Coming to Terms with Dreams in the Early Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

The clergyman Pehr Stenberg (1758–1824) in his autobiography frequently relates his and other people's dreams and attempts to interpret them and makes possible connections to actual happenings. As a scholar he is sceptical about their knowledge value but cannot reject them entirely, so he goes into exploratory discussions of the relation between dreams and reality. In this article the use of dream narratives in social interaction, his use of dreams as a rhetorical device, his reactions to his dreams and reflections about his reactions are studied, besides his ways of discussing the ontology of dreams.

Keywords: Dreams, dream narrative, autobiography, divination, personal narrative, Pehr Stenberg

In August 1809, the Reverend Pehr Stenberg (1758–1824) was taken as a prisoner of war/hostage by Russian troops leaving Umeå parish and town in a northern-bound retreat after some months of occupation. After a few days he and the other hostages were released, and he was able to return to his family. This frightful experience would certainly disturb his general sense of trust and security, although he had his devout faith in God as a source of hope. Some time afterwards, however, he connected this experience to a series of strange dreams he had had the previous spring, and in retrospect he interpreted them as forebodings of his later predicament. This was done in the format of a manuscript titled *Besynnerliga drömmar* (Strange dreams) which he wrote somewhere between August 1809 and June 1815.[1] He starts by relating the dreams, followed by the story of how he was captured, and he ends the manuscript with attempts to interpret the dreams as foreboding the events. He makes no effort to discuss the ontological status of dreams but states a connection between dreams and reality.

This was not the only time Stenberg was thinking intensely about the nature of dreams. In his unfinished autobiography *Pehr Stenbergs Levernesbeskrivning* (henceforth PSL), a life-long project he started around 1780 when he wrote at some 10–20 years' distance, using letters and notes for

support, he discusses dreams and stories of dreams time and time again. The work itself is a vast cornucopia of personal experiences and reflections of all aspects of everyday life. His position as a peasant boy who had the opportunity to study to become a priest and spent most of his adult life as a chaplain in his home parish makes his manuscript of 1,800 printed pages a unique source of cultural history.[2] Stenberg can be seen as a mediator between the peasant milieu of his upbringing and the contemporary academic worldview he represented from his education and the official position he held in church and society. From time to time this results in comments and explanations of popular customs and beliefs, aimed at the studied reader. One recurrent topic that puts his layman's everyday experiences in a challenging relationship to his educated position is dreams, their status as experience and knowledge, and how to explain them. Stenberg frequently returns to the problematic status of dreams and devotes some effort to defending the choice to give them attention despite their estimated low truth value.

> My reader will undoubtedly find me very vain and silly, speaking so often of my dreams as if I had trusted much in them. It may seem so and indeed in part be true; because who is not in some way a little childish and vain. But that is far from any real belief or trust in them. However, I have not avoided observing dreams that have seemed peculiar in order to see if they would be fulfilled in any way, and I have to admit that actually, what I have dreamt has often happened to me, even on the same day […] it is my thought that, although anyone who trusts dreams is more than stupid, one should not completely despise them all but let time explain them. And besides, as a human you are not always such a master of your thoughts that something contrary to your intentions will not sneak in, in connection to some explanations of them that you supposedly may have heard. And since I have promised to record not only what happened to me but also my thoughts at all times as I remember them, it also is my duty to speak of my dreams and my thoughts about them.[3]

There are peculiarities that put dreams in a complicated relation to reality, and humans are not always in control of their thoughts. This makes dreams a phenomenon Stenberg is trying to understand. In a larger perspective, since he tries to connect dreams as experienced to the belief in a God by applying a method of observation and scientific reasoning, he is practising a form of "vernacular religion" (Bowman & Valk 2014) by trying to reconcile different kinds of knowledge systems as they contribute to his ways of thinking on the subject. In this article I will study Stenberg's ways of making sense of dreams by analysing how he represents individual dreams and dream interpretations, and his general thoughts on the subject.

Material and Method

As part of the editorial work in publishing the PSL, I made an index of topics by combining a close reading with a computerized search of the manuscript

file for instances of keywords; thus I have a deep general knowledge of the autobiography. For this article I have once again identified all the passages where Stenberg writes of dreams and dreaming. He tells of 28 dreams of his own, and there are 10 instances of others telling their dreams. For 15 of the dreams there are interpretations, and for 19 (some overlapping) there are also some kind of consequences told (a mood installed, attention to certain things aroused). Furthermore, in 15 cases there is also a kind of metacommentary from Stenberg where he tries to make sense of dreams and dreaming. This division of the material has been one leading principle in the analysis and for the disposition of the article, although it is subordinated to the major aims and questions. I have made very rough translations into English, which means that the eighteenth-century vocabulary and word order of the PSL may produce a strange impression in some places.

I have also used other manuscripts by Stenberg: briefly, his dialect glossary from 1804, and the separate manuscript *Besynnerliga drömmar*. Stenberg clearly had ambitions to take part in the national scientific discussions but hardly anything was published during his lifetime; small and large manuscripts have been found and published posthumously, but he also mentions others which have been lost.[4]

Dreams as a Topic in Culture Studies

The study of dreams spans over many disciplines. I will here restrict myself to my immediate references and research contexts. Dreams and dreaming have had a perennial but marginalized position in folklore studies, being situated sometimes as beliefs, sometimes as narratives, but never with a central position in the respective fields of research. Carl-Herman Tillhagen, who as curator of the folklore archive at Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, had a broad overview of Swedish folklore documentation, in his survey of divination folklore (1968) noted that very few narratives of dreams had been recorded from folk tradition. A possible explanation might be a lack of traditionalized dream narratives, stories that have passed from personal experience to the collective retelling which for long time was a prerequisite for classifying a story as folklore. Tillhagen's survey is as stated focused on magic techniques and the folklore presented is dominated by general statements rather than narratives.

A later work is Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj's *Drømme gennem tusinde år* (1986), giving a historical survey as well as drawing upon Danish tradition records. A team of Nordic folklorists supervised by Kaivola-Bregenhøj and Ulf Palmenfelt in 1992 published an edited volume in Swedish on "Dreams and Culture", in part drawing upon literature and archived folklore recordings, in part upon a questionnaire. Palmenfelt notes (1992:59) how Swedish folklore beliefs about dreams mainly draw upon two traditions: the belief in being persecuted by nightmares, and the belief in dreams as divination, either spontaneous

or induced by eating "dream herring" or sleeping on seven varieties of flowers. Kaivola-Bregenhøj has continued doing research on contemporary dream narration (2012), and also together with Carsten Bregenhøj supplied the entry on dreams in the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (2010), where Elliot Oring also gives a summary of dream theory and dream interpretation (2010).

