

Apparition, a deceased person appears



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There is a systematic and extensive research within the four most important branches of the Survival Hypothesis such as Instrumental Transcommunication (ITC), Mediumship, Near Death Experiences and Reincarnation.

In the shadow of these four research fields we can also find a much less known and less investigated phenomena, the **Apparition** (from the Latin verb *apparere*=to be visible, appear), when somebody suddenly sees a deceased person, in most but not at all in all cases, a relative. Apparition is, owing to several factors which will be treated later in this article, rather difficult to do research on.

These four have the same comprehensive target to find evidence that some part of the personality can survive and exist somewhere after the death of the physical body. However, the conditions and the methods of the research within this group vary quite much. Research in ITC and Mediumship is possible via elective experiments, meaning that researchers can in advance and in details design and carry out experiments according to strict protocols and also that the results can be objective or statistically significant according to the judgement of experts. Reports of occurrence of NDE or the claim of Reincarnation are due to their nature spontaneous phenomena and can consequently be investigated only retroactively with results which tend to be subjective.

There are quite many reported stories about Apparition and the clarity of the experiences varies a lot. For the serious researcher the greatest dilemma is the fact that all the experiences are subjective and consequently it is difficult, if not impossible to prove that they were true.

In this context somebody could assert that if a clear apparition is reported by a particularly reliable person then people should believe in it. Indeed, one can believe in a statement, but believing is not the same as knowing. Scientific research has the target to arrive at knowledge about a phenomenon.

An apparition, as told me by a distant relative (owing to her integrity I have changed some personal characteristics, but the story is in all other respects accurately reproduced here):

Ingrid was a 35 year old operating room nurse

living in Stockholm, she appreciated her important job to assist qualified surgeons at complicated operations and was liked very much by her family, colleagues and friends.

For whatever reason, one day she decided to take a long break and travel around the world. After some time she arrived in India, visited the countryside and became deeply shocked by seeing the primitive living conditions of poor people with limited or no access to medical care. She decided to stay a while to help people as much as she was able to. In fact, she stayed five years, lived under the most simple conditions in a small village and took care of the sick as much as she could, having very limited access to modern medicines and material in health care.

A doctor from a small distant hospital supported her and she became a very good friend of a local “guru” who was the spiritual centre point of the people around him. As a blond woman with blue eyes who from nowhere turned up in the village to help people she was regarded as almost a miracle.

After five years in India she came back to Sweden and settled down in a much smaller town than Stockholm. A couple of years later she got into a serious personal crisis and could not decide how to handle it, the situation became worse and worse infecting both her work and family life. When the pressure on her became almost unbearable, she woke up one night, felt that her mind was crystal clear and saw to her enormous astonishment the “guru” from India standing in her sleeping room.

The guru addressed her with his usual nice and calming words explaining that he came from another dimension and was keen to help her. They had a long conversation and finally it succeeded the guru to disentangle her confused thoughts, gave her advice on what to do and then disappeared.

Ingrid the nurse, being a sensible and realistic person, was all the time aware of the absurdity of the situation and endeavoured incessantly to identify circumstances which could prove that the experience was true and that she had not had a dream. Among other things she noted that the curtains moved a little because the window was open, and she also heard some cars driving outside. ▶

Sceptics dismiss of course the phenomenon Apparition and claim that the above case, like many similar ones, are simply dreaming cases; as a matter of fact dreaming to be awake is more usual than most people think. Admittedly, I cannot deny that there is some logic in the “dreaming explanation”, not only in the above described case but also generally. As pointed out earlier in this article the huge problem is to be able to get objective evidence that an experience of apparition was

not due to dreaming.

But, if an apparition does occur right in daylight and the person who experiences it is awake, then the argument of dreaming cannot be valid any more. Therefore, I present hereunder a very short summary of the probably most famous case which occurred at Glasgow airport. Charman’s recent article is based upon an investigation of the case by two researchers Tricia Robertson and Archie Roy.

