the venereal act and organism, as also from the agitation of their legs and thighs, that, all invisibly to the bystanders, they have been copulating with Incubus devils; and yet some-

⁵⁴Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Quest. 4.

⁵⁵Boguet, *An Examen*, XI, p. 30.

⁵⁶Boguet, *An Examen*, XI, p. 29.

⁵⁷Boguet, *An Examen*, XII, pp. 31 - 32; also Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, XI, pp. 30 - 31.

times, howbeit rare, at the end of the act a very black vapour, of about the stature of a man, rises up in the air . . . [the Devil] can in this way seduce or pervert the minds of girls or other men who are standing by.

Husbands have actually seen Incubus devils swiving their wives, although they have thought that they were not devils but men. And when they have taken up a weapon and tried to run them through, the devil has suddenly disappeared, making himself invisible.⁵⁸

Women in these situations lay on their back and exhibited all the signs of the most erotic physical relationship, climaxing in a series of orgasms.⁵⁹

The testimony of the women as to the physical qualities of the experience is cited throughout the texts. The demon's penis is always cold. One woman "had several times taken in her hand the member of the Demon which lay with her, and it was as cold as ice and a good finger's length, but not so thick as that of a man." Additionally, "the members of their demons were as long and as big as one of their fingers"⁶⁰

Robert Burton, in his *Anatomy of Melancholy* offered an alternative explanation. Although he recognized the authorities such as Weyer who "stoutly deny" the possibility that "the Devil hath any copulation with women. . . that they be mere phantasies . . . lies and tales," yet he admitted that the possibility might still exist and suggested that the illusions may be caused by sexual frustration.⁶¹

Generation and Conception

For Sprenger and Kramer, the demons perform sexual actions for "complete conception and generation" since they can deposit "human semen in the suitable place of the woman's womb where there is already a corresponding substance." That in the generation of the children who may be conceived in this manner, it is only the "local motion" which can be attributed to the demon, and not the actual begetting which does not originate from the power of the devil or even from the body he assumes, but "from the virtue of him whose semen it was; therefore, the child is the son not of the devil, but of some man."⁶²

⁵⁸Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Book I, Part II, Quest. 1, Ch. 5, p. 114.

⁵⁹G.R. Quaipe, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 101.

⁶⁰Boguet, *An Examen*, XII, p. 31.

⁶¹Burton, *Melancholy* 3:1:1.

⁶²Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Book I, Part I, Question 3, p. 26.

For James I, the demons are completely spiritual. The only questions arise when the question of the sexual abuse of a living human is discussed. It would seem that there are two ways this abuse might be performed:

The one, when the devill onelle as a sprite, and stealing out the sperme of a dead body, abuses them that way, they not greatlie seeing anie shape or feeling anie thing, but that which he so conveys to that part . . . The other means is when he borrows a dead body, and so visibly, and as it seems unto them naturalle as a man converses with them. But it is to be noted, that in whatsoever way he useth it, that sperme seems intollerably cold to the person abused. For if he steal it out of nature of a quick person, it cannot be quickly carried, but it will both tine (loose) the strength and heate by the way, which it could never have had for lack of agitation, which in the time of procreation is the procurer and wakener up of these two natural qualities. . . . And if he occupying the dead body as his lodging expell the same out thereof in the dewe time, it must likewise be cold by the participation with the qualities of the dead body whereout it comes.⁶³

The *sexual abuse* discussed by James I seems only to be of the male demon and the human female. Boguet explains that "there is nothing which makes a woman more subject and loyal to a man than that he should abuse her body."⁶⁴

James never answered the question of how, if the demon has no corporeality, it can transport the sperm from the dead body to the place of copulation. Gathering the semen was performed at some times by the demon by his becoming an succubus and causing a man to ejaculate during sleep. This solved the question of wet dreams and answered the need for semen that would be expelled during the later encounter of the diabolical lover and the lascivious woman. Other authors do tackle the question however.

For Sinistrari, "it is undoubted that carnal intercourse between mankind and the Demon sometimes gives birth to human beings; and that is how the Antichrist is to be born . . ." He described the offspring, quoting other sources, not as monsters but as "tall, very hardy and bloodily bold, arrogant beyond words, and desperately wicked."⁶⁵ Bodin claimed that women who have lain with Satan give birth to hideous and terrible monsters. In continuing to expound on the theories of others, he described the quality of the semen which the Incubus obtained for use in the encounters:

⁶³James I, Book III, Chapter 3, 67.

⁶⁴Boguet, *An Examen*, XI, p. 29.

⁶⁵Sinistrari, p. 21. As authority for his theory, Sinistrari lists a number of well known personages throughout history who were supposedly the offspring of Incubi and human women. Among the people are Plato, according to Diogenes Laertius and Saint Jerome; Alexander the Great on the authority of Plutarch; Scirpio Africanus the Elder from the writings of Livy; *Merlin, the Englishman*, the child of an Incubus and a nun who was a daughter of Charlemagne; and lastly, the *damnable Heresiarch Martin Luther*, p. 22. Boguet offers a others in Servius Tullius and Florine and Ermeline

What Incubi introduce into the womb, is not any ordinary human semen in normal quantity, but abundant, very thick, very warm, rich in spirits and free from serosity. This moreover, is an easy thing for them, since they merely have to choose ardent robust men, whose semen is naturally very copious, and with whom the Succubus has connexion, and then women of like constitution, with whom the Incubus copulates, taking care that both shall enjoy a more than normal organism, for the more abundant is the semen the greater the venereal excitement.⁶⁶

However, Sinistrari maintained that "the whole strength and efficiency of the human sperm are contained in the spirits which evaporate and vanish as soon as it issues from the genital vessels wherein it is warmly stored; all medical men are unanimous in this," he said. Since the spirits can only be maintained if kept at the same temperature as the genital organs, they would be altered if transported by the Demon.

Boguet had a different theory.⁶⁷ Quoting Aquinas, he said that the demon "so skillfully shoots it into the womb that, on meeting the female ova, some result must follow." He further explains that "this semen is kept at its original warmth" by the "many devices" the Devil has at hand "to harm and abuse the human race." Even so, Boguet said that "all witches agree that the semen they receive from the Devil is as cold as ice" because even though the Devil can keep it warm during transportation, it "becomes cold as soon as it is ejaculated from its ducts."

Animal Partners

Theologians, following Aquinas, included under the term bestiality "every kind of carnal intercourse with any thing whatsoever of a different species."⁶⁸ However, Sinistrari argued that Aquinas did not equate copulation with demons and bestiality but that what he "intended here to specify so exactly is carnal intercourse with a living thing of a species different from man, that is to say, with an animal."⁶⁹ The sexual act with a demon (demoniality), a corpse (pollution), or in some non-procreative manner with a man (sodomy), was not, strictly speaking, bestiality. The difference between a beast and a demon was very specific in that the demon was incorporeal. Therefore, whether the demon was in the form of a man or an animal, the sin was demoniality. Interestingly, Sinistrari asserted that: "With regards to the penalties applicable to *Demoniality*, there is no law that I know of, either civil or canonical, which inflicts a punishment for a crime of

⁶⁶Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 22.

⁶⁷Boguet, *An Examen*, XIII, pp. 35 - 40.

⁶⁸Aquinas, *Summa*, II, 2, Quest 154.

⁶⁹Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 2.

that kind."⁷⁰ This said, coupling with demons in animal form would seem to have symbolic implications.

Commonly, the animal was a dog, a cat, a goat or a ram. While all of these have connections to witchcraft, the dog was mentioned most often throughout the literature when not making specific reference to witches. The connection of dogs with melancholy will be broached in Chapter Six. Burton further maintained that dogs, more than any other animal, suffer melancholy.⁷¹

As to dogs and the sexual act, Bodin claimed that in "Toulouse and Paris women have been known to make sexual abuse of a natural dog."⁷² The *silent sin* was manifested in a number of ways but may be associated with dogs. In Germany, it was reported that in one particular convent dogs were often found on nuns who were possessed by demons seeming to imply that the dogs were the embodiment of the devil.⁷³ Weyer told of a religious community on the borders of Cologne: ". . . eight years ago a demon in the form of a dog ran forth in daylight and went up under the inner garments of some religious maidens and, from the outer movements of the habits, gave indications of a sordid sexual skirmish."⁷⁴

Boguet insisted that "nothing will be born" from coupling with "a ram, a cat, a dog, or any other animal, by reason of the disproportion between them." Citing the case from Bodin above, Boguet insisted that these two women coupled so often with the dogs, that if issue was possible the women would "be filled with the fruits of such couplings."⁷⁵

The Offspring

Whether or not a woman can become pregnant through intercourse with the Devil depends, according to the *Malleus*, on the woman. If a woman is not sterile, "and should she be disposed to pregnancy, then if [the devil] can conveniently possess the semem extracted from some man, he does not delay to approach her with it for the sake of infecting her progeny."⁷⁶

⁷⁰Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 99.

⁷¹Burton, p. 65.

⁷²Bodin, *Démonomanie*, Book 3, Chapt. 6 and discussed by Boguet, XII, p. 32.

⁷³Bodin, *Démonomanie*, p. 308. Bodin calls this sin *péché muet*. Boguet also alludes to this story in Chapter XII, p. 34, as does Weyer, p. 306.

⁷⁴Weyer, p. 306 - 307. "Demons did the same thing at Hensberg in the duchy of Jülich under the form of cats."

⁷⁵Boguet, *An Examen*, pp. 37 - 38.

⁷⁶Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Book I, Part II, Quest. 1, Chapt. 4, p. 112.

As to what sort of being is generated by the intercourse of the Incubi and the woman, and secondly, who may be termed the father [paternity] of the child begotten under these circumstances several solutions were put forth by these writers. It should be noted that there is not one writer who discusses the birth of a female child from the mating of the Incubus and a human woman. Yet the assumption of the *Malleus* is that one of the strongest reason for this generation is that the issuing child will have less ability to refuse the devil's advances when grown. Devils turn themselves into Incubi and Succubi not for any feelings of pleasure, "since a spirit has not flesh and blood," but for two reasons: so "that through the vice of luxury . . . they may work harm against men . . . in body and in soul, that so men may be more given to all vices"; and since the devils know under which stars men have more vigor, they can conceive "men who will always be perverted by witchcraft."⁷⁷ In this way they can further the number of souls given over to evil.

Sinistrari, after his proof, shown above, of the inability of the Demon to transport semen, argued that the human man could not, as some claimed, be seen as the father of the foetus. He explained that it requires two acts to facilitate generation: first, that the sperm be delivered into the womb by the genital organs of the man "begetting his own substance"; and second, that begetting requires the "concurrence of two causalities": one material, the other efficient. In the first instance, the sperm is not delivered directly into the womb by the man who produced it, therefore, he could not be deemed to be the father of the foetus. In the second case, the concurrence of the two causalities, only one is present in the intercourse of the Incubi and the woman. By "material" cause, Sinistrari meant the actual material of the semen with the sperm, "the matter of generation." This was provided by the human donor. But it was the second half of the causality argument that was absent in the scenario under discussion. By efficient cause, Sinistrari meant "the action tending to generation "which must be contributed along with the material cause by the same contributing agent. He cited a contemporary medical text⁷⁸ in observing: "Generation entirely depends upon the genital spirit contained within an envelope of thicker matter; that spermatogenic matter does not remain in the uterus, and has no share in the formation of the foetus; it is but the genital spirit of the male, combines with the genital spirit of the female, that permeates the pores, or, less frequently, the tubes of the uterus, which it fecundates by that means."⁷⁹

After disproving many of the possibilities of body types and moral inclinations attributed to the offspring by other authors, Sinistrari stated his own beliefs: "Subject to correction by our

⁷⁷Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 3, p. 25.

⁷⁸Michael Etmüller, *Institutiones Medicæ Physiologæ*.

⁷⁹Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 24.

Holy Mother the Church, and as a mere expression of private opinion, I say that the Incubus, when having intercourse with women, begets the human foetus from his own seed."⁸⁰

There are in existence on earth rational creatures besides man, endowed like him with a body and a soul; they are born and die like him; they are redeemed by Our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore are capable of being saved or lost. These rational creatures or animals are swayed by the same emotions and passions, jealousies and lusts, as man. They are affected by material substances; therefore they participate in the matter of these substances, that is to say, they have corporeality. But this corporeality is far more tenuous and subtle than the body of man, It enjoys a certain rarity, permeability, volatility, and power of sublimation. These creatures are able at will to withdraw themselves from the sight of man.⁸¹

After a long argument bent on proving the corporeality of some spirits who would be capable of copulating with a human and producing the sperm to generate a foetus, he ends his discussion with two stories about the demons wooing first a married woman and then a nun. Because other people were capable of seeing the demons, he insisted that some spirits, at least, were corporeal.

Although the possession cases in Massachusetts were conspicuous in their lack of sexual manifestations they did not escape innuendo. After the trials in Salem had been stopped, colonists suggested that some of the possessed girls "went bad."⁸²

Remedies

Like exorcism in theological thinking, and purging in the medical antidotes, there were specific curatives in the battle against witchcraft. It should be noted that in cases of bewitchment, the Catholics seem to focus their attention more often on the possessed individual while the Protestants tend to concentrate on the witch. The Roman Catholics relied on exorcism as one line of defense even in bewitchment, but it was not the first suggested according to the *Malleus Maleficarum*. A bewitched individual should first "resort to Sacramental Confession." Although it was understood that there were times when the demons had so inhabited the possessed that he had lost the use of his senses, it was expected that he would make the effort to confess if there were lucid moments. Failing this, "the sacred sign of the cross and the recital of the Angelic Salutation"⁸³ might suffice. Then, and only then, was exorcism attempted. The use of supernatural in-

⁸⁰Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 27.

⁸¹Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, Introduction xxi-xxii.

⁸²See notes in Karlsen.

⁸³The Angelic Salutation is the *Gloria in excelsis*, the opening words of the hymn sung by the angelic host at Bethlehem.

cantations, spells, or charms was strictly warned against. So too was the insistence that the witch herself effect a cure since a "cure that is wrought by witches who remove a spell again requires an expressed pact with the devil."⁸⁴

Two last correctives listed by Sprenger and Kramer are most interesting. One said that "those who are possessed may be delivered by the intercessions and prayers of the Saints. . . for by the merits of Saints, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins the unclean spirits are subdued."⁸⁵ Many of the demons could be subdued by calling on certain saints by name. Another secondary restorative that some members of the Church believed in was that "a man possessed by a devil can indirectly be relieved by the power of music."⁸⁶

For the Protestants, the first and most important cure for bewitchment was to attack the witch. Since the Protestant doctrines forbade the use of magic such as exorcism in the cure, the jurists turned to the perpetrator. This attack was two pronged: either to attack the physical body or to attack the thing bewitched. "Punish the witch, threaten to hang her," says one treatise.⁸⁷ It also helps to scratch her and to "fetch blood." She might also be induced to take the malady onto herself. In which case "she sometimes is sick, as the party she afflicted was; sometimes dies." Sometimes "he or she (they are most Females, most old women, and most poor) [sic.] must transfer the disease to other persons . . ."⁸⁸ When this happens, we are advised that the witch should be threatened and beaten in order to get her to remove it. Casting a witch in prison may sometimes cause her to lose her power by losing contact with the Devil.

In the second remedy, attacking "the thing bewitched," punishment similar to that suggested for use on humans was considered practical because the punishment would be transferred to the witching agent herself. If a butter churn had been bewitched and "butter would not come," then a "red hot Iron" should be thrust into the churn and the witch would be "burned in her guts."⁸⁹ As will be seen in Chapter Five, the focus was on the body and its effluvia especially fecal

⁸⁴This quote and all information in this paragraph is from Sprenger and Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Quest. 2.

⁸⁵Sprenger and Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Quest. 2, Chapt. 5.

⁸⁶Sprenger and Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Quest. 2, Chapt. 5.

⁸⁷Anonymous, *Daimonomageia*, p. 21.

⁸⁸Anonymous, *Daimonomageia*, p. 23. The fact that the possessed are most often women is noted by almost every author, but calling attention to their social status and age was not as usual.

⁸⁹This and the other quotes in this paragraph are from Anonymous, *Daimonomageia*, p. 21. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a 'besom' was "a bundle of rods or twigs used as an instrument of punishment." It was often made of birch.

matter and urine. If the excrement of the bewitched was burned, the witch would find "her Anus sore." Stopping up bottles containing bewitched liquid would make the witch "able neither to urine or deject, until they were opened." One man was "freed by making urine through his Wives Wedding Ring . . . an another the like by pissing through a Birch Besome."

The jurists were more concerned with aspects of demonology that impinged on the peacefulness of the society. Obtaining truth during interrogation, collecting evidence, confining individuals viewed as potential threats to the well-being of the community, and administering effectual punishment were under the jurisdiction of the law. Again, as in so many situations, the reigning demonology that offered the framework for understanding was Aristotelian, scholastic, and Thomistic. Theologians and lawyers worked together just as did theologians and physicians. The difference being that in the cases of involvement by the law, the possession was considered to be the work of an outside agent such as a sorcerer or a witch. Here the adherents to Neoplatonic thought might also be accused because of their interest in astrology and alchemy, both of which were deemed to be manipulations of the supernatural.

CHAPTER FIVE THE POSSESSED BODY AS MEDICAL SYMPTOM

Prior to the early modern period, possession was not so much a medical illness as a theological problem. There may have been medical problems that showed symptoms similar to those of demonic possession, but once possession was diagnosed, it became a problem for the religious rather than the medical profession. As we have seen in Chapter One, there was little or no reference to physicians in either the Old and New Testaments since God gave health or took it away and no one could command otherwise. Biblical religious leaders were involved although not directly in the healing process. When an ailing member of the society experienced spontaneous healing, he was directed to the priest to demonstrate God's power.¹ Possessed individuals were healed through the power of God manifested in the Christian believer. In the medieval mind, demonic attack remained a theological issue. But by the sixteenth century, the defining symptoms became blurred by the developing science of medicine. Throughout much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the lines were obscured by the rapid rise of the scientific methods within the medical profession.²

Whereas the political and legal professions became involved when groups of demoniacs seemed to threaten the well-being of the society as a whole, clergy and physicians tended the individual victims regardless of the initial cause. The attending doctors were concerned for the state of the soul as well as for the physical well-being of the possessed individual. Possessed Roman Catholics were doctored in the home and often taken to a Church for the exorcism ritual. In the cases where Protestant individuals resorted to Romanist exorcism, as in the case of the seven persons in one family in Lancashire, the priest came into the home.³ For the Protestant physician, the remedial actions usually took place in the home or in the residence of the doctor al-

¹See Matthew 8: 4; Mark 1:44; Luke 17:14.

²For a preliminary discussion of the role of new and developing medical theories in the witchcraft phenomena see Leland L. Estes, "The Medical Origins of the European Witch Craze: A Hypothesis," *The Journal of Social History*, 17:2, (Winter, 1983), 271 - 284.

³George More, *A True Discourse concerning the certain possession and dispossession of 7 persons in one family . . .* (London).

though sometimes the local church was used instead of a public forum such as the court. There were nearly always witnesses, concerned family and friends as well as the professionals. Cases described by Johann Weyer, the autobiographical writings of both Hannah Allen and Soeur Jeanne des Anges, and the individual incidents described by Cotton Mather fit into this category.

The two previous chapters dealt with the possessed body as proof of the power of God or as evidence of the anti-social presence of evil. Chapter Three presented early modern concerns with the state of the soul and the existence of sin within both the individual and the community. Chapter Four looked at the use of the possessed body as evidence of witchcraft and as a tool for its expulsion. This chapter addresses the problem of the possessed body from the standpoint of the medical and scientific community.

Because of the repudiation of demonic possession as a theological argument by the Anglican Church, symptoms of melancholy and delusion were more often termed madness than possession. Whereas "Anglican propagandists declared that the visions and inspirations of radical Dissenters were insane delusions," the physical symptoms were more difficult to dismiss.⁴ In the cases of demonic possession studied here there are three assertions made relating to the physicians. First, that since the cases were designated demonic possession by both physician and clergy, they were attended more often than not by physicians who were primarily concerned with the physical symptoms. Second, the remedies and explanations offered were compatible with traditional humoral medicine. Third, the focus was on the internal body rather than on external forces. The characterizations of the human body as putrid, emanating filth, worm-eaten, and contaminated by the medieval theologians did not change during the early modern period.

Medical Theories

Two very different methods of approaching the physical as opposed to the mental aspects of demonic possession were prevalent in the period under study. One was the traditional philosophy based on the humoral theories of Galen and Avicenna. Under humoral theory, the balance of the four humors was important to health in that disease was caused by too much or too little of any of these substances. Practitioners of this methods were concerned with the inner workings of the body and the effluvia produced by it. Johann Weyer practiced traditional medicine using concepts regarding the humors as his guide and his therapies were based on restoring humoral balance within the body through vomiting, purging, and bloodletting. Since we are interested

⁴Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 170 - 172; see also Clarke Garrett, *Spirit Possession and Popular Religion From the Camisards to the Shakers* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). Of course it was not only the clergy but the lawyers as well who felt that a Paracelsian view of demonic possession was cause for concern. Paracelsus used methods from sorcery and astrology and these were as dispised as much as witchcraft in many circles .

here in the flesh and body of the demon-possessed individual rather than with the mind, the cases explored and the physicians encountered most often follow the traditional Galenic line of medicine. This was not to say that another medical alternative of the period, the Paracelsian approach, was without effect.

This second approach to medicine, the Paracelsian, was named after the early sixteenth century physician who was said to have developed it.⁵ It descends from the Neoplatonists through Ficino. Paracelsus (1493 - 1541) rejected the humoral view of the body and posited a different theory for the causes of disease in man. He suggested that disease was the result of interaction between principles and elements, between organs of the body and the stars for instance. His concept of man was as a mixture between the physical or visible body and the astral or invisible spirit. Paracelsus placed more emphasis on chemistry and his own ideas than on sources from the past. "My proofs," he said, "derive from experience and my own reasoning, and not from reference to authorities."⁶ These doctors increased the use of mineral remedies for ailments with the result that there were "twenty-five times as many drugs" imported at the end of the seventeenth century than at the beginning.⁷ Doctors who were more concerned with the Paracelsian approach tended to be more often interested with bewitchment as opposed to spontaneous possession.

The Paracelsian physicians tended to diagnose the symptoms of demonic possession through the use of astrology and to advocate remedies associated with chemical cures rather than to recommend the Galenic cures of bleeding, purging or vomiting. As Keith Thomas pointed out, "With astrology were linked the companion studies of alchemy, cryptology, magnetism, dreams, and Paracelsian medicine."⁸ They focused on the influence of the mind and its interaction with the body and on the use of forces outside the body as agents in order to explain the effects of demons. Such cases and cures as described by Richard Napier, the English clergyman/physician, owe much to Paracelsian chemical theory.⁹ Behaviors termed hysteria or delusions, such as those

⁵See Marie Boas, *The Scientific Renaissance 1450 - 1630* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), pp. 176 - 181; Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 188 - 189; Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 84. Pamphlet wars between the Galenic physicians and the Paracelsian adherents raged at the end of the sixteenth century according to MacDonald and are discussed in more detail in Alan G. Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, 2 vols. (New York, 1977), I: 58 - 59; and Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus* (Basel, 1958), pp. 126 - 58.

