

Appendix E

Possession

POSSESSION IS A difficult subject to discuss in relation to mental illness due to the atrocities which have been inflicted upon the insane over the centuries in the name of religion. Nevertheless, the Cayce readings explicitly acknowledge the reality of possession in certain cases of insanity. Therefore it is important to understand the precise meaning of possession in the readings.

The readings affirm the continuity of consciousness and state that souls do not proceed immediately after death to some eternal resting place (be it heaven, hell, or whatever). Instead, the process of evolution toward unity with the Creator continues on various "planes" or dimensions of reality other than the earth. Unfortunately, some individuals have such strong attachments to the earth experience that they are unable to detach from this dimension at death. Instead, they may exist in a realm which Cayce describes as the "borderland." Such discarnate souls seeking expression in a physical manner, may find it through persons whose spiritual centers are open to cosmic influences. This opening may result from

cases of insanity (i.e., dementia praecox), alcoholism, epilepsy, and various other organic disorders or from misdirected attempts at spiritual evolverment (e.g., certain occult practices, obtaining "higher knowledge" without applying it, etc.).

Keep in mind that the readings referred to "definite points" within the body which serve as connections between body, mind, and spirit (i.e., the *pineal system*, Appendix B). These interfaces could be adversely affected by somatic dysfunction, biochemical imbalances, and so forth. Severe weakening of these centers could thus leave the body open to outside influences seeking expression in the earth plane.

In certain cases cited in Chapter Three, possession was indicated because the individuals had lost control themselves and had little, if any, ego strength or sense of personal identity due to the degenerative effects of dementia praecox. In cases where dementia praecox was not indicated, the experience was more of obsession (e.g., (5221)) due to the opening of the spiritual centers of the body to outside influences.

It is also important to note that Cayce's use of the word possession in the readings does not suggest demonic possession. The intrusive entities were always earthbound spirits seeking expression in the earth plane. The readings' portrayal of life after death can be best described as a "continuity of consciousness." In other words, patterns of thought and action are carried over into the discarnate state. Interpersonal patterns of "possession" developed during one's earthly life would thus be maintained by earthbound discarnates (e.g., a marriage partner who dominates a spouse, a parent who lives vicariously through an offspring, an employer who controls employees, etc.). With this in mind, one can appreciate the readings' frequent use of the term *influence* (e.g., "discarnate influence" or "outside influence," etc.) to describe the manifestation of possession.

Possession is not necessarily always a negative experience. Throughout history people of all cultures have sought possession by benevolent spirits and have engaged in rituals and ceremonies for that purpose (e.g., the Holy Spirit in Christianity).

Mediumship is a form of trance possession whereby individuals willingly allow discarnate entities to use their bodies for communication. In this form, possession does not necessarily interfere with an individual's course of life or produce pathological dissociation, and is time limited so that the individual can resume normal con-

scious daily living. The prime consideration in this type of possession is the conscious voluntary involvement of the person being possessed. The popularity of spiritualism in the nineteenth century and the current interest in channeling are examples of trance possession.

Electrotherapy and hypnotherapy were two of the most common forms of therapy for the treatment of possession in the Cayce readings. Specifically, Cayce stated that electricity would drive out the discarnate influences. Wickland (1924) was an early twentieth-century M.D. who used electrotherapy in conjunction with other techniques (including hypnosis) to encourage the earthbound entities to detach from their hosts and proceed forward in the evolutionary process of soul growth.

The Unquiet Dead (Fiore, 1987) is an informative and readable introduction to this subject. Fiore is a clinical psychologist who uses hypnosis to perform "depossession therapy." Her view of possession in relation to schizophrenia is similar to that presented in the Cayce readings: "I do *not* feel that all schizophrenics are psychotic *because* of the possibility of possession. I do feel that—in addition to their mental illness—they are undoubtedly possessed. The possession is an extra burden for them" (p. 163).

Numerous clinicians are currently involved in various applications of depossession therapy. Baldwin's (1989) work with "spirit releasement therapy" echoes many of the themes developed by Fiore and attempts to provide a research format for exploring this subject. His work is scholarly and highly recommended to readers seeking further information.

Naegeli-Osjord (1989) is a Swiss medical doctor who provides assessment criteria for the distinguishing possession from schizophrenia. The range of criteria includes interpersonal contact, presence of phobias, auditory phenomenon, sudden changes in personality, and mediality (mediumistic). His discussion of auditory hallucinations will serve as an introduction to his diagnostic procedure.

