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ABSTRACT

Title: The Approach of the Edgar Cayce Readings to Dreams and Dreaming

Author: Brian Wilkinson

Abstract: A preparatory presentation of the origin of the Edgar Cayce psychic material and its approach to the nature of the mind and sleep is made. Then, the psychic material of the late Edgar Cayce is examined in relation to dreams and dream interpretation.

Dreams, according to the Edgar Cayce Readings and the author, are meaningful, purposefully directed experiences that have as their goal the full development of personal potential. Suggestions are given for the recording and interpretation of dreams.

THE APPROACH OF THE EDGAR CAYCE READINGS TO DREAMS AND DREAMING

BY

BRIAN WILKINSON

B.A. YORK UNIVERSITY, 1976

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the Master of Arts degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

1978

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INTRODUCTION

Through the earlier years of my life I seldom paid attention to my dreams. Only in the last five or six years have I given them any serious consideration. I do, however, remember one or two dreams from early childhood. They were strong then and vivid enough to have made a lasting impression on me, but I attached no particular importance to them. If asked whether or not dreams held any real meaning, I would probably have said yes but without any real convictions in the matter.

This attitude began to undergo a change in 1971 with the death of my father. A few months after his death I had a dream which graphically illustrated the nature of my past relationship with him. The dream was both clear and immediately understood by me and so moved me and shamed me that I attribute the dramatic changes that took place in my life the following year to its influence.

Within a year I became an adult student in psychology at York University and a member of an Edgar Cayce Search for God Study Group. Both these activities were motivated by the dream and represented a desire to come to terms with myself and those around me.

A Search for God Study Group is composed of people oriented toward spiritual and/or psychic growth utilizing the material given for this purpose in the psychic "Readings" of the late Edgar Cayce. This material is

contained in two volumes, A Search for God Books I and II (A.R.E., 1942), written utilizing material from the Readings and under the supervision of Cayce in the trance state.

The preparation of these books was done by the original Search for God study group of which Cayce himself was a member. In addition to this material the groups use as basic tools a weekly discipline or exercise, meditation, prayer and individual or group analysis of dreams. This last activity led to my current interest in dreams.

These study groups are part of the activity of the Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.), the organization which has grown up around the Readings and has over 17,000 members and over 1500 Search for God Study Groups around the world. In addition to its Study Group program, the A.R.E. encourages and assists research into the Edgar Cayce Readings, endeavours to make the information in the Readings accessible to the general public and maintains a modern library on psychic phenomena (A.R.E., 1976).

There are also several related organizations: the Edgar Cayce Foundation which is the actual owner and custodian of the Readings and which leases them on a long term basis to the A.R.E.; the Association of Learning (under the charter of Atlantic University) which conducts month-long seminars on topics like meditation; and the

A.R.E. Clinic, Inc., which conducts medical research into the Readings.

Despite the dramatic dream and my recognition of its influence on my life, I paid little more attention to my dreams than I had before, until I became a member of a study group. This event marked the beginning of my paying serious, and occasionally systematic, attention to my dreams. In the study group we were encouraged to record and interpret our dreams on a regular basis, occasionally bringing in difficult ones for discussion and help.

Dreams, then, for the last several years have been meaningful experiences for me and of real significance in my life. As a result of my work with dreams in the group, I chose dreams as the topic for this thesis. I wish to present an interpretation of the Readings on the nature of dreams and dreaming and, on the basis of this interpretation, formulate my own general theory of dreams and dream interpretation

I am aware through my work in psychology of the ongoing discussion on the nature of dreams and dream interpretation. In dealing with the Edgar Cayce Readings on dreams, I find it useful to draw on a few writers in psychology for comparative purposes. Particularly useful has been the work of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

Another consideration in preparing my thesis is my interest as a Christian in a modern Christian approach to dream interpretation. I have discovered only one modern

writer who deals in depth with modern dream interpretation from a Christian perspective.

This writer is John A. Sanford. In his book, God's Forgotten Language (1968), he examines the relevance of dreams to religious experience and, utilizing Jungian psychology, has tried to show how one may work with one's dreams in a religious manner.

My thesis, then, is a look at the phenomenon of the Edgar Cayce Readings; a presentation of what the Readings have to say about the nature of the mind and sleep; an examination of the Readings approach to dreams and dream interpretation with comparisons to a few selected writers in psychology and the work of John A. Sanford; and finally a formulation, on the basis of research, of my own general approach to dream interpretation.

SECTION I: THE EDGAR CAYCE READINGS

The Origin of the Readings

Edgar Cayce was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on March 18, 1877. At the age of 13, while reading the Bible, he had a vision in which he was promised he would be able to help heal people, especially children. He attributed his psychic ability in later life to this incident /1/.

In 1900 Cayce became ill and lost the use of his voice. It was found, after several traveling hypnotists had passed through, that Cayce regained the use of his voice while in a hypnotic trance but, on being brought out of trance, lost the use of his voice again. Finally, after a year of this situation Cayce discovered that he could put himself into a self-induced trance through prayer and meditation and that, while in this state, he could not only talk but also give suggestions for the cure of his voice.

This occurrence in 1901 was his first "psychic Reading". I have tried to discover how the designation "psychic Reading" for his trance state discourses was arrived at but have been unable to produce a definitive answer. It seems likely that the term "psychic" was chosen, not to denote the occult or supernatural, but to suggest that the material was of the soul. This would be in keeping with the viewpoint of the Readings that

psychic phenomena are a spiritual activity and would correspond to what I know of Cayce's own attitude to his gift.

The term "Reading" is even harder to explain. The only use of this term then current (that I am aware of) was in relation to Tarot cards about which I think Cayce knew nothing. The only thing I know for certain is that by 1910 the term was in regular use by Cayce and his associates.

When it became known that Cayce could diagnose his own illness while in a trance state, it was a short step to his being asked to give health Readings for others. As it became refined over the years, the procedure for giving these, was for him to loosen any binding clothing such as tie, shoes, belt, lie down on a couch, place his hands first on his forehead and then on his solar plexus as he began to pray and meditate. When his eyelids began to flutter, the person conducting the Reading would suggest that Cayce diagnose and prescribe treatment for a particular individual. This suggestion became standardized as follows:

You have the body of before you, who is in (city, street and address). You will go over this body carefully, examine it thoroughly, and tell me the conditions you find at the present time, giving the cause of the existing conditions, also the treatment for the cure and relief of this body. You will speak distinctly at a normal rate of speech answering the questions as I ask them (Readings Survey Material).

Cayce would then begin to speak, and a stenographer would take down what he said.

The process was not infallible. Sometimes the person conducting the Reading would miss the right moment for the suggestion and Cayce would go into a deeper trance and not respond. Cayce himself stated that unless he saw a flash of white light while meditating he could not give the Reading.

Cayce did not have to see or even know the person for whom he was giving the Reading, and distance was not a factor; the individual could be anywhere. While giving the Reading, Cayce was totally unaware of what he was doing and could even be having a dream at the same time. What was happening was a laying aside of his own consciousness. If he wanted to know what he had said in a Reading, he had to read a transcript of the Reading just like everyone else. This type of Reading, involving the diagnosis of illness and suggestions for treatment, remained for Cayce the main focus of his work throughout his life.

Not until 1923, 22 years after the first Reading, did he give any other type of Reading. The only change in procedure was a slightly different suggestion suited to the topic under consideration and occasionally a change in the direction in which he was lying. The latter was explained by the Readings as having to do with the polarization of Cayce's body.

The total number of Readings which Cayce gave by the time of his death in 1945 was over 14,000. A breakdown of the types of Readings, preserved by the A.R.E. is as follows: 8,976 health Readings, 2,500 life Readings, (concerned with vocational guidance, counseling and human relations), 799 business Readings, 667 Readings on dreams, 401 on mental and spiritual guidance, 24 on home and marriage and 879 on miscellaneous subjects.