⁶From an announcement of Paracelsus' lectures and quoted by Jolande Jacobi in *Paracelsus, Selected Writings*, p. liii.

⁷Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, p. 658.

⁸Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, p. 375.

⁹See MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, for the work of Richard Napier.

seen in pregnant women, were, according to Paracelsus, a result of the physical condition itself; epilepsy, mental deficiency, and idiocy were attributed by Paracelsus to natural causes rather than to demonic intervention. In fact, Paracelsus insisted that demonic possession took place within the intellectual faculties and that therefore "the devil was impotent to enter bodies not ruled by reason."¹⁰ This seems to lend credence to the understanding that it was women more often than men who were attacked by demons. As the *Malleus Maleficarum* so clearly pointed out: "it is not surprising" that women come more often under the influence of the Devil ". . . since they are feebler both in mind and body. . . Women are intellectually like children." It is "through the defect in their intelligence" and their "weak memories" that they most often succumb to evil.¹¹ Galenic medicine was often hostile to the use of chemical substances especially in cases involving the melancholic humor because such problems were thought to be irritated by the use of drugs.¹² In any case, traditional Galenic medicine held its primary position through the end of the seventeenth century even though most physicians did appropriate some of the chemical remedies for their practices.¹³

In the area of demonic possession, the more moderate Paracelsian view of the spiritual realm that reclassified intelligent spiritual beings in the universe as benevolent, caused many hardliners to expend great energy refuting it and labeling Paracelsians sorcerers and magicians.¹⁴ In England, it was the Anglicans who, having rejected popular demonology as a theological position, were more likely to champion the position of the Paracelsians. The Jesuits and the Puritans, especially the Nonconforming groups, however, took up the battle against Satan and his minions with vigor.¹⁵

By the second half of the seventeenth century, medical practitioners concerned with possession had accumulated great quantities of 'facts' which had been ordered and explained according to the science of the demonic, but as yet the proponents of both medical theories were at odds as to how to interpret them. Neither the Galenic/Aristotelian nor the Paracelsian/Platonic theories

¹⁰Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, p. 84.

¹¹Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 6.

¹²Lynn Theondike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), vol. VIII, p.g 522.

¹³Estes, "The Medical Origins of the European Witch Craze," p. 272.

¹⁴Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton*, pp. 83. However others before him, like Cornelius Agrippa and Georg Agricola, had "emphasized the beneficent nature of many of the spirits associated with home and work."

¹⁵MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 8 - 9.

were capable of 'proving' which 'facts' or remedies were true or false.¹⁶ Aspects of each theory were capable of explaining any given body of material. Physicians would use one theory to explain a set of 'facts' and ignore other data in considering the answer. The opposition would naturally consider the ignored information most important. And so it went. The answer really depended on which body of theory one found most comforting.

An important aspect of the argument as it concerns us was the question of non-material reality, what constituted an immaterial entity, and what powers in relation to the body that entity possessed. In the case of demonic possession, the metaphysical background of the physician, Aristotelian or Platonic, determined what was seen in the symptoms presented. Galenic medicine provided a structure for inference of illness from external signs. Through an analysis of the six non-naturals of air, sleep, food and drink, rest and exercise, excretion and retention, and the mental affections of the afflicted, the Galenic physician could ascertain the cause of the problem. No such system of analysis from the observation of the patient yet existed for the newer Paracelsian theories.¹⁷ Additionally, the Aristotelian view that any symptom or phenomena perceived as outside the realm of the natural was by definition caused by demons or some other supernatural force. Remember that the Roman Catholic jurist, Nicolas Remy commented: "Everything which is unknown lies, as far as I am concerned, in the cursed domain of demonology; for there are no unexplained facts. Whatever is not normal is due to the Devil."¹⁸ This is echoed by John Cotta, a Protestant doctor, when he asserted that the "most excellent & prime Philosopher, Aristotle, rejecteth whatsoever cannot be found by the Sense, or proved by reason, as spurious."¹⁹ Much of Cotta's treatise was based on the arguments of this "ancient Philosopher." He not only cited Aristotle, but also Hippocrates, and Galen, Aquinas, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Weyer, and Fernel.²⁰ Again and again the medical treatises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cite the Aristotelian/Hippocratic/Galenic doctors as authority.

¹⁶Lester S. King, *The Road to Medical Enlightenment, 1650 - 1695* (London: Purnell & Sons, Ltd., 1970), p. 201.

¹⁷H.C. Eric Midelfort, "Sin, Melancholy, Obsession: Insanity and Culture in 16th Century Germany," in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Steven L. Kaplan, ed. (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), pp. 113 - 145.

¹⁸See Chapter Three.

¹⁹Cotta, *Tryall of Witchcraft*, p. 5.

²⁰For direct quotes see Cotta, *Tryall of Witchcraft*: Aristotle, pp. 5, 104; Hippocrates, pp. 58, 73; Galen, pp. 5, 58; Aquinas, p. 90; *Malleus Maleficarum*, pp. 58, 90; Weyer, p. 76; Fernel, pp. 59, 71, 77, 83.

It must also be remembered that even in the most Protestant and Puritan of universities, Cambridge University, "divinity remained scholastic" and "that the Catholic scholastics were as thoroughly studies as the Protestant." Casuistry, the most Jesuitical of arts, was also "an important part of Cambridge theology" and would help to explain the penchant of Cambridge-trained individuals to apply general rules of religion and morality to baffling medical cases. By relegating symptoms unexplainable through the use of the traditional medical theories to the realm of the demonic, the alternative explanation of cause by outside forces could be used. Cambridge during this period also "produced many medical men, who, if they were not completely Cambridge-trained, received from their alma-mater inspiration and background. . . ." And it is for these reasons that I believe that the majority of the Puritan physicians and jurists concerned with bodily possession were confirmed Galenists in their medical thought.²¹

The fact was that the medical profession did not often produced the written 'case study' as did the legal and theological practitioners. In addition there were two things missing that we might expect in modern medicine—the controlled experiment and the empirical test.²² These became the domain of the demonologists and represent perhaps the first methodological efforts to validate assertions of demonic possession. ²³ The use of case histories was not necessary to the diagnosis of possession under the Galenic method because the diagnosis came from the observations of the individual patient and the application of the Galen system rather than from a build-up of symptoms from clinical reports. Therefore it was not the physicians who produced the case studies but the jurists and the theologians. First, one must define the 'case study.' The case study seen in the work examined here was usually a narrative description of the 'evidence' chosen to legitimate the position taken by the author. This recognition of the need for case studies by the non-medical practitioners was prompted by the need to propagandize their positions to a non-believing population. They had to prove their positions through the use of verifiable truth and the recitation of the experiments helped to do that. Seldom are we given evidence that is not capable of being explained through the chosen theories and verified through trials. The scholars offered stories to collaborate their evidence or argument. They placed great weight on the 'experience' aspects of the events and often, if they themselves were not present at the occasion, they had seen firsthand the material evidence. They certainly conducted 'scientific experiments' on

²¹All quotes in this paragraph are from William T. Costello, *The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 150.

²²The controlled experiment was more often seen used by the clergy in cases of demonic possession as we have seen in Chapter 3.

²³Midelfort, "Insanity and Culture," p. 135.

both the demoniac and the materials connected with the occasion. Even with all the evidence before them, they usually interpreted it in terms of the prevailing belief system.

One symptom of demonic possession, the vomiting of unusual objects should serve to illustrate the extensive interest demonstrated in bodily signs and anatomical experimentation as a means to prove a theological argument. That the Devil could cause all sorts of objects to be taken into the body and later expelled through vomiting, defecating or by way of an abscess was believed by most of the authors. All the authors were anxious to prove that this was indeed the case. When Johann Weyer published his *De praestigiis daemonum* in 1563, "the reaction was formidable."²⁴ For the first time, it seems, the physical capabilities of the actions of demons was brought into question. Jean Bodin condemned the book in an addendum to his work, *Dæmonomanie*, but did not refute the arguments themselves. Nicolas Remy did. He took on Johann Weyer's anatomical arguments, especially those concerning the controversy that Weyer had raised on the reality or illusion of vomiting nails. The kind of polemical battle waged over the interpretation of physical evidence can be seen here between Nicolas Remy the Catholic jurist and Johann Weyer the Protestant physician.

Weyer claimed that while the material evidence and the apparent actions of the demoniac would lead one to believe that the objects had been vomited by the patient, this was not true. Demons, he said, were capable of prestidigitation. It simply 'looked like' the vomiting of the materials had taken place. If Weyer was correct, one of the important components of the symptoms of possession would be false. Remy, like several other authors, returned to the authorities and reached back to show that such phenomena was documented in the "accounts of the ancients." He told the story of a certain demonic woman during the reign of Gaius Cassius (d. 42 B.C.) who was said to have vomited "volumes of flour from her mouth, while she ejected many other things besides down her nose."²⁵ However, by the middle of the sixteenth century the legal and the medical professions were both eager to prove their points with a show of medical understanding through physical evidence and personal experience in contemporary cases.

²⁴H. R. Trevor-Roper, *European Witch-craze*, p. 147. Upon sending the book to his friends, he was told that it should be burnt and it was by the Luthern University at Marburg. It was placed on the Index by the Catholic governor of the Netherlands and Bodin denounced Weyer as a "patron of witches." Boguet and Remy argued against him and James VI of Scotland wrote specifically to refute him. Only two advocates surfaced in the ensuing forty years, a fellow physician, Johann Ewich, who called him "a prophet of enlightenment" and Reginald Scot, who authored *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. One of the first things James VI did when ascending the English throne was to burn Scot's book. See pp. 146 - 149 for a further discussion of this reaction. Trevor-Roper asserts that even though there were skeptics after Weyer, "none of them improved materially on his work."

²⁵Told by Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 139. He also invoked the Bible, especially Old Testament, the names of Hippocrates, Seneca, Cicero, Porphyry, along with several popes.

For instance, Le Beau Saint Bernard²⁶ "was particularly famous" for curing internal ailments caused by demon possession. Remy told of visiting his shrine at Metz where many so afflicted had been cured in "the sight of any who cared to be present." The sick who had been brought there "in the greatest agony" had either "vomited or ejected from some part of their bodies" any number of objects. These objects, along with a pile of crutches, were displayed at the shrine. "I remember seeing," Remy relates, "its interior columns draped and hung with linen cloths from which were suspended bricks, coals, balls of tow and hair, trumpery, bits of glass, sword-blades, skins of lizards and toads, and all sorts of such trash."²⁷ As to his own personal experience, Remy tells of his "young kinswoman" who came to him in October of 1588 bringing with her "two iron nails which, together with a great quantity of stinking matter, she had vomited up in the sight of all who were with her."²⁸ She had been sick for more than a year, and with this vomiting, a swelling in her stomach that "had been as hard as a stone" began to subside.

Weyer's argument on this subject hinged on the physical impossibility of a demoniac passing such items as listed above through the normal channels of the body. He said the Devil is incapable of making "hard, rough, sharp objects pass harmlessly into the interior of the body through the solid parts of the body or through the narrower passageways."²⁹ His discussion on the anatomy of the trachea in refuting the belief that demoniacs could vomit large material objects is a good example :

The head of the trachea, the larynx, is composed of three cartilages. The orifice of the trachea is open when we breathe and usually closed when we eat, sometimes tightly closed, because of the fact that it is contracted by cords composed of nerves and membranes. As we breathe out and breathe in, the trachea simply transmits the fresh air and the unclean air (along with the impurities that it contains); or else it transmits some form of moisture, such as blood, phlegm, bloody matter, or the pus expectorated through coughing; it is obvious that the trachea can tolerate nothing heavier without the risk of life³⁰

²⁶Le Beau Saint Bernard was a cousin of Duke Jean II who fought in Venice in 1459 and was locally venerated. The shrine at Metz had been dedicated to him, although according to Remy "he has never yet been beatified." Nor has he since.

²⁷Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 138. According to the *OED*, 'tow' in the quote refers to "uncleansed wool or flax"; 'trumpery' means, not as may be expected, 'trickery,' but meant "something of no value; trifles, worthless stuff, trash, rubbish" in sixteenth century France.

²⁸Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 139. Remy adds here that he has had correspondence from an Englishman by the name of Lang who was practicing medicine "in the train of the Princes Palatine" in 1539 when a demonic woman, "after long and acute pains in her belly, vomited out of her mouth some long curved nails, and some brass pins wrapped round with wax and hairs."

²⁹Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Bk. I, c. XXVI, p. 87.

³⁰Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Bk. IV, c. II, p. 286-7.

Remy answered this statement directly when he said:

For as for their argument that nothing can come out but what has already been put in, and that the objects which appear to be ejected in this way are of such a size that not even the most credulous could imagine that they had ever been swallowed down the mouth or inserted up the anus, which are the two largest passages into the body; this can be refuted in more than one way.³¹

Remy pointed out that several natural diseases "engender certain objects in the body" such as "worms in the intestines, calcium in the kidneys, stones in the joints, [and] little animals like ants in the urine." All of which were expelled, sometimes through the "very narrowest channels," and even through open wounds and abscesses.

Furthermore Remy offered cases which were meant to prove the natural ability of the body to expel large objects. In one case a man "incautiously swallowed an ear of corn" which passed from his throat into his lung. Although he was in great pain nature took her course and according to Remy, "the ear worked its way through the lobe of the lungs, and the rib muscles, and finally the surrounding membrane, until it was ejected without any harm . . ."³² In another case, a "fool named Guido" in the service of the Prince of Rohan took it upon himself to swallow "a knife-blade three fingers long." There seemed to be no ill effects and "twelve days later he discharged it by anus." Remy again displays his knowledge of anatomy as he retells the path of the knife-blade: ". . . after it had passed through all the great length of his guts, of which the duodenum is especially thin and narrow and is so rightly named; and through the multiple and tortuous twists and fold of his entrails," the knife was expelled.³³ In the incident of the corn, Remy invoked the authority of Jean-François Fernel, a Galenic physician whose work *De abditis rerum causas* (1548) appealed to the educated reader and went through several editions in the sixteenth century.³⁴

³¹Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 140.

³²Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 140.

³³Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 140 - 141.

³⁴Jean-François Fernel, "le Galien moderne" was born at Claremont-en-Beauvoisis in 1497. He studied the classics, astrology, and mathematics and later took up medicine. He became one of the outstanding physicians of Europe and even Vesalius considered himself a pupil of Fernel. In his work he argued an integrated system of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Galenic views. The word "physiology" meaning the science of the body was coined by Fernel, and he is considered of utmost importance to the history of medicine because of his attempts to introduce a clinical approach to the study of man. He became 'Physician in Ordinary' to Henry II in 1556 and died in Fontainebleau in 1567. His *Universa medicina* was not published until almost ten years after his death. He was used as a source by Remy and Boguet as well as many of the other writers.

Fernel also reintroduced into medicine the Aristotelian epistemological beliefs which "allowed physicians to discuss symptoms" in light of the "underlying humoral pathology."³⁵ Fernel seems to have been the medical source of choice for those authors who riled against the skeptics like Weyer. In any case, it is obvious that even members of the legal profession were not completely ignorant as to the basics of human anatomy.

All these examples were meant to show that Nature "neglects no possible means of protecting herself."³⁶ After listing the powers of demons to alter the course of nature, Remy gave this explanation for the manner in which they can cause objects to pass with ease through the body:

. . . can anyone still refuse to believe that the Demons, with the great powers that are theirs, can introduce through the many apertures into the human body such pieces of iron and brick and stone! Does he think their size is an obstacle, when Demons at their pleasure cause them to contract and diminish even to atoms and again resume their former size when they are in position; or else can so distend the passages into the body that they are able to admit them?³⁷

So Remy was telling us that despite what could be known through observation, demons were capable of actions beyond the reasoned understanding of humans. For if Nature herself was capable of rendering seemingly impossible feats in relation to the human body, what marvels could the supernatural power of demons demonstrate? Here we can also see the ability of a jurist to argue anatomical proofs. We can observe the necessity of the jurist to convince the reader of the powers of demons. The crucial point of this argument hinged on whether or not the efficacy of the Devil to manifest supernatural powers through the agent of another. Weyer insisted that not only was the Devil powerless "to enter into the bodies of men at will," without the permission of God, but that neither was he capable of doing so "at the command or imprecation of some wicked or irresponsible old woman."³⁸ If Weyer was correct, what was at stake in this argument was much of the basis for the use of demoniacs as proof of the existence of witches within the community.

³⁵Estes, "The Medical Origins of the European Witch Craze," p. 272.

³⁶Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 140.

³⁷Remy, *Demonalatrie libri tres*, Bk. III, Ch. I, p. 141.

³⁸Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Bk. I, c.VVXI, p. 88.

The Devil and Diseases of the Flesh

Explanation of exterior signs on the body itself became an important tool for the diagnosticians of demonic possession. The Galenic system, as mentioned above, offered the necessary guide. According to Increase Mather "a trembling fit was a sign of Satanical Possession. Such persons. . . as had a spirit of Diabolical Divination would when a demon came upon them, be put into Shakings & Tremblings, after the very same manner as has been useful amongst that sort of people who of later years have been called Quakers . . ."39 Weyer explained medically: "In many diverse ways [the Devil] can likewise produce in the limbs dreadful spasms . . . In some individuals he can debilitate the whole body, as though the joints were dislocated and torn apart on the rack, or produce the spectacle of palpitating or quivering muscles . . ."40 Richard Napier's patients expressed a range of physical symptoms which would today be seen as physical responses to psychological problems. They include insomnia, stomach problems, "rising" sensations, "rising" stomach, trembling, ringing in the ears, headaches, vertigo, swooning, and weakness.41

The necessity to read correctly the outward signs of inner affliction has been the role of both the theological profession and the medical calling from the beginning. The idea that sin could manifest itself in visible signs was an important aspect of the Christian doctrines and more than likely grew out of earlier medical concepts. That disease had to be diagnosed from observation of the external body was a fact of medicine. The *Hippocratic Writings* contain detailed descriptions illustrating the use of these beliefs in the realm of medicine. The physician was seen in much the same light as the oracles for "if he is able to tell his patients when he visits them not only their past and present symptoms, but also to tell them what is going to happen, as well as to fill in the details they have omitted, he will increase his reputation as a medical practitioner. . . ."42 In order to accomplish this, the physician must be able to read those outward signs of interior distress.

While there was no attempt by the physicians to compile a comprehensive list of symptoms resembling those of the jurists and the theologians, the range of indications accepted as medical proof of possession at varying times will give the reader some understanding of the dilemma faced. The devil could bring on diseases of the muscles and nervous system such as epilepsy,

³⁹Increase Mather, *Disquisition*, p. 19-20.

⁴⁰Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Bk. I, c. XII, p. 35.

⁴¹MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 186.

⁴²*Hippocratic Writings*, ed G.E.R. Lloyd, (New York, 1978), p. 170 and quoted by Dubois, *Torture and Truth*, p. 89.

convulsions, and paralysis by stopping the heavier physical fluids and "obstructing and blocking the ventricle of the brain and the nerve roots."⁴³

It is also the habit of the Devil to . . . throw their [the possessed] humours into disorder and disturb the source of the nerves in the brain, so that the most cruel and unusual forms of spasms . . . In this way he is able to contract nerves and muscles . . . very often he can cause tetanus so that the neck remains immovable together with the body . . . sometimes he is wont to excite . . . backward straining—so violent that the head is forcibly wrenched against the back and shoulder blades, while the legs are in contraction.⁴⁴

Demons can cause blindness and deafness by making the body secrete noxious substances and bringing them to the eyes and ears. Or they can suggest ideas to the imagination and so induce such emotions as "love or hatred or other mental disturbances." The devil can also distill a spirituous substance from the blood itself, purify it of all base matter, and use it as "the most efficacious and swiftest weapon against human life" in causing all manner of infirmities.⁴⁵ "Some [demoniacs] are afflicted with violent fever and headache, and their whole body is weakened and in pain; but all these symptoms last a very little while, since a conjuration takes away the power of the demon."⁴⁶

Swelling in the body was seen as the intrusion of a foreign entity. When a part of the body or the entire body swelled to enormous size the physicians suspected possession. At times the swelling might afflict only the head and face, yet at other times "the whole body swells as if it were filled with hot vapour."⁴⁷ One might become concerned about demonic possession at "the bolding up . . . of a person's breast and bellie with such an unnatural sturring and vehement agitation within them . . ."⁴⁸ On other occasions "the demon shows himself in some part of the body palpitating like a fish, or like moving ants."⁴⁹ "If something moves about the body like a live thing, so that the possessed feel as if it were ants crawling under the skin" or when "the part of the body for which the demon is making is stirred by a sort of palpitation."⁵⁰

⁴³Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 106.

⁴⁴Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, I, c. XII, p. 35.

⁴⁵Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 106.

⁴⁶Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

⁴⁷Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁴⁸James I, *Daemonologie*, p. 71.

³⁶Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, pp. 168 - 169.

⁵⁰Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 167.

While the above symptoms were all visible to the observer, many authors list symptoms they could not know except through the testimony of the afflicted. Some possessed said when attacked that they "feel a lump rising and falling in their throat," or were troubled by "a continuous pulsating about their necks," which seemed to inspire them with terror, or perhaps their "throat is so constricted that they seem as if they are being strangled."⁵¹

The position of the limbs was another important sign of demonic interference. The unnaturally contorted bodies of those possessed by Satan were sure signs of the chaos precipitated by demons: ". . . such ironic hardness of the sinnows so stiffie bended out, that it were not possible to prick out as it were the skin of anie other persons so far: so mightely works the devil in all the members and senses of the body he being locally within the same . . ."⁵² Some "appear bound in all their limbs, and their shoulder blades grate dryly. Two very sure signs are contraction . . . of the arms, and when it seems to them that they have a lump upon their stomachs."⁵³

Some of the possessed at Loudun, when comatose, became so pliable that their bodies could be manipulated "like a thin piece of lead," they could be "bent in every direction, forward, backward, or sideways, till their head touched the ground; and they remained there so long as their position was not altered by others."⁵⁴ At other times they passed their left foot over their shoulder and touched their nose with their big toe.

The early symptoms of possession show themselves, in a number of cases, to begin in the legs. The Boy of Burton, in 1596, while exhibiting such symptoms as convulsions and vomiting, "lost the use of his legs, except during fits."⁵⁵ Mary Hall, "a Maid of Womans Statue, a Smiths daughter of little *Gadsden* . . . began to sicken in the fall of the Leaf, 1663. It took her first in one foot with a trembling shaking and Convulsive motion, afterward it possessed both; she would sit stamping very much. . ."⁵⁶ In the case of Elizabeth Knapp, "the tragedy began to unfold itself . . ." one evening "a little before she went to bed [while] sitting by the fire she cried out, 'Oh, my legs!' and clapped her hand on them."⁵⁷

⁵¹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

⁵²James I, *Daemonologie* p. 71.

⁵³Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

⁵⁴des Niau, *Eyewitness Account*, p. 46.

⁵⁵Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, p. 53.

⁵⁶Case reprinted in *Daimonomacheia*, p. 32.

⁵⁷Willard, *A Brief Account of a Strange* . . . in *Demos*, p. 422.