In the theory of established psychiatry, hallucinations—voices—are, for the most part, considered to be primary symptoms of schizophrenia. In my opinion, this is wrong. We have to consider that "voices" which another person cannot hear are real sensations, but only heard by the individual in the subtle interaction of the anatomic auditory center of the brain. This may be caused by either a very intense personal feeling,

or by a being of the ethereal dimensions, a "suffering soul" or a demon. But the existence of an ethereal body is not considered. In my opinion, it is an absolute proof of possession or harassment when these "voices" constantly repeat the same words, for example, "kill yourself" or "you are a fool," for a long time, without stopping. (pp. 471-472)

There is abundant literature in this area and it is not necessary to wade through it because possession is not the primary focus of this book. Rather, this Appendix is intended to provide a context from which to consider Cayce's occasional reference to it in cases of dementia praecox.

Because Cayce's use of the term possession in the readings was not satanic, but more a matter of influence and obsession, the manifestation of this state was closely allied to the symptoms of the mental disorder. In other words, one would not expect a person receiving a psychic reading from Cayce which indicated possession to be exhibiting symptoms and behaviors which are graphically portrayed in innumerable movies about satanic possession (i.e., no rotating heads and vomit). Rather, one might observe a lack of control, periods of unconsciousness, obsessive thought patterns, etc.

The written correspondence associated with the readings where possession was involved provides vivid and personal accounts of the experience of possession in this context. There are three Circulating Files and a research bulletin on possession which are available through the A.R.E. James Windsor has written a brief paper entitled *Commentary on Possession* which provides an excellent overview of possession as noted in the readings. A concise quotation from this work will be provided, and interested readers are encouraged to review this insightful paper in its entirety.

Possession was not a major theme of the Cayce readings. It was mentioned several times, almost as an aside, in cases where the primary concern was either physical or mental health. Possession was presented as a consequence of other problems such as insanity, epilepsy, and alcoholism, rather than a cause. The disease, and resulting weakness, opened the person to the possibility of possession. (Windsor, 1989, p. 2)

Clinicians (e.g., Fiore, Baldwin, Naegeli-Osjord, etc.) have provided assessment criteria for differential diagnosis for those inter-

ested in pursuing the relationship between possession and mental illness in a clinical setting. Oesterreich's (1966) *Possession: Demonical and Other Among Primitive Races, in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times* is a comprehensive treatment of the subject from an historical perspective while Rogo's (1987) *The Infinite Boundary* focuses on twentieth-century clinicians who have investigated the relationship between mental illness and possession. Admittedly, this Appendix is an abridgment of this controversial subject and will only serve as an introduction. Although William James was perhaps a little hard on the medical profession, his view of this subject is still timely:

I am not as positive as you are in the belief that the obsessing agency is really demonic individuals. I am perfectly willing to adopt that theory if the facts lend themselves best to it: for who can trace limits to the hierarchies of personal existence in the world? But the lower stages of mere automatism shade off so continuously into the highest supernormal manifestations, through the intermediary ones of imitative hysteria and "suggestibility," that I feel as if no general theory as yet would cover all the facts. So that the most I shall plead for before the neurologists is the recognition of demon possession as a regular "morbid-entity" whose commonest homologue today is the "spirit-control" observed in test-mediumship, and which tends to become the more benignant and less alarmingly, the less pessimistically it is regarded . . . I am convinced that we stand with all these things at the threshold of a long inquiry, of which the end appears as yet to no one, least of all to myself . . . The first thing is to start the medical profession out of its idiotically conceited ignorance of all such matters—matters which have everywhere and at all times played a vital part in human history. (in Murphy & Ballou, 1960, p. 261)

Excerpts from the Cayce Readings

281-6 5/12/32

Q. What has caused the severe attacks during the past week?

A. The return of those influences and forces seeking a home.

Q. Why should those entities return to this body after our prayer?

A. They are as material as individuals, why doesn't an entity return home? They are seeking a home, the same as individuals, personalities!

281-24 6/29/35

Q. In certain types of insanity, is there an etheric body involved? If so, how?

A. Possession.

Let's for the moment use examples that may show what has off been expressed from here:

There is the physical body, there is the mental body, there is the soul body. They are One, as the Trinity; yet these may find a manner of expression that is individual unto themselves. The body itself finds its own level in its own development. The mind, through anger, may make the body do that which is contrary to the better influences of same; it may make for a change in its environ, its surrounding, contrary to the laws of environment or hereditary forces that are a portion of the *élan vital* of each manifested body, with the spirit or the soul of the individual.

Then, through pressure upon some portion of the anatomical structure that would make for the disengaging of the natural flow of the mental body through the physical in its relationships to the soul influence, one may be dispossessed of the mind; thus ye say rightly he is "out of his mind."

Or, where there are certain types or characters of disease found in various portions of the body, there is the lack of the necessary *vital* for the resuscitating of the energies that carry on through brain structural forces of a given body. Thus disintegration is produced, and ye call it dementia praecox—by the very smoothing of the indentations necessary for the rotary influence or vital force of the spirit within same to find expression. Thus derangements come.