The Source of the Readings

The Edgar Cayce Readings contain an enormous volume of information ranging from medical diagnosis to statements about astrology and reincarnation. The question naturally arises about the source of this information.

Edgar Cayce, while by no means illiterate or unintelligent, possessed only a grade school education, and, outside of a thorough knowledge of the Bible, he was not well read. Certainly, he did not possess enough education to account for the detailed medical knowledge contained in the Readings. In addition, many of the metaphysical statements made by the readings offended Cayce's own deeply felt religious principles and were a constant challenge to him throughout his life. It would thus seem to be extremely unlikely that the source of the information in the Readings was Cayce's conscious mind.

An alternative possibility is that his subconscious mind was the sole source of the Reading's

information. It seems possible that he could obtain information about himself within the confines of his own mind, but it seems most unlikely that he could obtain information about others from within his own personal mind. Even to account for all the information given with respect to himself requires a different conception of the nature of the subconscious from any currently held by modern psychology.

The Readings themselves, when questioned about their source of information, give what I have come to consider the best description of their source. The Readings say that the information contained in the physical Readings comes from the subconscious mind of the person for whom the Reading was being given (Cayce,531-2). According to the Readings, Cayce's subconscious mind could contact the subconscious mind of other living or dead persons and obtain information for a Reading (Cayce,3744-2). The Readings often referred to this second source as the Universal Mind or Universal Source. Whatever the source of the information, the Readings, like the waking Cayce, regarded the work they did as being spiritually directed.

Another key question regarding the source of the Readings is their accuracy. Recently, Edgar Evans Cayce and Hugh Lynn Cayce conducted a survey of the accuracy of the Readings for their book The Outer Limits Of Edgar Cayce's Power (1973). Based on a random sampling of 150

Readings and their corresponding written records, the following results were found: 50% of the people who received Readings did not reply (in written form) whether their Readings were accurate or helpful; of the remaining 76 Readings only 7 subjects or 14% had sent Cayce negative reports. The remaining 65 or 85.5% sent positive reports.

Since the death of Cayce, the physical Readings have probably been subjected to more scrutiny than any other type of Reading. The A.R.E. runs a clinic and a program with co-operating doctors who research and implement the physical Readings. Findings are published monthly in the A.R.E. Journal.

The difficulty with this type of research is that Readings were usually given for individuals, so their treatments are not always generally applicable and can be quite dangerous if applied indiscriminately. Nevertheless, many general statements on diet and health are being formulated, and modern medicine is quickly approaching some of the Readings' concepts of over 30 years ago. In particular the Readings' concept of holistic medicine, which considers not only the physical but also the mental and spiritual health of the individual, is becoming increasingly accepted .

The other types of Readings are receiving confirmation in a surprising number of ways. For instance, the Readings' statements about the Essenes, made years before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and

Essene communities in Palestine, are being confirmed by modern research. To my knowledge outside of The Outer Limits of Edgar Cayce's Power there are, unfortunately, no serious studies on the extent of his failures.

It is particularly difficult to confirm or disprove many of the controversial statements made by the Readings on subjects like religion and reincarnation. The Readings themselves often say that much of their material had to be accepted or rejected within the individual and an attempt to prove their material will generally be futile. However, the gradual confirmation of much of the objectively verifiable information in the Readings lends credence to their information as a whole for many people. Also, the application of their material in daily life is proving to be a confirmation for many people.

The Language of the Readings

The language of the Readings often seems obscure and difficult to understand. There are archaisms contained within it, and the style can be so fluid that sentences run together. During the years in which I have been interested in the Readings, I have heard many explanations for the difficulty of the language but never a really definitive explanation. However, I will offer what have been for me the more cogent explanations.

From the very beginning transcribing the Readings was a problem. The Readings dictated information at a rapid rate without indicating punctuation. It was

essentially an oral phenomenon, and it was not until Gladys Davis Turner began stenographically recording the Readings in 1923 that any consistent quality of recording become possible. Occasionally, the Readings would help by indicating punctuation, but essentially, hers was the task of punctuating oral material which often dealt with extremely technical or entirely new concepts. The fact that the material was given orally, I feel, accounts for many peculiarities of its style.

Of the various types of Readings, the physical Readings are perhaps the clearest in meaning and in style. This clarity is a reflection of their subject matter which deals with something more concrete and easily translated into the written word than abstract ideas. Like the mystic, the Readings claim that some material has to be experienced rather than read, they try to express them anyway. There are times when one can feel the Readings straining to explain some new idea or conception.

The extent to which Cayce's own conscious and subconscious mind influenced the language of the Readings is difficult to determine. The Readings use a Biblical style of presentation found in the King James version of the Bible, for example, the use of the words "thee" and "thou". Cayce, after reading the Bible once for every year of his life was thoroughly imbued with this style. On the other hand, the Readings often argue that the quality of the information given is determined by the

attunement and purpose of those seeking the information. I therefore consider it possible that Cayce's subconscious had more influence over which type of source was sought for the information than on the language used in giving the information. Finally, the Readings themselves maintain that as their material is worked with, they become more meaningful and understandable. This I find to be the case. As one becomes familiar with the style of the Readings, their meaning gradually becomes more accessible. It is, of course, possible that this increasing accessibility is partially the result of projecting oneself into the material, and indeed getting the individual to project himself into their material may be a goal of the style of the Readings. The Readings stress the necessity of experiencing their material; the effort involved in coming to understand them is a form of minimal participation.

The Dream Readings

The dream Readings are those in which dreams as a whole are discussed or a dream submitted by an individual is interpreted. The Reading does not have to be solely concerned, or even mainly concerned, with dreams to be so designated. All that is required is some reference to dreams. However, most of the Readings designated "dream Readings" were given for the purpose of interpreting dreams submitted to Cayce in the trance state.

As with other Readings, the waking Cayce had no knowledge of any interpretation given in the Readings; he even submitted his own dreams for interpretation by the Readings.

My primary research source on the dream Readings is Dreams and Dreaming, The Edgar Cayce Readings, Parts I and II (Cayce, 1976). These two volumes contain over 1,000 pages of extracts from verbatim Readings dealing with people's dreams. They contain (in addition to the Readings) background information on the people submitting dreams for interpretation. This information varies considerably for each individual and is drawn from the written records of the A.R.E. and the personal knowledge of the volume compilers. Sometimes there is a great deal of information and sometimes almost nothing. Examples of the type of background information found are age, sex, occupation, dream submitted, relation to other individuals who had Readings and related information from other Readings.

To preserve the anonymity of the individuals receiving a Reading, the A.R.E. uses a numbering system 000-0 to identify each Reading; 000 is the number permanently assigned to the individual for all Readings, and -0 is the number of th Reading being given for the person.

SECTION II: THE MIND

In order to understand the dream Readings, it is important to consider the Readings' conception of the nature of the mind and of God or the divine /2/.

To describe the divine the Readings often rely heavily on Judeo-Christian material, but they resist efforts to categorize their conception of the divine under the auspices of a specific religion which they view as too limiting in scope. The most common terms for the divine used in the Readings are "God," "Father," "Lord," "Creative" or "Universal Forces" and "Universal Mind". Each of these terms used in the Readings highlights a different aspect of the divine.

When the Readings refer to the divine as "Lord," "Father" or "God," they are emphasizing the religious, the sacred, the deeply personal relationship between man and the divine. The terms "Creative" or "Universal Forces" are used to express the principle that all creation is of one substance, and there is nothing, including man, that is not part of the divine. "Universal Mind" is a key term in the Readings. It is used to express the idea that the divine is not merely man's identification with the universe or some kind of vast energy gestalt but is an aware, transcendent reality that is the cause of a purposefully directed creation.