Skin color was sometimes a concern to the examiners as when "the possessed person has a face the color of cedar wood."⁵⁸ Sometimes it was the skin that was damaged by the manipulations of the demons. Margaret Rule of Boston was afflicted by a "Body full of Pins, without any Hand that could be seen to stick them." She also found herself from time to time "so bitterly scorched with the unseen Sulfur thrown upon her, that very sensible Blisters would be raised upon her Skin. . . ." Yet while family and friends felt the need to apply oils used in the treatment of such injuries, the blisters would cure on their own in two or three days at the most.⁵⁹ Guazzo claims that "if the patient is tortured by certain pricklings" on the skin there is cause to suspect demons.⁶⁰ "If blisters are raised upon the tongue" and immediately disappeared, or "if they are like many little grains," it was a sign that the individual was inhabited by many demons.⁶¹

Francesco Maria Guazzo makes a great show of other bodily symptoms. "Some demoniacs have terrible eyes; and the demons miserably destroy their limbs and kill their bodies unless help is quickly brought to them.⁶² Some have very narrow eyes, and appear bound in all their limbs, and their shoulder blades grate dryly.⁶³ Sometimes the possessed become "as if they were stupid, blind, lame, deaf, dumb, lunatic, and almost incapable of movement, whereas before they were active, could speak, hear and see, and in other respects acted sensibly."⁶⁴

Margaret Rule was reported to have a "whitish powder," invisible to the witnesses, thrown into her eyes, "whereby her *Eyes* would be extremely incommoded." Once, however, this same powder "was fallen actually *Visible* upon her Cheek, from whence the People in the Room wiped it with their Handkerchiefs."⁶⁵

"If the demon rises as far as the throat and causes it to swell, and brings on a dry cough."⁶⁶ "If the demon takes hold of his tongue and twists it and makes it swell; or if he causes it to give

⁵⁸Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

⁵⁹Mather, *Margaret Rule, Drake, Witchcraft Delusion*, II: 33-34. It is evident from the testimony in this book that Mather had copies of Galen and Paracelsus to refer to on the shelves of his library.

⁶⁰Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 167.

⁶¹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 167.

⁶²Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁶³Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

⁶⁴Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁶⁵C. Mather, *Margaret Rule, Drake, Witchcraft Delusion*, II: 33.

⁶⁶Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 167.

utterance not to the man's thoughts but to those of the demon; or if the mouth is stretched wide open and the tongue thrust out."⁶⁷ The craving for strange objects and materials as food was thought to be one clue to bodily possession.

When the theological implications such as fear of religious items, speaking in tongues, knowledge of future or distant events were lacking, the physician relied on his knowledge of disease. As can be seen from this extensive list and from the physical symptoms identified throughout this work, diagnosis of demonic possession based on somatic evidence depended on the discretion of the medical doctor more often than not. Two particular areas of medical understanding were important to the Galenic physicians. The first was the inter-relatedness of melancholy and demonology; the second was the importance of the digestive tract and intestinal tract to the diagnosis and remedy of demonic possession.

Melancholy and Possession

In 1614 when the *Rituale Romanum* was published for the first time, the wording on categorizing possession was that the exorcist "must know the symptoms that distinguish a possessed person from other individuals who suffer from melancholia or any other illness."⁶⁸ This statement specifically called for the advice and cooperation of a physician. The relationship between melancholy and possession was an intricate one. It was in the character of melancholy that the theological, medical, and scientific professions came together.

Let us see by what method the demon causes sickness. This has been clearly set forth . . . the demon is the external cause of sickness when he comes from without to inhabit a body and bring diseases to it; and if the sickness has some material source he sets in motion its inner causes. Thus he induces the melancholy sickness by first disturbing the black bile in the body and so dispersing a black humour throughout the brain and the inner cells of the body: and this black bile he increases by superinducing other irritations and by preventing the purging of the humour.⁶⁹

Black humor was one of the four humors of the body that figured in the humoral theory of medicine which was fully developed by the end of classical antiquity. The writings of Galen, the Greek physician of the second century A.D., were the focus of medical schools in the sixteenth

⁶⁷Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

⁶⁸The only revision which has been made in relation to the 1614 version of the *Rituale Romanum* was made in 1952. The word 'melancholia' was removed and, among illnesses, mental illness was specifically mentioned. Adolf Rodewyk. *Possessed by Satan: The Church's Teaching on the Devil, Possession, and Exorcism*. Translated by Martin Ebon (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), p. 19.

⁶⁹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 106.

century. Until the Enlightenment, he was the chief transmitter of Greek medicine to the European west. As seen above, Galen's methods were based on the humoral theory.

In humoral theory, both the mind and the body were influenced by the balance of the four basic fluids that were conjoined to the four basic elements, the four winds, the four seasons, the four times of day, and the four phases of life. Sanguine humor was associated with blood; Choleric humor was associated with yellow bile; Phlegmatic humor was associated with phlegm; and Melancholic humor was associated with black bile. It was believed by sixteenth-century man, that the natural state of man was to have all four humors in perfect balance. This balance would constitute a perfect and healthy human being. This human being would be completely free of sin since the presence of sin was believed to be detectable in the physical illnesses of the individual. Free of all sin and therefore of any debilitating illnesses, such an individual would also be immortal. This would have been the humoral condition of man before the Fall.⁷⁰ In fallen man one of the humors has dominance over the others even though their balance changes throughout the day, the seasons, and the lifetime of the person. It was the degree of dominance of the specific humor, according to the medical profession, that determined the entire personality. As to the genesis of the humors Galen explained:

. . . those articles of food, which are by nature warmer are more productive of bile, while those which are colder produce more phlegm. Similarly the periods of life, those which are naturally warmer tend more to bile, and the colder more to phlegm. Of occupations also, localities and seasons, and, above all, of natures themselves, the colder are more phlegmatic, and the warmer more bilious. Also cold diseases result from phlegm, and warmer ones from yellow bile. There is not a single thing to be found which does not bear witness to the truth of this account.⁷¹

Blood, moist and warm, was the first and most important of the humors and was associated with the element air. The man with a sanguine temperament would be a splendid physical specimen with a healthy, rosy complexion, a natural cheerful disposition, social, generous, talented. The sanguine humor was connected with the morning, springtime, and youth.

The yellow bile or yellow gall of the choleric humor associated itself with the element of fire and was considered hot and dry. The choleric personality was irascible, warlike, quick in reactions and was attached to the hot and dry summer, to midday, and to the mature individual.

Moist and cold phlegm was connected with the element of water. The phlegmatic individual was difficult to characterize as he tended to have no discernible and particular qualities. This humor was associated with night, the winter, and with old age.

⁷⁰Discussed by Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 157.

⁷¹Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, II. viii.

However it was black bile or black gall that we are most concerned with here. The melancholic humor was dry and cold and was linked with the element of earth. Earth, the image of the material rather than the spiritual, the abode of the fallen angels, the demons, and evil. Earth, the domain of the Antichrist and the location of the final battle between the forces of evil and the forces of good. This melancholic humor was linked to autumn, to evening, and to middle-age, around sixty years old. Galen said that black bile ". . . tends to be in excess, as regards the seasons, mainly in the fall of the year, and, as regards ages, mainly after the prime of life."⁷² Where the sanguine personality was considered to be the most fortunate, the melancholic temperament was the most feared. This individual was thin in body build while swarthy in complexion. They were also hairy of body, had "broad veins, and much hair on the brows. . . . They that stutter and are bald will be soonest melancholy . . . by reason of dryness of their brain."⁷³ The list of character traits was long and unpleasant: lazy, surly, and sad; cowardly, faithless, and irreverent; a loner who was miserly, spiteful, greedy and malicious. Finally they were considered the most likely prey to insanity. Possibly the only redeeming aspect of the melancholic individual was the penchant for solitary study and the classical connection with the scholar, the genius, and creativity.

Here, in the melancholic personality, we can find the associations most often mentioned in connection with demonic possession. Black humor was always present in the body in some quantity, but when it underwent an alteration "through the agency of contained heat" it tended to become "heavy and more of the nature of the earth." In this state it became much more "malignant than in its normal condition" and if poured out onto the earth, "it produces a kind of fermentation and seething, accompanied by bubbles—an abnormal putrefaction having become added to the natural condition of black humour." Galen further explained that the ancient physicians gave the name "black humor to the normal portion of this humour, which is discharged from the bowel and which frequently rises to the top [of the stomach contents]."⁷⁴ Black bile was what they called the putrefied and corroded aspect of the humor and the term most frequently used by writers concerned with demonology and possession.

The connection between melancholia and greed can be found throughout the literature. Albrecht Dürer portrayed 'Melancholia' as a woman with a purse, the "common symbol of wealth, particularly in its less enjoyable aspects of parsimony and avarice."⁷⁵ Luther confronted a case of

⁷²Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, II.ix.

⁷³Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part I, Section 2, Member 1, Subsection 4, p. 181.

⁷⁴Galen, *On the Natural Faculties*, II. ix.

⁷⁵Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, p. 164. Robert Burton commented on Dürer's depiction of melancholy: "Albertus Durer paints Melancholy, like a sad woman leaning

demonic possession in 1536 where a young girl began to swallow coins and to speak in an Upper German dialect she had no way of knowing. The bewildered clergy wrote to Luther about the "money devil" as they called her tormentor. While waiting for an answer, a Catholic exorcist intervened, but after six days of exorcism there was no change in the symptoms, as the Protestants gleefully pointed out. Luther suggested taking the girl to divine services and praying for her recovery. Several noisy services later, she recovered and remembered nothing of her possession. Here it would seem that the coin-eating episode offered an "image of greed and a moral indictment of a sinful society."⁷⁶

After the Renaissance, each of the humors became also associated with one or more of the planets. The sanguine personality was connected to either friendly Venus or well-tempered Jupiter; fiery Mars was linked to the choleric individual; the "watery star", the Moon, was responsible for the phlegmatic character; and it was Saturn, the ancient god of the earth who controlled the melancholic. Saturnine has in fact become almost synonymous with melancholy just as jovial and sanguine are used interchangeably.⁷⁷ Saturn was the most unfortunate of the celestial influences. From Hesiod we learn that he was the de-throned father-god, castrated, imprisoned in the earth, the god of old age, associated with misery and death.

In 1653, John Brayne attempted to show that astrology was the "Doctrine of Demons, professed by the worshippers of Saturne."⁷⁸ He explained that the "Starres and the powers of the ayre are in themselves good, and do not stirre up warre, lust, or other evil. . . ," but during the time of the Antichrist the "Demon Doctrines of the worshippers of Saturne" would prevail. The relationship between Saturn and the literature on possession is further demonstrated by Burton in *Anatomy of Melancholy*: ". . . if Saturn be prominent in his Nativity, and cause Melancholy in his temperature, then he shall be very austere, sullen, churlish, black of color, profound in his cogni-

on her arm with fixed looks, neglect habit &c. held therefore by some proud, soft, sottish, or half-mad . . .," *Anatomy*, p. 334.

⁷⁶Andreas Ebert, *Wunderer zeitung von einem Geld teuffel* (Frankfurt a. O.: 1537). Told by H.C. Erik Midlefort, "Sin, Melancholy, Obsession: Insanity and Culture in 16th Century Germany," *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, Edited by Steven L. Kaplan (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), pp. 113 - 145.

⁷⁷Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* , p. 166.

⁷⁸John Brayne, *Astrologie Proved to be the old Doctrine of Demons, professed by the worshippers of Staurne, Jupiter, Mars, Sunne and Moon. In which is proved That the Planetary and fixed Starres are the Powers of the ayre, which by Gods permission are directed by Satan the chief Power thereof, by meanes whereof nothing can by their Congurations be foreseen but by Satan* (London, 1653).

tions, full of cares, miseries, and discontents, sad and fearful, always silent, solitary. . . delighting in husbandry, in Woods, Orchards, Gardens, Rivers, Ponds, Pools, dark walks and close. . . ." In other words, the melancholic man will like to stay close to the earth. Often those belonging to Saturn were laborers, hard-working peasants, close to the earth—"privy-cleaners, grave-diggers, cripples, beggars, criminals."⁷⁹ One last connection between Saturn and the literature of possession must be mentioned. Minerals, plants and animals could also have a melancholic nature—the dog and the bat in particular were animals of Saturn. It was the dog that seemed to be the most constant companion of the witches.

Much of the interrelationship between the melancholic humor and the possession of the body by demons can be seen in the story told by Johann Weyer of a young girl who had a knife surgically removed from her side. Cleaning her shoes with a knife borrowed from her sister, this maiden was confronted by an older woman and a black dog. The knife disappeared. After falling into unconsciousness for three days, the girl awoke to debilitating pains in her side. Three months later, "an abscess began to appear on her left side. . . it was moon-shaped and about the size of a hen's egg, and it swelled and subsided with the waxing and waning of the moon." No one would believe that she had a knife lodged in her body, so she predicted that on the Feast of Visitation they would clearly see that she was right. She was correct. On the thirtieth of June, as predicted, the swelling burst, a great quantity of pus was expelled, and the tip of a knife appeared through the skin. A surgeon removed it and found that it was corroded and that part of the blade had been eaten away by the black bile in her system. Weyer explains why the demon should have become involved with this particular young woman.

First of all, It should have been observed that this simple girl had been worn down by a long fever—a quatrain fever (as I gather from the duration) produced from an excess of heavy, bitter, melancholic humor putrefied within the body. Melancholic humor often obstructs the spleen and produces swelling, hardness, and abscess therein, in which case a quatrain fever occasionally leaves such a "progeny" behind, even after it has passed. Upon this foundation—female sex, youthful age, wearing effect of a lengthy illness—the demon built and constructed the rest of his work with eager and untiring zeal. He gains credibility for more easily with women than with males of mature age and good health. To support his work, he adopted the humor most suitable for his activities—namely the melancholic humor; far from being cleansed of this bile, the girl's brain and body were burdened all the more. The Devil takes great delight in immersing himself in this humor, as being the proper moisture for himself and his activities by virtue of its analogous properties. . . .⁸⁰

Cotton Mather adhered to the same system of beliefs in his understanding of the possession of Margaret Rule and also offered an explanation for the predominance of women in the ranks of

⁷⁹Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, p. 166.

⁸⁰Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Book IV, Chapters XIII and XIV.

the possessed: "The Malignant *Vapours* and *Humours* of our Diseased Bodies may be used by *Devils* there into insinuating as engine of the Execution of their Malice upon those bodies; and perhaps for this reason one Sex may suffer more Troubles of some kinds from the *Invisible World* than the *other*"81

Elizabeth Knapp was followed by a "black dog with eyes on its back" that sometimes stopped her house, and "sometimes leaped up behind . . ." She also asserted that a witch appeared to her "in the form of a dog downward, with a woman's head."⁸²

Burton quoted Avicenna who claimed that the Devil could contaminate the body and that even the slightest contamination could cause the whole bodily system to produce black bile. Purging black choler was believed to serve the purpose of relieving the contagion and, according to Burton, it was because of this that the purging of the humor of melancholy became known as the "Devil's Bath." When the Devil spies such humors in a human being, he "drives them many times to despair, fury, rage, &c., mingling himself among the humours. . . this humour invites the Devil to it, wheresoever it is in the extremity, and of all other, melancholy persons are most subject to diabolical temptations and illusions, and most apt to entertain them, and the Devil best able to work upon them; but whether by possession, or obsession, or otherwise. . . ."83

The Alimentary Canal

A second area of concentration for the Galenic physicians was the alimentary canal. The connection between the acts of eating, elimination, and sexual experience are clearly expressed in the demonology. The saints and the religious take a vow of perpetual virginity as young girls or chastity if they are older females; in the case of the males it is a vow of celibacy. The association of the body and materiality with the woman rather than the man may help to explain the preponderance of female demoniacs.

Eating, drinking, defecating, urinating and vomiting play a major role in the discernment of spirits, the behavior patterns of the demoniac, the diagnosis of the doctors or theologians, and in expelling the offending entity. The act of eating became an important aspect of possession whether it was believed that the demon needed a vehicle in which to enter the body, or whether he could enter as a spirit. There were two methods of entry understood by the demonologists. First, free will could be the cause of corrupting behavior, manifested in gluttony for instance, which opened the way for the spiritual demon to enter the body. Second, the demon could have

⁸¹C. Mather, *Margaret Rule, Drake, Witchcraft Delusion*, II: 32.

⁸²Samuel Willard, *A Brief Account . . .* (1672), in Demos, *Remarkable Providences*, p. 426.

⁸³Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 174 - 175.

been poised in a piece of food, demons were always present around an individual, and with the failure to properly exorcise the food through prayer, it was ingested with the food and lodged in the body.

Food and all the ramifications connected with nourishing the body serve as clues to the identification of the spirits involved in the possession. Saints and mystics have been seen to fast for long periods of time, often to the point of endangering their own health. Yet, as Caroline Walker Bynam has shown in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, food was "a powerful symbol" and "crucial to the religious experience of medieval women." Yet for these religious women the food symbol was positive sign of charity and fertility. While it also symbolized the suffering and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and was analogous to the body of Christ, the final outcome of His death on the cross was the "birth of salvation."⁸⁴

The role played by food in the stories of demonic possession is quite different. For the earliest Christian writers who wrote to women, food was most often associated with lust. Eating and drinking too well was a precursor to sexual incontinence. For men, the primary caution was to avoid gluttony, not "abstinence or food providing or Eucharistic fervor."⁸⁵ Robert Burton explains that diet, retention and evacuation, are the more material aspects of the bodily functions "because they make new matter, or else are conversant in keeping or expelling it." Diet is first in these aspects because it may be called a material cause of melancholy.⁸⁶ Demons, being more oriented toward matter than toward spirit are naturally drawn to the baser sorts of bodily functions. This may be another reason why the ascetics and future saints were wont to avoid food and therefore defecation as much as possible in an effort not to provide a habitation for the Devil. Remy explained that cleanliness, inside and out, was an anathema to the Devil because he took "immoderate delight in external filth and uncleanness." This was proven for Remy by the fact that he made "his abode in dead bodies" and, if he occupied a living body, or even made a body for himself out of air or condensation, his presence was always "betrayed by some notably foul and noisome stench."⁸⁷ As for the place of dwelling when the demon entered the human body, he would most often take up his dwelling "in those parts of the body, which like the bilge of ships, harbour the excremental waste of the body."⁸⁸

⁸⁴Caroline Walker Bynam, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 30.

⁸⁵Bynam, *Holy Feast*, p. 79.

⁸⁶Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 189.

⁸⁷See Chapter 4 for a discussion of odors in relation to possession.

⁸⁸Remy, *Demonolatry*, Bk. I, Ch. X, p. 38. Further, "The gifts of the Demon also are fashioned from ordure and dung . . ." Remy claims that "Gratian points out in his *Decretals*"

The Church Fathers considered the battle against gluttony the initial step in the development of the spiritual life. This is no doubt true because "gluttony is the archetype of all enslavement of the body, in which the body in its animal character comes to be master of human freedom instead of being the beloved servant of the person's intelligence and free will."⁸⁹ So gluttony and greediness and drunkenness were the most basic of sins. Paul talked about those who's "end is destruction, their god is in their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds on earthly things."⁹⁰ Therefore early in Christian development moderation, temperance, and sobriety were lauded and asceticism in the form of fasting became a model for spiritual behavior. Although even abstinence did not always save one from the accusations of demonic possession for Guazzo contends that "abstinence from food and drink for seven or more days is a powerful sign" of possession.⁹¹

Sometime in 1373 or 1374 Catherine Benincasa, a woman of about twenty-six years old, dictated, probably to her spiritual advisor, the following words sent in a letter to another Religious in Florence:

Dearest beloved Father in Christ sweet Jesus, I Catherine, useless servant of Jesus Christ, entrust myself to you . . . I am sure you have no other motive than the desire to honor God and care for my health, fearing a demonic siege and self-deception. About this fear, Father, particularly about the matter of eating, I am not surprised; as I assure you not only you are fearful, I myself tremble with fear of a demonic trick. . . . In response to your question whether I believed it possible to be deceived, saying that if I did not so believe this [in itself] would be a demonic deception, I answer you that not only in this, which is merely a bodily function, but in this and in all my other actions, because of my frailness and the devil's cunning I am always afraid . . . And I say to you my Father, and I say it to you in the sight of God, that in every possible way I could I always forced myself once or twice a day to take food; and I prayed continually . . . that he will give me grace in this matter of eating so that I might live like other creatures I say to you that many times, when I did what I could, then I look[ed] into myself to understand my infirmity,

that the Witch of Endor was called a ventriloquist, which means "speaking from the stomach," for this reason. Evidently, as was certainly thought in the later centuries also, ventriloquism was not a talent but was due to the possession of demons.

When demons provide food, although it may sometimes be "delicious and delicate" it is usually made from human flesh, such as babies killed for the purpose or disinterred bodies, or animals found dead. However, the meals always lack two things, salt and bread. Because the Devil "detests and abhors all sacred rites and ceremonies and all that is used in them." Remy, Bk. I, Ch. XVI, p. 57.

⁸⁹Benedict M. Ashley, OP, *Theologies of the Body: Humanist and Christian*(Braintree, Massachusetts: Pope John Center, 1985), p. 426.

⁹⁰Philippians 3:19.

⁹¹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

and [the goodness of] God who by a most singular mercy allowed me to correct the vice of gluttony.⁹²

Catherine claimed that it was not the devil but her bridegroom Jesus Christ who was responsible for her inability to eat. Her refusal of food went far beyond the ritual fasting prescribed by the Church, so much so that her eating or lack thereof became a scandal. She was assigned advisors to monitor her behavior and to guide her in the proper spiritual rituals. She, however, was insistent that the worldly men had no jurisdiction over her when Jesus had commanded her to abstain from food in order to control her tendency for gluttony. Many if not most of her contemporaries at one time or another considered her possessed by a demon. She was accused of heresy and was called before a formal church Commission in Florence to answer for herself. She evidently acquitted herself well.

Catherine has been rigorous at fasting for much of her life. By the age of fifteen she had restricted her food intake to bread, uncooked vegetables, and water. During the early period she spent most of her time alone. She renounced the worldly and took herself to a dark cell in the cellar of the family home. It was here that the demons first began to attack her by parading "before her the earthly and womanly pleasures she was giving up."⁹³

Catherine claimed that after her father's death Christ came to her and told her to give up her solitary ways and to go out and teach the men and women of the world. At this point Catherine was about twenty years old. After this, we are told, she could no longer eat bread. By Catherine's twenty-fifth birthday, she was eating "nothing." Her confessor explains: "Not only did she not need food, but she could not even eat without pain. If she forced herself to eat, her body suffered greatly, she could not digest, and she had to vomit." Confessors as well as family and friends feared this was the work of demons. She was commanded to eat to allay suspicions of demonic possession, but she complained that she felt much stronger and healthier when she abstained.

