

Characteristics of Purposeful Action in an Apparition Case¹

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ABSTRACT: Some theories depict apparitions as mindless fragments, whereas others point out their intelligent and purposive side. This case involves apparitions of a businessman, which occurred 2 days after he was killed in an airplane disaster. A distant relative addressed a plea to his postmortem personality, requesting that he appear to his mother in a certain manner that would constitute a sign of his continued existence. This appeal was communicated to a witness but was not disclosed to the mother or to anyone else. Subsequently, the deceased man's mother saw an apparition of him in the form her relative had requested; he also appeared in an identical form to his 6-year-old niece. All three experiencers lived about 100 miles away from each other. Neither the mother nor the niece knew of the request to appear, and neither had information about the other's experience at the time of her own. The case is discussed according to its concordance with two variants of the survival and the super-ESP hypotheses.

The characteristics of apparition experiences (AEs) are not conveniently uniform but are of a bewildering variety. Some AEs are shared in the way sensory experiences are: Everyone present and attentive to the area can perceive the event. Other AEs are private events, as unobservable to others as are our thoughts and ESP impressions. Apparitions in the context of near-death experiences result in experiences of peace and fascination, whereas in other contexts, apparitions can evoke fear and depression. Sometimes experiencers scream and run away, even from apparitions of their own mothers! Apparitions are rarely perceived as communicative: They do not say or show percipients anything, nor do they seem to communicate nonverbally. More often than not, apparitions just stand there or float by. Some apparitions are veridical, that is, they convey information in other ways, such as appearing at the time of their deaths to the hitherto uninformed percipient. Nevertheless, "the great majority of experiences that might be regarded as apparitional are not veridical" (Stevenson, 1982, p. 341). This nonveridicality, which clearly seems to be true of some AEs, seems to provoke some researchers to label all apparitions as "lifeless fragments," static images void of consciousness (Price, 1939; Roll,

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1983). Others, however, have pointed out purposeful action in apparitions (Hart & Collaborators, 1956; Myers, 1903/1954; Richmond, 1938).

Elsewhere I have stressed (Osis, 1981, in press) that apparition experiences make much more sense when we allow ourselves to postulate specific interpretations for each of the different kinds of AEs rather than to assume they are all of the same fundamental nature and can be pressed into a common mold. The case under discussion exhibits the characteristics of one type of AE: one in which the appearer seemed to have a purpose of his own, and the percipients, in response, experienced rather pleasing emotions, like those reported in deathbed visions (Osis & Haraldsson, 1977) and NDEs (Ring, 1980).

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

In this single case study, the appearer, a man killed in an airplane crash, was reportedly seen by two independent experiencers in two different locations at two different times. One witness was alone at the time, and the other was the only person awake in the room. The AEs occurred after a third party requested the deceased to appear; this request was unknown to the percipients at the times of their experiences. All three of the above-mentioned individuals were interviewed by telephone on several occasions. Six other persons, to whom the experiences were told shortly after they occurred, were also questioned. The initial interviews were conducted in early 1983. Reinterviewing was done in late 1984; this produced some new information which was not available in the preliminary report (Osis, 1984). The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The AEs themselves and the antecedent request to the deceased were not written down after the occurrences by those involved. However, notes pertaining to the sequence of events were recorded contemporaneously on a calendar by the person who made the request to the deceased; these were made available to me.

On March 18th, 1983, the research team (K.O., Donna McCormick, and a psi practitioner) visited the home of the ostensible appearer's widow, Beth. Although telephone interviews had been conducted prior to this visit, we took advantage of an opportunity to conduct face-to-face interviews with Beth and a principal experient, Marge, the mother of the deceased.

The following questionnaires, which we have used in previous cases (Osis & McCormick, 1982), were administered to Marge during our visit: Thurstone and Jeffrey's (1956) Closure Speed

Test, which is designed to assess ability to perceive objects from fragmented and poorly structured gestalts; a revised version of Betts' Questionnaire Upon Mental Imagery (Sheehan, 1967) in which respondents attempt to imagine various visual and auditory items and then rate the vividness of these images on a 7-point scale; a slightly modified (by Osis and McCormick) version of the absorption scale of Tellegen's (Tellegen, 1975; Tellegen & Atkinson, 1974) Differential Personality Questionnaire, which queries the individual's tendency to have his or her attention absorbed by real and imagined experiences; and the Questionnaire on Psychic Experiences, developed by Osis (1980) for use in a survey by the (London) Times, which elicits information from the respondents on the frequency of occurrence and qualities of their various psychic experiences.