Each individual soul is a free, aware, individual portion of this Universal Mind. For the Readings the ultimate goal of each soul is to become aware of its oneness with God or the Universal Mind without losing its own individuality.

In relation to man God is defined as spirit, hence the actual contact between the mind of man and the mind of God takes place at the level of the superconscious.

Although the Readings divide the mind into three parts, they consider this division an artificial one that is necessary only in order to enable man to understand its workings. They maintain that the mind is a totality and the divisions merely expressions of this essential oneness. This idea is reminiscent of the Christian concept of a triune God who is essentially one. Although difficult to grasp fully, this concept underlies all discussion of the mind in the Readings.

Hence ye have a three dimensional consciousness related to the earth and to thy heaven, or to the Godhead. Study the relationship of one to another, for they are one; even as the Father-God is one but in manifestation in power and might - has three phrases of expression; spirit or soul, mind, and body; Father, Son and Holy Spirit (2800-2).

The division of an idea into three parts due to man's having a three-dimensional consciousness is a recurrent theme in the Readings. For the Readings the dividing into three parts does not reflect reality, only man's concept of reality.

The Readings divide the mind into three structures, the physical, the mental (or soul) and the spiritual, and into three corresponding states of awareness; the conscious, the subconscious, and the superconscious.

The Physical Body and Consciousness

The Readings' idea of the physical body is much the same as is understood in ordinary usage. To be sure, the medical Readings offer some unique material on the workings and functions of the various parts of the physical body, but essentially the overall conception of the physical body is the same as understood in ordinary usage. The important difference is that the Readings emphasize that the physical body is as much an expression of our mind as thoughts or ideas are.

The Readings consider the distinction between the body and the mind as an artificial dichotomy. They treat the body as the result of the activity of the mind and not vice-versa. The conscious mind is the only portion of the total mind of an individual that is dependent on the physical body for existence, and even it is as much affected by the subconscious as by the physical body.

The conscious mind for the Readings is that portion of an individual's total awareness which is made up of his awareness of the physical body and the ordinary waking self; in other words, the ego. It functions through interaction with the external environment, with

the inner environment of the physical body and with the mental body through the subconscious mind. The Readings occasionally treat the awareness of the physical body as a separate state of awareness called the "physical consciousness". Nevertheless, I feel the physical consciousness is more properly considered as a portion of the Readings' total concept of the conscious mind.

The Mental Body and the Subconscious

The mental body is also called in the Readings the "other self" and "soul body," for it is the combined result of all an individual has experienced since he was created. The mind uses what we eat, the exercises we do or do not do and the special skills we have learned to build the physical body. In the same way the mind builds the mental body out of the thoughts it feeds on, the experiences of which it partakes and the skills it learns. However, the Readings take the view that we have been in existence as individuals since the beginning of creation and accept the idea of reincarnation. The Readings, therefore, view the mental body as the result of not one life but many lives and experiences between lives. The mental body is briefly defined in the following Reading.

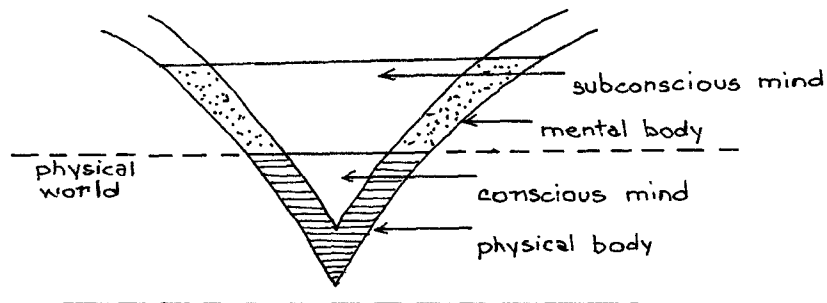
What other self? That which has been builded by the entity or body, or soul, through its experiences as a whole in the material and cosmic world (5754-2)
/3/.

For the Readings the subconscious is the intellect

of the mental or soul body. The subconscious partakes of both the the conscious and superconscious mind. It correlates the reactions, thoughts and ideas of the spiritual body to the days' activities with that which has been experienced in the present life, as well as with the total past experiences of the soul.

Unlike Perls, who denies the reality of the unconscious, seeing awareness as a ball floating in the water with different areas coming to the surface (Faraday, 1972:143), the Readings see the subconscious as a higher level of consciousness (see diagram below).

Diagram I



The subconscious mind, though in contact with the conscious mind and the physical body, is not itself contained in the physical world.

Included in the Readings' conception of the subconscious is the notion of repression; the unconscious is the area containing our unfulfilled wishes resulting from our repressed instinctual desires. However, in the Readings' conception of the subconscious, this aspect of the unconscious plays only a minor role in the healthy

individual. In the healthy individual dreams would only occasionally deal with repressed desires since these would be mainly conscious. The degree to which the individual had dreams of this nature would depend on the degree to which he repressed parts of his personality.

Another correlation with the Readings' idea of the subconscious is Freud's idea of racial memory and Jung's idea of the collective unconscious. Both these conceptions postulate the idea of genetic transmission of memory traces and behavioural predisposition. The Readings, on the other hand, while acknowledging the influence of heredity on bodily characteristics, and therefore the mind, would account for these elements of the subconscious by the fact that the subconscious brings the memory of previous lives to its new experience in consciousness.

The Spiritual Body and the Superconscious

The spiritual body, according to the Readings, is the original motivating force or First Cause of our being. It is the external and ultimate set of values against which our soul measures itself.

Spirit is the First Cause, the primary beginning, the motivative influence as God is Spirit. 262-123

The spiritual or soul self is the eternal. Hence the mental is both of material and of spiritual, or divine origin. 1797-3

The spiritual self is what I feel John Sanford is referring to when he says there is an inner image of oneself which strives towards wholeness through our dreams (Sanford, 1968:56-94). This inner image is called by Sanford the "self" or "center" of our being. It is not a construct but a reality that can be observed and measured through our dreams. This center is "the person in the mind of God" that the individual was originally intended to become. I feel that the Readings agree with Sanford's assumption but where as he feels that this "center" is only an image of God or divine reality, the Readings insist that it is actually a part of God.

Freud's conception of the superego as the internalization of external authorities such as parents and educators belongs as an element of the subconscious, not as part of our spiritual selves or superconscious (cf. Fordor, 1958:149).

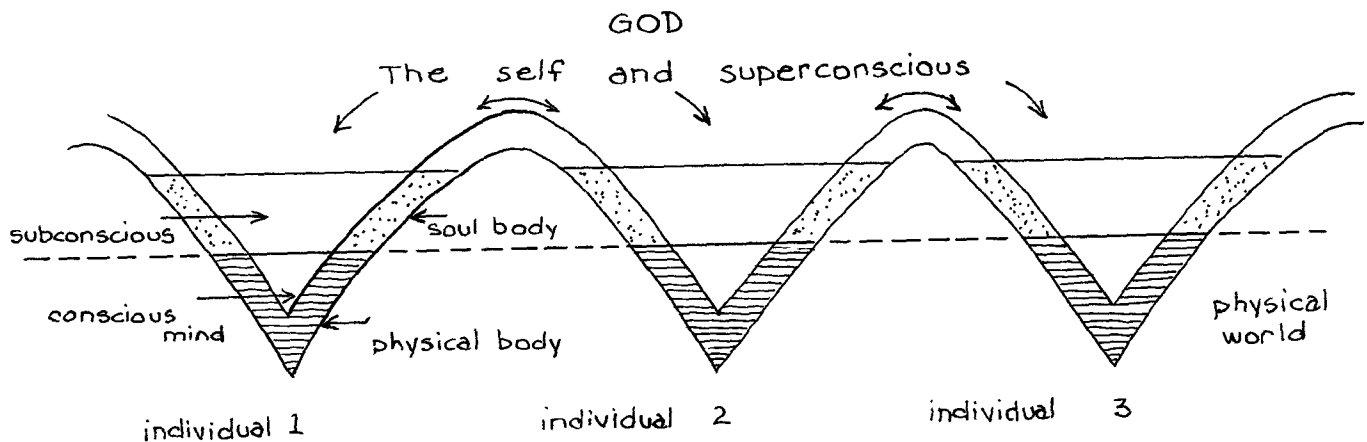
The superconscious is the state of awareness lying between the center of our being or spirit and the rest of consciousness. It is the only state of consciousness that can deal directly with our inner center of being and as such is our contact with the divine. Contained within it are most of the characteristics Jung assigns to the collective unconscious. It is vast, transcending age, birth and death, and combines characteristics of both sexes. The ultimate union of man with God and his fellow man is contained within it (Jung, 1933:186).