It was during the time when she was consuming "nothing" that she felt the compunction to gather pus from the cancerous breast of woman she was nursing, collect it in a ladle, and drink it. That same night she reported, she had a dream where Jesus invited her to drink his blood as it flowed from his pierced side as a consolation that her stomach "no longer had need of food and

⁹²Caterina (Santa) da Siena (Caterina Benincasa) *Epistolario di Santa Caterina a cura di Eugenio Dupré Theseider*, vol. I (Rome, 1940), letter number 92. Quoted by Rudolph M. Bell in *Holy Anorexia*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 22 - 23. Further quotes in this passage are from Chapter 2, pp. 22 - 53 unless otherwise noted. Catherine of Siena was the first of the holy fasting women who became well-known during the late Renaissance and the Reformatioun period. For more information on the life of Caterina of Siena also see Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982); Caroline Walker Bynam, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast*,

⁹³Bell and Weinstein, *Saints and Society*, p. 39.

no longer could digest." Her only sustenance was the consecrated host and eventually she was allowed to receive the Eucharist daily. However, her own testimony shows that the battle to suppress all hunger for earthly food was constant: "When I cannot receive the Sacrament, it satisfies me to be nearby and to see it; indeed, even to see the priest who has touched the Sacrament consoles me greatly, so that I lose all memory of food."

Catherine finally gave in to the demands of her advisors if for no other reason than to assuage the suspicion of demonic possession which was a dangerous charge. The ability to sustain life without eating was believed to be a sign that one was being fed by Satan, either through a familiar or by the Devil himself. She deigned to eat once a day in the company of a companion when she was twenty-seven years old. However, after every meal she vomited the contents of her stomach. When the advisors relented and told her she could ignore the orders, she refused to give up the eating vomiting routine as it was most assuredly penance for her sins. Catherine died, according to her own prediction, at the age of thirty-three. Her death came at the same year of life as had the death of her beloved bridegroom Jesus Christ.⁹⁴

Catherine's concerns of the connections between gluttony, demonic possession and demon entry were not unfounded. One of the most accepted methods for demons to enter the body was in food eaten by a susceptible person. In the New Testament we see an early example of this in the case of Judas Iscariot. In the upper room during the last supper, Jesus answers the question of who will betray him by saying: "It is he to whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him."⁹⁵

An anecdote passed on by Gregory the Great in his *Dialogues*:

On a certain day a servant of God from the aforesaid monastery of virgins entered the garden, and saw a head of lettuce that she desired; and forgetting to bless it with the sign of the cross she greedily bit into it. All at once, however, she was seized by the devil and fell on the ground. As she was being tormented word was quickly brought to the beforementioned father Equitius so that he might come at once to her aide with his prayers. Soon after, when the said father had entered the garden, the devil who had seized her began to cry out from her mouth, as if to justify himself, saying, "What did I do? What did I do? I was sitting on the lettuce — she came along and bit me!" With grave indignation the man of God ordered him to go out and keep no place in the servant of almighty God. He departed at once, and could not manage to come upon her again.⁹⁶

⁹⁴Other holy women and saints who were troubled by demons in connection with food were Clare of Assisi, d. 1253; Benvenuta Bojani, d. 1292; Maragret of Cortona, d. 1297; Angela of Foligno, d. 1309; Catherine of Genoa, d. 1510; Dominica del Paradiso, d. 1553; Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi, d. 1607 among others.

⁹⁵John 13:26-27.

⁹⁶Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, 1.4.

Since there were a number of demoniacs who confessed to having been attacked by devils after eating, the sin of gluttony was attached to possession encountered after meals. Fruit, and especially the apple, played an important role for it was through the 'apple'⁹⁷ "that Satan continually rehearses the means by which he tempted Adam and Eve in the earthly Paradise."⁹⁸ "Perrenette Pinay was found to be possessed by six devils, after having eaten . . . an apple and a piece of beef."⁹⁹

Jean-François Fernel, an important source for Henri Boguet and many of the other writers, told a story about a thirsty man, unable to find water, who ate an apple and became possessed by a devil.¹⁰⁰ An apple also played the central part in a tale that circulated about Europe in which the apple lay at the edge of a bridge for more than two hours one day in Savoy in the year 1585. Now from this fruit came "a great and confused noise," so that people were frightened to go anywhere near it. This bridge was a busy thoroughpass and crowds came from all around the town to gawk at the thing, yet no one dared to touch it. Finally, one bold man took a long stick and pushed the apple into the river. Nothing more was heard from it. There would seem little remarkable in this story until we read the explanation offered by Boguet: "It cannot be doubted that this apple was full of devils and that a witch had been foiled in giving it to someone."¹⁰¹

The image of the apple as the fruit through which demons enter the body or as having close connections with possession was not confined to the Roman Catholic imagination. Cotton Mather told us that Mercy Short was given apples "to Try whether shee could eat them" which were snatched away from her by the demons who then ate them in front of her.¹⁰² John Bunyan used a similar metaphor of fruit and eating when creating the situation where evil may enter the body in his *Holy War*, an allegory concerned with the city, *Mansoul*, and the attack of *Diabolus* and his army of demons. Once two of the most effective defenders of the *Mansoul*, Lord Innocency and Captain Resistance are killed, fruit is then offered to the townspeople: ". . . they looked, they considered, they were taken with the forbidden fruit, they took thereof, and did eat: and having eaten, they became immediately drunken therewith; so they opened the Gates, both Ear-gate and

⁹⁷Actually there is no specific fruit named in Genesis. Biblical scholars opt for a fig. The apple seems to have been an invention of the medieval mind of the more northern climes. This idea of the 'poisoned apple' is also a prominent motif in the folk tales of Europe.

⁹⁸Boguet, *An Examen*, V, p. 11.

⁹⁹Boguet, *An Examen*, V, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰Story told by Boguet, *An Examen*, p. 10.

¹⁰¹Boguet, *An Examen*, V, p. 12.

¹⁰²C. Mather, *A Brand Pluck'd . . .*, in Burr, *Narratives*, p. 278.

Eye-gate, and let in Diabolus with all his bands"¹⁰³ Satan succeeded yet again in causing the fall of man through an offering of fruit.

Failure to properly bless food prior to ingesting it may be seen in a number of such tales. A story was told about "a married women of unimpeachable morality," who through eating a piece of unblessed bread found herself the target of an Incubus who wooed her for months. Her resistance held and finally through exorcism and perseverance, she was rid of the demon.¹⁰⁴ A "wench" in Bononia was possessed with two devils "by eating an unhallowed pomegranate" and she later confessed, after being cured by exorcism, that she had not made the sign of the cross over it before eating.¹⁰⁵ Blessing the food, in an attempt to exorcise any demons that might be present in the it was the moral of the first two stories. The Protestants rejected the blessing as exorcism as they had other forms. Prayer as prophylactic became the Protestant mode. Joseph Blagrave was convinced that prayer every day, especially in the morning, would preserve one from the snares of the devil for the entire day. He related the tale of a young maid who was possessed and whose father contracted with Blagrave to cure her. Blagrave said he would undertake the cure for no cost if the father could prove that the girl had prayed the morning she was stricken. As it came to pass, she had awakened early to go to the well and had neglected her prayers, thereby leaving herself open to possession.¹⁰⁶

The Catholic belief was that prayer over the food prior to eating it exorcised the inhabiting demons since the food presumably containing demons at all times. For the Protestants, the blessing of the food was transformed into a thanksgiving. It would seem from the Blagrave case above, that the Protestants required that protection from the incursion of demons was the responsibility of the individual and that food was not necessarily possessed by demons except when bewitched.

Caterina Gaulteri in the case examined below was given a morsel of food "to taste" by a relative and was stricken with possession. At Salem in Puritan America it was the West Indian slave belonging to the Reverend Samuel Parris who outraged the Puritans by mixing urine and rye flour in order to make a "witch cake" believed to have magical properties when eaten.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³John Bunyan, *The Holy War* (1682), Edited by Roger Sharrock and James F. Forrest (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 17.

¹⁰⁴Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, pp. 14 - 21.

¹⁰⁵Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 175.

¹⁰⁶Blagrave, p. 141.

¹⁰⁷"Mr. Parris's Indian Man and Woman made a Cake of Rye Meal, with the Childrens Water, and Baked it in the Ashes, and as is said, gave it to the Dog; this was done as a means to Discover Witchcraft . . ." Calef, *More Wonders*, in Drake, III: 5.

Boguet observed that "demoniacs for the most part confess that the evil attacks them when they eat something." Obviously this was the punishment of God as "it may be supposed that there is gluttony" on the part of the victim. From this we should learn, he says that "when we are about to eat and drink, to think of Him who is the author of all, and to bless our food with the sacred sign of the Cross as we have been taught by the Holy Fathers. . . ."108 Eating food that had been "bewitched" was another source of food possession. On the fifth of June in 1598, a young girl of Coyriers in Perche" was struck helpless in all four limbs so that she had to go on all fours; also she kept twisting her mouth in a very strange manner." According to the story, a visitor to the house had, the day before, given the girl "a crust of bread resembling dung and made her eat it, strictly forbidding her to speak of it" or she would be killed and eaten. The next day the girl was found to be possessed.¹⁰⁹ Still, both Protestants and Catholics clung to the ancient notion that demons entered the body through the mouth with or without the agent of food as in the case of Elizabeth Knapp. On Tuesday [December 19, 1671]. . . she confessed that the Devil entered into her . . . when she was going to bed he entered in (as she conceived) at the mouth, and had been in her ever since. . . ."110

Once the demon gained access into the body, many believed that eating would feed the demon as well as the flesh of the body. Hannah Allen, a Protestant Englishwoman underwent a possession and declined food until she was "exceedingly lean, and at last nothing but skin and bones." Even when family and neighbors began to insist that she eat she would answer: ". . . every bit she did eat hastened her ruin for she saw herself as having a dreadful curse and evil within her and every thing she ate only fed that evil, made it grow, increased the fire, which would at last burn her up." She concluded: "I would willingly live out of hell as long as I could."¹¹¹ Galen was quoted as maintaining that demons in the form of worms sometimes ate the food in the stomach and thereby depriving the body of nourishment. "A ravenous hunger also occurs from time to time, for no other reason than that these creatures are occasionally so voracious that they snatch food directly from the stomach . . . and then the body becomes horribly emaciated."¹¹²

¹⁰⁸Boguet, *An Examen*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹Boguet, *An Examen*, I, p. 1 - 3.

¹¹⁰Samuel Willard, *A Brief Account of a Strange and Unusual Providence of God Befallen to Elizabeth Knapp of Groton* (1672) and reprinted in John Demos, *Remarkable Providences*, p. 433.

¹¹¹Allen, *Satan . . .*, p. 207. This behavior would probably today be seen as anorexia nervosa, a method of personal control.

¹¹²U. Aldrovandi, *De animalibus insectis libri septem, cum singulorum iconibus ad vivum expressis . . .* (Bononiae, 1602), p. 667 and quoted by Comparesi, *Incorruptible Flesh*, p. 111.

The *Malleus Maleficarum* specifically addressed the question of how a spirit may perform the process of eating. The complete act of eating may be separated into four processes: "Mastication in the mouth, swallowing into the stomach, digestion in the stomach, and fourthly, metabolism of the necessary nutriment and ejection of what is superfluous." The first two processes can be performed by spirits in the assumed body, but not the third and fourth. Instead of "digesting and ejecting they have another power by which the food is suddenly dissolved in the surrounding matter."¹¹³

Indigestion of food especially "when they [the possessed] are given drugs without being relieved," was a possible symptom and "many feel acute pain in their guts." The stomach can become forcibly inflated¹¹⁴ and ". . . the bolding up so of a persons breast and bellie with such an unnatural sturring and vehement agitation within them . . . can be powerful clues when accompanied by other signs."¹¹⁵ Some others have "a very cold wind, or one as hot as fire running through their stomach," according to Guazzo.¹¹⁶ Presumably this was the way the energumen themselves explained the experience.

A certain Margarita of Essling in 1546, experienced great pains in her belly. It swelled to such a size as to completely hide her face. As she lay on the bed, those around her heard "the crowing of cocks, the clucking of hens, the braying of asses, the barking of dogs, the bleating of sheep, the grunting of pigs, the lowing of oxen, and the neighing of horses." An entire barnyard had been transported into her.

Vomiting and defecating strange objects was also considered valid evidence for the presence of demons. The objects ejected from the body fell into two categories: the first category consisted of manmade objects such as pins, nails, cloth, glass, pieces of metal and the like; the second were natural things like snakes, eels, worms, frogs and toads, ants or other insects. The theologians and doctors were careful to examine the materials expelled from the body for any clues as to possible exorcism or medical remedies.

One author wrote in 1566 that a group of approximately thirty children were taken "in the sudden grip of some mania or frenzy." The advice of exorcists was sought since the children were believed to be under the influence of demons. Though the exorcists "gave readings" and "made conjurations" it was all to no avail. In fact, during the readings "the children vomited a great number of needles, along with pins, thimbles, strips of cloth, potsherds, pieces of glass, hair, and

¹¹³Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Question I, Chapter 4, p. 111.

¹¹⁴Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

¹¹⁵James I, *Daemonologie*, p. 71.

¹¹⁶Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

other such things." The exorcisms in this case seem to have failed since the malady recurred on several occasions.¹¹⁷

Antonia Benivieni gave an example of a sixteen year old girl who among other symptoms of disease "broke into vomiting and cast forth rather long curved nails and brass needles together with wax and tangles of hair, and finally a piece of her breakfast, so large that no one could have swallowed it down his throat." She was immediately turned over to ecclesiastical representatives and to them she gave "even clearer signs of possession." She was later heard to prophesy and to do many things which "exceeded human capacity."¹¹⁸

Some of the possessed were so "indisposed in their stomachs that they vomit whatever they eat and drink"; but this is a "very slight sign" unless accompanied by other symptoms. Some had a "great vomiting from their stomachs."¹¹⁹ "From the abdominal orifice of some there issue certain matters like balls, as if they were worms or ants or frogs."¹²⁰ The woman described above having an entire barnyard in her body "voided from her side about one hundred and fifty worms and serpents."¹²¹ This was believed to be a miracle, but was explained by Guazzo as only an illusion.

The profusion of animal life expelled from the bodies of the demoniacs bears mentioning since the readers of the accounts would immediately understand the symbolism.¹²² Frogs and toads were representations of the sin of lust in its most vile and filthy aspects. In the Middle Ages, naked female sinners were shown in Hell having their sexual organs eaten by toads as well as by snakes and lizards.¹²³ Sinners guilty of the sin of greed were believed to be eaten by toads

¹¹⁷Hadrian Nicoli, cited by Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, p. 301.

¹¹⁸Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, p. 297. Benivieni, *The Hidden Causes of Disease*, Chapt. 24.

¹¹⁹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

¹²⁰Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 169.

¹²¹Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 54-5.

¹²²For discussions of the animal symbolism seen in the cases of possession see: Louis Charbonneau - Lassay, *The Bestiary of Christ*, Translated by D.M. Dooling (New York: Parabola Books, 1991); James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); Heather Childs and Dorothy Colles, *Christian Symbols Ancient and Modern* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); Barbara G. Walker, *The Women's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988).

¹²³Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, *The Bestiary of Christ*, trans. D.M. Dooling (New York: Parabola Books, 1991), p. 171. Illustration of a demon with a toad emerging from the mouth was drawn by Carbonneau-Lassay from a fourteenth-century miniature in Barbier de Montault's *Traité* and is reprinted on p. 171.

in the Underworld. Toads were also the emblem of jealousy, the most base envy, and they were often seen as the representation of the Devil. Depictions of exorcisms often show a frog or toad emerging from the mouth of the demoniac. Toads could also be a symbol of spiritual death. Ants, like the other animals mentioned here, were associated with the earth, especially the underground, the domain of the demons. Because of their comings and goings both above ground and in their tunnels, it was believed they could carry messages from one world to the other.

Snakes, worms, eels, and serpents can be classed together and the word worm may be applied also to caterpillars, millipedes, maggots, and even sometimes lizards. Although the snake had, in ancient times, been a sign of fertility, wisdom, and the power to heal, in Christian symbolism it represents evil, temptation and death. As the seducer in the Garden, the serpent was the image of Satan and his works were symbolized by the snake's venom. The sea serpent, especially the moray eel, was seen to represent the unknown and the mysterious, especially what was out of sight under the water. Earthworms and maggots were common symbols for the corpse-eating earth and as such were associated with death and decay.

Worms and like creatures were invoked as representatives of the unregenerated and as symbols of the decay of the flesh. They inhabited the most vile parts of the body and were often seen as the cause of physical complaints. Jean Fernal related how a canon of the Church, after taking a draught for cholic pain "deposited a worm, like a lizard in shape, but fatter, hairy and standing on four feet."¹²⁴

As a connection with the melancholic humor, one can see why there seems a preponderance of such animals in the demonic literature. The serpent also became the Christian symbol for evil and the Devil. It was an evocation of death because it brings death with the venomous bite and because it lives underground, with the corpses of the dead. The serpent was finally one of the oldest symbols of female power and for this reason it would seem most often connected with the female demoniacs. Coiled in the pelvis like the organs of a woman, it represented the inner power of the human body.

Let me recount one case in full as it is told by a Dutch physician in 1575.¹²⁵ The physician himself saw much of what is reported in this account as the girl was living in his house most of the time and was directly under his charge:

A tale surpassing all wonder is . . . that of a fifteen-year-old girl of Louvain named Catarina Gualteri . . . in the year 1571. She was given something to taste by a kinswoman her own age, and when she had eaten it she at once showed extraordinary symptoms of sickness . . . In the eighth month of her sickness with a great effort she voided from her

¹²⁴Related by Comporesi, *Incorruptible Flesh*, p. 117.

¹²⁵Cornelius Gemma, *De Naturae divinis characterismis*, (Antwerp, 1575), II, 4. Quoted in Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 108-109. See also Burton, p. 175.

back passage a live eel, perfectly formed, as thick as a thumb and six feet long, with scales and eyes and tail and everything belonging to an eel. . . three days before it came out, not only the girl herself but also those near her heard the eel utter a sharp thin cry in her belly; and when it was coming out the girl said that she clearly felt that at the first attempt it drew back its head, and then came out in a rush. They killed and disemboweled the eel, and hung it high out of reach of the animals; but it suddenly vanished. Meanwhile the girl began to vomit an immense quantity of fluid not unlike wine and of an unpleasant taste; and this continued for more than fourteen days, each day's vomiting weighing twenty-four pounds. Besides this she made water copiously two or three times a day. No tumour or external swelling could be seen in her stomach or anywhere else in her body, and the girl ate and drank very sparingly, hardly taking a cup of wine or beer or other liquor; but her excretion of water was such that in two weeks she could easily fill two water-butts.

The symptoms begin, it will be noticed, after eating something given her by a family member. The physician was most assiduous in commenting on the symptoms and in analyzing the effluvia. The fact that one method of ascertaining the content of the vomited liquid was to taste it may come as some surprise, yet it was not an unusual way to analyze liquids in the sixteenth century.¹²⁶ The examination and dissection of the eel was a method of assuring that it was what it seemed to be; the fact that it "vanished" comments on its possible supernatural origins.

The question of the amount of intake versus the quantity of liquid expelled was one way these early physicians could diagnose the inner working of the body and is a method still used today. With no way to examine the internal body, minute observations were made of the results of the vomitings.

After the flood of water she began to vomit a vast number of hairs of about a finger's length, some longer and some shorter like those which fall from old dogs; and the quantity of the hairs grew each day so that she could easily have filled many full-sized balls. All this she vomited with much retching and difficulty. After a few days interval there followed other vomitings of great balls of hair floating in a purulent sanies,¹²⁷ and sometimes of the appearance of the dung of pigeons or geese; and in this pus were found bits of wood and tiny pieces of skin, some of the wood being of various-sized pieces of living trees, as if they had been broken off from the trunks; these were of the thickness and breadth of a nail, spongy inside and black with old bark outside. Shortly afterwards her vomiting became as black as coal, so that you would have said that it was ink or the excretion of the cuttle fish, with minute pieces of coal in it; and each day she vomited two or three pounds, nearly always accompanied with more hairs than could be put into a

¹²⁶ Sometime nearing the end of the sixteenth century the grave of John Colet, who had died in 1519, was opened. A hole was made "at the upper edge of the coffin . . . which was full of a Liquor which conserved the body." Two members of the examining group tasted it and commented that "'twas of a kind of insipid tast, something of Ironish tast." This story was recounted in *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, Oliver Lawson Dick, ed. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1950), p. 70.

¹²⁷ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *sanies* is a thin fetid pus mixed with serum and blood secreted by a wound or ulcer. A physician, Bulleyn, is quoted in 1562 as saying, "Now sanies is nothing els, but corrupted foode or nourishment which natur was not able to digest."

walnut, all white long and stiff. This continued for three days, and then in one single vomit she threw up two pounds of pure blood, as from an opened vein, unmixed with any other matter. After this blood, the black vomiting returned, as if the fluid had been dyed with pounded antimony, and each day there were five or six pounds of the fluid; and this prodigy continued for seven solid hours. The application of human and divine remedies brought some relief. . . .

Until this point there seems to have been no attempt to remedy the situation. Now, however, the doctor spoke of both medical and theological attempts at a cure. While the medical procedures are not specifically discussed here, purgings and vomitings were common. Burton tells the same story and adds that "she was seized by paroxysms of laughing, weeping, & ecstasies." While it may be assumed from Guazzo that exorcism was the "divine remedy," Burton leaves no doubt when he says: "They could do no good on her by physick, but left her to the Clergy."

The mass of excretions were never simply discarded as they contained important clues to the state of the internal organs. The black liquid, like "ink or the excretion of the cuttle fish" was a substance often seen in cases of possession. Vomiting black liquid referred to as "writing ink,"¹²⁸ was common. One servant girl was said to "vomit up ink without feeling any disposition" while going about her household chores.¹²⁹

The blackness was assumed to be the result of the black bile that was usually present in such cases due to the melancholic humor either brought on or exacerbated by the presence of demons. As we have seen, the demon accomplished this "by dispersing a black humour throughout the brain and the inner cells of the body." The demon could in fact increase the amount of black bile in the body by "superinducing other irritations and by preventing the purging of the humour."¹³⁰

Black bile as the cause of melancholy was an explanation for this kind of illness was presented also by Burton, but he too felt that demons were involved in the production of the symptoms. He explained that "bad genii mix themselves with depraved spirits and black bile," and that the devil being "a slender incomprehensible spirit, can easily insinuate and wind himself into human bodies, and cunningly crouched in our bowels, vitiate our healths, terrify our souls with fearful dreams, and shake our minds with furies." In fact, this humour actually invited the Devil to it. In other words, "melancholy persons are most subject to diabolical temptations" either by obsession or possession.¹³¹ Here were both the "slender spirit," perhaps in the form of the eel,

¹²⁸Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, p. 304.

¹²⁹Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, p. 300.

¹³⁰Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 106.

¹³¹Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 174.

and the penchant for the material, "crouching in the bowels," much as we have already seen in the case related here.

Even during the remedies, the vomitings continued.

. . . during which the hairs were still ejected, but they were fewer and gradually became blacker and shorter every day, growing from auburn to dark and so to jet black, and it seemed that the vomiting broke them into minute particles, such as was her virulent spitting; though at times it was more like mud.

So far the excretions of this girl have followed the normal list of objects. The condition of the expelled hair would seem to indicate the effectiveness of the remedies, but the expelled matter changed dramatically in September.