On individual occasions, while at the laboratory of the ASPR, three psi practitioners (including the one who later visited the family with us) were asked to hold token objects and give their impressions of the cause of the plane crash that resulted in the death of the ostensible appearer. Although these data were recorded and analyzed, they are not pertinent to the AEs and will not be discussed.

THE PERSONS INVOLVED IN THE CASE

Leslie

Leslie was the 36-year-old, highly successful businessman whose ostensible apparition appeared to the two witnesses. He had a degree in statistics and, at the time of his death, was writing his doctoral dissertation. Leslie was described as being a very bright, decisive, and capable man whose attention was absorbed entirely in matters of this world; neither parapsychology, life after death, nor religious concerns were on his map of reality. He is remembered as a good father and as having been kind and pleasant in social relations. At the time of his death, Leslie had three living children and another one on the way. He was reportedly close to all of his children, but the youngest, Ricky, was "his baby," and the one most attached to him. Eighteen months prior to Leslie's death, 1½-year-old Ricky had drowned; Leslie's grief was very intense. He took up flying in order to have an outlet for the stress this sorrow produced in him.

² Fictitious names are used throughout this report; dates and places are deleted in order to secure the privacy of those concerned. Only the author and Donna McCormick know the code.

Beth

Beth was Leslie's wife. In college she studied physical education, then switched to psychology. She has a strong personality and took the tragedy of her husband's death so shortly after that of her young son with admirable courage. Beth believes in reincarnation and related issues, but she kept it to herself, not revealing it to her strong-willed husband during the years of their marriage. Although she longed to "see" her deceased spouse, she admitted believing that she might be overcome with fear at the appearance of an apparition.

Marge

Marge, a woman in her late 50s, was one of the witnesses to the apparition. She deeply loved and depended upon Leslie, her only son. Marge was still grieving the loss of her grandson, Ricky, when the tragedy of her son's death struck the second severe blow. At the time of her AE, Marge had no belief in an afterlife, stating: "If someone else had told me about an experience like I had, I would think that person belongs in an institution."

Jennifer

Jennifer was the other person to witness the apparition. She is the daughter of Beth's brother, Ray, and his wife, Rita. This niece of Leslie's was 6 years old when she experienced the apparition. She is described as a frail and sensitive child. Jennifer was raised in an atmosphere of appreciation for Eastern culture and beliefs, her parents having made repeatedly long stays in India, where they acquired Buddhist beliefs in afterlife and reportedly observed psychic phenomena.

Constance

Constance was the one who requested Leslie to appear to his mother. She was connected to the family by the marriage of her daughter, Vivian, to Leslie's cousin. Constance had met Leslie only once, at her daughter's wedding; he impressed her by his kind attentiveness to her disabled husband. Constance had not seen Marge except on several occasions 13 years prior to Leslie's death. Moreover, Constance knew neither Jennifer nor her parents. Constance is a believer in afterlife and related phenomena. She had reported previous experiences to Gardner Murphy and brought the present case to my attention when she rejoined the ASPR early in

1983. In that letter, she listed her psi experiences, which included earthquake predictions, for example, one which later occurred in Mexico, a dream of an airplane crash, which she thought might have foretold Leslie's disaster; and she also described her request to Leslie to appear and Marge's subsequent AE.

Will

Will is an electronics technician who is married to Constance and to whom she confided her request to Leslie.

Vivian

Vivian, Constance's daughter, is married to Leslie's cousin. She knows Marge, who is her mother-in-law's sister. Vivian had no recollection of ever meeting Jennifer or her parents, although she said that she might have seen them in the crowd at a wedding or other large family gathering. She believes in life after death and was aware that Marge and Leslie both scoffed at such beliefs.

Jane

Jane went to stay with her sister, Beth, when Leslie died. She was present when Marge visited the widow and recounted her AE.

Constance was the only one of the above-mentioned people who took the initiative in discussing the phenomena with me and who did so in a willing manner. The trust of the others had to be cultivated and assurances had to be given that the data would be handled in a confidential manner. Publicity was not sought by any of them; on the contrary, they were afraid of the embarrassment that could result from public attention.