A cross-cultural perspective on dreams and dreaming intersecting with religious frameworks makes up the structure for interdisciplinary volumes such as *Dream Cultures: Exploration in the Comparative History of Dreaming* (Shulman & Stroumsa 1999), *Dreams: A Reader on Religious, Cultural and Psychological Dimensions of Dreaming* (Bulkeley 2001) and the German/English *Hundert Jahre "Die Traumdeutung*" (Schnepel 2001), which despite the title's reference to Sigmund Freud's work takes a non-Eurocentric perspective and presents how dreams have different status as knowledge and reality across the world, as does the special issue on "Anthropological Approaches to Dreaming" of the psychology journal *Dreaming* (Stewart 2004). The more recent edited volume *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World* (Plane, Tuttle & Wallace 2013) specifically discusses the role of dreams in structuring historic change, that is, dreaming which served as impetus for change or for the understanding of social changes within the time span 1450–1800.

Jean-Claude Schmitt (1999) in the Shulman & Stroumsa volume summarizes the role played by dreams in the historical development of "Christian individuality", using texts by medieval Western scholars. His general impression is "a strong and basic distrust of dreams" (Schmitt 1999:276), with the various positions of seeing dreams as a subcategory of visions, that is, a divine origin, dreams as tricks of the devil, and the concept of dreams come true as a topic of interest. The religious system of explanations was not to be challenged until Descartes in his *Treatise on Man* (1633) reduced dreaming to the individual, the brain and the nervous system (Schmitt 1999:281). The individualization of dreams would be furthered during the eighteenth century. Phyllis Mack (2013), starting with an epiphanic dream reported by the Irish physician and Quaker John Rutty (1697–1775), has discussed enlightened eighteenth-century perspectives on dreaming among Quakers and Methodists, for whom dreams were considered a means for individual conversion. Rutty, in his autobiography written close to his death, and in yet another manuscript, relates how in 1754 he had a dream where "God enlightened his understanding" that made him change his ways of living. "Rutty's account foregrounds two elements that characterize many texts of the period: a vagueness about the nature and origin of dreams or visions and a focus on the emotions generated by the dream rather than the dream's specific message" (Mack 2013:208). Mack also paints a general picture of views on dreams in Rutty's time: "Dreams were a universal source of fascination even though there was no general consensus about their nature. In popular

and learned discourse, dreams were defined as predictive or prophetic, signs of artistic inspiration and also of indigestion. […] Popular street literature attributed dreams to demonic possession or a witch's spell, and dreams could also be 'caught' like a contagious disease" (Mack 2013:209). According to the eighteenth-century philosopher William Smellie, in Mack's words, "the activity of our unconscious selves is a reflection of our true character. […] though we may lie, our dreams tell the truth, and we are therefore responsible for the acts and emotions of our dream life even though consciousness, will, and agency are absent" (Mack 2013:212).

An interesting parallel to Stenberg's work is established when Mack positions Rutty in his contemporary context.

> Rutty composed an account of his dream as a man of the Enlightenment addressing other scientists. As such, he was careful to present himself as an agnostic on the question of supernatural origins, despite his obvious desire to proclaim the spiritual significance of the event: "It is recommended to their consideration, whether … the instantaneous change of temper from a morose and perverse to a sweet state above observed … do not exceed the ordinary power of nature … and if they allow this … consider how far the answer of the prayer . . . may not imply a supernatural interposition. (John Rutty, A Faithful Narrative of a Remarkable Visitation by a Physician, London: James Phillips, 1776:9–10, quoted in Mack 2013:221).

Mack notices a similar ambivalence in other British eighteenth-century writers, with different positions taken in different genres. "The Scottish writer and editor of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* William Smellie wrote confidently of the relationship between dreaming and divine Providence and sceptically about dreams as spiritual messages or prognostications. But in his personal memoir, he revealed his interest in dreams as vehicles of communication between the living and the dead, making a pact with a friend that the first one to die would reappear within a year" (Mack 2013:222). And he also mentions Mary Shackleton Leadbeater, an Irish Quaker writer who "criticized dreams as superstition in her book *Annals of Ballitore*, a study of local folkways, but in her private journal, she revealed a far more complex attitude toward her own dreams" (Mack 2013:222). Mack in her conclusion stresses the rising notion of the individual identity as a frame for the understanding of dreams.

> The writers and religious seekers who explored the phenomenon of dreaming failed to resolve the questions they themselves had raised, but they did complicate the idea of the bounded self that is said to characterize late eighteenth-century culture. Once dreams began to be attributed to a newly discovered unconscious self rather than the activity of spirits, a part of one's identity became inaccessible to the conscious mind at the same cultural moment when the concept of an integrated individual identity was becoming more clearly defined. Eighteenth-century dream theory and interpretation thus promoted not just new knowledge about the self but new levels of mystery and anxiety. (Mack 2013:224)

A recent contribution is the work of the anthropologist Adriënne Heijnen on dreaming in Iceland (2013), which applies a long historical perspective, from early medieval to contemporary society. She aims at a social theory of dreaming, where cultural understandings of personhood, shared knowledge and experience are building blocks for our dreams. Of special interest is how she characterizes views on dreams in post-Reformation Iceland among contemporaries of Stenberg: dreams can be conveyors of truth and thus worthy of collective interpretation, and they can be seen as testimonies of Christian devotion (Heijnen 2013:82). In the final chapter, she cites the anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano on the "messiness" of societies having several authoritative theories of dreaming, which are not fully compatible with each other (Crapanzano 2001:233). Her conclusion is that the interplay of dreams and cosmology restricts the number of theories, and identifies four cosmologies currently circulating in Iceland: "traditional", "Christian", "modernist", and "post-modern" (Heijnen 2013:213). She holds that all four can be drawn upon by the same individual, since a manifold of ideas, different ways of communicating them, and different social institutions promoting them make the co-existence possible.[5] Although her foursome is not applicable here, the co-existence of several kinds of plausible explanations and the (easy or uneasy) process of integrating them is a more general problem.

Dreams are taken up as an integrated part of a person's total worldview in the Finnish folklorist Juha Pentikäinen's study of the Karelian peasant woman Marina Takalo (Pentikäinen 1978). On the one hand he classifies her as a "Homo religiosus", sensible to supernatural experiences and soon to give a religious interpretation of everyday events as omens, signs or results of supernatural mechanisms, while she also was a rationalist always seeking an explanation (Pentikäinen 1978:335) and sometimes accepting a "natural" explanation for many experiences rather than accepting a supernatural interpretation. As for dreams, she grew up in a community where almost every[body]" judged their dreams, but she often took the opposite view to the collective tradition in interpretation (Pentikäinen 1978:137).