Unlike Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, however, the superconscious is a union of individuals in God who continue to be aware of themselves as individuals; it is not a stream of undifferentiated consciousness.

The degree of interaction between the superconscious and the rest of consciousness depends entirely on the degree to which we are fulfilling the original motivation for our existence. This interaction only takes place through the superconscious when the conscious mind, including the awareness of the physical body, is laid aside either in sleep, meditation or death.

Diagram II is a model of the Readings' conception of the mind and its relationship to other minds.

Diagram II



As can be seen in the diagram, a true union of minds only takes place in the superconscious, but it must be remembered that for the Readings, this does not mean a loss of individuality. Above all it must be remembered that for the Readings the mind is a totality and the separations artificial.

Before going on to a discussion of the nature of sleep, here are some brief formal definitions of the Readings' concepts discussed in this section.

The physical body is a manifestation of the total mind of the individual in the material world. Its appearance and functions are those accepted in ordinary usage.

The conscious mind is the awareness of individual identity in the material world through memory and the awareness of the body.

The mental body is the combined result of all the mind's experiences since its creation. It is the vehicle of the soul in the universe.

The subconscious is the intellect and awareness of the soul. It performs all the functions of the mind assigned by Jung to the personal unconscious and in addition is the connection between the conscious and the superconscious.

The spiritual body is the individual entity as originally created, containing the motivating force of the individual and the pattern for its completion.

The superconscious is the original and ultimate source of consciousness in the individual. It is the root of all intellect and awareness in the mind.

SECTION III: THE NATURE OF SLEEP

The Readings' description of the sleep state asserts that sleep is a reflection of the experience of death. During sleep we are no longer aware through the senses of the external environment around us. Perception is no longer functioning.

According to the Readings, however, our senses are not asleep but rather turned inward and operating through what is called the "auditory forces" or "auditory sense." This auditory sense is not a sensory activity per se but rather something related to audition.

Hence it may be truly said, by the analogy of that given, that the auditory sense is subdivided, and there is the act of hearing by feeling, the act of hearing by the sense of smell, the act of hearing by all the senses that are independent of the brain centers themselves, but are rather of the lymph centers--or throughout the entire sympathetic system is such an accord as to be more aware, more acute, even though the body-physical and brain-physical is at repose, or unaware. (5754-1)

The Readings treat the operation of our senses (in the sleep state) as functioning through the sympathetic nervous system rather than the central nervous system and consider them to be more acute and sensitive to the subconscious and superconscious than in the waking state.

Taken collectively, the operation of our senses in sleep is referred to by the the Readings as our "sixth

sense." This sixth sense is the mental or soul body's active force or sense of perception during sleep and has two functions which it accomplishes through dreams.

Its first function is to enable the mental body to compare the day's activities and thoughts to the ideals of the individual. Every individual, whether aware of it or not, has a set of these ideals within himself based on his awareness of the divine and the criterion and standards of judgements he has accepted as correct.

As a result of this comparison, the individual, according to the day's activities, will either be in harmony or disharmony with his spiritual criterion or ideal. Disharmony is an expression of the individual's warring with the ideal and will eventually cause serious mental distress or physical illness. Because of this, the Readings say, many people go to sleep happy and awaken sad or vice-versa (Cayce,5754-2).

The second function of the sixth sense is to be intuitive and protective. Its function is accomplished by becoming more aware of, and sensitive to, our inner spiritual nature and thereby gaining access to a more universal form of consciousness. Although the sixth sense is usually rendered ineffective because ignored, it can be trained to be sensitive, or rather we can be trained to be more sensitive to it. Part of becoming more sensitive to our sixth sense is the awakening of a desire to remember our dreams better.

The essential idea is that what one desires one becomes. Therefore, the more spiritually oriented an individual is, the more attention he pays to his dreams, and the more he relies on intuition the more effective the sixth sense becomes.

As can be seen from these functions, the Readings consider dreams a spiritual experience, a natural expression of the spirit, as the following quotation shows.

It's a natural experience. It's not an unnatural! Don't seek for unnatural or supernatural! It is the natural - it is nature - it is God's activity! His associations with man, His desire to make for man a way of understanding!
5754-3

SECTION IV: SOURCES AND TYPES OF DREAMS

The Readings see dreams as arising from the three areas of the mind: the conscious, subconscious and superconscious, but this is a division of a single idea into three parts. For the Readings all dreams are an expression of divine concern and guidance for the individual. However, the more spiritually attuned the individual, and the higher the area of consciousness from which the dream arises, the more direct the connection with the divine. This approach is in contrast to Freud who felt that activities such as daydreaming and free associating were of equal validity with dreams. I will now examine each of the three areas of the mind as a source of dreams.

The Conscious Mind

The conscious mind is difficult to deal with as a source of dreams. In one sense it is incorrect to speak of it as a source of dreams, since it is laid aside during sleep. But in another sense it is the stimulation for many dreams. Almost all dreams are in response to our day's activities and thoughts. Like Freud, the Readings feel that most dreams have their original stimulation in some aspect of the previous day's activities (Freud, 1965:591-592). In contrast to Freud, who felt that it was necessary for the day's activities to stimulate a childhood wish in order to produce a dream, and Jung, who

did not consider the conscious will powerful enough to exert an influence over the character of dreams, the Readings see each action, decision and choice as determining the character of our dreams.

Many of the contents of the subconscious which are being presented through dreams were originally part of our conscious awareness but were repressed. Generally, these contents represent the fears and desires we consider negative components of our personality and therefore unacceptable to us. These contents produce wish fulfilment dreams and dreams of fear and anxiety. For Jung, if these contents are repressed too thoroughly, they become personified as a dark, sinister figure called the "shadow". While the Readings do not use this term, they have many examples of dark figures or creatures that represent an individual's fears and anxieties. Symbols interpreted, by the Readings, as representing fears and anxieties include spiders, dark sinister faces and wild animals (Cayce, 2671-5, 900-104 and 294-43).

The Readings also feel some dreams are produced by the body's assimilating or digesting its nutritional intake. These dreams frequently do not make a vivid enough impression to be remembered, but when they do, they are usually experienced as nightmares. Therefore, the poorer the diet, the greater is the likelihood of poor digestion's causing nightmares vivid enough to be remembered. When asked to interpret this type of dream,

the Readings replied that it was not necessary to interpret them (Cayce,294-40).

The Subconscious

The subconscious is the source par excellence of dreams. My impression is that most of the dreams discussed in the Readings are said to come from this source. Dreams from the subconscious have four basic functions: psychological intergration, the presentation of guidance from subconscious forces, the presentation of guidance from the superconscious and the facilitation of telepathic communication.