THE REPORTED PHENOMENA

In 1982, Leslie was alone piloting a private airplane across the southern portion of the United States. On the third leg of his journey, after refueling for the second time, Leslie reached an altitude of 3,000 feet when he apparently lost control of the aircraft and crashed to his death. The plane hit the ground on Wednesday, 11:30 p.m. (EST) and burned with Leslie in it. His family was notified of his death very early Thursday morning.

Vivian (the wife of Leslie's cousin) heard of the tragic death early Thursday morning and related the news to her mother, Constance, who lives in a different state, later that morning. Vivian

asked Constance to pray for Leslie's soul because, she thought, he died suddenly, unprepared, and he might be confused.

Constance felt that she might have been forewarned about the disaster by a dream. The day before Leslie's airplane had crashed, Constance made the following note on her calendar, "Had a dream about a plane coming down heading toward me. Told Will at breakfast." In the interview, Constance said that at the time the dream disturbed her: "I was a little scared . . . I didn't know who was on the plane or why it was coming at me."

Regardless of whether or not the dream was precognitive, Constance felt it induced her to do more than pray as Vivian had suggested. When interviewed she said:

I had forgotten what he [Leslie] looked like; I have not seen him for 15 years. I took the book [a photo album of Vivian's wedding], looked at his picture¹ and talked to him as if he was right there . . . And then I said, "It would be a nice gesture if you would go and find your little boy who had drowned a year ago and take him by the hand and appear to your mother so that she will know that you are not dead, just separated from your body. And if she saw her little grandson with you, she will be more comforted." The next day I did the same thing a couple of times: I pictured it in my mind as if I was talking to him and he was right there.

I then asked her whether she sensed Leslie's "presence" when she was petitioning him to appear. She replied, "No, I didn't feel any presence . . . I did not know if he would do it [appear to his mother], of course." Constance went on to speak of how she told her husband, Will, about her request to Leslie; Will remembered being told the same day. He also recalled that Constance had called Vivian on Tuesday (two days after the funeral) but was not told anything about the apparition experience. He remembered that it was six days after the funeral that Vivian told Constance about Marge's AE. The inscription on Constance's calendar for that day reads, "Vivian phoned later, told about Leslie's mom seeing him at foot of bed while awake holding his little son's hand." Although both Constance and Will felt good that Marge's grief was somewhat helped by the outcome of Constance's request to Leslie, neither of them told anyone else about it except Vivian at the time of her disclosure of Marge's apparition experience.

In the interview, Marge said that the tragedy of her beloved son plunged her into a state of very intense grief and despair. Saturday, between 1:00 and 3:00 a.m., two nights after Constance first requested Leslie to appear to his mother, Marge was awakened by a

¹ The photograph consists of her husband, Will, sitting in his wheelchair as Leslie pushed it and Constance stood beside it.

disturbance in her room. She was lying on her side, then turned around and saw someone standing at the foot of her bed. To say the least, she was startled by what she saw:

There he was, Leslie, with the baby, and he was holding the baby's hand . . . they were at the foot of the bed. They looked at each other. I was wide awake then. They were content; they were happy that they found each other, that they were together now. And they were letting me know that it is so; I got that feeling.

This experience was so absorbing that the perceptual world around Marge faded out:

They were solid. There was like grayness around, like a gray cloud around them. I would say there was a mist in the whole room, nothing you could touch, just the grayness all around. But they were solid, both of them. The room was dark; electric light was coming from outside through the venetian blinds. . . . but I didn't need light to see them. There is a lot of traffic around my area. No matter at what time you got trucks and buses. Not one sound then, all was excluded at that moment, everything, as though the world had stood still. And there was nobody but us three in the world.

The communication that followed was nonverbal, therefore, no details (which we parapsychologists are addicted to) were available to investigate. However, for Marge it was as transforming an experience as those of the near-death variety, but perhaps for her it was a life or death matter:

They looked at me and they communicated. [K.O.: What did they communicate?] I really don't know. I got a peaceful feeling, everything around was completely serene. I felt them as if they were breathing into me, breathing my life into me. He was giving my life back to me. And it's the most lasting feeling: I will never, never forget this. Never, never forget this. It never happened before and never happened since. They were just there, I believe, to give me peace of mind. It really helped. I have not gotten over it [the grief] yet, but it made me able to live through very hard times without killing myself, because I was very despondent. I tried to keep them longer and they just went. They got smaller [into the distance] and faded out.