The specific contribution of this article to this vast and diverse research field may lie in the ethnographic quality of Stenberg's late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century notations of dream narratives, and his attempts to reconcile vernacular thought, Christian doctrine and a scientific attitude, taken as an expression of his self-understanding as a studied person contributing to general knowledge.

Umeå Parish and Town in the late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

Pehr Stenberg (1758–1824) spent most of his life in the Umeå region, first as a child and adolescents up to the age of twenty-one (1858–1779). After a

ten-year tenure in Finland with studies and exams at Åbo University interspersed with positions with gentry families, he spent the rest of his life as a priest in the Umeå region. This included a position as town priest in Umeå (1792–1804) followed by an economically more solid position as a second priest under the vicar for the Umeå country parish up to his death.

Up until the fourteenth century the Umeå region was the northernmost part of Swedish-speaking settlement and continued to be a bridgehead for the royal exercise of power during the subsequent expansion northwards and into Sami-speaking Lapland. In the 1620s four new townships were established in northern Sweden (Umeå, Piteå, Luleå and Torneå), with Umeå becoming the official centre of Västerbotten County, established in 1638. Agriculture, hunting and fishing were the main means of subsistence and taxation for the peasantry. The relatively meagre production meant that the countryside never had been of any interest to the Swedish nobility; hence, local society was organized around villages of freehold family farms, with the parish as the administrative unit and the vicar in a central position exercising state control. In the second half of the eighteenth century the town of Umeå, circled by a wooden fence with tollgates, had a population of roughly 900; a regulated number of merchants (including fishers) and tradesmen with families and servants made up the major part, with the county governor and his staff and a mayor with staff representing public office. The annual hiring of servants made interaction between town and country families possible.

Stenberg grew up in a peasant home in the village of Stöcke, some five kilometres from the township and ten kilometres from the parish church. As an orphaned peasant child his father had come as a farmhand and eventually married a family daughter; they would later be heads of the household. His father had urban connections through second cousins in Umeå as well as in Åbo, and an uncle worked as a customs servant in the county harbour – all relations that would be important for the young Stenberg. As a child, he learned to read from the family bible with assistance from his mother – a common pattern for the Swedish peasantry. A long period of illness gave him much time to study the bible, and as physically not so fit for agricultural work it was decided he would go to the town school – primarily for a possible career in book-keeping, but he took an interest in becoming a priest and obtained the parish peasants' consent to collect alms for higher studies.

The parish was part of the diocese of Härnösand, inaugurated in 1772 by separation from Uppsala. With the bishop and the diocesan administration at some 250 kilometres distance and with a small local clergy, theological discussions were not particularly advanced in the Umeå region. Neither was popular sentiment receptive to new religious currents, or any critical evaluations of established systems of knowledge in general, but maintained a conservative view through the responsibility placed on the family patriarchs to uphold the evangelical-Lutheran worldview. This was controlled by

annual catechetical hearings in the home (one of Stenberg's regular duties). As a priest, Stenberg never questioned the clerical hierarchies and stuck to the established theology; when a deputy priest took up "Kant's philosophy" at a gathering in 1800, Stenberg and the other clergy rejected the ideas out of hand (Pettersson 2023:143f).

The provincial physician Daniel Næzén founded a reading society in Umeå in the late 1790s, but this had few members. Stenberg did not join from the beginning due to the high cost, but eventually joined (without leaving any significant traces in his autobiography). He also distanced himself from Næzén in his autobiography, considering him "egenkär" (vain, self-complacent; 3:368, 3:451). In a private letter in 1800 Næzén characterized Umeå as being "short of people and even more short of lovers of reading. Not even the priests have any knowledge, they lag behind half a century in literature and have knowledge only of the 'trivial scholastica' needed to give them their position".[6]

Stenberg thinks of himself as a "philosopher", and despite being placed in the geographic periphery and never advancing beyond a subordinate position, he clearly has ambitions to contribute to scientific production. A dialect glossary, a treaty on hunting methods, a topographic description of Umeå parish are other works that have been posthumously published after being rejected in his lifetime;[7] furthermore, in his autobiography there are sudden digressions on plants, animals, geology etc. Still, as the museologist and historian of ideas Richard Pettersson notes in his essay on Stenberg's autobiographical project, he had no clear direction in his quest for knowledge but hoped that later generations would find his observations useful (Pettersson 2023:122, 138).

Dreams in Everyday Interactions

Why and how do people narrate their dreams to others? Besides the central status that dreams have in Freudian psychoanalysis, the popular practice of dream-telling can have several uses and functions. The Finnish folklorist Leea Virtanen, in an analysis of contemporary material, lists six causes: to shake off a nightmare, to entertain listeners, to speak of sexuality, to share a strong experience, to intervene in others' lives, to draw attention (Virtanen 1989). All these can in one way or another be found in Stenberg's text. As for the social life of dream narratives, I propose the process to be divided into the immediate telling, the interpretation (this is often made in conversation with the intimate relatives, or a local expert), and the subsequent retellings – this is when the dream is re-evaluated as having a more permanent relevance, for instance when it is not forgotten ("must have something to say"), when it is connected to actual subsequent events that makes it a dream come true, or when it is ascribed an extraordinary status such as "a vision" or "a prophecy". Situations actualising the retelling of a dream could be the

déjà-vu experience making it appear true, someone else's dream telling, or discussions of dreams in general (or perhaps, when a conversational theme brings its recurrence in a personal dream to attention).

Stenberg gives no clues to how his upbringing introduced him to the concepts of dreams and dreaming, but he gives some examples of how others tell of their dreams and sometimes try to interpret them. There are at least ten different instances where Stenberg relates how others speak of dreams. The situation can be one of somebody wanting to be comforted or to handle an agitated mood. Employed as a preacher with General Baron Carpelan, he was once addressed by his niece, Miss Flemming.