Seeing an apparition at Glasgow Airport

Journal of Society for Physical Research, 2016, by Robert Charman

In the beginning of 1990 Loganair was a small airline in Scotland having only 5 airplanes. Two of the pilots were Robert Macleod 30 years old and his older colleague Robert Hambleton 50 years old, during the nine years they worked together at the airline they became really good friends. Hambleton retired from service nine months before the reported apparition.

Hambleton landed in Glasgow from Heathrow on the 15th June at 14:30 on a sunny summer day. After having passed customs he went to the meeting point of the airport, where he was expected to be picked up by a friend. He put his bag down, checked his clock which showed 14:45 and waited patiently for his friend. He was pleasantly surprised to see his old friend Macleod coming out from a side door heading towards him. Macleod smiled and greeted him with a typical familiar jargon:

“How’s it going you old bastard”. They chatted shortly with each other, and then Macleod said: *“Sorry, I have to go, I am already too late”* and he disappeared in the direction of a check-in counter.

The researcher Tricia Robertson interviewed Hambleton some time after the reported apparition and noticed that he was quite upset and worried because he found his old friend at the airport so thin, Macleod must have lost over 10 kilos. Moreover, Hambleton was surprised that Macleod did not take then initiative to shake

hands with him.

Anyway, next day Hambleton went to his local pub to take a drink as his habit was and an acquaintance showed him a newspaper with an obituary notice saying: *“You might have known this man, he was a pilot like you.”* To his huge astonishment he saw Macleod’s picture; it cannot be true, he thought and called immediately the airline to get an explanation to the obvious error in the paper.

However the airline did confirm the death of Macleod and also told him that Macleod had been seriously ill several months earlier due to liver cancer and lost 18 kilos. He died on the 11 June, that is to say **5 days before Hambleton met him at the airport.**

Tricia Robertson carried out a thorough investigation at the airport in order to get a survey of the conditions in connection with the reported apparition. Among others she checked all the lists of arriving passengers and found nobody with the name Macleod.

Unfortunately, the surveillance tapes of the airport were of no use since after some time the content was regularly deleted. But what she finally found was an, to say the least, astounding fact; on the day of the apparition a plane carrying **a coffin with Macleod’s body landed at 15:00 at the airport** for further road transport to his home town where the funeral would take place.

Now, having this fact on the table it is possible for me to analyse what happened and to make theoretical conclusions regarding the imaginable alternatives as follows:

Alternative 1.

An invented story. Hambleton for some reason decided to tell a lie. This is of course completely possible, however in the defence of Hamilton a lawyer could argue among other things that Hamilton had no motive whatsoever to lie, he was genuinely upset and worried seeing his old friend so thin.

Alternative 2.

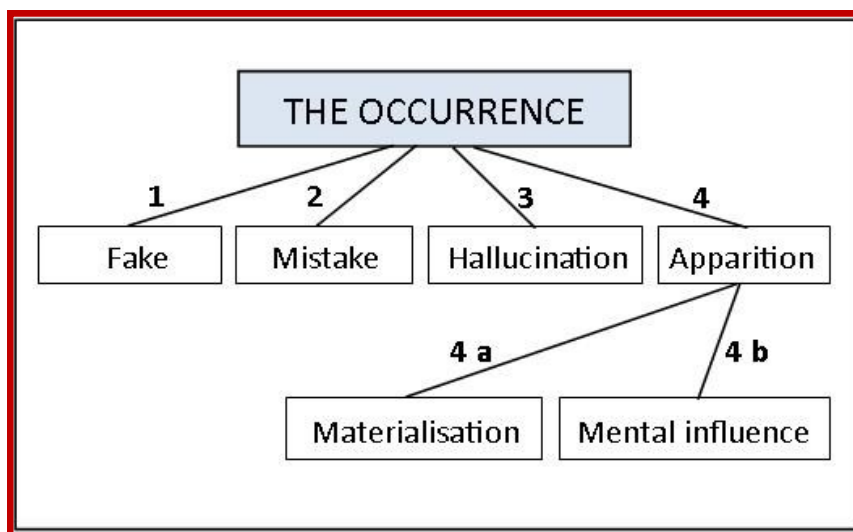
Mistake, that is to say Hambleton did not see Macleod but another person. This alternative can, without any further consideration, be written off from the list of the four alternatives. Hambleton claimed most decidedly during an interview that he was totally sure to recognize Macleod; after all they knew each other for over nine years, were good friends and met countless times.