The experience was said to have lasted about 15 seconds, but its effects on Marge lasted at least up to the follow-up interview 2½ years later.

Marge's husband did not awaken during her vision of Leslie and Ricky; therefore, we do not know if the apparition could have been collectively perceived. The following morning, Marge told the experience to her husband. She then went to her son's house and told his widow, Beth; Jane, who was staying with her sister, Beth, to

help her in her time of grief, was also present as Marge recounted her experience. Both women remember Marge's report with clear consistency.

The vision was kept privy to the intimate core of the family for fear of the skeptical attitude and possible ridicule they would encounter from family members who were known to look down on beliefs in life after death. Prior to her experience, Marge herself would have been among those who scoffed. She said: "I had no anticipation that I would ever accept anything like this, nor that I would be the recipient of such a visit." Others who know Marge well portrayed her pre-AE attitudes about such things in the same way. According to them, initially her grief was so desperate because she believed death to result in the ultimate destruction of human personality and hence, of her son. The AE certainly turned her philosophy around. In fact, 2½ years later, Marge admitted that after that first experience she had tried in different ways to induce an apparitional visit from Leslie, but in spite of her great desire to see him, no AE occurred. In any case, that day Marge did share her experience with Beth because she knew of her daughter-in-law's belief in survival and felt she would understand what Leslie's appearance meant to her. The AE was not discussed the next day at the funeral.

Leslie and Jennifer were reportedly quite fond of one another. Jennifer was thrilled when Uncle Leslie would come for a visit because his children would play with her, and when he came in his airplane he would take her up for a ride. Jennifer also knew of her uncle's death prior to witnessing his apparition. Her experience occurred several hours prior to Marge's AE. Jennifer described the event as follows: "I was up and awake when I saw like a cloud in my room and there was [sic] Leslie and Ricky holding hands . . . They looked just regular [life-like] . . . It looked almost exactly like him [Leslie]." Although Ricky died when Jennifer was only four, she said she recognized Leslie's little boy. When asked how they disappeared, Jennifer said, "I stopped thinking about them and they went away." In response to repeated questions, Jennifer consistently stated that she was up and awake and that her eyes were open. She was vague about the length of the experience. Of her feeling about the event, she said: "part of it was happy, and part of it was sad." She also said that she felt close to her Uncle Leslie when he was alive; her mother confirmed the closeness of that relationship. Rita, Jennifer's mother, also confirmed that the little girl had told her of the experience right after it happened. Rita remembered that at the time, Jennifer had been meditating and therefore was awake. She added that Jennifer described a sense of peace coming from her visionary visitors. Rita determined that

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Jennifer's AE must have occurred Friday evening because the next day they left for the 150-mile journey to Leslie's house.

Overall, the incident was similarly remembered by Jennifer's father, Ray, although he had forgotten the details. He told me that, like many of the youths who grew up in the 1960s, he and his wife had made a pilgrimage to the East: two long trips to India and Nepal; they were members of groups that claimed extraordinary psychic experiences, and they reported a few such personal events themselves. Jennifer's parents, therefore, felt that their daughter's vision was a comparatively "small matter," and it did not particularly arouse their interests. Rita stated that Jennifer had not had any other apparition experiences, but that "she has a little better ESP than other kids. At times she can get numbers when she's not looking at them." When I phoned for a follow-up interview 1½ years later, Jennifer still had not experienced any other apparitions, but a precognitive dream had just been fulfilled.

From our interviews we established that Jennifer became aware of Marge's experience a day or so after her own AE. Marge, on the other hand, did not know of Jennifer's AE until a month later. We were told that this was because they did not want Marge to know that Leslie had appeared to someone else before he "visited" his mother.

Whereas Marge's experience was completely outside the range of her expectations, Jennifer's was not. According to her mother: "We talked about these things. We believe in reincarnation. She very well might have expected something like that."

The closeness in time and the independence of and similarity to Marge's experience would seem to increase the importance of Jennifer's vision to our assessment of the case.