> The following day, Miss Flemming told of a dream she had, when she thought the general was dead, and that he was hardly grieved by his relatives and me, and she feared for its fulfilment and that she was worried about losing her uncle. But I begged her not to pay any attention to dreams, and wanted to convince her that he would certainly be missed, also by me, although she seemed to want to reproach me for the opposite; this worried me, because I was definitely not that callous. (2:194f)

To speak of dreams can also be a rhetorical device to get a covert message through or be a way of teasing. In November 1785 Baroness Carpelan tells of a recent dream where a manor building burns down. She then makes this interpretation: "They say that when you dream of fire, it means love; it will be interesting to see what kind of wedding we will have here." Stenberg comments as if this was some kind of insinuation: "I will never believe this prophecy will become true regarding me. At least I have not yet any inclination thereof" (2:104). One year later speculations of Stenberg and the spinster Miss Flemming as a possible match give an opportunity for an acquaintance to relate how he had dreamt Stenberg married her. Since Stenberg is not fond of the idea and under significant stress from his employer, this information "increased my sorrow rather a lot, so I secretly shed many tears" (2:280).[8]

Yet another way of using dreams in conversations is to present deliberate thoughts, ideas and provocations as dreams (cf. Hesz 2014 on indirect social criticism by relating dreams). Also with Baron Carpelan, he initially has good relations with to the baron's middle-aged unmarried niece, but this cools off. When one of his pupils in the family tells him of a dream, Stenberg sees this as a trick.

> My disciple Wilhelm Paul remarked that on the 8th he had had a dream in which he thought, he said, that Miss Flemming, his aunt, had threatened that she would put things to the General [Baron Carpelan] so that, for my unsteadiness, instead of 33 dalers 16 shillings I would get just 33 *plåtar* [= 11 dalers] as my annual priest salary. I pretended not to care about this story of his; but since I could not see any reason for him having such a dream, about things of which he had no knowledge whatever, I came to suspect Miss Flemming of having persuaded him to tell me this under the

guise of a dream, in order to test whether self-interest would not bring me to re-install myself in her friendship […] However I did not take any notice of this but took up the story as a genuine dream. (2:201)

A parallel is to be found when his father writes in a letter in 1782: "Sometimes we thought that you would come home, and dreamed several times, that you were back at home" (1:448). Framing his wish for Stenberg's return as a dream emphasizes the paternal longing, and perhaps suggests a feeling of deep sincerity behind his recurring pleas for Stenberg to return.

One interesting point is that Stenberg tells of how others relate their dreams, but he never mentions that he told of his dreams to others. Was he reserved about letting others know what he dreamt about? Was it a matter of keeping up his image as an educated man by not inviting others to discuss on equal terms? In his autobiography, he invites the presumptive well-educated reader to be his discussion partner. Writing of his own dreams, he has many thoughts of their relation to reality, their emotional effects and the problem of whether interpretation is possible, and how.

The Rhetorical Use of Dreams in Stenberg's Autobiography

Sometimes Stenberg relates a dream without giving it any further interpretation or comment, but as included in the autobiography it contributes to the narrative of his life. During all his study years and his first years as a serving clergyman, he is occupied with the question of finding a woman suitable as wife to a priest – a quest which is hampered by his low social background and status. When appointed as a private tutor with the family of an army major belonging to the nobility, he fell in love with one of the young women and interpreted quick glances and ambiguous utterances as signs of reciprocated emotions. He also wrote down a "curious dream" he had one night, where he was awakened by a kiss and found himself surrounded by all four sisters of the family speaking to him and looking affectionately at him. Then they are discovered, and he is summoned by their father to marry one of them (1:320). The following month he has yet another dream where she kisses his hand and speaks tender words. This time he comments that he has never trusted dreams (1:326). In 1:337, 1:398, and 2:79, he confirms his romantic affection for these young girls of the nobility by telling of dreams about them.

The angry father also returns in his dreams. "I dreamed that the Major had been made aware of my love and was going to beat me etc., and I worried; but when I woke and found it was a dream, I was glad but found it necessary to be cautious, since it could become true if he got to know" (1:450, yet another example at 1:444). Thus, the social divide he aspires to cross is further visualized; he not only has to win the affection of a girl above his status, but also to overcome the employer's aversion to the idea of letting an employee into the family and the social group.

Reminiscences of dreams sometimes occur in his text, emphasizing the narrative value of their content despite their dubious ontological status. He would be reminded of the dream of the four sisters (1:320) in further meetings with the sisters in February 1782 and again in April 1783 (1:383, 1:466). This is one of Stenberg's narrative devices – there are many references back in time: "as I had noticed before…" and a page reference for comparison. Sometimes it is clearly stated that he made the connection in the narrated time, but sometimes one may wonder whether this connection was realized only at the time of writing.

Dreams can also be retold for their metaphorical use. One striking example is when Stenberg has a temporary position with a vicar outside of Umeå. He fits in quite well with the vicar and his wife, but at the end of his term they have a disagreement over his salary, and he is suddenly out in the cold. To him, this makes sense in retrospect an account of a recent dream.

> Through this, the dream I had the night before the day of salary payment was fulfilled. I jumped from a roof down on a dung heap, but without getting dirty. So, in just a moment I lost the respect of the master and mistress, although completely innocent, and in their eyes I fell deep down from my hitherto well-known noble principles, and this in the last days of my stay with them; but it did not worry my conscience, although I admit I wished I could have kept their appreciation. But when this could not be, I put on an air of innocence, did not react to their sulkiness, and was just as merry in their company as before. Neither did their opinion of me hurt my image in the public eye, although they told Major Turdfjäll [later on to be Stenberg's father-in-law] and several others of my supposed ingratitude at the salary, etc. But luckily enough, nobody was so concerned and pitiful about the damage to their purse as they themselves. (3:166)

In his own view, he is clean and there is nothing about him to criticize, but those around him look at him as if he were standing in a dung heap. As a metaphor this dream can stand not only for this situation, but also more generally for how he often finds himself unjustly accused although innocent or with no control over circumstances.[9] In this case, he can triumphantly state that public opinion was on his side. His anxiety over his precarious situation – a social standing but no safety net should he fall from grace – recurs in other dream interpretations.

> At this time, I dreamed one night that I was standing on the Degerberg sands, the beach by the road just south of Sörmjöle village. I saw, during a horrible storm, from the sea large columns of water rise to the sky; but I was totally free and secure where I stood. From this, I hoped to escape all persecution if any unknown storms should grow upon me. (3:299)

Seeing the storm as a symbol of human life, a well-known metaphor, is also an unforced interpretation. The previous narrative is soon followed up with a similar one:

I once again had a dream on the 27th. I imagined myself standing on the harbour street and saw a ship on the river that was thrown here and there by the storm, in high speed, circling around and heaving up and down, until it finally stopped. This dream to me seemed to be the most vivid image of human life; and I remembered the many changes I had been through; and thought: who knows how many storms I yet will meet, where I like this ship will be tossed to and fro. (3:304)

These dreams and Stenberg's interpretations clearly reinforce the general ethos of his autobiography, where the constant uncertainty and anxiety of a voyage into an unknown world would be a convenient trope for a life history.