About the middle of September she vomited larger pieces of skin which seemed to be torn from her stomach, and they had the appearance of a thick fleshy membrane, tough and difficult to tear, like the choroid envelope of a foetus, and were marked with a network of veins, and were sometimes as much as half a palm in length. Immediately after these followed others much thinner but black right through, but still bearing the marks of veins, and in other respects not unlike the allantoid membrane.¹³² Last came membranes of a third kind, devoid of vasa, and thinner than any of the others, like the amnion yet differing from it in appearance and material; for though thin, they were remarkably tough, and in some marvellous manner larger.

Here for the first time the physician gave an explanation of the skin fragments and through the closest of examinations offered an explanation that tied into many of the theological dogmas.

The fragments differed in size, but two especially were more than two palms wide and were deeply grooved: these split themselves from top to bottom and took the form of cancellated rhombs. I can compare them with nothing better than the slough of a viper, although I had never seen anything comparable with them. But this was chiefly remarkable in them, that along the length of them there appeared a deeper groove marked sparsely with transverse marks, as appears in hoarseness of the lung. They had a hollow circular cavity within, a little narrow in the fastigium of one membrane, like the mark of a snake's head with a mastoid apophysis or a maxillary processes. In the end of the other there lurked something abdominal and asymmetrical, not unlike a bifurcated vertex. All these joined together clearly attained to the length and thickness of the eel, and I think that it was a papillary tubercle through which the eel breathed and, perhaps, drew into itself the needful solid and liquid nutriment.

The care with which the doctor examined and reconstructed the skin of the snake/eel after removing it from the rest of the vomit attests to his thoroughness. With the physician's language and methods, this Dutch doctor successfully connected the amazing symptoms with Satan in the form of the snake.

After she cast up these membranes there followed a vast quantity of stones, which she brought up always in the evening and at a fixed hour with much contortion and nausea. These stones were of a shape which is found in the ruins of old houses, and were

¹³²According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* this is a foetal membrane found only in mammals, birds, and reptiles, which lies between the amnion and chorion, and forms a means of communication between the foetal and maternal blood.

solid, angular, and of various shapes and sizes, some as big as walnuts; and she vomited them not without danger of suffocation. Sometimes also they were coated with chalk and joined together, so that they could not be distinguished from stones pulled from a house wall.

Once in my presence she brought up an angular stone as big as a double chestnut, with very great difficulty, so that I manifestly saw her vomiting it and heard the sound of it falling into the basin, to the great horror both of my own mind and of those who were standing about. Immediately afterwards she brought up, but with less difficulty, a piece of wood as thick as a thumb. This was bound right round with a sort of thread. Meanwhile at intervals she still vomited hairs, but fewer and blacker. Then came that which would surpass all belief, for she brought up a hard triangular bone, hollow and spongy inside, such as was clearly a fragment of an ox's leg, and the girl's father said he had seen such a one the day before in his broth. Without delay on the following day she vomited a number of bony objects, some sharp and some round, of various shapes and sizes, still mingled with hairs and stones: and last of all, pieces of glass and bronze.

The author "justly supposes that a demon was, with the permission of God, the originator of these prodigies, but that he nevertheless employed natural causes in their due order as far as he could."

As a consequence of medical involvement in the invasion of demons, there arose a parallel interest in the monstrous and the odd. A Swedish case exemplifies this connection. In 1678, a young boy of Malmoe in Sweden was diagnosed bewitched and exhibited signs of demonic possession by voiding stones.¹³³ The boy, Abraham Mechelburg, was about thirteen years old when he found a "Bundle of Linnen Rags" filled with "Pins, some crooked, some laid across, some without points; partly Horse-hair, and such Trash" which he promptly "rent asunder" and threw away. A few days later, the boy fell ill and no physician could render an explanation. Finally, the boy began to void little stones "at the Oriface of the *Penis*, which by degrees came forth bigger and bigger."

Before the Stones came forth, there was a strange motion in his Belly, as if something were alive in it, the Stones seemed to crack within, and something they heard, as if a great stone were being violently broken, and at this time he felt the greatest pain. When the Stones were ready to come forth, the *Penis* was drawn in so deep, that the Standers by could not perceive any thing of it; and after that, it dropt those prodigious Stones, which seem rather to be fetched from Quarries, than produced by any *Saline* or *Nitrous* Matter in the Body.

The boy voided several hundred stones weighing together about twenty pounds over the next two years. A group of seven witnesses, among them a medical doctor, a chirurgeon, and a pastor, signed an account in 1680 as to the veracity of the above story and added some further medical evidence.

¹³³Anthony Horneck, *An Account Of what happen'd in the Kingdom of Sweden In the Years 1669, 1670. and upwards. In Relation to some Persons that were accused for Witches.* (London, 1688) and reprinted in Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus.* See pp. 591 - 597.

The expelled stones were carefully examined and were said to look "much like pieces of a Rock broken by force, or by instruments fit for that Purpose." Prior to the "misfortune," the boy had been ill in bed, "during which Sickness something was seen moving in his body, as if it had been some live thing." Just before the stones were about to pass, Abraham would experience "incredible pain" in the "Spine of his Back." As long as this was going on, "he neither made Water, nor went to stool sometimes in two Months, sometimes not in a quarter of a year." The boy did not suffer from an enforced fast as do so many of the girls, we are told that he "continued to eat his Meat very heartily." The physicians examined the stones and sometimes found them bloody and at other times they had traces of "Talch." He was cured on 20th of September, 1679 by regular use of prayer. And there is not, ". . . after all those Torments, any Defect to be found, or perceived either in his Body, or the aforesaid Member of the Boy, but he continues safe and sound unto this day."

The concern to verify the truth of the story prompted the king of Sweden to send his envoy to Malmoe to question the townspeople and to obtain the above affidavit. He had earlier sent some of his own surgeons "to know the truth" and one of them had "held his hand under the *Penis* after it was drawn in, and there dropt a very odd Stone, broad and angular into his hand." The father and boy, we are told were "were no indigent people, but well to pass, and Persons of very good Reputation." The envoy "enquired of all People, whom he thought might not be very credulous" but everyone he talked with "unanimously bore witness of the thing."

While this tale may contain medical material similar to Catrina Gaulteri's situation where the expelled items were carefully examined, there are great differences. The boy displayed no other symptoms of demonic possession. The intimation that by handling and discarding the bundle of objects associated with witchcraft he had become bewitched must be assumed by the reader for it is never overtly expressed. There are cautious references to "some live thing" in his body, yet they are never named nor called demons.

Catrina vomited rough stones near the end of her ordeal and they too were sometimes covered in a chalk or talc. The broken stones did occasionally come "forth from the Boy's mouth" but mostly came through another means. The boy had no loss of appetite, and except for a little constipation, he remained healthy. Even though the physicians turned him over to the clergy and he was healed by prayer, it would seem reasonable that even the author's saw this as a medical problem more than a theological one.¹³⁴

¹³⁴Sometimes the accumulation of materials was not actually expelled but had to be removed from the body. A servant of a minor German nobleman was said to have suffered so from a swollen throat that other members of the household were afraid it would suffocate him. They took it upon themselves to pray for his deliverance and then, "along with much other rubbish, there was taken from William's [the servant] mouth, the front part of a shepherd's breeches, flintstones, fragments of such stones, little balls of thread, girl's hair, needles, strips of cloth from a child's cloak and a peacock feather." (Weyer, p. 298.) The peacock feather is an

Examination of urine was a common method of ascertaining the source of illness. When Martin Luther was suddenly taken ill, a physician present "after inspecting [Luther's] urine" said that he would recover. But Luther did not believe the illness to be natural, "I suspect Satan," he said, "to be sure he would gladly kill me if he could."¹³⁵

Exorcising Asmodeus himself from Soeur Jeanne was not an easy task for the clerics. Through the mouth of the demoniac, the demon had revealed that he was lodged in the lower belly. After several recitations of the exorcism ritual, the demon simply laughed and uttered blasphemies at his enemies. Finally, on October 8, 1632, Soeur Jeanne was carried to her room and placed on the bed. M. Adam, the local apothecary was summoned and arrived with a huge brass syringe in hand. Asmodeus must have recognized the signs of impending doom, for he began to throw a fit. The Prioress was held down by several persons present at the remarkable episode, M. Adam applied his trade, and Asmodeus dispossessed the nun.¹³⁶

Driving out demons is no easy matter. It would seem as in the account of the use of the enema on Soeur Jeanne, that the spirits would sometimes solidify at the moment of expellation and resolve themselves into perceptible filth, excrement, vomit, dung, coal, and even such live beings as reptiles and amphibians.

Boguet tells a story that when the priest commanded one of the demons to come out of Rol-lande du Vernois, he said it was not yet his time, "but that his companion was still very low, and at this the possessed woman put her hand on her belly, and with her hand followed some object up as far as her throat, which in the end appeared as a lump in her throat. The demon then said that he was very near, yet that his hour was not come." In a short while night came and the exorcists left the woman "in the protection of God."

Roallande told them what happened during the evening when she saw the clergy the next morning. "One of the demons, namely Devil, did not fail to leave her at about seven or eight o'-

important clue as to the cause of the servant's troubles. The peacock, the proudest of birds, represented the sin of pride and was often depicted with a mirror in which the image of Satan can be seen. Although through the centuries the peacock has also represented immortality and resurrection, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was primarily associated with the sin of vainglory. In the Grünewald altarpiece at Isenheim, Lucifer is shown wearing a peacock's crest. See Ruth Mellinkoff, *The Devil at Isenheim. Reflections of Popular Belief in Grünewald's Altarpiece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹³⁵Luther, *Table Talk*, p. 24. Luther was plagued by kidney stones and suffered greatly. See Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1958), pp. 244 - 250.

¹³⁶Huxley, *The Devils of Loudon*, p. 122-23.

clock in the evening and came out of her mouth like a black slug, which crept about the ground a little and then disappeared."¹³⁷

Fasting as Remedy

Fasting was not only a means of preventing demonic possession but also a method of curing it in medical circles as well as in the Protestant exorcisms. Weyer reflects the early Christian influence as he recommends fasting "when the flesh has grown insolent in its excessive indulgence." It was long thought to be advantageous in ridding the body of unwanted intruders: "Fasting is useful for expelling demons, excluding evil thoughts, remitting sins, mortifying vices, giving certain hope of future goods and a foretaste of celestial joy."¹³⁸

The exorcist was not only a minister of the Church but was also considered a doctor of souls. The *Manual of Exorcism* explains that the exorcist must prepare himself for the battle with the Devil by spending his time in "fasts and scourging" as well as "holy prayers and pious meditations because some demons only leave bodies under these circumstances."¹³⁹ Fasting was the indicated remedy since the excessive flesh caused by overeating provides "room for the demon." The bodily appetite must be "curbed and bridled and restored to its proper status."¹⁴⁰ Using the Scriptures as precedent, fasting was adopted by the Puritans as a means, along with prayer, of beseeching God to deliver the demoniac from the clutches of the demons. The self-proclaimed English exorcist, John Darrell, was said to have denied food to his possessed subjects because the "demons would fly from bodies that were no longer able to offer nourishment to the parasitic little devils."¹⁴¹

But the demons themselves also used fasting as a method of control as in the case of Mercy Short whose demon put her to "Extreme Fasting for many Days together." Mercy was compelled to fasting with little respite for "having obtained a Liberty of Eating for Three Dayes, after a Fast of Nine Dayes, [and] was immediately compelled unto another Fast, which lasted for about Fifteen Dayes together. In all this time, shee was permitted scarce to swallow one bitt or drop of any Victuals."¹⁴² The food she was permitted by the demons to eat was mostly fruit, a raw pear, now

¹³⁷Boguet, *An Examen*, p. 176 - 177.

¹³⁸Gunther Pairis, Cistercian, and quoted by Caroline Bynam in *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 2-3.

¹³⁹*Manual*, p. 16.

¹⁴⁰Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Book Five, Chap. XXXII, p. 455.

¹⁴¹Quoted by Peter Underwood, *Exorcism!* (London: Robert Hale, 1990), p. 118.

¹⁴²Mather, *Brand . . . in Burr, Narratives*, p. 265.

and then an apple, and some hard cider, yet Mather records that she also had a chestnut and some cold water.

Margaret Rule kept an entire fast for nine days upon being taken by the demon. She "had a very eager Hunger upon her Stomach, yet if any refreshment were brought unto her, her Teeth would be set, and she would be thrown into many Miseries . . ." She did take a spoonful of rum at one point. Throughout the ordeal, Mather commented that "she was to all appearance as Fresh, as Lively, as Hearty, at the Nine Days End" as at the beginning.¹⁴³

It is interesting that although fasting seems to be a universal remedy to possession, the vomiting of inappropriate objects and the defecation of live animals seems to have been more often a continental symptom, seen on occasion in England, and almost non-existent in Puritan America. This is not to say that the English, Scottish, and Americans gave up any connection with animals for they seem to have contributed the idea of the familiar to the witchcraft theories.¹⁴⁴ Cotton Mather came finally to the same conclusion as have many religious individuals and theologians throughout the history of the west: "It seems that Long Fasting is not only Tolerable, but strangely Agreeable to such as have something more than Ordinary to do with the Invisible World."¹⁴⁵

Self Destruction

Suicide, or self-murder became a subject of choice for Puritan and Nonconforming preachers who considered it one of the most popular methods of torment by demons on the unregenerate.¹⁴⁶ The remedy was conversion or moral regeneration. Here again we see the Puritan insistence that demons were only capable of attacking where faith and the Holy Spirit were absent.

Destruction of the possessed person by the demon was considered a likely possibility. In fact the attempt to commit suicide, "when some inner power seems to urge the possessed to hurl

¹⁴³C. Mather, *Margaret Rule, Drake, Witchcraft Delusion*, II: 31.

¹⁴⁴Robbins, *Encyclopedia*, p. 190.

¹⁴⁵Mather, *Brand* . . . in Burr, p. 266. On the use of fasting in expelling demons see also Weyer, Book V, c. xxxii, pp. 455 - 457.

¹⁴⁶According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word suicide was not in the 1755 edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*. The word was coined later to remedy the pejorative connotations of self-murder as the legal concept had changed to assume that one who killed himself was insane and therefore not responsible for his actions. Suicide was no longer attributed to the Devil. See MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 171.

himself from a precipice, or hang or strangle himself or the like," was sometimes seen as evidence of possession. "Some demoniacs have terrible eyes" because the demon has destroyed them in trying to cause the individual bodily harm. At other times the demons "miserably destroy their limbs and kill their bodies unless help is quickly brought to them."¹⁴⁷ Evidence from the literature attests to this understanding of the power of the maleficent possessing spirit.

Sœur Jeanne des Anges at the convent of Loudun, thinking herself pregnant by the workings of the demon Isacaaron determined that it would be better to die than to risk the humiliation of a demon birth. She explained: "I was determined to take several potions and to this effect I found a way to have drugs"; yet, at the last second, she decided that God intervened by giving her "a great apprehension . . . of losing the soul of the little creature that I thought to have had in my entrails therefore she took the resolution to not use the drugs" and she discarded them.

Drugs also proved to be a recognized method of suicide for the Protestant demoniac. Hannah Allen first thought of taking opium, "that I might die in my sleep, and none would know that I had not died naturally." She sent to several apothecary shops for some but the apothecaries either said they had none or would not sell it because it was dangerous. Not to be outdone, Allen decided to use a pipe and smoke spiders, which were thought to be poisonous.¹⁴⁸ Although she was unable to complete the plan, she did one evening eat a spider and "awoke feeling death upon her." Her brother sent for the apothecary who administered "something to expel it." The thought of her child stopped her also, for she "desired that her child might not be disgraced by her untimely end."¹⁴⁹

The apprehension for the unbaptized child that had stopped Sœur Jeanne from using the drugs did manage to shift her focus from her own suicide to the ultimate fate of the "creature." She decided that if the fetus were baptized all would not be lost. So, to this end she developed another plan, "which was to make an opening in my [her] side to pull out this child of the body that I [she] would baptize [it] and thus his health would be assured." She knew without a doubt that she was putting herself in danger of death, but to that end and the day after her confession

¹⁴⁷Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 168.

¹⁴⁸The spider was seen as a symbol of Satan in Christian beliefs. The thirteenth century writer Pierre le Picard explains in his *Bestiary* that "the spider is the image of the devil who weaves and tends his web, and works to take and destroy the souls of those who through lust, drunkenness, murder, or covetousness fall into his traps." The spider is also seen as the seductress or the prostitute who uses her web to entangle the unsuspecting. Then, enfolding him in her arms, he is lost forever. See Charbonneau-Lassay, *Bestiary*, pp. 359 - 360.

¹⁴⁹Suicide was considered self-murder and the suicide was tried post-humously. The body would be buried in a road bed or beside a road instead of in consecrated ground as a lesson to others. The suicide's personal goods would be confiscated and would go to the Crown. Allen, p. 206.

on 2 January 1635, she took a large knife from the kitchen and along with a basin of water in which to baptize the "creature," she retired to a small upstairs room in the convent resolved "to carry out the scheme and open her side." There being a crucifix in the room, Sœur Jeanne threw herself on the floor in front of it and asked pardon for her own death if she ended up killing herself, and especially for the little creature because she "was resolved to suffocate it after having baptized it."¹⁵⁰ She was saved by a vision of Christ.

Saint Mary Magdelene dePazzi was likewise treated very roughly by demons; she was thrown down from the top of stairs, they bit her like vipers, and "sometimes seemed to devour her like so many hungry Lions." She armed herself against the assaults of the demons with extraordinary fasts which "she continued whole weeks without receiving any nourishment, besides what she had from the holy Eucharist," with a girdle pointed with iron which bit into her flesh even to the "effusion of blood." Finally one day, in great despair like Jeanne des Anges, she took a knife from the kitchen determined to kill herself. She found herself in the Quire instead and under the influence of the Virgin Mary, she resolved to place the knife in the hands of the holy Mother, who "at the same instant restored quiet to her troubled spirit."¹⁵¹

Hannah Allen similarly resorted to fasting and hiding as a means toward death. During her possession she was often taken to sermons by members of her family in the hope that the Word of God would help to alleviate the torment caused by the Devil. One time, having promised to attend another sermon, the Devil began to terrify her for making such a promise, and suggested that she would do better to break it than keep it. She wrote:

And sitting in great distress, contriving how I might put off my going, the Devil found me out a place on the top of the house, a hole where some boards were laid, and there I crowded in myself, and laid a long black scarf upon me and put the boards as well as I could, to hide me from being found, and there intended to lie, till I should starve to death.¹⁵²

Another Puritan woman, Joyce Dovey "snatched a pair of Cizzers from a woman's girdle, and applied them to her throat; and another time a knife from another, in an admirable quick way, and strook her breast, yet both without so much as a scarre in either place."¹⁵³

The tendency for demons to produce a self-destructive attitude, especially when faced with the loss of their habitant, can be seen in the case of Joyce Dovey. "As her Deliverance drew near, it was with her as I have seen in one more Possessed Person. A strange Fancy of Dying Pos-

¹⁵⁰Sœur Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁵¹Saint Mary Magdelene dePazzi, *Life*, sect. 32, p. 56.

¹⁵²Allen, *Satan . . .*, pp. 206-207.

¹⁵³*A Strange and True Relation . . . Joyce Dovey*, p. 3.

essed her, and her Discourse ran much upon her Funeral. Wee then quickly saw the Death and Burial of the Trouble now upon her."¹⁵⁴

Blaming the Devil for an act of suicide could have had the effect of securing the hold of the family's possessions since a suicide's property was forfeited to the state. The jurists too were well aware of the impact the Devil could have on the afflicted and often warned that the Devil might take the life of an imprisoned witch.

Medical Remedies

As we have seen, the medical doctors like Johann Weyer were not adverse to working side by side with the spiritual doctors in expelling the causes of the diseases. Weyer's prescription for exorcism involved a concerted effort to first rid the body of black bile and then to apply the spiritual healing.

The medical profession used the standard remedies when confronted by the possessed: purging, vomiting, and infrequently, bloodletting since demons were never mentioned in connection with the blood but only with reference to the digestive tract. Weyer was of the opinion that a purgative prior to any exorcism would make the job easier if not unnecessary. In fact the physician, even after ascertaining from examination that the illness surpassed the natural limits of medical causes should, according to Weyer, in cases where the patient seemed afflicted by a melancholic humor, rid the victim's body of black bile. Black bile was the material of choice for the demons, they liked to insinuate themselves into it and by discharging it from the body, the possessed oftentimes could no longer produce wonders.¹⁵⁵ In one such case a boy was able to speak "the Dutch perfectly that he had never learned." Then, through the use of "a Physick [he] voided many Worms and could afterward speak only his Native Tongue."¹⁵⁶ The demon who had rendered him capable of speaking the foreign language was either residing in the mass of worms or had taken the form of a worm while in the body.

In one case related by Weyer, a local exorcist was unable to help a young woman in Berg. After repeated attempts, a doctor was called in and "following professional canons, first employed medicines to expel the black bile and then others to give her strength . . ."¹⁵⁷ She was restored to health and Weyer observed that once the body has been disburdened and relieved of the natural impediments, the possessed person was more readily able to be spiritually cured by

¹⁵⁴C. Mather, *Brand* . . . in Burr, *Narratives*, p. 277.

¹⁵⁵Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Book 5, Chapter XXVIII, p. 446.

¹⁵⁶Anonymous, *Daimonomagia*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁷Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Book 5, Chapter XXVIII, p. 447.

the ministers of the Church. Here Weyer saw the medical doctor and the spiritual physician working together to render a cure. The girls who complained of "unusual illness" at Salem were subjected to "Physic for their cure, but it was altogether in vain."¹⁵⁸

The decision as to which remedy to use, as well as whether or not there was a case of possession, was sometimes made on the basis of a urine sample. A physician judged the Boy of Burton as possessed solely on the examination of his urine.¹⁵⁹ Mary Hall's "water" was examined by a Doctor Woodhouse who was famous for curing bewitchments and such. He judged from the sample what was needed and "prepared stinking Suffumigations, over which he held her head, and sometimes did strain to vomit."¹⁶⁰ Fumigations were a favorite method of expelling demons. This of course speaks to the corporeality of the spirits since they must be able to either smell the odors or to be repelled by the smoke of the fire.

Depending on the disposition of the victim, the demon could be seen as aqueous, igneous, aerial, phlegmatic, earthy, subterranean;¹⁶¹ demons of proper dispositions attack persons who complement their dispositions. For a phlegmatic nun obsessed by an aqueous demon a theologian recommends a suffumigation as follows: a new vessel of earthenware and glass were produced and filled with "sweet calamus, cubeb seed, roots of both aristolochies, great and small cardamon, ginger, mace, nutmeg, calamite storex, benzoin, aloes-wood and roots, one ounce of fragrant sandal, and three quarts of half brandy and water." This vessel was then placed on hot ashes in order to force the vapors out and upward and the nun's cell was kept closed. The suffumigation worked, for when the demon next arrived to harass the nun, he did not dare enter the cell. When the nun left the cell she was advised to wear pomanders made of "musk, amber, civet, Peruvian balsam, and other essences."¹⁶²

Foul odors were recommended by Luther to chase the Devil. "I resist the Devil," he said, "and often it is with a fart that I chase him away. When he tempts me with silly sins I say, 'Devil, yesterday I broke wind too.'"¹⁶³ Later he expounds further. "Almost every night when I wake up the devil is there and wants to dispute with me. I have come to this conclusion: When the argu-

¹⁵⁸Lawson's *A Brief and True Narrative*, Second Edition, pp. 97 - 98, and quoted in Drake, III:5n. Mr. Lawson was a former minister in Salem who published an account of the trials.