RESULTS OF TESTS ADMINISTERED TO MARGE⁴

The results of the psychological tests taken by Marge are as follows:

- (1) *Betts' Questionnaire Upon Mental Imagery*: The highest extreme for vividness of imagery was checked on all items; (2) *Absorption Scale of the Differential Personality Questionnaire*: The tendency to become absorbed in such experiences as a crackling fire, music, or nature was in the upper range for two-thirds of the items, the median being "frequently" ("never," "rarely," "once in awhile," "all the time" were the other response alternatives); (3) *Closure Speed Test*: Below average ability (as compared with other

⁴ We could not administer any tests to Jennifer because she and her family were living in California at the time of our investigation.

apparition experients we have administered this test to) to perceive objects from fragmented and poorly structured gestalts was indicated; (4) *Questionnaire on Psychic Experiences*: The scores indicate that Marge is now a moderate believer in afterlife and that she claims some personal ESP.

How does Marge's description of the apparition of Leslie and Ricky fit the test findings? The exclusion of traffic noises and the reduction in clarity of her visual surrounds, for example, "like a gray cloud around them," go well with her above-average ability to become absorbed in her experiences. In regard to vividness, she said that the apparitions were "like shadows," which is far from what would be expected of someone who is constructing apparitions with an imagination as vivid as hers (Marge's score on the Betts' Questionnaire Upon Mental Imagery was extreme). Her description of the unclear, shadow-like forms in her vision do, however, correspond well with the results of the Gestalt Completion Test, which indicated that her ability to discern figures from scant and poorly structured stimuli is far from acute. The correspondences between the test results and the AE account do indeed suggest that the apparition might have been seen rather than imagined.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we will critically evaluate the possible nonpsi interpretations of the data, and we will assess the authenticity and consistency of the reports, the reliability of the witnesses, and the likelihood of chance coincidence. Three competing hypotheses will be applied to the data and assessed for their ability to accommodate the information.

Authenticity

Did the events really occur as they were reported by the witnesses? There were three experients: one who requested the event and two who perceived it. Each of these occurrences was observed by solitary individuals. Each event was reported to at least one other person within hours after it happened. Each incident occurred without the witnesses' knowledge of what the others had done or seen; in this respect these reports are independent, that is, the accounts were related to someone else before knowledge of the others' experiences could bias them either toward conformity or uniqueness. At the time, none of the three persons kept written records detailing what they did or saw. Scanty notations on Constance's calendar were very useful in tracing the chronological

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sequence of events, but the details of these events depend solely on the memories of the experients and those in whom they confided.

Consistency

Were the accounts reasonably consistent among the nine persons interviewed? Descriptions of the contents of Marge's and of Jennifer's visions closely corresponded with one another; the exception to this was Ray's account, which simply lacked detail because he did not remember the specifics. Comparisons among reports reveal that a few details were omitted here and there, but there were no indications of exaggeration.

The succession of events was also consistently related and supported by memories pertaining to the contexts in which situations occurred. This is fortunate because there was poor recollection of the exact dates and times of the events; corroborative testimony about surrounding events was important and helpful in restructuring the sequence. For example, Marge was uncertain about whether her AE happened during the night of Friday-to-Saturday, or Saturday-to-Sunday. Without exception, her family remembered that her experience occurred the same night as Jennifer's. Because Jennifer left her home to visit Beth on Saturday morning and had her AE prior to that trip, Marge's Saturday-to-Sunday alternative was eliminated.

Reliability

As previously mentioned, no motivation for publicity nor for other personal gain was discovered. Quite to the contrary, there were strong indications that those involved feared publicity and the ensuing ridicule, both from inside and outside the family. Only after their confidence was gained did the witnesses become candid with me.

Additional reservation is usually called for when one obtains anecdotal material from children. This must have come to the reader's mind when learning that one of the principal experients was a 6 year old, despite the fact that she told her parents of the event just after it occurred. However, the views pertaining to the value of a child's testimony have changed recently. Because of space limitations, I will not discuss the latest research on the issue of child witnesses in criminal cases. Suffice it to say that much greater accuracy has been found in children's statements than was hitherto recognized in courts.

It would seem safe to conclude that the basic information neces-

sary for interpreting this case was remembered with sufficient clarity, recounted with reasonable accuracy, and with no apparent motivation for distortion.