Such, then, become possessed as of hearing voices, because of their closeness to the borderland. Many of these are termed deranged when they may have more of a closeness to the universal than one who may be standing nearby and commenting; yet they are awry when it comes to being normally balanced or healthy for their activity in a material world.

436-3 M. 28 11/11/33

Q. Are there entities, because of a psychic opening, feeding on or sucking my vitality?

A. Entities that would seek to find expression through that left open . . . yet the harmony even of the spheres may be the experience of the entity with the aid in self builded to such an extent as to gain from the meditation healing influences from the higher sources, and

give out to those who would as vultures feed upon the body—that they may find for themselves that guiding influence in their present environ and sphere of experience.

638-1 F. 72 8/21/34

Mr. Cayce: Yes, we have the body here, (638). (In undertone, after long pause: "We have possession here.") Now, as we find, from the physical or material standpoint we have conditions that disturb the better physical functioning of this body. These have to do with the coordinations between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal responses to the activities in the physical forces of the body . . . we have . . . corresponding cold spots on various portions of the body . . .

Q. What causes the illusions?

A. Incoordination between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal nerve system, from those areas or ganglia as indicated. We must create for the physical forces of the body that which will make coordinations in these areas.

900-20 M. 29 1/15/25

For the subconscious, as given, is the storehouse of every act, thought, or deed . . . Hence the condition as is seen about such entity having passed into the spirit plane; it seeks the gratification of such through the low-minded individuals in an earth plane.

1183-3 F. 56 1/22/38

Q. What causes him to lose control of himself?

A. Possession!

Q. Is there any way I can help him?

A. Kindness, gentleness and prayer. These offer the channels through which the greater help may come at this time . . .

Q. Regarding my husband, what is meant by "possession"?

A. Means possession!

Q. Does that mean by other entities, while under the influence of liquor?

A. By others while under the influence that causes those reactions and makes for the antagonism, and the very change of the activities.

For this body (the husband), if there could be a sufficient period of refraining from the use of alcoholic stimulants and the diathermy electrical treatments used these would drive these conditions out!

But do not use same with the effects of alcohol in the system—it would be detrimental!

But such information for the physical condition of the body had best be approached from the individual, to be sure.

Q. Is he crazy, or mentally deranged?

A. If possession isn't crazy, what is it?

1553-6 F. 71 8/19/38

Q. Is it possible that this body is possessed by an unclean or evil spirit which causes peculiar crying and expression of rage at times?

A. As has been indicated, there is the inclination for the inner self to GATHER the influences of same. Not a case of complete possession, but ENTERTAINING of such influences at times. Hence the electrical forces will aid, with the suggestions, in eliminating these IMPRESSIONS—or POSSESSIONS of the mental attitudes.

1553-17 F. 72 10/30/39

This can only be met through the suggestions—for, as has been indicated, these periods come and go; and, as has been outlined heretofore, it is a lack of the coordinating between the cerebrospinal and sympathetic impulses or reflexes.

Q. Is there POSSESSION in this body?

A. No—not in the present. As has been indicated, there have been periods; but these have passed.

1572-1 F. 50 4/18/38

Hence pressures are indicated in the lumbar and the lower dorsal area . . . As has been given, this is the incoordination between the cerebrospinal and the sympathetic nervous system. And as the glandular system is affected as related to the genitive system, and especially affecting directly the center above the puba, there is produced—with the toxic forces in the system—this burning, and the EFFECT of POSSESSION!

1789-1 F. 32 1/13/39

The beauty of this soul, its abilities as a creative influence in the lives of those who may bring it back as it were from the very borderland, is worth all the effort, all the love, all the kindness one may give.

Such is so near possession that there needs to be great care taken.

1969-1 M. 38 7/28/39

In the present environs (this is not meant to be as a disputation),

it is not thoroughly understood. For here we have a condition that is as much POSSESSION as a weakening of the nerve forces in the system; and the general nerve breakdown will NOT be eliminated by the administering of drugs nor by the mere activity of suppression.

2067-3 F. 52 9/30/40

Q. When my vitality is low and I get discouraged, is it still possible for undesirable discarnate beings to obsess me and make a statement unbeknown to me, as I believe they did in 1938 in (1387)'s office?

A. May obsess anyone that opens self to listen to same!

2465-1 F. 28 3/17/41

There has been a lesion in the lacteal duct and that as coordinating with the organs of the pelvis.

Hence at times such a state is produced as to almost become obsession, but possession in same.

The reaction to the pineal becomes so severe as to short circuit the nerve impulse; carrying or producing a fluttering or an engorgement in static waves to the base of the brain.