The function of psychological integration is to mould the divergent elements of the personality into a unified whole. To accomplish this function the subconscious begins by presenting in the dream the repressed portion of our personality in relation to the day's activities. Next the subconscious presents aspects of conscious situations of which we have not been consciously aware. The subconscious tries to present a balanced viewpoint of any situation that is of concern to us. This view parallels Jung's concept of compensation. In integrating our personality it tries to give a fully rounded picture of events presenting not only our viewpoint but also the viewpoint of others.

The subconscious also responds to the day's activities on its own account. "Then there is the action of the purely subconscious forces, giving the lessons to

the body out of its own experience" (4167-1). The guidance which these lessons provide is invaluable, since not only is the subconscious more intimately aware of our innermost thoughts and desires, but it also, according to the Readings, has at its disposal a vast reservoir of first-hand experience in dealing with life's problems.

The presentation by the subconscious of material from the superconscious is an important function but one which is difficult to define with precision. Basically, the idea is that the superconscious presents material to the subconscious of the individual which then translates it into a form comprehensible to the conscious mind and then presents it in a dream (Cayce, 900-64).

Since the original material is adapted by the subconscious, it is not always possible to determine the source of this type of dream. I feel, from my study of the Readings as a whole, that the more attuned the conscious mind is to the divine the more unadulterated the transmission of material from the superconscious mind to the conscious mind.

Finally, the subconscious presents guidance (which has been received telepathically) to the conscious mind. Generally, such guidance comes from someone who is close to the dreamer and concerned for his welfare. According to the Readings such guidance can come from any individual living or dead, but in the latter case it is more common from the recently deceased who have not yet continued their own development.

The following explanation of this type of dream was given in a Reading in response to questions about guidance which "243" had been receiving from her recently deceased mother.

The dreams, as we see, come to individuals through the subjugation of the conscious mind, and the subconscious being of soul - when loosed is able to communicate with the subconscious minds of those whether in the material or cosmic plane. 243-5

The Superconscious

Dreams from the superconscious, while much rarer than those from the subconscious, are often deeply moving and appear to offer deep meaning but are not always understood. They may be spiritual or religious in character and represent an inner awakening of the individual to his true spiritual nature.

Dreams from the superconscious can also be precognitive, warning the individual of approaching danger or conflict. As is seen in the following quotation this warning or guidance is treated by the Readings as part of the protection God has provided for each soul:

There are no individuals who haven't at some time been warned as respecting that that may arise in their daily lives...(by) that subliminal or subconscious self that is on guard ever with the Throne itself; for has it not been said, 'He has given his angels charge concerning thee, lest at any time thou dashest thy foot against a stone.' (5754-3)

Closely related, but not identical to dreams from the superconscious, are visions, which also have their source in the superconscious and are often indistinguishable from dreams. It is not quite clear to me what the distinction between these two types of experiences is in the Readings. The distinction seems to be that, whereas the subconscious normally modifies and interprets material from the superconscious to facilitate conscious understanding, in the case of visions the material from the superconscious is transmitted exactly as received (Cayce, 900-54).

Types of Dreams

To handle the material contained in the dream Readings I have created ten major categories of dreams. These categories are: self-analysis, interpersonal relationships, inspirational guidance, personal potential, physical health and diet, business and finance, precognition, past-life dreams, telepathic and spirit communication.

The dreams in the first eight categories are seen by the Readings as arising from one of the three areas of consciousness: the conscious, subconscious and superconscious. The last two categories, are however, slightly different. While the dream is still produced by the individual, the stimulation for and content of the dream either wholly or in part is the result of contact with the subconscious mind of another.

These two types of dreams may be concerned with any of the subject matter of the other eight categories. Any dream may overlap several categories or be confined to just one.

1. Self Analysis: Dreams dealing with self analysis of the individual are part of the subconscious attempt at psychological integration. Defects and weaknesses in an individual's character are pointed out, usually with some suggestions for correction. The following quotation is part of an interpretation offered by the Readings in response to a dream in which "900" has angered others by his response to their business proposition.

Think twice before speaking of any condition. The body finds self under strain at the present time, pertaining to many different conditions and ways. Before answering, then, in any (way), as is shown here, be sure of the position the body takes in every condition presented to self. 900-49

Usually the Readings make no condemnation of the individual in the interpretation, but weaknesses are pointed out. In addition, after the subconscious has achieved a large measure of psychological integration, it continues to analyze the daily actions of the individual in order to keep him in tune with the underlying motivations for his actions.

2. Interpersonal Relationships: This type of

dream is essentially an extension of the self analysis category but deals exclusively with an individual's relationship with others. In dealing with this type of dream it is virtually an axiom of the Readings that the responsibility of resolving conflicts between the dreamer and others lies with the dreamer. As the following quotation dealing with "137's" relationship with his brother shows, the fact that the conflict with another may have had its inception in the behaviour of another has no effect on this basic stance of the Readings:

For as is seen, in most every element of an entity finding fault, the greater source of same lies at one's own door. Then, the lesson as is seen, the entity should apply self in such a way and manner as to be the one that would assist in bringing to self and to brother that assistance in such ways and manners as would stabilize, rather than bring about contention in any way and manner by fault of either of the individuals as conditions might pertain to. 137-92

3. Inspirational Guidance: These dreams derived from the superconscious, are usually, though not always, cast in the mould of the dreamer's religious background. There are two types of inspirational dreams found in the Readings. The first type involves the concept of forgiveness and usually deals with some form of cleansing of the individual. Water, as illustrated in the following quotation, is a frequent symbol of spiritual cleansing in this type of dream:

Question 7: Night of November 6th or 7th. "I seemed to be bathing, but the water running off me was in dirty streams." Answer 7: As in the condition as seen is abhorrent to the body,-see of dirty, or dirty water streaming from the body-so would the entity cleanse self by gaining the more perfect knowledge. As is seen, "All shall be saved, so as by water. Comprend that." 137-28

In relation to this type of dream, Sanford says that we are frequently unaware that we even feel guilty. Some psychologists assign the burden of this guilt to the conflict between one's upbringing, social mores and one's natural instincts. Therefore, recognition of our inner desires and the source of our conscience can help relieve our guilt.

Sanford argues that while it is true that some guilt feelings arise from society's mores, the real cause of guilt feelings is transgressing our own innate sense of morality or righteousness, which is from God. There is an inner set of laws, he feels, arising from the deepest center of, one's being. These laws are not the creation of, or subject to, the laws of society, and it is the contravention of these laws that creates true guilt. Sanford argues that, although Christianity reflects these laws, it is frequently ineffective, because the forgiveness represented by the cross must be experienced to be realized (Sanford, 1968:47-57).

This type of inspirational dream, then, is a way of becoming aware of one's inner values and of finding out

how one really feels about them. Through dreams God makes us known to ourselves and can provide or direct one to an experience of forgiveness.

The second type of inspirational dream is usually experienced by an individual who is committed to a search for personal spiritual growth. There is often a confirmation of the reality of an individual's spiritual progress and an encouragement to keep on trying. The following quotation is an interpretation of a dream in which Jesus appeared to the dreamer:

Question 7: Please give me the significance of the dream I had the night of September 26th at which time I saw the Master. Answer 7: As there has been in self that seeking more and more for the material confirmation of the thought, the intent and the purpose of self's activities, so in that given, that seen, is a confirmation of that purpose, that thought, that activity. Hence rather, than bring fears on the part of self, or anxiety as respecting those visioned in same, rather know that self is being led by Him who is the Guide, the Giver, the Promise to all mankind. 262-55

4. Personal Potential: All dreams are for the instruction and development of the individual. Personal potential dreams, however, are those dreams that open new areas of development for the individual. While this type of dream can be experienced by almost anyone, it is usually the result of an individual's working with the first three types of dreams discussed.