¹⁵⁹Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁰Anonymous, *A Relation of Mary Hall . . .*, reprinted in *Daimonomegia*, p. 32.

¹⁶¹Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, p. 56. See Chapter 1 for more detail.

¹⁶²Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, pp. 56-7.

¹⁶³Luther, *Table Talk*, No. 122, p. 16.

ment that the Christian is without the law and above the law doesn't help, I instantly chase him away with a fart."¹⁶⁴

Medical Fraud

One last aspect of the arguments concerning demonic possession that created heated debate was the possibility of fraudulent symptoms. That individuals were induced by circumstances to create the illusion of possession, either on their own or under the tutelage of a professional exorcist as in the case of John Darrell, was well known and accepted. Doctors, jurists, and theologians were not blind to the possibilities and were often quite careful to look for counterfeit behavior.

Cotton Mather related the story of Mercy Short in *A Brand Pluck'd Out of the Burning* and raised the question that she might have had access to some of the English or continental literature and might therefore have faked some of the symptoms, especially that of the voices of the Devil.

And it was particularly considerable that altho shee could bee no other than utterly ignorant of what the European Books relate concerning such matters, nevertheless the Voice of these Daemons was exactly such as you read in Glanvils collections and elsewhere; twas Big, Low, Thick, and such as ordinarily caused her to say Haah! or How! or What do you say? and listen and oblige them to Repeat before shee could understand.¹⁶⁵

In England, it was believed that "belly speaking" was one way the pretended demoniacs used convince others that they were possessed for "in this way [young people] do make people believe that they are possessed by the devil speaking within them."¹⁶⁶ Susannah Fowles, a confessed imposter, "did wickedly personate the Devil speaking in her, and from her, by shutting her teeth, and speaking through them by a shrill hollow Voice . . ."¹⁶⁷

Weyer related the story of a beggar who thought that by feigning possession he could elicit more sympathy and therefore more alms from the townspeople. He lay down in front of the church doors and with two "guards," his wife and a local prostitute, to prevent him harming himself or others, would perform his "beggar's rhetoric." One of the most impressive actions he performed was to have "his stomach heave and fall in constant restlessness." Suspected and finally apprehended by the authorities as an imposter he confessed and explained how he had created the illusion of a demon in his belly.

¹⁶⁴Luther, *Table Talk*, No. 469, p. 78.

¹⁶⁵C. Mather, *Brand . . .* in Burr, *Narratives*, p. 262.

¹⁶⁶Thomas Ady, *A Candle in the Dark* (London, 1656; second edition, *A perfect Discovery of Witches*, London, 1661) and quoted by Robbins, p. 392.

¹⁶⁷*The History of Our Present Imposter, Susannah Fowles*, appended to *The Boy of Bilson*, p. 20.

He first inserted an obstruction of some sort deep into his anus and simultaneously devoured a large quantity of butter to line his stomach and intestines and protect them against the harmful effects of quicksilver. He then ingested some quicksilver which was carried by its own weight from the stomach through the pylorus and into the intestines where all exit was cut off by the bolted doorway. Therefore, although the quicksilver became terribly moist and rarefied, restless with its own inherent mobility, and although it was stirred by the [body's natural] heat, it could not evaporate even if the heat had been violent enough because the windings of the intestines had been lined with butter. This caused the violent perturbation of the body and the uneven tossing, which was increased by the violent and voluntary jolting of the body; meanwhile all the interior remained unharmed because of the antidote of butter that had been taken in advance.¹⁶⁸

William Perry, the Boy of Bilson, used an ingenious method to convince the doctors that he was near death by producing black urine. He was being kept in the house of the Bishop and during that time there had been numerous attempts to ascertain whether or not his possession was a trick. Upon the advice of the physicians that the boy might be near death since ". . . Nature had left her usual Operation, having never found in any Humane Body so much adust Matter, to give so deep and deadly a Tincture," the Bishop decided to try one last ploy. He cut a hole in the wall so that the boy could be watched at all hours of the day and night. The next morning the Bishop and his family went out leaving someone to spy at the hole.

. . . the Boy, finding all quiet, no Noise about him, he lifts himself up, stares, and listens, and at length gets out of his Bed, and in the Straw, or Mat under it, takes out an Ink-horn, and makes water in the Chamber-pot through a piece of Cotton, in his hand; another little piece of Cotton he puts between the *Glans* and the *Prepuce*, drawing the Skin over it, and that was for a Reserve, if he should be forced to make Water when Company was by.¹⁶⁹

Susannah Fowles also confessed that she had met "a Gardener, a pretended Doctor" named Jordan, who "gave her something in a Bottle, as also some Pills, and told her, that they would make Her Vomit Pins and Needles. . . ." ¹⁷⁰

There can be little doubt as to the general dissemination of the symptoms of bodily possession to a broad audience when children and beggars are capable of counterfeiting them. That the possibility was on the minds of the general populace as well as that of the clergy and the physician can often be seen. In the case of Margaret Rule, Cotton Mather never wavered in his belief that she was genuinely demonically possessed. He admonished the non-believers when they questioned him:

¹⁶⁸Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, Book IV, Chapter xxvi, pp. 347 - 348.

¹⁶⁹*The Boy of Bilson: or A True Discovery of the Late Notorious Impostures of Certain Romish Priests in their pretended Exorcisme, or expulsion of the Devill out of a young boy, named William Perry . . .* (London, 1622), p. 6.

¹⁷⁰Susannah Fowles, p. 23 - 24.

It were a most Unchristian and uncivil, yea a most unreasonable thing to imagine that the Fitt's of the Young Woman were but meer *Impostures*: And I believe scarce any but People of a particular *Dirtiness*, will harbour an Uncharitable Censure . . .¹⁷¹

In fact his ridicule extended to the spectators who witness the attacks of the demons without sympathizing with the suffering. "They that could behold the doleful condition . . . without sensible compassions might have Intrals indeed, but I am sure they could have no true *Bowels* in them." One factor in the reluctance of Mather to attribute the possessions of Margaret Rule as well as Mercy Short to any outside human agent was probably the fact that they occurred within a year of the Salem problems.

The Protestant exorcist John Darrell and his colleague George More, were investigated by Church authorities after "exorcising" numerous victims. In the case of William Somers they were found to have practiced fraud in teaching the "possessed" the tricks of the trade and then in dispossessing them. They ended up in prison, their careers as exorcists at an end.¹⁷²

It would seem that the decline in the number of demonic possessions was not so much tied to the witchcraft trials as it was to the changes in medical and anatomical theories through the end of the seventeenth century. As more and more of the frustratingly difficult medieval maladies such as impotence, falling sickness, and nightmares were moved into the "natural" realm, the doctors became more and more reluctant to treat suspected demoniacs with the older remedies. John Cotta argues that the physician, "by the light of Reason, which God hath given" to him, may discern diabolical intervention in two ways:

The first is, when in the likeness and similitude of a disease, the secret working of a supernatural power doth hide itself, having no cause or possibilitie of being that kinde in nature. The second is, when natuall remedies or means according unto Art and due discretion applyed, doe extraordinarily or miracously either lose their manifest inevitable nature, use, and operation, or else produce effects and consequences, against or above their nature.¹⁷³

One aspect of the seventeenth-century Galenic medical remedies is conspicuous in its absence from the possession materials. There is no mention in any of the possession literature of the importance of blood. Demons did not inhabit the blood, nor do they cause problems involving the blood. In fact, bloodletting was not mentioned as a possible remedy. In the humoral theory, it will be remembered, the blood, moist and warm, was connected to the sanguine temperament

¹⁷¹C. Mather, *Margaret Rule*, in Drake, *Witchcraft Delusion*, II: 30 - 31.

¹⁷²See D.P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, for a more complete history of John Darrell.

¹⁷³Cotta, *The Tryall of Witchcraft*, p. 70.

and was associated with air. The belief that the demons would not be attracted to the warmth must have eliminated the blood and the circulatory system from consideration in the medical view of possession. Further, the Holy Spirit, a spirit of an opposite nature, was attracted to the heart and blood of the individual.

The worms and vile creatures that characterized the unregenerate body at the end of the middle ages were transformed in the early modern period into aspects of bodily afflictions and the possessing demons of the Devil. The putrid body of the sinner attracted them and they became a metaphor for ill health rather than a symbol of the decaying and sinful flesh of man. An aspect of the development of medicine during the eighteenth century might reach back to the theories and literature of demonic possession and might be explored more thoroughly. This is that through the involvement of the doctors and their cooperative attitudes in this area, the possibility that ideas, especially those in the imaging of medical ailments, could stem from the possession literature. Demons were depicted as the physical causes of gout, intestinal problems, and pain in general.¹⁷⁴

One aspect of the history of medicine seems to have had a great effect on the decline of the diagnosis of demonic possession: the almost complete shift away from the Galenic system of medicine. Galenism was synthesized along with mechanical philosophy and chemistry into a new system of medicine early in the eighteenth century by Herman Boerhaave (1668 - 1738). This system was virtually supreme from 1715 to 1740.¹⁷⁵ This period in fact corresponds to a dramatic drop in demonic possession throughout France, England and Puritan America. Only in the Roman Catholic convents and areas under heavy Catholic influence was there continued experience of demonic possession sporadically into the twentieth century. As the medical profession became more and more reluctant to certify the symptoms described here as demonic and more often than not declined to hand the possessed individual over to the clergy for exorcism, the instances of the affliction dropped. Of course the fact that the Romanists remained staunchly Aristotelian in their theology would help to explain the adherence to the Galenic possession ideals.

¹⁷⁴See Barbara Marie Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imagining the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991).

¹⁷⁵King, *The Road to Medical Enlightenment*, p. 3.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LAST OF THE PURITAN DEMONS

By the end of the seventeenth century, new intellectual currents were bringing different ideas about the possibility of spirits. While the humbler people continued to see the world as swarming with spirits and filled with occult powers, the followers of Descartes, Locke, and Newton were looking elsewhere for answers.¹ The spectral evidence controversy in New England seems to have been an important intersection in determining the direction of the understanding of the spiritual world. Here the discussion about the corporeality of demons was transformed into the belief in the corporeality of the individual human soul.

As has been seen, the early modern writers may be placed into one of two philosophical categories: Aristotelian or Neoplatonist. Underlying the rise and fall of the use of demonic possession as an explanation for a catalogued set of behaviors was the adherence to scholastic learning and especially to those philosophies based on the materialist theories of matter and the natural sciences of Aristotle. Catholic theologians who relied on Thomistic thought and the Puritans from Cambridge University in England were the most likely to have held to the belief in the power of demons. In the realm of jurisprudence, it was they who were steeped in the inquisitional witchcraft literature, also based on Aristotelian philosophy, who were most adamant about possibility of demonic possession. And finally, it was the Galenic physicians out of the Aristotelian and Hippocratic traditions who supplemented and offered the physical evidences justifying the diagnosis of demon habitation. The Aristotelians, and therefore the rationalists, were, by definition, believers in the witch-craze. They insisted on rational explanations for all phenomena. Remember that Jean Bodin was known as the "Aristotle of the sixteenth century."

A second avenue of thought, based on the idealism of Plato, the Neoplatonists, and the Renaissance Platonists, arose in the sixteenth century and gained influence through the seventeenth century. Adherents to this line of thought tended to look for alternate explanations for the

¹As David D. Hall has pointed out in *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 107ff, Increase Mather began to differentiate the popular and "enthusiastic" understanding of natural phenomena from the "intellectual and scientific" approach. See also Herbert Leventhal, *In the Shadow of the Enlightenment: Occultism and Renaissance in Eighteenth-Century America* (New York, 1976), pp. 91 - 95.

behaviors that had been designated demonic in origin by Aristotelian thinkers. In the spheres where their power was most prevalent, the cases of demonic possession waned or nearly disappeared. Behavior patterns previously seen as having supernatural causes were explained by other means. For the Neoplatonists, the possibility of the spiritual world and the unseen members of the hierarchy reaching toward the divine were a reality. Experiences of spiritual possession, of ghosts, of any number of divine providences were empirical proofs of the invisible realm. Resort to a maleficent agent such as a witch or sorcerer was unnecessary for the Neoplatonists. The debates concerning the relationships between the body, the mind, and the spirit came together in Salem, Massachusetts, at the end of the seventeenth century. For in the spring of 1692, the Aristotelians met the Neoplatonists on the subject of spectral evidence.

Most historians of the Salem phenomenon have concerned themselves with the interrelationship between religion, magic, and folk beliefs, however I am inclined to see the Salem outbreak and the subsequent rationale for and about it as a connection between the theological and the scientific theories, and therefore as a controversy between the tenets of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonic thought. In New England, the issue of "specters" became a primary source of evidence for the witchcraft trials but it was intimately concerned with demonic possession.

Glamours and Illusions

In Salem a group of young girls were diagnosed as being either obsessed or possessed by demons. These girls claimed to see apparitions of the witches even when others did not. The apparitions could even inflict harm on the girls. One theory as to how this was caused, as can be seen below, was by the possessing devils using the mental images already in the girls memory and causing them to move to the fore and create an illusion. The whole explanation of how demons could cause one to "see things" was articulated by Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Beginning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, scholastic theologians established a theory on the powers and nature of demons. Aquinas provided the major study of angelology. Important to the argument was the understanding that demons were angels, albeit fallen, and were therefore capable of the same actions as unfallen ones. Since demons were like angels possessing neither flesh nor blood, they could like angels, through the inspissation of vapors and air, take on the appearance of human beings. "Although air as long as it is in a state of rarefaction has neither shape nor color, yet when condensed it can both be shaped and colored . . . this is what we mean by an angel assuming a body."² The body thus fabricated from earthly elements, while

²Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. 1, Qn. 51, Art. 2.

in actuality an aerial body, did nonetheless have a physical reality, was capable of some actions, and was subject to the sight of humans.

Demons could assume an "aerial body," according to the *Malleus Maleficarum*. This body could be termed in some respects earthly because it had "an earthly property through condensation," or inspissitude. Although the air itself did not have a definite shape, it does take on the shape of some body into which it is enclosed. When it does this, it is not bound by its own limits, but by the limits of that in which it is confined. In other words, the air or a demon cannot take on a particular shape of its own. Add to this the fact that air is a fluid and changeable matter. [A] "sign of this is the fact that when any have tried to cut or pierce with a sword the body assumed by a devil, they have not been able to; for the divided parts of the air at once join together again." Therefore air is a very "competent" matter in that it cannot take on shape unless joined with some terrestrial matter.³ When approaching the property of earth, the air becomes in some way inspissated with a terrestrial property while still retaining its true property of air. This is accomplished by devils and disembodied spirits by effecting a condensation "by means of gross vapours raised from the earth . . . and collecting them together into shapes in which they abide . . . which gives the body the formal appearance of life." It is in this as in the conjunction of the soul and body of a human, for the disembodied spirit inhabits the aerial body "in very much the same way as the soul informs the body to which it is joined." Therefore a spirit can be said to be of only air in the beginning, but when it "assumes" a shape it becomes "inspissated air, partaking of some of the properties of earth." This is an operation entirely distinct from a devil's possession of a body, which is not "assumed, but occupied," or possessed.⁴

Until early in the seventeenth century there had been little or no change in the concept of the corporeality of spirits. The Aristotelian and Thomistic physics concerning illusions, specters, ghosts, and all manner of phantoms continued to insist that these were produced through the fancy and memory of the individual and held no reality outside the imagination. Additionally, a number of assumptions as to the corporeality of spirits can be seen throughout the literature. First, except for the Holy Spirit, good spirits neither appeared to man, nor do they occupy human bodies; only evil spirits could do this. Second, demons in order to be seen, either assumed an aerial body or possessed a living being, animal or human. Third, devils did not raise the dead nor did they bestow life on a corpse. For the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, "devils cannot

³Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Question 4, pp. 109 - 111. This section of the *Malleus* continues with a description of the ability of spirits to perform the bodily functions of man such as speaking, seeing, hearing and eating.

⁴Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Question 4, pp. 109 - 111.

bestow life upon the bodies which they assume; because life formally only proceeds from the soul, and the act of generation is the act of the physical organs which have bodily life."⁵

That angels had appeared in recognizable form was evident from the references in the Scriptures as well as from accounts throughout history. The scholastics speculated that for demons this could be accomplished by one of three methods: by causing a "glamour," by assuming a dead body or by creating an "imaginary vision." In a glamour there was actually an exterior object that could be seen, yet it was seen as other than it was. The object existed but looked like something else. Nicolas Remy tells us that when "Demons first approach their Followers, they bring them money; but afterwards, when the Glamour has vanished, it is found to be nothing but Dung, Bricks, Leaves or some such Matter."⁶ In other words the demons had turned the dung, bricks, or leaves into a glamour of money.

A second manner used by the demons for appearing to humans was to actually assume a body fabricated from earthly elements as above or to take over a dead body. Possession of the dead body seems to be accomplished for two reasons, the first, as discussed above, and the second for providing a miracle. Since demons cannot produce miracles, such feats as raising the dead and the healing of blindness are mere illusions when performed by demons. Therefore, when a demon raises a body from the dead it is done through deceit by the demon taking possession of the body in order to animate it and thus convince an audience of a miracle. In other words, the demon does not actually reanimate the dead body with its original and individual personality, but merely uses the body as a vehicle for his own purposes. To raise someone from the dead would suppose that the once dead personality would also return to life. Sometimes, when the demon appears to do this, "he either enters into the dead body or else removes it, and himself takes its place in an assumed aerial body."⁷

Remy and James I also agree that demons may not raise the dead for they are not capable of recalling the dead man's soul to his body. They explain ghosts and specters by asserting that a demon may take on the appearance of another individual, even one who is dead, by either entering into the corpse and animating it or by assuming the appearance of the dead person.⁸ There is no further explanation in either Remy or James as to the assumption of an aerial body, but since

⁵Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part I, Question 3, p. 22.

⁶Nicolas Remy, *Demonolatriy*, Bk. I, Ch. IV, p. 7.

⁷Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 1. Ch. 9, 126.

⁸Remy, *Demonolatriy*, Book II, Chapter i, pp. 86 - 92; James I, *Daemonologie*, Third Book, Chapter 1, pp. 56 - 62; Peter Thyraeus, *De Spirituum Apparitionibus*, Book I, Chapter 9, pp. 24 - 25;

they both gave much recognition to the *Malleus Maleficarum* as a source, it can be understood that the above explanation must also hold for them. James I, in answer to the question as to how the demons enter into a house, says that they choose their mode of entrance according to the "forme that they are in at the time." For if they have taken a dead body they have hands with which to open the door or window; but if they are "as a spirite onelie," they can enter "anie place where aire may come in at." As to the problem of demons defiling the bodies of the faithful after death, James I asserts that it is no defilement because the soul is absent and it is only the soul that could be defiled.

A third manner of appearing was by creating an imaginary vision. This did not require an external object because it was an "inner mental image impressed on the imagination."⁹ In New England, the principles proclaimed by Aquinas on the connection between the imagination in the mind and the powers of the demons was well understood and led to the acceptance of spectral evidence in the courts. The arguments expounded in the two anonymous letters written to Robert Calef will serve as an example. The author begins with two substances, "Body & Spirit, altogether different" and distinct one from the other. He continues by stating that "a spirit can Acuate, Animate, or inform a certain portion of matter, and be united to it." Once this is accomplished and "the Devil [is] united to a portion of matter," which the writer refers to as a vehicle, the demon "may fall under the cognizance of our senses, and be conversant with us in a bodily shape."¹⁰ Just as the Devil could inspissate air and vapors in order to form a humanlike appearance, he could insinuate himself in particular organs of the body and, using the images already present in the individual, change the perception of reality. While he could not change the substance of anything, the Devil was, according to the scholastics, able to create marvelous illusions.

That the scholastic argument remained the orthodox view throughout most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is evident from the sources. The changes in this mode of thought came from the Cambridge Platonists in their response to Descartes. For the writers of the *Malleus Maleficarum* in the closing decades of the fifteenth century, possessing demons were withheld access to the soul of humans; only the Holy Spirit could dwell there because "to enter the soul is possible only to God Who created it, yet devils can with God's permission, enter our bodies; and they can make impressions on our inner faculties corresponding to the body organs."¹¹

⁹Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II, Qn. 1. Ch.8, 124. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. 1, Qn. 111, Arts. 3 and 4.

¹⁰Anonymous, *A Letter about Witchcraft*, in Drake, *Witchcraft Delusion*, II:166.

¹¹Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II. Qn 1. Ch. 9, 125.

The anonymous author in Massachusetts continued that no great difficulty arises in understanding the work of a demon in a human body. He used the story of the demoniac from Luke 8 in explaining his position. For by possessing only the body the power displayed by a demoniac is "immediately from the Devil, and whatsoever the possesst person does, or suffers . . . beyond his natural power; he is inabled by the *Dæmon* so to do. . . ."¹²

Aquinas explained the connection between the imagination and the eye when he discussed the phenomenon of bewitchment.¹³ He agreed with Augustine that matter obeys God alone¹⁴ but that a non-material being, such as an angel or demon, may with the permission of God, when joined with the body, change the body's imaginative powers. "This change," he said, "occurs mainly in the eyes, which the more subtle spirits reach." Using the Aristotelian concept of vision, he argued that "the eyes infect the air at a certain definite distance," and that this is the cause of 'evil eye.' So, when certain bodies are stirred by the subtle spirits of demons, "strongly stirred by wickedness, as happens especially with old women," their look can become harmful and poisonous "to tender and impressionable bodies," such as those of children. So it is possible, with God's permission, that the spitefulness of demons can be used to create mental images through changes within the body of the possessed.

One of the accusations against the witches in Salem was that they could, "by a look of their eye" cast "the afflicted into their fitts by poisoning them."¹⁵ This was referred to as "the Salem philosophy" by some, as the Cartesian "effluvia theory" by others, and as the "Salem superstition and sorcery" by Thomas Brattle. But no matter what name may be assigned, it is the Thomistic theory resurfaced in the midst of a Puritan stronghold. In the absence of any new philosophy, they had reverted to the old scholastic standby learned at Cambridge.

The problem of where the demon could dwell in order to work the illusions became a point of discussion. The soul, for Augustine, resided in the center of the heart yet it communicated with all the members of the body through an outpouring of life. Augustine insisted that the soul was in every part of the body at once, including the head where the illusions were manifested. "The work of the soul is in the body, to inform it and fill it with life; so that it exists not merely locally, but in the whole matter." By this concept, the possessing demon would have to take up residence in the same place as that which the soul fills if possession was manifested in the head.¹⁶

¹²Anonymous, *A Letter about Witchcraft*, in Drake, *Witchcraft Delusion*, II:167.

¹³Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. 1, Qn. 117, Art. 3.

¹⁴Augustine, *De Trin.* III, 8.

¹⁵Thomas Brattle, *Letter*, in Burr, p. 171.

¹⁶Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II. Qn. 1. Ch. 9, 125.