The Emotional Effects of Dreaming

One thing Stenberg notices about dreams is their ability to install moods that linger on through the new day. One example is where he is in a melancholic mood and dreams make him feel still more sorrowful the following day (2:180). Another example is told with an excursus on dreams and moods.

In the beginning of November [1792] I had a comforting dream; I was given a large, beautiful and genuine diamond, in public at the Church Square. Such dreams really have no value; but they somehow *mecanice* tune the mood for the day to merriness, just as unpleasant dreams also leave behind unpleasant impressions in the mind. In both cases perhaps for a long while without our being aware of it, causing many of our better or poorer undertakings or ways of thinking, or at least often stamping our speech to a softer or harsher tone. Because when the mind is happy and pleased, everything seems so easy and pleasant, and vice versa. (3:239)

This reciprocal relation between moods in dreams and emotional being is also referred to *en passant* in other cases. One dream is commented on with "I did not put any trust in dreams; but since this had been a sweet wish for some time, this dream cheered me up, and I hoped it would mean something good" (2:79). Another dream leads to the conclusion: "I could not but get jolly and satisfied from such thoughts" (3:56). But sometime it is also the other way around: a childhood memory tells of a drinking man who liked to scare the children. "We ran like hares and took refuge in secret hiding-places as soon as we saw him coming to our houses; we were also frightened in our sleep from the nastiest dreams about him, a fright that followed me until I was a full-grown man, and had a hard time conquering it with the support of my wits." (1:28)

As a young man, he is constantly troubled by the problems of handling his emotional affections for young women, keeping up a high moral standard as becomes a priest, and finding a suitable wife despite his insecure social position. In July 1780, he stays with a noble family, where he is secretly in love with the daughter, and dreams of her during the night.

I imagined that not only did my Miss declare her tenderness and love for me; but also, that her mother Mrs Major Aminof put my Miss's hand in mine, and said that in this way she wanted to reward my good nature. Of course, it is true that I never give any credence to my dreams and I also found this to be a continuation of my brooding and my phantasies before I fell asleep. (1:278f)

However, since he knows that a previous suitor of common background, a Sergeant Mört, has been abruptly driven away, he immediately realizes that he has no prospects of succeeding. This affects his mood when he meets his hosts.

I went to have coffee and breakfast, but stayed as shy and introvert as ever. When I saw the Major's wife, I certainly remembered my sweet dream. But I also found the enormous chasm that separated me from my Miss, and neither did I have any inclination to ford across it in order to incur the same treatment as Mört. This made me somewhat depressed, so I hardly had the courage to say just a few trivialities to my Miss who was most of the time in the hall with me, and least of all did I dare to speak anything of my love, and my glances were insecure and fleeting. I bade farewell and went home. (1:279)

A dream, the impression it brings to Stenberg and his interpretation of it can have a lasting impact on his reactions in various situations for quite a long time. In February 1782, after a year as a private teacher, he is travelling to Åbo to continue his studies and on his way stays one night at the Cautua manor.

The same night I slept well, but in the morning had this curious dream, which I want to tell since I remember it well. I thought I was in a big town or in Åbo, where someone came in the street and pursued me with a rapier in his hand; I ran as fast as I could and hid in a gatehouse. There I seemed to be concealed from him, but suddenly he was close to me and wanted to pierce me; but someone came to my defence and saved me from him; and this person was half-grown, or it was a Professor, at least it was in the house of a professor, that I hid, and thereby escaped from my persecutor's cruelty. I did not reflect upon this unpleasant dream until it was time for breakfast, and the factory owner Mr Timm also told about the dream he had in the morning. And the contents were something like this: He saw two men, one young and one older, on horseback, at least the older one was on horseback. The latter pursued the younger one violently, knocked him off the horse to the ground and treated him very badly. I was amazed by the similarity of our dreams, which made me aware of them. "Oh dear Lord!" I thought, "Perhaps in this way you want to warn me about some impending disaster, so help me, Oh Lord, and save me all my days; because I cannot by myself anticipate and take heed of ruin and misfortune!" Then I left, after giving my thanks, thinking intensely of these dreams, which made me decide to be careful in all my behaviour. (1:386)

This dream of being persecuted is rather soon commented upon as a memory that can influence his emotional state. When he arrives in Åbo, he visits relatives, friends and acquaintances in order to make his arrival known. He is also greeted by fellow students he hardly knew before, and is happy about

their friendly reception of him (1:390). Later on, writing a comment on a friendly letter:

> I was cheered and encouraged by this letter of his and reminded myself gladly of his advice, which I found spoke the noble language of friendship, while many a conceited and self-centred young man would have met them with contempt. I found it wholesome and good to follow; so much more since it reminded me of my dream in Cautua. (1:396)

Still later, in June 1782, he is visited by a fellow student Sundwall who complains of his severe melancholy, and wants Stenberg to comfort him. Stenberg is suspicious of him, thinking this might be a hoax by a gang of students who want to make fun of him. "I also remembered my dream in Cautua, which reminded me to be careful and cautious in everything", but eventually he realizes Sundwall is serious with him (1:415).

Interestingly, Stenberg never mentions the concept of nightmare (Sw. *nattmara, mara-ritt, mardröm*) or the popular belief in the *mara*, a supernatural being that explains nightmares. As he notices other kinds of popular superstition, this omission might seem significant. However, the *mara* concept was not necessarily connected to dreams and dreaming, but rather to the physiological experience of sleeping badly with pressure on the chest, shortage of breath, fatigue (or horses and cattle found exhausted in the stables in the morning) as a result of being ridden in the night by the *mara*. The *mara* would be an unconscious shape-shifting of someone driven by envy, jealousy or illicit lust towards the afflicted person or his/her property; seemingly, Stenberg or his relations made no connection between dreams and this phenomenon.[10] In his 1804 dialect dictionary, *mara* is not explained: he leaves the reader with the comment "What is meant is common knowledge" (Stenberg & Widmark 1966:84).

Dreams and Reality

At the bottom of the interest in and attention allocated to dreams are the questions of their status as knowledge, what kind of knowledge they convey and their trustworthiness. Here, Stenberg struggles with contemporary discourses and tries to handle scholarly lines of argumentation, the Christian worldview he is brought up with and has been educated to be a professional spokesman and inspector for, and everyday laypersons' conversational exchange of ideas, interpretations and attitudes. Besides the categorical denial of dreams having any real content or value whatsoever, there are three paradigms for construing dreams that dominate in Stenberg's writing: *dreams speak of what is important*, *dreams can foretell future events*, and *dreams can be a message from God*. They are not mutually exclusive and quite often overlap.