This type of dream can deal with subjects as varied as the individuals who have them and often suggests development into areas never before considered by the individual or previously rejected as impossible. Examples of topics covered in the Readings by this type of dream are home, marriage, a career or hobby, almost any area that might conceivably enrich the development of the individual. One woman, "136," received a whole series of dreams on how to prepare herself for the birth of a child, an event which was previously considered impossible (due to her physical condition). The child was eventually born.

One very common topic for this type of dream in the Readings is psychic development. People who worked at any length with their dreams through the Readings sooner or later was told they could discover their own psychic potential through dreams. This is not surprising since the Readings' approach to dreams is spiritual, and they see psychic development as a natural result of spiritual development. The following is a typical example of the Readings' attitude towards this type of dream:

The dreams as we see that come to this body are those injunctions to the body of how the forces as may be applied through the entity are presented, and the entity may use same in that manner as has been given. For through these the entity may more perfectly understand those laws as pertain to the manifestation of psychic forces in the material world. 137-24

5. Physical Health and Diet: Dreams dealing with health problems were detailed and specific since the subconscious has accurate and complete information on the physical body. The recommendations which the Readings derived from these dreams are in the general direction of moderation. They advocate a balanced approach to health, diet and exercise.

While there are many general recommendations contained in the Readings, their interpretations respond to the individual's needs, often recommending things for one individual which are rejected for another as these two examples illustrate.

Then eat more sweets, see? 136-21

Beware of trouble from stomach for same...Beware of too much sweets. Beware of too much aggrandisement of the appetite in self. 900-94

Also, as the second quotation shows, dreams dealing with current or approaching illness often give the cause of illness as an attitude within the individual rather than a purely physical cause.

Although the Readings consider the subconscious primarily responsible for the physical body, on occasion the superconscious takes an interest as is seen in the following quotation:

Question 4 "While dozing over the Bible, the voice as follows: 'That is enough!' Is this again the physical subconscious caring for my tired mind and body?"

Answer 4 "Rather the superconscious..."
900-136

6. Business and Finance: Most of the business advice given by the Readings is found in the dreams interpreted for "900", his family friends, and associates. These dreams deal with fluctuations in the stock market; "900" and his brother were members of a brokerage firm. The following quotation is an interpretation of a dream "137" had about the California Petroleum book on the New York Stock Exchange:

This particular stock, California oil, as we see with many others, falling off in price at the present time. There will come the 25th-26th when it will have reached a low point then advance.
137-55

As a result of dream interpretations like this "900" and "137" became wealthy men, and "900" survived the 1929 stock market crash relatively unharmed. The Readings did not offer financial guidance to him on a daily basis, however, but only in response to business dreams submitted by "900" for interpretation. An individual would only receive financial guidance through dreams about activities in which he was making conscious efforts and with which he was intimately concerned.

Some of these financial dreams seem to be precognitive but are not precognitive in the sense that superconscious forces are predicting future events.

Rather, these dreams are based on a subconscious evaluation of the information available to the individual.

This , as we see, is as the study of those conditions as have been presented to the body in the mental mind, correlating same in the subconscious brings about that projection of a condition wherein there will be the excitement of the general condition on market... 137-59

While the Readings readily interpret financial dreams, they caution against undue exploitation of information gained this way and encouraged the individual consciously to improve his business skills.

7. Precognition: Precognitive dreams are among the most fascinating types of dreams. As already mentioned, some are the result of the subconscious mind's re-evaluating the information on a subject available to the individual. Others, however, are from higher centers of consciousness and can span several years. However, they are not deterministic in nature. The operating principle is, that if conditions remain unchanged and the information in the dream is not acted upon, then such and such a happening will occur.

Question 15 "What in visions is given me that I may use to prevent such a tragedy?" Answer 15 "Watching and care of self and self's action."

Question 16 "What should I do or say when the time comes to prevent such a happening?" Answer 16 "Don't let 'em happen!" 900-79

The Readings state categorically that nothing of importance happens to us without first being dreamed and that there is nothing wrong in using such dreams to be forewarned or to change the course of events.

For any condition ever becoming a reality is first dreamed. 136-7 Then the use of the knowledge that is gained through such dreams may be applied in the life of the entity in such a way and manner as being forewarned, be fore armed... 538-22

Samples of the precognitive dreams in the Readings that were later confirmed are predictions twelve months in advance of the birth of children and their characteristics, of divorce, the stock market crash and a future eviction from a residence.

In my research into the dream Readings I was unable to find any instances of unconfirmed dream predictions. Given the limited data available to me, however, this does not mean that there were no such instances.

8. Past Life: There are few past life dreams recorded and no real discussion of past lives as a source of symbols in the Readings dealing with dreams. One knows from other Readings that past lives are regarded as an important source of individual symbolism, but this fact is not reflected much in the dreams interpreted by the Readings. Past life dreams are only experienced and interpreted if they have a relevance to the individual's

current situation.

The following quotation is one of the few examples of the interpretation of a past life dream in the Readings.

Then in the name Isbdleoxdz. In this experience the entity finds that in dreams there often comes that vision of a temple through which the entity wanders, seeking for this counsel, for one that must be the rule there. The flames often interfere, yet as each step is gained toward the altar that the entity seeks, there comes as it were a new chapter in the life of the entity.
172-33

According to this interpretation, every time "172" reaches a major crisis or choice in her life, symbols from a past life, namely, the temple, the fire and the altar appear in her dreams to signal this fact.

9. Telepathy: As already discussed, this type of dream can be from the subconscious of someone living or dead. The second type will be dealt with in the next category.

Telepathic dreams are usually connected with someone close to the dreamer and often occur during times of unusual stress as in the following instance:

Question 1 Morning of Dec. 27, 1926
"Dreamed Emmie committed suicide." Answer
1 "This shows to the entity, through this correlation of mental forces of the body mind itself and those of Emmie, that such conditions had passed through this mind-contemplation of such conditions..."

Question 3 "How did '136' get this information about Emmie in a dream?"
 Answer 3 "Correlation of subconscious minds that contact through thought for thoughts are deeds, and may become as crimes or miracles." 136-54

Just as one can receive telepathic messages in dreams, I feel one can send them out. This activity may well be reflected in an individual's dreams even if not consciously remembered by the other individual involved.

10. Spirit Communication: The Readings assert that the subconscious can communicate with the subconscious minds of discarnate entities who have not passed beyond a certain level of consciousness. These communications usually concern the well-being of the dreamer or someone close to him who has passed away recently. Such dreams are frequently taken by the dreamer as proof of survival after death. Since the death of my father, I have had several of these dreams myself. The earlier ones, I am convinced, were actual experiences with my father. Later I believe the appearance of my father in a dream became a symbolic source of comfort and reassurance rather than my actual father. The Readings affirm the reality of these experiences and encourage acceptance of them.

Question 7 Does she (her mother) try to tell me "I am alive and happy?" Answer 7 "Tells the entity ' I am alive and happy' when the entity will attune self to that at-oneness." 136-33

Question 7 Dream of recent date 'I was in a hospital and my mother was with me. It was either to have my baby or that I had a miscarriage again...' " Answer 7 "Again we find this full correlation of this at-oneness and, as it were, the guiding force of the mother directing the body in its various conditions..." 136-45

SECTION V: THE READINGS APPROACH TO DREAM INTERPRETATION

General Principles

It should be clear by now that the Readings consider dreams to be meaningful, purposeful and essential to individual mental, physical and spiritual development. Therefore, in addition to providing individuals with assistance with their dreams, the Readings also encourage individuals to interpret their own dreams and provided guidelines for doing so.