Chance Coincidence

Could coincidence explain the reported phenomena? A measure of probability that the results could have occurred by chance is essential when interpreting experimental data; it is not, however, very appropriate for single case studies (Yin, 1984). Only rough estimates of chance probabilities are possible in spontaneous case studies. Three characteristics have to be considered in this case: (1) Double apparitions, those of two persons who died at different times, are infrequent outside of visions seen in near-death experiences; (2) Double apparitions perceived by two independent individuals and in widely different localities is a rarity, especially when the apparitions reportedly appear in the same pose, that is, father holding his little son's hand; (3) Responding to an apparition with soothing and beneficial feelings is also infrequent outside of near-death experiences. Green and McCreery (1975) state that "subjects sometimes report that they had a feeling of 'peace,' 'calm,' 'comfort,' or 'tranquility,' either while perceiving an apparition, or afterwards. Four per cent of our subjects report this type of reaction" (p. 200).

Of course, chance coincidence can never be totally excluded, but, in my estimation, the likelihood of it explaining this case is exceedingly small.

PSI-RELATED INTERPRETATIONS

Many psi-related hypotheses have been advanced during parapsychology's 100-year search for a solution to the enigma of apparitions (Alvarado & Martínez-Taboas, 1983; Gauld, 1982; Gurney, Myers, & Podmore, 1886/1970; Jacobson, 1974; Myers, 1903/1954; Osis, 1981, 1984; Osis & Haraldsson, 1977; Rhine, 1981; Roll, 1982; Stevenson, 1982; Tyrrell, 1953). I will limit my discussion to two basic models: the survival hypothesis, which shall be split into two subcategories, and the super-ESP hypothesis. Specifically, I will deal with the following three:

(1) *Survival-of-Personality Model*, which assumes that in an AE there is active participation on the part of deceased agents, in this case, Leslie and Ricky;

(2) *Survival-of-Fragments Model*, which proposes that only fragmented images or thought, which were generated when the appearer was alive, are all that survive death;

(3) *Super-ESP Model*, which attributes the origin of AEs exclusively to living agents, in this case, Constance, Marge, and Jennifer.

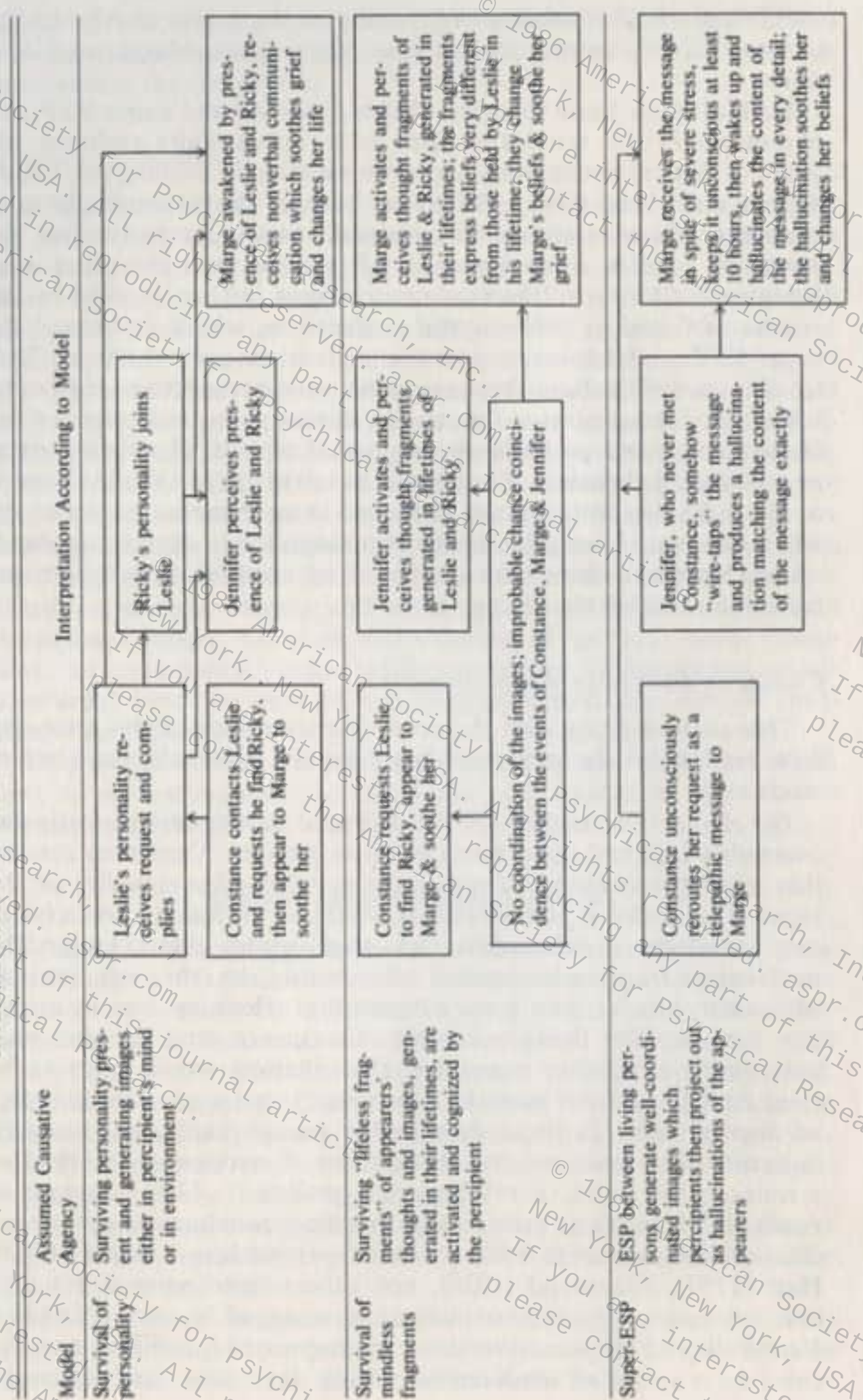
Both of these basic theories, that is, survival and super-ESP, are perennials in the sense that they have successfully endured 100 years of critical evaluations and even passionate onslaughts. I have argued elsewhere (Osis, 1983) that both of these seemingly contradictory theories should be retained because each one has the power to explain some types of AEs better than the other one. Keeping both forks of the road open is even further justified by the results of Gauld's (1982) careful evaluations, which dethroned the super-ESP model from its position of dominance in the field. That leaves theorizing about this case to an open perspective. However, I feel that I must caution the reader, at this point, to beware of the inadequacies and preliminary natures of almost all existing parapsychological theories. The factual bases of these theories appear to me to be like little islands scattered in an immense ocean of the still unknown. I see wonderful cumulus clouds above this landscape, but these clouds are generated by currents of hot air rising from our wishful theorizing.