However, the scholastics reasoned that since the soul and the demon were not performing the same task, and since there was "no confusion between their respective operations," there was no reason seen by these authors why demons and the soul could not reside together in the same part of the body.

According to the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the demons could possess the head of the individual in order to "make impressions on the inner faculties corresponding to the bodily organs."¹⁷ The devil can pull from the memory of the individual, "which is in the back of the head," some image which he then "locally moves" to the middle of the head where the imagination resides, and then finally he transports it to the front of the head where is the sense of reason. This same process can be seen in operation in the autobiographical writings of Soeur Jeanne at Loudun. There particular demons appropriated certain organs or faculties in order to control the functioning of them and thereby control the nun. The result of all this movement was that the possessed person was "changed and confused" into believing that he had in reality seen the image with his eyes. All this was done without causing any pain to the demoniac because there was no actual physical change in the organs themselves. The only thing that moved was the mental image.

The Holy Spirit was also capable of appearing to the faithful in spiritual form. Assurances of protection from the demons who would assault her came to Mary Magdelene de'Pazzi at the beginning of her "trials." On the eve of Whitsunday in 1585, she was "represented in her mind a horrible and dreadful place full of devils of monstrous shapes, she called the lake of Lions" and "a voice spoke to her inwardly" that she should be thrown into it and that "she would be abandoned to the fury of those monsters of hell," for a space of five years. At the first sight of this spectacle, she cried out to heaven and received assurances of continued protection from the holy Virgin, St. Michael, her guardian angel, the Saints, and her protectors who she continued to invoke every day. For eight days and nights just prior to the beginning of the five-year trial, Mary Magdelene remained in ecstasy. During these days "she conversed with God and her Heavenly Spouse [Jesus]." "Seven times she received the Holy Ghost . . . and during one of the ecstasies in preparation for her great probation, Jesus said to her: Later on I will take away from, I do not say My

¹⁷Kramer and Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, Part II. Qn. 1. Ch. 9, 125. The geography of the head with the memory in the back, the imagination in the middle, and the reason in the front seems to be the invention of the authors of the *Malleus* as I have been unable to find it in another source.

Grace, but the feeling of this grace" On Saturday, June 15, 1585 Mary Magdelene spoke aloud during ecstasy: "Now the time of joy is ended and that time of trial begins."¹⁸

In 1691, Mercy Lewis, one of the girls in Salem, affirmed that a "white man" appeared to several of the girls so afflicted and gave "them notice how long it should be before they should have another Fit" She gave this description of the experience. She affirmed:

*. . . That she saw a man in White, with whom she went into a Glorious Place, viz. in her fits, where was no Light of the Sun, much less of Candles, yet was full of Light and Brightness, with a Great Multitude in White Glittering Robes, who sang the Song in Rev. v. 9. and the cx. and cxlix Psalms; And was given that she should tarry no longer in this place.*¹⁹

About two years later, in 1693, Margaret Rule of Boston also experienced the visitation of what Cotton Mather called the "White Spirit."²⁰ She related that she could not see his face but "that she had a frequent view of his bright, Shining and glorious Garments"; he would stand at her bedside "comforting and counselling her to maintain her Faith and hope in God." This apparition told her that "God had permitted her afflictions to befall her for the everlasting and unspeakable good of her own soul, and for the good of many others, and for his own Immortal Glory, and that she should therefore be of good Chear, and be assured of a speedy deliverance" We are told that because of the assurances of her encounters with this spirit, Margaret was able to endure her afflictions with greater ease.²¹

Spectral Evidence

Much of the early history of spectral evidence in England was concerned with the animal familiars of the witches, the likeness of the accused on the head of a fly or bee, or the image of the devil himself. The doctrine of spectral evidence as claimed by the Salem authorities also had a long and respectable history. It stated that once the witch had signed a covenant with the Devil, the Devil could assign a demon who then, on the command of the Devil, could take the witch's form and commit evil deeds against members of the human community. If this was true, it was possible for the accused witch to be nowhere near the afflicted individual and still be found guilty in the eyes of the court. The physical body was no longer necessary as the perpetrator of an evil deed; a specter was evidence enough. The question that arose in New England was that if

¹⁸Minima, *Seraph*, p. 72.

¹⁹Calef, *More Wonders*, in Drake, III:13.

²⁰Mather also claimed that Mercy Short experienced this vision. He alluded to the *Swedish* in this section, C. Mather, in Drake II:37.

²¹C. Mather, in Drake II:37.

the Devil could create the specter, why could he not create specters of the innocent as well as the guilty? This became the crux of the argument at Salem in 1692.

The idea of ghosts, especially ghosts in the form of departed relatives or enemies, was not new to Europe. The Catholic Church had rationalized the belief in ghosts by identifying them as spirits of the departed who were trapped in Purgatory. These poor souls would occasionally return to earth and could be encountered by living Christians. Of the three categories of souls separated from the body, the damned, the blessed, and those in Purgatory, it was only those in Purgatory who had the possibility of return. As expounded by Guazzo, "it is clear that with God's permission the souls of the dead can return to us."²²

For the early Reformers, this belief in returning souls who walked the earth after separation from the body went the way of belief in Purgatory. At least in theory. Protestant theologians in the seventeenth century for the most part agreed that any ghostly spirits that walked the earth were just that, spirits, and were to be understood as evil spirits and messengers of the Devil, not as the souls of departed humans. The Protestants believed that the idea of ghosts, along with many other superstitious beliefs had been perpetrated on the unsuspecting populace by the Popish clergy. Any spirit that appeared was by definition an evil spirit, for as Aquinas had shown and like the Protestant concept of miracles, while God was perfectly capable of producing either, he never did so. Therefore it was only through the machinations of the Devil that spirits appeared to walk the earth: therefore, ". . . the demons often pretend to be the souls of the dead, in order to confirm the error of heathen superstition."²³

However, spirits did continue to walk the earth even after the clergy's ongoing denial. They were encountered regularly if we believe the amount of literature about them and many must have reverted to the Catholic belief in ghosts as spirits of the dead. John Cotta, a Protestant physician, writes in 1616 that there are three kinds of spirits in the world: angels, devils, and the understanding "soules of men after death, separated from their bodies."²⁴ The possibility of the soul's return was also entertained by Increase Mather, who warned against the practice of making agreements to come back after death in *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*.²⁵

²²Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, p. 57.

²³Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Pt. 1, Qn. 117, Art. 4.

²⁴Cotta, *Triall of Witchcraft*, p. 23.

²⁵I. Mather, *An Essay . . .*, pp. 243 - 245 and discussed by Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. 593. For a discussion of the belief in popular belief in ghosts see Thomas, "Ghosts and Fairies," Chapter 19, pp. 587 - 614. Thomas does assert that: "At an abstruse philosophical level the possibility [of ghosts of the dead appearing] was kept alive by the occult theories of the Neoplatonists [and] Paracelsians who believed in astral spirits which lingered on after the body had decayed." (p. 591 - 592) However, this was not the crux of the argument put

Glanvill makes the connection between the ghosts of the departed and witches: ". . . I see no necessity to believe that the *Devil* is always the *Witches Confederate*; but perhaps it may fitly be considered whether the *Familiar* be not some *departed human spirit*, forsaken of God and goodness, and swallowed up by the unsatiated desire of mischief and revenge . . ."26

But it was not the souls of the dead in ghostly form that were finally the greatest concern of the religious leaders of New England at the end of the seventeenth century, but the disembodied spirits of the living. It was the ability of a living individual to be manifest in more than one place at a time. In the case of Mercy Short in Boston, the Devil brought with him "a considerable Number of Spectres, most exactly resembling the persons of several people in the country, some of whose Names were either formerly known, or by their companions told unto her."²⁷ There was no indication that any of the "people in the country" represented by these specters were dead.

Two phenomena were manifest in the spectral evidence dilemma encountered by the theologians of Massachusetts in 1692. First, disembodied but living individuals were presenting themselves to certain of the members of the community. Second, the spectral forms were invisible to bystanders, yet when attacked, these spirits often relinquished solid, material objects such as weapons which they had in their possession.

. . . a person was cruelly assaulted by a spectre, that, she said ran at her with a spindle, though no body else in the room could see either the spectre or the spindle: at last in her agonies, giving a snatch at the spectre, she pulled the spindle away; and it was no sooner got into her hand, but the other folks then present that it was indeed a real, proper, iron spindle . . ."28

Cotton Mather offered an explanation of the way in which witches can make themselves invisible: "In all the *Witchcraft* which now Grievously Vexes us, I know not whether any thing be more Unaccountable, than the Trick which the Witches have, to render themselves and their Tools *Invisible*. *Witchcraft* seems to be the skill of Applying the *Plastic Spirit* of the World unto some unlawful purposes, by means of a Confederacy of *Evil Spirits*."²⁹ Mather goes on to say that

forward by More against Descartes and which the Mathers appropriated for use in New England.

²⁶Glanvill, *Saducimus*, p. 77.

²⁷C. Mather, *A Brand Pluck'd Out of the Burning* (1693), reprinted in Burr, *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases 1648 - 1706*, p. 262-263.

²⁸Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christa Americana or the Ecclesiastical History of New England*, Raymond J. Cunningham, ed. (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 1970), Book II, p. 61.

²⁹C. Mather, *Wonders* . . . , in Drake I: 204.

"invisibilizing of the Grossest Bodies" would seem difficult but that the "Ancient Authors" showed the way.

Mather wrote on August 4, 1692 after six executions in Salem: "They [the judges] have used as judges have heretofore done, the spectral evidences, to introduce their farther inquiries into the lives of the persons accused; and they have thereupon, by the wonderful Providence of God, been so strengthened with other evidences that some of the witch-gang have been fairly executed."³⁰

The problem became more acute for the theologians as the adherents of the new sciences begin to attack the spiritual realm. The interaction between the theologians and the scientists on this question evolved into a matter of gravest importance by the end of the seventeenth century when the Devil intensified his campaign against the Christian soldiers in Puritan America. Theology and physics fused in the middle decades of the seventeenth century and this fusion had an important impact on the demonology. Far from being a return to the earlier beliefs as far as the witchcraft prosecution was concerned, the Salem judges and the ecclesiastics utilized the new sciences to further understand the attack of the devil. The writers, lawyers, doctors, and theologians alike, understood, until the middle of the seventeenth century, that illusions, specters and glammers were created in the minds of the possessed through the workings of the demons on the images within the memory of the demoniac. However, during the opening decades of the century, a number of thinkers were busy attempting to answer the old questions of the spirituality of the soul and God in light of the contemporary discoveries. Probably the most influential philosopher in this area, especially as it relates to our subject here, was René Descartes.

Increase Mather and his son Cotton Mather have been "credited with defining the ecclesiastical response to witchcraft in New England."³¹ However, it is not only the theological aspect of their lives, but also the scientific interests that seem to have perpetrated the almost relentless pursuit of the witches. For had they not been so steeped in the work then current concerning the corporeality of spirits and their workings in the material world, they might have relied more heavily on the older witchcraft treatises. However, they did not. They turned instead to a num-

³⁰Mather, *Wonders . . .* reprinted in Taylor, *Witchcraft Delusion in Colonial Connecticut*, p. 33.

³¹Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17th-Century Massachusetts*, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), p. 23. Weisman argues from the evidence of a lack of writings on witchcraft by the New England divines that they were less interested in the phenomenon than their fellow Puritans in England. This argument, however, does not hold up under other evidence. They were certainly reading, commenting on, and contributing to the output from England.

ber of old friends and to a position that harkened back to a pre-Augustinian period. They turned to a tradition that had been rejected in the West since Aquinas; to an alternative to the received knowledge. They returned to the Neoplatonists.

The creeping materialism of the new sciences infused the seventeenth century Puritan theological arguments with a new set of meanings pertaining to the spiritual world. Where the possibility of the soul separating from the body had heretofore been relegated to a period after the death of the body itself, the new philosophy seemed to argue for other possibilities. Where Thomistic theology had determined that specters were "in the eye of the beholder," the spirits of the late seventeenth century acquired a palpable and objective materiality. The question was no longer whether a demon was simply assuming a body, but whether a human soul could, without the death of the body, separate from the body and take on a personality of its own, a will of its own. The second question became whether through natural means, individuals could make themselves invisible and thus perform maleficium. The attempts of the theologians and physicists to infuse theological statements with a real physical meaning were exemplified by the dialogue between More and Descartes.³²

Near the end of his discourse entitled *The Immortality of the Soul* in which Henry More argues against the Cartesian concepts of the soul, he says:

*We have now finisht our whole Discourse, the summary result whereof is this: That there is an Incorporeal Substance, and that in Man, which we call the Soul. That this Soul of his subsists and acts after the death of his Body, and that usually first in an Aëreal Vehicle, as other Daemons do; wherein she is not quite exempt from fate, but is then perfect and secure when she has obtained her Aethereal one, she being then out of the reach of the evil Principle whose dominion is commensurable with misery and death. Which power the Persian Magi termed Arimanius, and resembled him to Darkness, as the other good Principle, which they called Oromazes, to Light . . .*³³

Here it would seem that More also accepted the fifteenth century understanding of the aerial body assumed by demons and added the human soul to the category. Obviously for More the human soul is capable of existence separate from and outside the living corporeal body of the individual. He defines the spirit, whether angel, demon or human soul:

³²For extended discussions on the More/Descartes controversy see Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957); Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

³³The Persian Magi here is Zarathustra, the prophet of the sixth century B.C., whose teachings were centered in the dualistic system and the conflict between the forces of good and evil in the representations of Ahura-Mazda (The Wise Lord) and Angra Mainya (The Lie). These entities became known as Ormazd and Ahriman respectively during the first centuries of the Christian era. See Chapter 1 for a more complete explanation.

But for my own part, I think the nature of a spirit is as conceivable and easy to be defined as the nature of anything else. For as for the very essence or bare substance of anything whatsoever, he is a very novice in speculation that does not acknowledge that utterly unknowable. But for "essential and inseparable properties," they are as intelligible and explicable in a spirit as in any other subject whatever. As for example, I conceive the entire idea of a spirit in general, or at least of all finite created and subordinate spirits, to consist of these several properties, viz., self-preservation, self-motion, self-contradiction and dilatation, and indivisibility; and these are those I reckon more absolute I will add also what has relation to another, and that is the power of penetrating, moving and altering matter. These properties and powers put together make up the notion and idea of a spirit, whereby it is plainly distinguished from a body, whose parts cannot penetrate one another, is not self-moving, nor can contract and dilate itself, is divisible and separable one part from another. But the parts of a spirit can be no more separated, though they be dilated, than you can cut off the rays of the sun by a pair of scissors made of pellucid crystal. And this will serve for the settling notion of a spirit; the proof of its existence belongs unto this place. And out of this description it is plain that a spirit is a notion of more perfection than a body, and therefore the more fit to be an attribute of what is absolutely perfect than a body is.³⁴

We come now to the argument More developed in his understanding of the spiritual world.³⁵ Descartes presented the idea of extension and claimed that only the material, the body, has extension while the spiritual, the soul, has no extension. It would seem that other earlier authors like John Cotta would have agreed with Descartes here. More found this objectionable. How, he wondered, could something that had no extension like the soul, be joined to a body that was only extension?

Johann Weyer exemplified the Thomistic, and therefore Aristotelian, system when he argued that a body cannot be in two different places at the same time.

For since God has disposed all things in point of measure, number and weight, they all individually have their own weight and measure and number. That which is without place, without measure, without form, and which moves without time and place, is infinite; and only one thing is infinite [God]. All other things, therefore, such as spirits and bodies, move in time and space. Spirits also are substances, which are circumscribed by place, just as our soul, too, is in a place, because it is present somewhere; and it is localized, because that which is present somewhere in its entirety is not somewhere else. The experts in law say: "He who is everywhere is deemed to be in no place."³⁶ Now soul does not have line, point, surface, as does body; nevertheless, it is finite or limited. But

³⁴More, *An Antodote Against Atheism*, Book I, Chapter iv, pg 171 - 172 in *The Cambridge Platonists*, edited by Gerald R. Cragg, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

³⁵For further and far more complete explanations of the Descartes and More arguments see Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), chapters V & VI, pp. 110 - 154; Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination From the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), Chapter II, pp. 23 - 116; A. Jacob, *Henry More. The Immortality of the Soul*, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), Introduction.

³⁶Weyer is quoting Augustine here. *De praestigiis daemonum*, III, c xiii, p. 202.

"everywhere" is unlimited. And there is no proportion between the finite and the infinite. But if the soul is so circumscribed that when it is somewhere it cannot be elsewhere, how much more so is this true of earthly bodies?³⁷

So, while people report that individuals come to them at night while the body of the person is found asleep in the bed, this is not possible. For the Devil has the power from God of producing visions and persons, even when awake, may see them and think them real. "Such apparitions most commonly come to children, women, madmen, people of delicate health, and sick persons, all of whom are disturbed by constant fear and vain dreams because of their weakness in mind and body."³⁸ Brave men rarely see such visions.

More argued against such stories perpetrated by Weyer in which Weyer claimed that the demons created the illusion that the soul may leave the body. In a story told by Weyer, a sleeping soldier was seen with a weasel that ran out of his mouth, crossed a brook with the aid of a sword and returned to the mouth. Upon awakening, the soldier related a dream of crossing a river by means of an iron bridge. This Weyer said was only the demon acting on the imagination; More disagreed.³⁹ More, under the influence of the Cartesian philosophy a century after Weyer, gave an explanation for the ability of the body and soul to separate without death:

. . . but you'll say the greatnesse and incrediblenesse of the Miracle is this; That there should be an actuall *separation of Soul and Body* and yet no *Death*. But this is not at all strange if we consider that *Death* is properly a disjunction of the Soul from the Body by reason of the *Bodie's unfitness* any longer to entertain the Soul, which may be caused by extremity of *Diseases*, outward *Violence of Age*; And if the Divell could restore such bodies as there to life, it were a miracle indeed. But this is not such a miracle, nor is the Body properly dead, though the Soul be out of it. For the *Life* of the Body is nothing else but that *fitness* to be actuated by the Soul. The conservation whereof is help'd, as I conceive, by the *annointing* of the Body before the *Extasy*; which ointment filling the pores keeps out the cold and keeps in the heat and Spirits, that the frame and temper of the Body may continue in fit case to entertain the Soul again on her return. So the vital streames of the carcasse being not yet spent, the pristine operations of life are presently again kindled, as a candle new blown out and as yet reeking, suddenly catches fire from the flame of another though at some distance, the light gliding along the smoke.

Wherefore there being nothing in the nature of the thing that should make us incredulous, these *Sorceresses* so confidently pronouncing that they are *out of their Bodies* at such times, and see and do such and such things, meet one another, bring messages, discover secrets and the like, it is more naturall and easy to conclude they be *really out of their Bodies*, then in them.⁴⁰

³⁷Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, III, c. xiii, p. 202.

³⁸Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*, III, c. viii, p. 187.

³⁹More, *An Antidote Against Atheism*, Book III, Chapter viii, p. 136.

⁴⁰More, *An Antidote Against Atheism*, Book III, Chapter viii, pp. 135 - 136. A fully expanded argument appears in More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, Book II, Chapter xv, pp. 161 - 170.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and appear in a recognizable form to other members of the community was thus established by More and was expressed in popular form. The use of Cartesian philosophy by the judges in Salem was attested to by Thomas Brattle when arguing the use of the touch of a witch to cure a bewitched person of the evil eye:

The Salem Justices, at least some of them, do assert, that the cure of the afflicted persons is a natural effect of this touch; and they are so well instructed in the Cartesian philosophy, and in the doctrine of effluvia, that they undertake to give a demonstration how this touch does cure the afflicted persons; and the account they give is this; that by this touch, the venomous and malignant particles, that were ejected from the eye, do, by this means, return to the body whence they came, and so leave the afflicted persons pure and whole. I must confesse to you, that I am no small admirer of the Cartesian philosophy; but yet I have not so learned it. Certainly this is a strain that it will by no means allow of.⁴¹

During the year or so that Robert Calef and Cotton Mather carried on a correspondence after the Salem witchcraft trials and sometime probably in 1694, in answer to an inquiry by Calef, Mather sent him Richard Baxter's *The Certainty of the World of Spirits*. Calef wrote:

Having long since sent you some doctrinals as to my belief, together with my request to you, that if I erred you would be pleased to show me by scripture . . . But instead of such an Answer as was promised, and justly expected, you were pleased to send me a Book, which you since call'd an ungainsayable one; which book till lately I have not had the opportunity to fully consider. And to the end you may see that I have now done it, I have sent to you some of the remarkables contained in said Book . . .⁴²

Keeping in mind that Mather claimed that Baxter's book was "ungainsayable" and that it was presented to Calef in place of the scriptural justifications requested, we might reasonably conclude that Mather was convinced of the truth of the assertions contained in *The Certainty of the World of Spirits*. In Calef's mind, the most questionable aspect of the "remarkables" is the activity of the soul separated from the body. After remarking on several incidents found in the book, Calef concludes:

I design not to remark all that in the Book is remarkable, such as the departed souls wandering again hither to put men upon revenge, &c. favoring so much of Pithagoras his Transmigration of Souls, and the Separation of the Soul from the Body without death, as in the case of her that went to see her Children, while she did not stir out of her Bed, which seems to be a new speculation; unless it determins in favor of Transubstantiation, that a Body may be at the same time in several places. Upon the whole it is ungain-

⁴¹Thomas Brattle, Letter of October 8, 1692, in Burr, p. 171.

⁴²Robert Calef, Letter to Cotton Mather, in Drake, II:113.

sayable, That that Book, though so highly extol'd, may justly be expected to occasion the staggering of the weak, and the hardening of the unbelievers in their Infidelity.⁴³

This, after the embarrassment of the spectral evidence controversy. Cotton Mather was certainly sufficiently acquainted with Baxter's beliefs since Baxter had provided the preface of Mather's *Memorable Providences* when it was published in London in 1691.⁴⁴

Cotton Mather made himself very clear on the question of the ability of the devils to create the specters, yet he questioned whether God would give the "Evil Angels" permission to abuse their power by plotting "Representations of *Innocent Persons*, to cover and shelter themselves . . ." "How far", he asked, "our God may for our Chastisement permit the Devil to proceed in such abuse?" After a lengthy meeting, Mather and "some very Pious and Learned Ministers" come to the conclusion "That the Devils may sometimes have permission to Represent and Innocent Person, as Tormenting such are under Diabolical Molestations: But that such things are Rare and Extraordinary; especially when such matters come before Civil Judicature."⁴⁵ After coming to the determination that innocent people may be presented to the possessed in spectral form the only authority these 'Learned Ministers' fell back on was that God was incomprehensible. A very clear Aristotelian conclusion.

Mather later connected the ownership of a specter with having made a covenant with the Devil. "The *Witches* which by their covenant with the Devil, are become Owners of *Specters*, are oftentimes by their own *Specters* required and compelled to give their consent, for the molestation of some, which they had no mind otherwise to fall upon . . ." The specters then, in some way, became personalities in their own right and were capable of exercising a free will separate from the individual who signed the agreement with the Devil. It was the specters then that performed the torments on the obsessed girls for, continued Mather, "the *Specters* have an odd faculty of clothing the most substantial and corporeal Instruments of Torture, with Invisibility, while the wounds thereby given have been the most papable things in the World. . . ." When bystanders assaulted the specter and took the instrument of torture from them, "upon snatching, wrested the Instruments out of the *Specters* hands . . . everyone has then immediately not only *beheld*, but *handled*, and Iron Instrument . . ."⁴⁶

⁴³Robert Calef, *Letter to Cotton Mather*, in Drake, II:118 - 119.