The two core principles on which the Readings' interpretive method is founded are (1) if you can remember your dreams, you are capable of interpreting them, and (2) you are your own best interpreter, the Readings themselves notwithstanding. Referring to dreams, the Readings state that

Each and every individual who is possessed of the faculty of visioning the various conditions of experiences which pass through the various consciousnesses of the individual, capable also of gaining those lessons and truths as shown to the individual... 136-40

The body may analyse same, interpret same, better; for it can do it better for its own activity than were it done by the most wonderful of all interpreters... 257-138

In the first quotation the term "visioning" is referring, not to the ability to dream which everyone has, but to the ability to recall or "see" our dream experiences. The presence of the ability to recall dreams

is an indication of the presence of the ability to interpret them.

The second quotation is somewhat surprising in light of the fact that the Readings are actively engaged in dream interpretation. The key to this attitude in the Readings is found, I feel in their underlying philosophy. For the Readings, it is not the conceptualization or intellectualization of an idea that is of any value but the personal application in the individual's daily life of his own understanding of the idea. Once when asked which version of the Bible was more correct, the Readings replied that it was the version one applied in one's daily life.

The Readings do not preclude any co-operative form of dream interpretation, but root the fundamental valuation of any dream interpretation in the understanding of the individual and not in the expertise of the therapist or the consensus of the group.

Techniques of Interpretation

Correct interpretation of dreams is important for the Readings, but there are no short cuts involved. It is essentially a trial and error method requiring patience, practice and application. If an interpretation does not produce the desired results or produces negative results, it has to be re-evaluated. However, the more the individual puts into practice his dream interpretations by attempting to apply them in his daily life, the clearer the interpretations of his dreams will become.

The interpretations and the activities as you progress in the actions will become more open to thee. 307-13

The Readings recommend as a useful method for working with dreams keeping a record of those interpretations that have proven valid, making a note of those symbols in them you feel you understand for future reference.

Question 44 "How should dreams be interpreted?" Answer 44: The better definition of how the interpretation may be best is this, "Correlate those truths that are enacted in each and every dream that becomes a part of this, or the entity the individual, and use such to the better developing, ever remembering develop means going towards the higher forces, or the Creator.

More recently, Calvin Hall has developed what he calls the "Spotlight Method" of dream interpretation. In this method he uses the successful interpretation of one dream to work on other dreams adding each newly interpreted dream to his reservoir of illuminating material. Jung in a slight variation of this approach had little confidence in the single dream and preferred a series of dreams on which to base his interpretations (Jones, 1970:90-95).

In interpreting dreams the dream Readings give tentative meanings for a great many symbols. One example of these should suffice.

Question 3 "Dreamed of being picked up by an elephant..." Answer 3 "As is seen

the elephant as represents power, might, cunning with all th mental proclivities of that gained through knowledge. Then let the entity be picked by same, studying to show abilities to use and apply same in a manner acceptable unto Him, as is seen in the rescue from the elephant by the keeper..." 341-15

Symbols and the meanings assigned to them by the Readings are to be used as guides to possible interpretations and to stimulate one's own interpretive processes. They are not to be considered definitive interpretations. As in the Jungian concept of archetypes, symbols are the form, not the content, of the interpretation.

Worship not the light of the candle but rather that to which it may guide thee in thy service....it is but a helpmeet in the service of the Lord. So use them to attune Self. Symbols are but the servants of the Lord, Master of all even as thou. 707-2

It is important also to remember, when working with symbol definitions from the Readings, that, unlike Freud, they feel symbols should be considered in relation to one another and the total context of the dream.

The Readings see many symbols as arising from past life experiences. These kind of symbols Jung would see as arising from the collective unconscious and that are reflected in our myths. Because of these symbols and their effect on the individuation process, Jung considers that a professional therapist aware of the inner meanings

of these symbols is required.

The Readings, on the other hand, see such symbols as intrinsically meaningful to the individual on the basis of experience with them in previous lives. A professional therapist is still useful for interpreting dreams, but the Readings would not view him as vital since the meaning of these symbols is intuitively available to the individual. Included in this type of symbol would be religious symbols particularly those not of one's own faith. There are of course other types of symbols in the Readings. I feel Eric Fromm's classification of symbols is the closest to the way these other types of symbols are regarded by the Readings (Fromm, 1957:13-15).

His first category is "accidental symbols". These symbols pick up their identification with an object or feeling by chance. A mood of depression or joy in a particular place may cause that place to become representative of that feeling merely by accidental association. Next there are "conventional symbols" whose meaning is arrived at by common consensus. Many cultural symbols fall into this category. Finally, there are "Universal symbols" whose meaning is derived from some intrinsic relationship between the symbol and what it represents.

In working with symbols in dreams, perhaps the most commonly held working assumption by the Readings is that the elements of a dream are projections of the

personality of the dreamer. Virtually all dream interpretation theories hold this position to some degree and the Readings are no exception. In particular, dream figures are often considered to be aspects of the dreamer's own personality.

"for to the body-conscious mind these individuals represent certain conditions or specific conditions in the mind of the entity..." 900-308

One of the most effective ways of dealing with this aspect of dream interpretation which I have encountered is the approach of Frederick Perls. Perls starts by assuming all dream elements, people, and objects, are aspects of the individual's own personality. In an attempt to bring a sense of immediacy to the interpretation, the dreamer tells the dream in the present tense while other members of the group watch his reactions. The dreamer then takes the role of each element of the dream and tries to react as that element in the dream (Faraday, 1972:143-145).

The Readings almost always start interpreting a dream by relating the dream to some aspect of the individual's personality. However, the Readings interpret dreams on many levels, therefore, once this aspect of a dream is examined, other possible interpretations of the dream should be explored.

SECTION VI: SUMMARY

The attitude of the Edgar Cayce Readings on dreams is based on the contention that dreams are purposefully and meaningfully directed and guided by the inner spiritual nature of the individual through the subconscious and superconscious forces of the mind. The goal of this guidance is the full development of the potential of the individual and the awakening of the individual to his relationship with the divine.

In order to achieve this goal, dreams enter all areas of life, there being no thought or activity too trivial for their consideration. They, therefore, facilitate an intensely personal relationship with the divine within us.

In comparing the Readings on dreams with the approaches of the psychologists I have examined, I find that they generally have more in common on a practical methodological level than on a theoretical level. Psychology is essentially secular in nature, but when dealing with individuals it is often forced to enter into activities that border on the religious. The theory remains secular, but frequently, especially in counselling, the discipline is forced to work with values and ethics in relation to the religious background of the individual.

The Reading's approach to dreams, on the other hand, while essentially spiritual, frequently utilizes psychological approaches to dream interpretation. The two approaches then have a tendency to meet with regard to the actual method of interpreting a dream even though they start from different theoretical standpoints.

In my work with the material which Sanford has presented on the relationship between Christian thought and dreams, I have found very little which contradicts what the Readings have to say about the underlying nature of dreams /4/. While this lack of contradiction does not in any way establish the validity of the Reading's material on dreams, it leaves open the possibility for dialogue between Christian thought and the Readings on the nature of dreams and dream interpretation. This is important, I feel, because the Readings can make a major contribution towards a religious approach to dream interpretation, and I feel Christianity can benefit from participation in the world of dreams.