He relates most of his dreams to his own life, but he is also open for interpretations which speak of general conditions, that is, a more collective prophetic function ascribed to dreams. In February 1783, he dreams of being at the royal castle in Stockholm, where a child is ill. Soon after arrives the news that the Hereditary Prince has passed away. "There you are, I thought: there is my dream and its meaning" (1:455).

The presaging quality can also consist of providing a general metaphor – a rhetorical device that Stenberg as a priest would be familiar with, as in the dream of the storm-tossed ship quoted above (3:304).

Adriënne Heijnen has noticed how a contemporary of Stenberg, the Icelandic minster Reverend Jón Steingrímsson, in his autobiography relates dreams he had from 1778 onwards presaging a catastrophe, possibly a volcanic eruption. Jón Steingrimsson took the dreams as trustworthy, and referred to other honourable men who had similar dreams. He also changed the topics of his sermons following advice given to him in a dream, to preach about following God's laws and rules. The Lakagígar eruption in 1783 was taken as confirmation of his premonitions (2013:79ff).

The relation to reality can also be one of negation, that is, the dream shows the opposite of what is or will be the case in reality (cf. Schiffmann 1992:106). Stenberg dreams of meeting the girl he is courting and she is nice and loving; however, when they actually meet a couple of days later, she is cold and discouraging. "Thus I got to see my girl, according to my dream, but in a mood quite contrary to what she seemed in my dream; as often is the case with dreams." (3:301, 303)

As quoted at the beginning of this article, "in order to see if they would be fulfilled in any way" (1:398) is the key motivation he ascribes to himself for taking notice of dreams. In the following events, Stenberg thinks of them in terms of dreams being fulfilled, or their interpretations turning into real events. One story takes place when Stenberg as a teenage schoolboy was living with his relatives, the Nordström family.

> The Saturday afternoon after St Michael's day Carl Stenman (town organist, a great musician) came and talked, of many things. Cousin Magdalena was not at home, she was doing some errands. Among other things, he told us the following dream: "I thought," he says, "I was on the old ship *Swan*; a great snake came into the cabin where I sat, I struggled very much to kill that snake: but impossible. At last I seemed to be at Valns (the house of Nordström's neighbours) "and the same snake followed me there; I fought for a long time with him; but I don't remember what happened to him in the end, whether I killed him or whether I got away." Aunt then answered; "I can surely interpret that dream for you." "That would be rather nice," Stenman says. "Yes," she continued, "it is true that you are planning to marry; but you don't remember whether you killed the snake or if he got away?" The answer was no. "If you were able to kill the snake, then the courtship and marriage that you now are planning will have a good outcome and ending; but if he got away, then everything is wasted, because it is certain that dreams of snakes and fires are only about love.

And if you seem to put out the fire you imagine you see, all the courtship is in vain; but if you can't put it out, this means success."

Stenman didn't answer this and that was that for this time. But the next day or Sunday afternoon he came again to us and when he had sat for a long time and spoken of many things, he was about to go home; and since Cousin Magdalena now was at home, she would as always follow visitors to the gate; but instead of advancing out, they stopped in the entrance hall. After a while Uncle wanted to go outside but Aunt stopped him by saying: "Stay inside, let them stand there and talk for a while." He stayed. "Aha," I thought, "this is where the fox lies": I pretended not to hear or understand, but thought to myself: the interpretation of the dream is already starting to be fulfilled. (1:88)

The following day, Stenberg moved to other lodgings. Two weeks later, he went to the Sunday church service and heard the banns proclaimed of the coming marriage between Stenman and Magdalena Nordström. Afterwards he met the family.

Aunt then said to Stenman: "Was it not strange that I should sit and interpret your dream about my own daughter?" And she asserted that she did not have any knowledge about this before; neither could she have, since Stenman then had not told anyone about this. (1:90)

In July 1792 he ran for a position in the Umeå town parish, with several competitors.

I had a couple of dreams that I have to mention: One night I seemed to be sitting in a house made of stone. Then a strong stream and rapids hit the house, and despite seeing great rocks and stones float nearby me, I was perfectly safe in the house, so the threatening stones could do me no harm at all. From this I made the interpretation that the schemes and evil intents of my enemies would not harm me. Likewise, the night before election day on the 15th I dreamed I had obtained a majority of the votes. This long-awaited day came, and I went to the parish church to preach, and in the afternoon just as I came home, the news came that I had received a majority of the votes. (3:209)

The presaging dimension of dreams is clearly and movingly exposed in connection with the death of his first wife. The tragedy is further emphasized since she brings in local superstitions of forebodings into his frame of reference.

Just before the wedding day my fiancée told of a dream she had where her engagement ring had broken straight across, and she commented: "it is a common saying that such a dream means: the planned wedding will come to nothing and never be completed." I told her not to pay any attention to dreams: surely you should know and be sure that I won't back off, I continued, definitely not now when things have gone so far that they can't be changed in any way, so be secure and satisfied and don't worry over such a dream; that would be madness. Still I could not refrain from thinking about it. (3:401)

When she later died, he was reminded of this dream. "Now I remembered the dream of the golden ring that my wife mentioned just before our wedding. And this would also happen!" (3:470) He also remembered an incident at the wedding he had described earlier:

> I went into the wedding room and we took our places before the altar; I was completely happy and satisfied and to show the guests that I was satisfied with my choice, I deliberately looked around merrily and joyfully two or three times, which I would not have done if I had known the peasantry's belief about such looks, which is that the one of the bridal couple who does so will survive the other, and be married once more; since then I would definitely not give them cause for such superstitious prophecies; but it was not until some time after that my wife informed me of this superstition; adding that the basis for such guesses would be that the person looking around is looking for a new spouse. (3:435)

He also remembered an incident some months before the marriage was planned where he interpreted a catch of fish as a sign from God that he would eventually marry twice, and how he had been reminded of this just a month before her death. (3:470)

The thought that dreams may be a sign from God would solve the puzzling contradictions of sense and nonsense, sleep and consciousness, present and future.