Characteristics to be Accommodated

This section deals with the core characteristics of this case and how well they are accommodated by the alternate explanatory models.

The request. A request for the deceased to appear was made and ostensibly initiated apparitions of those persons. One must assume that telepathy occurred if either the survival-of-personality or the super-ESP model is considered. It would be difficult to conceive of any satisfactory telepathic link that could occur under the survival-of-fragments model. According to the survival-of-personality model, one must assume that telepathy was in operation between the living petitioner, Constance, and the deceased personality of Leslie; moreover, that channel would have to be clear enough in order to make it possible to arrange something like an appointment. Is there data in the parapsychological research literature that indicates the plausibility of making such effective arrangements with surviving personalities? The concept of mediumistic readings concerning specified communicators implies planned arrangements with deceased personalities. Gauld (1982), Hart (1959), Richmond (1938), and others have pointed out data that strongly suggest communications arranged in such a fashion. Nea Walker (1935) described how she requested a communicator to come to a specified mediumistic sitting days later, and, although

Table
INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CASE ACCORDING TO RIVAL HYPOTHESES



the medium was not informed of the "appointment," the ostensible spirit seemed to comply and communicate. I applied this idea to my linkage experiment with mediums (Osis, 1966) and got results that indicated that arrangements of the kind Constance attempted might be effective.

The super-ESP model would assume that Constance's request to Leslie was unconsciously readdressed and telepathically transmitted by her to the apparition experts, Marge and Jennifer.