⁴⁴Parsons, Introduction to *Saducismus Triumphatus*, p. xiv.

⁴⁵C. Mather, in Drake I: 21.

⁴⁶C. Mather, in Drake I:104 - 105.

If the soul by itself, or a witch in league with the devil, could produce a specter that was made up of some material substance, how might one explain complete absence of materiality? In the Salem literature, the question of the ability of witches to render themselves not only in specter form but completely invisible appeared several times. In the trial of George Burroughs, the witnesses testified that the accused disappeared during a walk home from strawberry picking only to reappear much further along the road possessing knowledge of the conversation while he was gone.⁴⁷ Cotton Mather explained that "the Court began to think" that when Burroughs had stepped off the road he had met the Devil so that "he might put on his *Invisibility*, and in that *Fascinating Mist*, gratifie his own Jealous Humour, to hear what was said of him."⁴⁸ The fact that witches were sometimes masters of this feat was more credible "because there is Demonstration" in that "they often render many other things utterly Invisible."

I am of the opinion that neither Cotton Mather nor his father saw the question of spectral evidence as the same thing as the ability of the soul to separate from the body. Nor was the appearance of the specters of individuals through the separation of the soul from the body seen as an impersonation of the devil. Perhaps then, these two phenomena were interpreted as two different phenomena.⁴⁹ What caused the controversy was the conflict between the Platonic view and the Aristotelian view of the body/soul/spirit interconnection. The Mathers were acquainted with both views and attempted to reconcile the differences. Cotton Mather in his rejection of spectral evidence as the only authority by which an individual should be condemned was weighing his understanding of More's concept of the ability of the soul to voluntarily leave the body of an individual without intervention by a diabolic instrument.

Here it seemed was the first time that the Protestants, and especially the radical Puritans, were developing an argument regarding body and spirit relationships different from the scholasticism of the Roman Church. If the soul could act separate from the body without death, then there was not necessarily proof that a witch or the Devil was involved. Cotton Mather, in cham-

⁴⁷Mary Webber testified that something (George Burroughs) came into her house and "stood by her bed side and breathed on her." See full records of the Burroughs trial in Boyer and Nissenbaum, *The Witchcraft Papers*, I:151 - 178.

⁴⁸C. Mather, *Cotton Mather on Witchcraft: The Wonders of the Invisible World*, (New York: The Dorset Press, 1991), p. 105.

⁴⁹Leibniz, certainly acquainted with More's system, stated in relation to the ability of the soul to separate from the body: "The soul changes its body only gradually and by degrees, so that it is never deprived all at once of its organs. There is frequently a metamorphosis in animals, but never metempsychosis or a transmigration of souls. Neither are there souls wholly separate from bodies, nor bodiless spirits. God alone is without body." (Leibniz, *The Monadology*, 72).

pioneering this new understanding of the body/spirit connection presented by Henry More, had finally shaken the Cambridge Puritan Aristotelian bondage. With the spectral evidence arguments at the end of the seventeenth century, the authors concerned with spiritual possession and their ancient authorities had taken an important step. The Cambridge Puritans had held on to their Aristotelian roots far longer than did the other Reformers. In the reform movement overall, new theological explanations had been introduced to take the place of the traditional understandings of the Roman Catholics in most areas. Yet, in the realm of the interrelationship between the body and the spiritual world, no new theology had been developed. The final demise of the diagnosis of demonic possession in Puritan centers depended directly on the rise of Neoplatonic thought and the end of dependence on scholastic Aristotelian philosophy.

EPILOGUE

This dissertation began as a study in intellectual history searching for the theological basis for demonic possession in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I was interested in what intellectuals believed was happening when individuals displayed anomalous behavior; how they interpreted the behavior; and how they acted on their beliefs and interpretations. Demonic possession was different from other religious questions in that it was manifested in physical signs and required a professional opinion before it could be diagnosed. Not once in the literature did I encounter a diagnosis of demonic possession without the potential demoniac first having been examined by a physician. Even in the cases involving spontaneous possession, the clergy initially called in a medical doctor. Demonic possession was never the domain of popular culture as was witchcraft.

By separating the authors of the demonologies into a tripartite system and investigating the uses made of the Thomistic demonology, it became apparent that each professional used the same argument to structure each particular 'science of the demonic.' The codification served to assure the universal adherence to the theology. Demonic possession served to single out the sinners within the religious community. Exorcism or prayer and fasting were the remedies while the organized codes helped the physicians and clergy to identify those under the influence of evil. The jurists inculcated the bewitched and organized the evidence to help rid the community of witches and maleficium. In the medical profession, the symptoms of demonic possession offered outward verification of physical inward corruption.

This suggests an area for further investigation: the relationship between doctrines concerning demonic possession and the eighteenth century medical developments. Since the physicians were so intimately involved in the theology of possession, how much of the imaging, language, and understanding of later medical theory can be traced to the demonology of the early modern period? When it came to understanding the human body, perhaps it was the Christian theologians who offered the most comprehensive background based on the importance of reading the human body for signs of corruption and need for religious intervention for salvation. Upon the death of suspected demoniacs, autopsy found "collections of vicious matter" in the bodies along with "diseased guts filled with Water-snakes." Upon opening one body the physician found in the

liver "many small scrawling wormes then living." Often the liver was "corrupted and putrefied," organs were "rotten and black," hearts were "discolored" or of "evill colour," and the stomach was found "inclosed with shining rotten gelly" or a "black round gelly as bigge as a Tenice ball."¹ Dissection was the final proof that the diagnosis had been correct. Corruption and putrefication in the corpse proved the case. When the perceived need for salvation of the corrupt soul through religion was transformed to the need for salvation of the ailing body through society, was it the theological tenets that were transferred into the secular realm? The doctors involved in diagnosing demonic possession were performing autopsies to determine the cause of death and finding a myriad of signs pointing to habitations of demons as early as the middle of the sixteenth century. They were examining the effluvia of the possessed bodies and finding all manner of pernicious objects, worms, and melancholic humors. How many of the images discovered in these cleansings live in the medical arena even today?

The phenomena of the bodily manifestations of demonic possession also deserve to be studied in conjunction with the mystical experience. Saint and demoniac are simply two sides of the same coin. In Christianity this duality is not only evident in doctrine, it is clear in practice. The state of the soul, the condition of the society, and the health of the human body were all capable of being assessed through the 'science of the demonic.' The demoniac presented the corruption while the saint offered the portrait of incorruption.

That the basis for the 'science of the demonic' was the Roman Catholic, scholastic, Thomistic system of angelology became very important. Aristotelian physics dominated the thinking of the lawyers and the physicians as well as the theologians. Probably the most important finding emerging from this study is that the Protestant Reformation did not uniformly recast Roman Catholic theology. Whereby they managed to develop new theological understanding in most areas, angelology and demonology remained almost unaffected. The major changes regarding these was a variation on reasons why God might allow one to become possessed and the method of exorcism. Protestant theologians, especially those trained at Cambridge University, were steeped in scholastic thought and were even reading the Catholic authors throughout the period. Aristotle was regarded as the mainstay of the Cambridge education until the middle of the nineteenth century. Puritan divines educated at Harvard University during the last half of the seventeenth century were also studying scholastic logic as well as the Ramian logic and students were "cautioned against too exclusive a cultivation of any one method. . .," in fact it was said "that students consulted Aristotle, Ramus, Descartes, or Bacon."² Yet, in the area of demonic possession,

¹Cotta, *The Tryall of Witchcraft*, pp. 16 - 17.

²Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belnap Press, 1939), p. 118.

angelology, or demonology the authority was only Aristotle through Aquinas. The implication for historians of this period, especially the Puritan historians, is that if the transition from the Romanist point of view was incomplete in this particular area of study, are there other areas where long standing scholastic ideals dictated particular Puritan doctrines?³ When it came to the interaction of the possessing demon and the physical body of the demoniac, there was only one prevailing theory—the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas. That this was used along with the rest of the Catholic demonology was evident in the Puritan writings on the subject all the way to the end of the seventeenth century and the work of Cotton Mather.

³I have identified two areas of study that might benefit from this line of inquiry: the disciplining of children and preparationism. Both have aspects that remind one of the tenets of Aristotelian ethics.

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APPENDIX A

Prayers Offered in the Ordination of Exorcists

The Archdeacon summons the ordinandi, who approach the Bishop holding lighted tapers in their hands. They kneel before the Bishop, who solemnly admonishes them with the prayer:

Dearest children who are about to be ordained to the office of Exorcists, ye must duly know what ye are about to undertake. For an Exorcist must cast out devils; and announce to the people that those that may not be present at the sacrifice should retire; and at the altar minister water to the priest. Ye receive also the power of placing your hand upon energumens, and by the imposition of your hands and the grace of the Holy Spirit and the words of exorcism unclean spirits are driven out from the bodies of those who are obsessed. Be careful therefore that as ye drive out devils from the bodies of others, so ye banish all uncleanness and evil from your own bodies lest ye fall beneath the power of those spirits who by your ministry are conquered in others. Learn through your office to govern all imperfections lest the enemy may claim a share in you and some dominion over you. For truly will ye rightly control those devils who attack others, when first ye have overcome their many crafts against yourselves. And this may the Lord vouchsafe to grant you through His Holy Spirit.

The Bishop then hands each of them the Book of Exorcisms saying:

Receive this and commit it to thy memory and have the power to place thy hands upon energumens, whether they be baptized, or whether they be catechumens.

All kneel, and the Bishop, wearing his mitre, stands and prays:

Dearest brethren, let us humbly pray God the Father Almighty that He may vouchsafe to bless these his servants to the office of Exorcists that they may have the power to command spirits, to cast forth from the bodies of those who are obsessed demons with every kind of their wickedness and deceit. Through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ Our Lord who with Him liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God without end. Amen.

Then, the Bishop having removed his mitre, turns to the altar and the last prayer is said over the kneeling exorcists:

Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God vouchsafe to bless these thy servants to the office of Exorcists; that by the imposition of our hands and the words of our mouth they may have power and authority to govern and restrain all unclean spirits: that they may be skillful physicians for Thy Church, that they may heal many and be themselves strengthened with all Heavenly Grace. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ Thy Son who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God world without end. Amen.

APPENDIX B

**The Order of the Exorcism From the Rituale Romanum
Set Forth by Order of the Supreme Pontiff, Paul V (1605 - 1621)**

The priest, robed in surplice and violet stole, one end of which is placed around the neck of the possessed person, bound if he is violent, sprinkles those present with holy water. Then the service begins.

1. The Litany.
2. Psalm 54 ("Save me, O God, by thy name").
3. Adjuration imploring God's grace for the proposed exorcism against the "wicked dragon" and a caution to the possessing spirit to "tell me thy name, the day, and the hour of thy going out, by some sign."
4. The Gospel (John i; and/or Mark xvi; Luke x; Luke xi).
5. Preparatory prayer.

Then the priest protecting himself and the possessed with the sign of the cross, placing part of his stole round the neck and placing his right hand on the head of the possessed, resolutely and with great faith shall say what follows.

6. First Exorcism:

"I exorcise thee, most vile spirit, the very embodiment of our enemy, the entire specter, the whole legion, in the name of Jesus Christ, to ✠ get out and flee from this creature of God ✠ ✠ .

"He himself commands thee, who has ordered those cast down from the heights of heaven to the depths of the earth. He commands thee, he who commanded the sea, the winds, and the tempests.

"Hear therefore and fear, O Satan, enemy of the faith, foe to the human race, producer of death, thief of life, destroyer of justice, root of evils, kindler of spirits, seducer of men, betrayer of nations, inciter of envy, origin of avarice, cause of discord, procurer of sorrows. Why dost thou stand and resist, when thou knowest that Christ the Lord will destroy thy strength? Fear him who was immolated in Isaac, sold in Joseph, slain in the lamb, crucified in man, and then was triumphant over hell.

(The following signs of the cross should be made on the forehead of the possessed.)

"Depart therefore in the name of the ✠ Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost; give place to the Holy ✠ Ghost , by the sign of the ✠ Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Father and the same Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth one God, for ever and ever, world without end.

7. Prayer for success, and making the signs of the cross over the demoniac.

8. Second Exorcism:

"I adjure thee, thou old serpent, by the judge of the quick and the dead, by thy maker and the maker of the world, by him who has the power to send

thee to hell, that thou depart quickly from this servant of God, N., who returns to the bosom of the Church, with fear and with the affliction of thy terror. I adjure thee again (☩ *on his forehead*), not in my infirmity, but by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, that thou depart from this servant of God, N., whom Almighty God hath made in his own image.

"Yield therefore; yield not to me, but to the minister of Christ. For his power urges thee, who subjugated thee to his cross. Tremble at his arm, who led the souls to light for the lamentations of hell hath been subdued. May the body of man be a terror to thee (☩ *on his chest*), let the image of God be terrible to thee (☩ *on his forehead*). Resist not, neither delay to flee from this man, since it has pleased Christ to dwell in this body. And, although thou knowest me to be none the less a sinner, do not think me contemptible.

"For it is God who commands thee ☩ .

"The majesty of Christ commands thee ☩ .

"God the Father commands thee ☩ .

"God the Son commands thee ☩ .

"God the Holy Ghost commands thee ☩ .

"The sacred cross commands thee ☩ .

"The faith of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and of all the other saints commands thee ☩ .

"The blood of the martyrs commands thee ☩ .

"The constancy of the confessors commands thee ☩ .

"The devout intercession of all saints commands thee ☩ .

"The virtues of the mysteries of the Christian faith commands thee ☩ .

"Go out, therefore, thou transgressor. Go out thou seducer, full of all deceit and guile, enemy of virtue, persecutor of innocence. O most dire one, give place; give place, thou most impious; give place to Christ, in whom thy hast found nothing of thy works, who hath dispoiled thee, who hath destroyed thy kingdom, who hath led thee captive and hath plundered thy goods, who hath cast thee into outer darkness, there for thee and thy ministers is prepared annihilation.

"But why truculent one, dost thou withstand? Why rash creature, dost thou refuse?

"Thou art accused by Almighty God, whose statutes thou hast transgressed.

"Thou art accused by his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom thou didst dare to tempt and presume to crucify.

"Thou art accused by the human race, to whom by thy persuasion thou hast given to drink the poison of death.

"Therefore I adjure thee, most wicked dragon [*draco nequissime*] in the name of the ☩ immaculate lamb, who trod upon the asp and the basilisk, who trampled the lion and the dragon, to depart from this man (☩ *let the sign be made on his forehead*), to depart from the Church of God (☩ *let the sign be made on those standing by*). Tremble and flee at the invocation of the name of that Lord at whom hell trembles, to whom the virtues of heaven, the powers and the dominions are subject, whom cherubim and seraphim with unwearied voices praise, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabboath.

"The word made flesh ☩ commands thee.

"He who was born of the Virgin ☩ commands thee.

Jesus of Nazareth commands thee, who, although thou didst despise his disciples, bade thee go, crushed and prostrate, out of the man, and in his

presence, when he had separated thee from the man, thou didst not presume to go into a herd of swine.

"Therefore, adjured now in his ✠ name, depart from this man, whom he has created. It is hard for thee to wish to resist. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks ✠. Because the more slowly thou go out, the more the punishment against thee increases, since thou despises not men but him who is the Lord of the quick and the dead, who shall come to judge the quick and the dead and the world by fire."

9. Prayer.

10. Third and final Exorcism:

"Therefore, I adjure thee, most vile spirit, the entire specter, the very embodiment of Satan, in the name of Jesus Christ ✠ of Nazareth, who, after his baptism in Jordan, was led into the wilderness, and overcame thee in thy own habitations, that thou stop assaulting him whom he hath formed from the dust of the earth to the honor of his glory, and that thou tremble not at the human weakness in miserable man but at the image of Almighty God.

"Therefore, yield to God, who by his servant Moses drowned thee and thy malice in Pharaoh and his army in the abyss.

"Yield to God, who made thee flee when expelled from King Saul with spiritual songs through his most faithful David.

"Yield to God ✠ who condemned thee to Judas Iscariot the traitor. For he beats thee with divine (✠ on scourges, in whose sight, trembling and crying out with the legions, thou hast said: What art thou to us, O Jesus, Son of the most high God? Art thou come hither to torture us before our time? He presses on thee with perpetual flames, who shall say at the end of time to the wicked: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

"For thee, impious one, and for thy angels are prepared worms which never die.

"For thee and thy angels is prepared the unquenchable fire; because thou art the chief of accursed murder, thou art the author of incest, the dead of sacrilege, the master of the worst actions, the teacher of heretics, the inventor of all obscenities. Therefore, O impious one, go out. Go out thou scoundrel, go out with all thy deceits, because God has willed that man be his temple.

"But why dost thou delay longer here?

"Give honor to God, the Father Almighty, to whom every knee is bent.

"Give place to the Lord Jesus Christ ✠ who shed for man his most precious blood.

"Give place to the Holy Ghost, who through his blessed apostle Peter manifestly struck thee in Simon Magus, who condemned thy deceit in Ananias and Sapphira, who smote thee in Herod the King because he did not give God honor, who through his apostle Paul destroyed thee in the magician Elyman by the mist of blindness, and through the same apostle by his word of command bade thee come out of the pythonesse.

"Now therefore depart. ✠ Depart, thou seducer. Thy abode is the wilderness, thy habitation is the serpent. Be humbled and prostrate. Now there is no time to delay. For behold the Lord God approaches quickly, for his fire will glow before him and burn up his enemies on every side. For is thou hast deceived man, thou canst not mock God.

"He expels thee, from whose eye nothing is secret.

"He expels thee to whose power all things are subject.

"He excludes thee, who hast prepared for thee and thy angels everlasting hell; out of whose mouth the sharp sword will go, he who shall come to judge the quick and the dead and the world by fire."

11. Final prayers, including canticles, creed, and various psalms.

APPENDIX C

**Physical Phenomena Recognized by
Catholic Authorities as Charismatic**

This list was compiled from the *De servorum Dei beatificatione et beatorum canonizatione* written by Pope Benedict XIV when he was Promoter of the Faith (1708 - 27). As promoter of the Faith he was in charge of the canonization procedure and played "the devil's advocate" in the interrogations. This treatise discriminates between different classes of charism and describes the roles of imagination in both mental and physical illness. The work is "marked by a fresh, historical approach" and through it the Congregation of Rites (the canonization committee) can draw on the long history of religious experiences when examining the lives of potential saints.

For further information see J.N.D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) and *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*..

Visions: the perception of normally invisible objects.

Locutions: interior illuminations by means of words or statements, sometimes accompanied by a vision and seeming to proceed from the object represented.

Reading of hearts: telepathic knowledge of secret thoughts or mood without sensory cues.

Incendium amoris: burning sensations in the body without apparent cause. These include interior heat, usually a sensation around the heart, which gradually extends to other parts of the body; intense ardors (when the heat becomes unbearable and cold applications must be used); and material burning that scorches clothing or blisters the skin.

Stigmata: the spontaneous appearance of wounds and bleeding that resemble the wounds of Christ.

Tears of blood and bloody sweat (hematidrosis): the effusion of blood from the eyes, as in weeping, or from the pores of the skin.

Exchange of hearts: the appearance of a pronounced ridge of flesh on a finger, representing a ring designating mystical marriage with Christ.

Bilocation: the simultaneous presence of a material body in two distinct places at once.

Agility: the instantaneous movement of a material body from one place to another without passing through the intervening space.

Levitation: elevation of the human body above the ground without visible cause and its suspension in the air without natural support. It may also appear in the form of ecstatic flight or ecstatic walk.

Compenetration of bodies: when one material body appears to pass through another.

Bodily incombustibility: the ability of bodies to withstand the natural laws of combustibility.

Bodily elongation and shrinking.

Inedia: abstinence from all nourishment for great lengths of time.

Mystical aureoles and illuminations: radiance from the body, especially during ecstasy or contemplation, which is considered to be an anticipation of the Glorified Body.

Blood prodigies, bodily incorruptibility, and absence of rigor mortis in human cadavers.

APPENDIX D

Statute of 1604
An Act Against Conjuracion, Witchcraft,
and Dealing with Evil and Wicked Spirits

I. Be enacted by the king, or sovereign lord, the Lord's spiritual and temporal, and the Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that the statute made in the fifth year of the reign of our late sovereign Lady of most famous and happy memory, Queen Elisabeth, entitled "An Act against conjurations, enchantments, and witchcrafts," be from the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel next coming, for and concerning all offenses to be committed after the same feast, utterly repealed.

II. And for the better restraining the said offenses, and more severe punishing the same, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any person or persons, after the said Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel next coming, [a] shall use, practice, or exercise any invocation, or conjuration, of any evil and wicked spirit, or shall consult, covenant with, entertain, employ, feed, or reward any evil and wicked spirit to or for any intent or purpose; or [b] take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of his, her, or their grave, or any other place where the dead body resteth, or the skin, bone, or any other part of any dead person, to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraftm sorcery, charm, or enchantment; or [c] shall use practice, or exercise any witchcraft, enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in his or her body or any part thereof; that then every such offender or offenders, their aiders, abettors, and counselors, being of any the said offenses duly and lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer pains of death as a felon or felons, and shall lose the privilege and benefit of clergy and sanctuary.

III. And further, to the intent that all manner of practice, use, or exercise of witchcraft, enchantment, charm, or sorcery should be from henceforth utterly avoided, abolished, and taken away, be it enacted by the authority of this present Parliament that if any person or persons shall, from and after the said Feast of St. Michael the Archangel next coming, take upon him or them by witchcraft, enchantment, charm, or sorcery, [a] to tell or declare in what place any treasure or gold or silver should or might be found or had in the earth or other secret places, or where goods or things lost or stolen should be found or become; or [b] to the intent to provoke any person to unlawful love; or [c] whereby any chattel or goods of any person shall be destroyed, wasted, or impaired; or [d] to hurt or destroy any person in his or her body, although the same be not effected and done; that then all any every such person and persons so offending, and being thereof lawfully convicted shall for the said offense suffer imprisonment by the space of one whole year, without bail or mainprize [surety], and once in every quarter of the said year shall in some market town, upon the market day or at such time as any fair shall be kept there, stand openly upon the pillory by the space of six hours, and there shall openly confess his or her error or offense.

IV. And if any person or persons being once convicted of the same offenses as is aforesaid eftsoons perpetrate and commit the like offense, that then every such offender, being of any the said offenses the second time lawfully and duly convicted and attainted as is aforesaid, shall suffer pains of death as a felon or felons, and shall the benefit and privilege of clergy and sanctuary. Saving to the wife of such person as shall offend in anything contrary to this act her title of dower; and also to the heir and successor of every such person his or their titles of inheritance,

succession and other rights, as though no such attainder of the ancestor or predecessor had been made.

V. Provided always that if the offender in any of the cases aforesaid shall happen to be a peer of this realm, then his trial therein to be had by his peers as is used in cases of felony or treason, and not otherwise.