> When I woke up one morning those days, I found myself having had the following peculiar dream. I imagined myself lying awake in my bed and could see that two rather beautiful trees stood by my bed, one by the bedhead, the other by my feet, they were in full blossom and had rather beautiful flowers, of which I was very glad and when I looked up, I saw around my table 3 or 4 smaller but just as beautiful trees, also rather delightfully blooming, from which I also had much enjoyment. Then I woke up […] It seemed to me as if this dream would mean something about my future marriage, and thus promised something good about a future wife as well as children. My mood was now definitely, at least sometimes, somewhat disappointed because of my idle hope of Mademoiselle Backlund. […] Maybe, I thought, God, with this dream, wants to cheer up my mind and increase my hope for a happy future in this case? And you will find that from such thoughts I could not but be very merry and satisfied.

These two examples are the only ones where he directly interprets a dream as a divine message. However, the idea of a God who gives signs to the individual recurs throughout Stenberg's autobiography. Stenberg tackles setbacks, enjoys unexpected successes and good luck with reference to God's will and God's plans for him; this context implies that Stenberg had a more general understanding of dreams as a possible medium for divine communication, but did not necessarily hold all dreams to be meaningful.

How to Understand Dreams – a Discussion by Stenberg

Stenberg sometimes speaks to the reader as a scholar, taking everyday

situations as a starting point for discussions of paranormal experiences. A discussion of a woman who has premonitions on people's destinies is justified thus:

> As nothing is so unknown to us as our soul's inner hidden treasures and qualities, which only through undeniable experiential examples can become known to us, it is the way of a philosopher, instead of denying everything without discrimination, to try to define, analyse and decode what may be sheer superstition, distractions and play of imagination, and what may be the natural power, gift or treasure of the soul. (4:194)

Through the autobiography, Stenberg sometimes refers to popular sayings and beliefs as "superstitions" (*vidskepelse*). He never mentions the dream books that were spread in cheap prints (Bregenhøj 1992; Palmenfelt 1992), nor the books on weather signs, but their "*x* means *y*" format was part of the traditional knowledge systems present in his frame of reference. As for dreams, he notices how others speak with this one-to-one signification – "dreams of snakes and fires are only about love" (1:88), "when you dream of fire, it means love" (2:104), a broken engagement ring means "the planned wedding will come to nothing and never be completed" (3:401).

Late in life (when writing his 1802 part, so this would probably be written sometime during the early 1820s), he writes a longer passage where he tries to convince the reader that he is not superstitious, although he has just written of how he had thought that he had dreams that eventually came true. "But to preclude the reader from thinking I have a superstitious confidence and trust in dreams and pin my hopes on them, I now want expose my relation to them and what I think about them as I have done before." He tries to make a rational argumentation where he points to how only the dreams that seem to come true are the ones noticed and remembered. This is accomplished by categorizing dreams into types that are dismissed one by one, according to their ability to stay in memory.

> Dreams I do not attend to, especially not those which just ramble on without any coherence and do not get stuck in my memory in any way; they may go as they have come, and those that cannot be recalled once I have woken up. The other dreams, they may be more or less clear, more weakly or strongly etched into my memory, I let them be or pass them as they have been without any further thought about their meaning and without trying to remember them, still less ask for an interpretation or explanation. (4:236f)

The next category is the dreams that are most clearly remembered. But of these, he discards the majority, except for those that later seem to come true. This latter phenomenon, the evaluation of some dreams as true, he situates in the social and cultural context where interpretations are already to be found.

> Such dreams are so strung in the mind that their remembrance cannot be avoided; the same with their interpretation, as you have heard from young age; who is so

perfect to be able to stop them from returning in memory? That for instance this dream means this, and that one means that. (4:237)

He immediately continues to reconstruct the lines of thought that almost inevitably will follow.

So; if such a dream incurs, its supposed meaning is soon after also recalled in memory. And who is that philosopher, who with all his haughty good sense and reason could stop such a thing from happening? Because that happens ex associatione idearum. – Add to this that the dreams themselves in the most clear and obvious ways present their own explanation, how could one then avoid noticing this their explanation and also its fulfilment, if it not only seemed to, but actually is found to happen. – And you obviously find that the soul has its hidden and inexplicable inklings in waking as well as sleeping states; and who would dare to deny such things? (4:237)

To exemplify his line of argument, he goes into analysis of two dreams that he just has related to the reader – probably the reason why the topic comes up at this moment in his writing. The dream narratives and his interpretations are here given in full.

Dream No. 1. At the end of the month, I had this strange dream. "I thought I was following Vice-Pastor Nordlund, who walked in front and carried a light in his hand, and I followed just behind or beside him, but just after us came a large crowd of people. First, we went over a green and beautiful valley or meadow, and then up a just as beautiful and green but steadily rising hill, but Nordlund shone his light before us. – At the left side was all the way a deep, dark and gloomy valley. – When we came to the top of the hill we met a steep earth slope, in which or under which was an opening or entrance, then Nordlund turned around and gave me the light, saying: "with this light you shall shine the way for the people!" I then took the light in my hand and followed Nordlund into the earth opening to light up his path 2 to 3 steps, there we met two tiny openings: one went straight on or rather somewhat down into the ground; but the other went straight up. Through this latter Nordlund went or climbed higher and higher, and I heard the sound of him preceding, as well as his voice, as also the sound of his climbing, but fainter and fainter. – I tried to follow him the same way, but the opening was too narrow, so I could not possibly go another step further after him; and soon the opening closed completely, and I turned around and met the people just outside the first opening, when I shone the way with my light and went in front the same way back again." Such was the dream: its explanation will be told in the following. (4:234)

Dream No. 2. The last day of the month I had the strange dream, that I seemed to be walking about in my yard where I saw a large and deep hole; almost like a well, covered with planks and logs, on which I had to walk very carefully in order not to fall down. And I also seemed to be saying something about the time to send a message to the Consistory on some issue. – Such a dream, especially about the hole, is said to mean death; and the message to the Consistory would in some respect be about myself?