Correspondence between elements of the case. It is clearly evident that a close correspondence exists between Constance's request for Leslie to soothe Marge's grief by appearing to her with his son, Ricky, and the actual apparitions experienced by both percipients. Highly similar correspondences are also to be found between the two AEs, despite Constance and Jennifer being totally unacquainted with one another; however, Leslie knew all three experiencers. The survival-of-personality model does well in explaining the nearly exact congruence between Constance's request to Leslie and the two AEs. This is so because it assumes a coordinator of these events, that is, the personality of Leslie. The survival-of-fragments model is apparently unable to offer an adequate explanation for the correspondence between the three experiences because it does not suggest any coordinator. An explanation depending on chance coincidence has already been ruled out as a very unlikely possibility. The super-ESP model at first appears to provide a good explanation, but becomes strained when one fully realizes the complexity and extent to which ESP would have had to have been operating. That hypothesis would assume that the personalities of Leslie and Ricky did not exist in any form after death. Therefore, figuratively speaking, Constance would have dialed a telephone number that was disconnected, and so the operator (presumably her unconscious) rerouted the call to Marge, about whom Constance was concerned. This "rerouted call," however, would have had to overcome three obstacles known to be detrimental to ESP: (1) the state of severe emotional stress experienced by the percipient, Marge; (2) the "super-goat" attitude of disbelief in survival held by Marge; (3) the vagueness of the relationship between agent (Constance) and percipient (Marge), who had not seen one another for 13 years. The two women had little in common, belonged to different subcultures, and possessed different belief systems, which is the reason that Constance's request was not disclosed to Marge until my inquiries made it necessary. The first two obstacles would have tended to inhibit or garble the telepathic message, while the third presumably would diminish the relevance of a message coming from a person insignificant in Marge's life. Why, then, did a message which should have come

through in an understated fashion, at best, hit with such impact that Marge awoke, turned over and experienced a full-blown hallucination that lasted for 15 seconds? If you are interested in reproducing any part of this journal article, please contact the American Society for Psychical Research, Inc., New York, New York, USA.

The super-ESP hypothesis is further strained in Jennifer's case: Not only was the little girl *not* the target of Constance's concern, but Constance did not even know of Jennifer's existence. Essentially, the super-ESP interpretation would assume that one experient (Jennifer) had a precognitive hallucination of the other experient's (Marge's) hallucination. Although, according to the model, this might seem like a logical interpretation, there is no precedent in the literature for it. However, if this were the case, one would expect that the stimulus material would have to be of such an intense and personally meaningful nature of the precognizer, 6-year-old Jennifer, that it would result in the perception of several identical details and provoke a hallucination capable of containing them all. The occurrence of massive ESP is thought to depend largely on the motivation of the people involved. Although there was a bond between Leslie and Jennifer, there were no ties whatsoever between Jennifer and Marge. It would seem difficult to find a precedent regardless of whether we assume that Jennifer had a hallucination that precognized Marge's hallucination, or else precognized Marge's later description of her experience. The precision with which Jennifer's vision expressed the relevant details makes the super-ESP explanation even more unlikely.

Impact of the apparition experience. The impact that the AE had on Marge closely resembles that of some near-death experiences, which evoke emotions of love and contentment (Ring, 1980). According to Marge's testimony and the observations of other interviewees, the AE certainly renewed the bereaved mother's inner strength and will to live. The apparition also stimulated a radical change in her belief system: She now has a belief in afterlife which she did not have before. Jennifer's description of the experience as "part happy, part sad," seems also to indicate that, although to a lesser extent, the communication carried for her the same tone as it did for Marge. It is difficult to imagine that such outcomes could have been achieved by ESP experiences between individuals with scant or no personal ties between them.

The first appearance. Why was the apparition of Leslie and Ricky first experienced by Jennifer and not by the requested target person, Marge? This is the hardest of all to explain by the super-ESP model because Jennifer and Constance were total strangers who lived far away from one another. The survival-of-personality model also has some difficulty explaining this feature. Something happened that was not requested by anyone. Within the framework of the survival model, one could speculate that it was easier for

Leslie to reach a believing little girl who was quietly meditating than to contact his strongly disbelieving mother who was stricken with grief and despair. Also, why was there no apparition experienced by Beth, the widow? She stated that she thought Leslie knew that, in spite of her grief, she "would not be able to handle it," that is, the fear generated by seeing an apparition of the dead. Maybe Leslie also knew that he would need more than one appearance to impress those family members who, like his mother, were highly skeptical. He was a man who could assess situations quickly and respond to them well. He might have found a better way to effectively achieve what Constance had requested.

CONCLUSION

We have discussed how well the various models do or do not fit our case. Let us remember that we operate in the domain of a very young science in which many uncertainties still prevail. One case alone cannot decide the survival issue. Different scholars will interpret the data differently, each according to their own belief systems. The manifest characteristics of this case certainly do not support the notion that apparitions are static images void of consciousness; something much more powerful and purposeful seems to be indicated.

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