SECTION VII: ESSENTIALS OF DREAM INTERPRETATION: MY OWN APPROACH

The one principle which I feel is absolutely vital to accept if one is to obtain any worthwhile benefit from dreams is that dreams must be assumed by the individual who wishes to work with them to be potentially meaningful experiences in his life. The reason for this is that, by accepting the possibility of meaning in dreams, the individual is establishing an attitude of willingness to work with his dreams in his daily life. Such an attitude denotes an openness to change and a recognition that dreams may be helpful in dealing with problems facing the individual. Without at least tentatively conceding that dreams might be meaningful, the individual will be unlikely even to remember his dreams, much less find them useful tools for coping with daily life. Looking for meaning in dreams creates an attitude of expectancy which in itself stimulates clarity of recall.

I do not feel it is necessary to accept the premise that dreams are from God or a higher state of consciousness within ourselves in order to find meaning in them. Most psychological theories about dreams do not operate on this assumption, yet they produce meaningful and useful methods of dream interpretation.

Nonetheless, I feel even a qualified or tentative acceptance of this premise can greatly enrich the vitality and meaningfulness of dreams. This is particularly true

of individuals who are embarked on a spiritual quest for identity and a sense of purpose. The acceptance of this premise introduces an element of "otherness" into our dream life that facilitates the creation of a dialogue between the individual and them.

On the mundane level, this acceptance can mean that the individual may become aware of other levels of his personality and consciousness that are concerned for his welfare, helping to integrate him as a complete individual, and on a spiritual level this acceptance can lead him to a first hand experience of the relationship between God and man.

Personally, I have found it to be true that in working with dreams what one expects conditions what one encounters. Therefore, the more open the approach, the more one expects to find in dreams, the more meaningful they become.

In the actual interpretation process I find the central issue to be whether or not an individual is capable of interpreting his own dreams. The psychologist's I examined, while conceding that the interpretation of a dream must be rooted in the responses of the individual, in the main come down on the side of necessary expertise. This is a result, I feel, of the fact that much of psychological dream theory is derived from the clinical situation.

What validity this point of view possesses is, I feel, rooted in the special requirements of the clinical situation and in the fact that the dream interpretation process is greatly enhanced by group participation. This remains true whether the group consists of two people or twenty. As the group gradually becomes aware of the personality and background of the dreamer, such awareness enables them to offer increasingly meaningful insight into individual's dreams. Even without this facet of the group process, however, the group is invaluable in suggesting new perspectives and approaches to dreams that would not ordinarily be considered by the dreamer. Group consensus about a dream's meaning can represent peer group pressure to accept a new and different conception of oneself than would otherwise ordinarily be acceptable to the dreamer.

Despite my high evaluation of the group process as a tool for dream interpretation, I am convinced as a result of my research and my own experience in dream interpretation that expert opinion or training is more capable of interpreting dreams only in relation to its own theory or at best in facilitating the individual's own interpretation. Therefore, I still feel that the individual is not only more capable of interpreting his own dreams but it is essential that he do so.

Frequently, insight into one's character or problems is not sufficient motivation for change. Without the final responsibility for deciding the correct

interpretation of a dream there is often insufficient motivation to take any action in relation to the interpretation. By accepting responsibility for interpreting his own dreams, the individual has already entered into an agreement to attempt to change.

Once an initial commitment has been made, I have found that if an individual does not attempt to apply the results of his dream interpretations, this causes a decrease in the quality and frequency of his dream recall. This in itself often motivates the individual to further effort.

The question of the validity of individual interpretation of dreams is also a relevant one for modern Christianity. If, in fact, God does commune with man through dreams, what is the relationship of traditional Christian values to guidance received by the individual through dreams?

The answer to this question lies in Sanford's assertion that the values held by Christianity are a reflection of the values of the "inner-self" or "God within" of the individual that is directing the course of his dreams (1968:199-202). Although the individual's interpretation of these values may differ from the traditional, they should not do so too radically. What is vital is the first hand experience of these values.

In addition, if Christian churches participate in and help guide individuals through the world of dreams, an

important new form of dialogue between their members and themselves can develop. After all, dreams seldom come already interpreted, and there is no reason why Christianity should leave guidance for the individual in interpreting his dreams solely to a secular discipline like psychology.

In the course of my research and through my experience in working with my own dreams and helping others to learn to work with theirs, I have discovered some helpful techniques for dream interpretation.

1. To interpret dreams one must be able to remember them. The first step in learning to recall dreams is to have the desire to remember them.

2. To stimulate dream recall give yourself the suggestion before going to sleep that you will remember your dreams.

3. Reinforce this suggestion by having a large pad beside your bed to record your dreams when you wake up.

4. Write down whatever you remember, however fragmentary. Once you begin writing, you will often find that more of the dream will be spontaneously recalled.

5. Work with whatever portion of your dream you have remembered. This will reinforce your nightly suggestion that you want to remember and are serious about working with your dreams.

6. When you begin to interpret your dreams, start by assuming all elements of a dream are portions of your personality.

A word of caution: Carl Jung made an excellent point when he said dreams do not make qualitative judgements. When a negative aspect of your personality is portrayed in a dream, remember that it is only one aspect of your total personality, not an evaluation of your entire character.

7. Once this approach has been exhausted, begin to look at how it might refer to various elements of your life. A little common sense goes a long way in this regard. If the dream is concerned with other people, try to interpret the dream in terms of your relationship with them. If food is the major feature of the dream, try to interpret the dream in terms of your diet. If your work environment or business associates appear in the dream, try to interpret it in terms of your work situation. Do not make dreams mysterious; they often do refer to what they appear to refer to.

8. Be careful how you apply your dream interpretations to your life. Start by considering them in making small decisions and changes until you gain confidence and experience in utilizing them in your life.

9. For future reference keep a record of your dreams and the symbols whose meaning you discover. Dreams often run in series and the interpretation of one dream

will help you understand the interpretation of another dream on the same subject. A symbol once defined will begin to appear more frequently in your dreams, although you must be on the alert for shifts in its meaning.

10. A dream book or collection of dream symbol meanings can be useful particularly if it is based on first hand experience in working with symbols. One cannot stress too strongly, however, that such books should only be used to give you ideas as to possible meanings, not as definitive sources of the meaning of symbols.

I once spent several weeks trying in vain to understand my dreams because I had accepted without question a meaning for a symbol in my dreams that was given in a dream book. The best book of this type I have found, however, is Elsie Sechrist's book Dreams Your Magic Mirror (1964) which is a collection of symbols and their meanings extracted from the Edgar Cayce Readings.

11. If at all possible, try to work with your dreams in a group situation. If it is not possible to discuss your dreams in a group situation, try finding a friend or relative with whom to discuss them. This is not as difficult as it sounds. Although not a common topic of conversation, the subject of dreams is one in which I have found that people have an enormous latent interest.

12. Finally, try not to become too rigid in your approach to dream interpretation. There are always a wide variety of new ideas and techniques appearing on how to

interpret your dreams. While you should keep a firm hold on what you have found to be valuable in interpreting your dreams, experimentation can often restimulate and revitalize your work with your dreams.

To conclude, my research into the Edgar Cayce Readings, humanistic psychology, the work of John Sanford and my personal experience has convinced me that dreams attempt to guide us purposefully into an integration of our total personality and into the development of our full potential as human beings. In addition I have found dreams to be expressions of God's concern for man and a way of experiencing a direct encounter with the divine.

END NOTES

/1/ There is a River (1947) by Thomas Sugrue is the chief source of biographical information on Edgar Cayce in this thesis.

/2/ Much of this material is based on the book Meditation and the Mind of Man by Herbert Puryear and Mark Thurston.

/3/ The Readings are not entirely consistent with their use of the term "soul". Sometimes the Readings use it to refer to what I am calling the "spirit body", and sometimes the Readings use the term to refer to the total individual. However, I feel that the most consistent use of the term is as a synonym for the mental body.

/4/ An exception to this is the past life dream. However, there are so few of this type of dream that I do not feel they cut off meaningful dialogue between Christianity and the Readings.

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