And the next day the first of April there came a notification that Vice-Pastor Nordlund had died. The preceding dream had thus come true in both respects;

because the death had occurred, and its later content seemed to urge me to mind the date for my application to the Consistory to arrive on time. (4:236)

Let us now make the application to my two preceding dreams. The one written on page 488 [234] had two predictions; the first that Vice-Pastor Nordlund's death soon would happen, which was signified by his wandering beside the dark valley of death and his entrance and disappearance into the small opening in the earthen mound, where it was impossible for me to follow. – Its second prediction is based on the following circumstances of the dream: behold, Vice-Pastor Nordlund carried the light in his hand, went in front of the people and lit up their road; it was the light of the Gospel, the teaching of blessedness, that he until then had preached to the people. – That he gave me the light, with the command to light the way for the people, and that I carried the light in my hand and went with it before the people the same road back, signified that I would be his successor and preach the teaching of blessedness to the people. – Behold, the dream itself seemed to force the acceptance of its explanation. The latter dream, page 493 [236], was just like a confirmation of the previous one, so the matter would appear much more clear; therefore he would also immediately be perfected, by the following day Pastor Nordlund's death was announced, and the issue of the letter to the Consistory was, as already explained, a reminder not to forget the closing date for application to succession. Thus, it was impossible that this explanation would not appeal to me. – I therefore did not place my trust in it, neither with any joyful or sincere hope, yet less waiting anxiously; but, as said before; I left it aside and for its worth, just quietly, and without all worries wanted to await the definite outcome, of which I write later. (4:237)

Later on he wins the election and is able to succeed Nordlund. This is noted in an entry called "dreams fulfilled" (4:279). "So at last I could become Pastor Nordlund's successor, and the dreams stated on pages 488 and 493 and their explanation on page 494 were all fulfilled; of which I could not refrain from being astonished" (4:279).

As Stenberg's most thorough discussion of dreams, this would have been the place where his frames of references would be articulated most clearly. It is interesting to note that he never attempts to postulate a diabolic source, nor a divine one – although the omnipresence of God is an (un)pronounced framing for the autobiography and Stenberg occasionally sees dreams as a direct message from God, this is not outspoken here, even though he interprets the second dream as positioning him as a messenger of the Lord. Instead, his discussion ends where he began, with an astonishment of the dream experience's relation to reality and an agnostic attitude towards the ontological status of dreams.

Conclusion

Retelling your dreams to others, interpreting dreams, paying attention to them and remembering them in later situations were ordinary everyday practices in Stenberg's world. As an educated person in an official position, he also took upon himself a duty to represent a scientific view. In

comparison to the British examples referred to by Mack, the ambivalence between the "enlightened" view[11] of relying on reasoning and empiricism, and the religious experience is also clearly present in Stenberg's discussions. But for the Quakers and Methodists, the dream narratives that were circulated had a stronger emphasis on the individual conversion (which was the motive for their wider circulation) whereas Stenberg used them as a confirmation of his ongoing relation to God but not as in any way a special genre for divine communication. As a priest in the official church, he would support individual conversion, and noted examples among his parishioners with satisfaction, but he did not take part in or promote any spiritual movement (or any internal church opposition whatever).

Mack's observation of the rising tendency in the eighteenth century to understand dreams as stemming from the individual is confirmed in Stenberg's writings. He is sceptical about the traditional interpretations of a fixed signification system; instead, his interpretations of his own dreams take his own worries, anxieties and current life situation as a starting point. But he is also open for the idea of dreams presaging collective and political events and changes, such as a war or the death of a hereditary prince. Like his colleagues in Iceland (Heijnen 2013:82), Stenberg shares his dreams and interpretations, not for other clergy to interpret, but rather in order to discuss the nature of dreams.

The thought that dreams can tell your future is present in Stenberg's mind – he speaks against it, distances himself from superstitions and tries to explain rationally; still, in his environment he meets people who speak with this idea in mind, and Stenberg also directs his attention to notice the fulfilment of dreams – maybe with a touch of insight into the performative aspects of telling of your dreams.

Taking part in several social networks and knowing their discourses, his attempts to integrate different worldviews bears witness to his consciousness of his middle position dilemma. His attempts to gain a deeper understanding of dreams are stated as reflections in a manuscript for a well-educated reader and thus draw upon his self-understanding as a "philosopher", but they may just as well be characterized as an expression of a vernacular scepticism and everyday conceptual reflection. He starts in the middle of his own experiences and notices similarities to events in reality. As a priest and as an academic, he wants to hear God's voice behind the dreams from a distance while at the same time seeking concrete and rational explanations in the individual's life situation; but with no convincing scientific theory available or palatable he can get no further support in his thinking. Still, his "ethnographic eye" has noticed the uses of dream narratives and the emotional effects of dreaming, and he thus qualifies his "silly" interest as grounded in social consequences.

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[1] He refers to Napoleon and Alexander as two contemporary emperors in Europe, thus making the date of the Battle of Waterloo the *terminus ante quem*. Unfortunately, some 16 pages in the middle are missing and other damage makes the discussion hard to follow. The manuscript is now available only as a transcription made at Landsarkivet i Härnösand and digitally published by Umeå University Library.

[2] This article was produced as part of the project *Emotions in Eighteenth-Century Everyday Life: Class, Gender, and Godliness in Pehr Stenberg's Autobiography*, funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond grant P18-0700:1. A longer presentation of Stenberg and his autobiography in Swedish is Stenberg, Wennstedt & Elgh 2023. The autobiography is published as Stenberg 2014–18. I would like to thank Michael Yonan, University of California at Davis, and my project colleagues Ina Lindblom and Richard Pettersson, Umeå, and the anonymous reviewers for valuable comments.

[3] Stenberg 2014–2018, volume 1, page 398f. In the following, references to this work will be in the format "1:398".

[4] Published posthumously are a treaty on catching birds, a topographic parish description, and the dialect glossary. There is also a small manuscript which reports an interview with two peasants who had spotted a whale along the coast – this can be seen as a scientific endeavour, reporting a peculiar event as a contribution to the description of the world in order to increase knowledge. See Danell & Stenberg 2021.

[5] Roger Ivar Lohmann has made a more general typology of cultural dream theories, spanning from regarding dreams as "nonsense" to explanations of soul travel and visitations by other souls (2010:230ff).

[6] As summarized by Henrik Sandblad, 1979:165. Næzén also held conservative views and rejected Kant's thinking, Sandblad 1979:158.

[7] In 1823 he had his Swedish translation of Rudolf Hospinian's *De templis, hoc est de origine, progressu et abusu templorum*… (1587) published by a Stockholm publisher.

[8] Stenberg's vain attempts to find a suitable partner among the gentry while being employed as a teacher are discussed in Arvidsson 2024.

[9] This interpretation draws upon a close study of how Stenberg uses the words *skuld*, "guilt", and *oskuld*, "innocence".

[10] The word *mardröm* establishes a connection between the *mara* and dreaming; however, the official Swedish dictionary reports no instances of the word until the 1890s. For the Nordic mara tradition, see Tillhagen 1960, Raudvere 1993.

[11] I here place "Enlightenment" inside inverted commas since Stenberg, although educated during the latter half of the eighteenth century and interested in contributing to science, has no inclination towards the social and theological ideas associated with the Enlightenment; cf. Pettersson 2023.