Alternative 3.

Hallucination is a reasonable possibility. Hallucination can be a very clear sensation, experiences of physical objects, animals or human beings although the pictures are not transferred via sensory organs as eyes or ears, they arise in the mind. Usually, something has to give rise to a hallucination for instance a sudden change in the psychical or physical balance of a person.

If we, in this context disregard drugs or severe mental instability (which belongs to the discipline of psychiatry), hallucination occurs very, very seldom in healthy people. Hambleton was a professional pilot in a very good mental and bodily shape. He had not seen or met Macleod for a period of nine months and had no reason at all to think about him. Why would he get such a long and clear hallucination of Macleod?

Well, if we consider hallucination as an alternative, it is necessary also to consider the reason of it, in other words what initiated the hallucination. There is a rather daring hypothesis; Hambleton had a particularly strong psychic ability without being aware of it and due to that he got an unconscious “feeling” that the body of his old friend was laying in a coffin not far away from him. This hypothesis has also another version, such as that Macleod, from another dimension created the “feeling” in Hambleton.



Picture showing the different possible explanations of the apparition.

Alternative 4.

Apparition. Considering this alternative as a logical explanation brings about a couple of consequential questions regarding the arousal of the apparition, namely if it is a mental or physical phenomenon.

a) The deceased Macleod succeeded, in a for us incomprehensible way, to re-build his complete body in our physical dimension, not like a materialisation of only the shape of a body, but also all the inner organs and functions of the body, moving, talking, smiling, hearing and so on. If so, Hambleton indeed saw him and heard him talking and all other people around could have seen and heard him.

b) Macleod did not create a physical body at the airport but influenced, in a for us unknown way, Hambleton's perception and the meeting did not take place at the airport but only in Hambleton's mind without any input from his sensory organs. This can be compared to a very vivid dream or hallucination.

c) Irrespective of the fact which of the alternatives a) or b) may be the reason to Hambleton's experience, why did Macleod act in this way? If he did it then it must be understood that he, while his body was in the coffin, could from another dimension see what was happening at the airport, recognize his friend and decide to make contact.

This apparition case offers researchers two kinds of evidence; Hambleton's very clear experience which is, no matter how convincing, still only a subjective evidence and circumstantial evidence meaning that all the circumstances regarding the case indicate that the apparition was a true phenomenon.

Strong circumstantial evidence is often accepted by a court of law and judgements are accordingly based upon it. Notwithstanding court praxis, circumstantial evidence are not enough for science within parapsychology and especially not regarding the issue of possibility of life after death. There are of course photos published in papers and on the Internet showing what seems to be an apparition, but to get acknowledgement such photos should have been taken under strictly controlled conditions in the presence of neutral observers.

And such conditions are almost impossible to achieve, unless, unless, unless a very psychic person could make contact with a deceased who would agree to appear in our world at pre-arranged times.

Unfortunately, there seems to be no way for research to obtain objective evidence in cases like this, what remains is to work with logical hypotheses and to arrive at reasonable conclusions. It is in the nature of things, that strong circumstantial evidence can be more convincing than weak ones, thus increasing the probability that the apparition was a genuine event, just like what happened at the Glasgow airport.

To take a huge step from the serious, scientific way of dealing with phenomena like this, I quote some words of the famous British literary detective Sherlock Holmes, who in an apparently hopeless situation, when there was no obvious explanation how a crime must have been committed said:

***“when everything possible is impossible,
we have to consider
that the impossible is possible.”***