Thus periods are caused when there is lack of self-control.

2544-1 F. 50 7/25/41

Now we find, there are disturbing conditions. These are the result of external injuries to the body. (thrown up in air in an automobile accident)

And the pressures that exist especially in the coccyx area of the spine cause a deflection of nerve energies and impulses; producing hallucinations to the mental reaction.

But from external injuries the nerves in the coccyx end of the spine have been jammed, as well as the reaction upon the nerves in the lumbar axis and the brachial and cervical.

In the reaction to the nerves, as the pressures upon the coccyx end and the brush end of the cerebrospinal, congested areas have formed there.

Periods come when there is self-condemnation, self-realization of the reaction; and at times the feeling or expression of POSSESSION.

2614-1 F. 37 11/7/41

These are the result of chemical and glandular reactions in the

body; producing a deteriorating reaction in nerve impulses.

Thus the mental aberrations that appear, the hallucination as to lack of desire for associations and activities, faultfinding in self and in environs, as well as those about the body.

If these are allowed to progress they may bring a very detrimental condition—either that of possession or such a deteriorating as to become dementia praecox in its nature.

2863-2 F. 45 7/21/43

When the adjustments or manipulations are given, now about once a week, follow same with the ultraviolet light—this to be the Mercury Light, and project the green glass between it and the body; this to be applied mainly to the spinal system.

Q. What material conditions are upsetting to the body, and what adjustments need to be made to prevent this?

A. These have just been outlined. As the centers are opened, that is why we are giving the electrical treatments in the two forms—one external to act upon the structural portion, the other to the centers that will prevent any form of possession or impression from the psychic forces outside the body.

2865-1 F. 31 12/7/42

As we find, there are physical or pathological, as well as mental-psychological, disturbances. These, while they do not work together, are caused or produced by retentions in the mind—or that which is partially, or at times possession.

The body-mind lost control of itself through overtaking of the body-mind, combined with a type of fever that was part of the experience when the body so taxed itself; reducing the body-forces to such an extent that in many centers along the spinal column there came to be less and less ability for the centers to coordinate between sympathetic and cerebrospinal nervous systems.

First there was caused absentmindedness, the tendencies towards a little temperature, the driving of self too much, and then the hallucinations, and then debilitation in the impulses to be carried back and forth through the ganglia.

3075-1 M. 24 7/2/43

As we find, the conditions that disturb this body are as much of a psychological nature as of a pathological nature.

Pathologically, these would have to do with conditions which ex-

isted during the period of gestation.

Psychologically, these have to do with the karma of this body, and those responsible for the physical body.

Hence we have here conditions that at times approach near to that of possession of the mind by external influences, or that very close to the spiritual possession by disincarnate forces.

To be sure, these interpretations would not be accepted by some as an explanation. And yet there will come those days when many will understand and interpret properly . . .

Owing to those conditions which existed in the manner in which coordination is established in the physical reactions between impressions received through sensory system and the reactions upon the reflexes of brain, we find these at times become very much dissociated . . .

At such times possession near takes place.

With the capsule of the inner brain itself, these cause the distortions, the associations with not the normal reflexes but with the impressions received in the suggestive forces.

3315-1 F. 40 10/27/43

The conditions here, as we find, have been so aggravated by animosities, and by hates, that we have a deterioration in the nerve force along the spinal system; so that this dementia—and now possession, such that this may appear near to hopeless in this experience.

Ready for questions.

Q. What was the original cause, or what brought about this condition?

A. Changes in the glandular system, and then aggravated by animosities and hate.

3410-1 F. 20 12/19/43

As we find, there are disturbing conditions. Part of these are pathological, part are psychopathic. There has been the opening of the lyden (Leydig) gland and thus a disturbance through glandular system. Possession at times is the result.

3421-1 F. 39 12/27/43

. . . there has been the opening of the lyden (Leydig) gland, so that the kundaline forces move along the spine to the various centers that open . . . with these activities of the reaction is much like

that as may be illustrated in one gaining much knowledge without making practical application of it . . . Now we combine these two and we have that indicated here as possession of the body; gnawing, as it were, on all the seven centers of the body, causing the inability for rest or even a concerted activity—unless the body finds, as this occurs, the disturbance is retarded or fades—in the abilities of the body to exercise itself in (giving) help for others.

5221-1 F. 53 6/9/44

. . . the body is a supersensitive individual entity who has allowed itself through study, through opening the (gland) centers of the body, to become possessed with reflexes and activities outside of itself . . .

Q. How did I happen to pick this up?

A. . . . the body in its study opened the (gland) centers and allowed self to become sensitive to outside influences.

Q. What is it exactly that assails me?

A. Outside influences. Discarnate entities.