

Marian Apparitions and Discarnate Existence

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Introduction

The observations of the percipients of twentieth- and twenty-first century Marian apparitions provide some validation, derived from external sources, of various otherworldly elements of near-death experiences.¹ NDEs, pre-death visions and shared death experiences inform us about post-mortem existence but without making clear distinctions between disparate forms of discarnate life, whereas Marian apparitions not only promise to guarantee the continuity of life after death, but also bring into focus well-defined forms of discarnate life – thereby highlighting the sanctity of terrestrial existence. The purpose of Marian apparitions is to recall and emphasise some aspects of spirituality. At the same time, they are of immense significance for a deeper understanding of the brain-mind-consciousness complex in the sense that they validate the existence of a higher consciousness and its independent existence after physical extinction. Consciousness should be viewed from different angles for better appreciation, like the facets of a jewel. Therefore, it is my contention that Marian apparitions could make a valuable contribution to consciousness studies in addition to their spiritual significance.

The present paper discusses Marian apparitions from discarnate survivalist perspectives. Generally, in the study of Marian apparitions, objective analysis and courtroom logics are applied along with theological wisdom. Mary has offered information to the percipients about discarnate existence through revelations, visions and by way of physical and out-of-body transportations into other realms. Marian apparitional experiences provide an insight into unfamiliar otherworldly realms, angelic spirits and negative entities, as well as into the whereabouts of deceased relatives and friends. In this respect, the Marian manifestations at Kibeho, Fatima and Medjugorje are particularly enlightening.

Marian Apparitions

Parapsychology has recently opened its frontiers to encompass the spiritual or the mystical, but the transcendental aspects of Marian apparitional phenomena are beyond the parameters of scientific research. Marian percipients see a talking apparition of Our Lady in objective space as having a purpose, rather than presenting itself merely as a hallucinatory figure, and those apparitions are three-dimensional and active. The meeting between percipient and apparition is not mechanical. Quantitative scientific tests conducted by French and Italian medical

teams at Medjugorje have proved that the visionaries are responding to an outside agency.² The voice extinction and sensory disconnection of the percipients demonstrated at Fatima, Medjugorje and other Marian apparitional sites could be explained as psychokinetic-like activity on the part of the apparition, and so visionary experiences involving recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis (RSPK) or RSPK-like activity may be instances of true apparitions at a physical site. Marian apparitional experiences may thus constitute evidence for the existence of psi-like phenomena and discarnate survival.

Neuroscientists who are confused about neurological theories of mysticism would benefit from studying Marian apparitions in order to understand that, in addition to sensory and quantum consciousness, we may have a 'spiritual/higher consciousness'. Marian apparitional experiences can be subjected to scientific analysis, but Marian apparitions are beyond scientific parameters. Marian apparitional events inform research into post-mortem existence, and offer a complementary insight into our current knowledge of the discarnate realm. There are hundreds of Marian apparitions around the world without major references or investigations. Most apparitions are not condoned or sanctioned by the Catholic Church, which is the custodian of Mary's appearances. I will discuss three Marian apparitions relevant to my present discussion on discarnate existence: Kibeho, Fatima and Medjugorje.

Kibeho Apparitions (Rwanda, Africa)

The Kibeho apparitions of Rwanda (November 28th 1981 - November 28th 1989) have a typically African cultural flavour. On November 28th 1981, Alphonsine Mumureke, then a pious, 16-year-old student, was suddenly called by a voice saying 'My child!' Our Lady began appearing to her, and called herself 'the Mother of the Word'.³ To begin with, Mumureke's account of this event was met with considerable criticism, and she was put into a sort of quarantine. However, soon afterwards, Marie-Claire Mukangango, one of the sceptics, was also called by Our Lady. Events gained momentum and crowds gathered. A raised platform had to be erected, and apparitional experiences began to take place in full view of thousands of pilgrims and those who had come out of curiosity.

When Our Lady appeared, she wore a long white dress and sometimes a blue veil. She was neither white nor black but some indescribable colour, and she was especially radiant. She sometimes wept, and was sometimes happy. The visions were authentically African. The visionaries sometimes danced, sang or composed prayers, and the crowd often joined in great waves of powerful prayer. The visionaries looked unwaveringly at one particular point in front of them. They were insensitive to pins driven into them as far as the bone, and to burns or blows. They

were in another world. When the apparitions finished, they sometimes had ecstatic falls which looked frighteningly painful, but which left no visible marks. During the apparitions they sometimes cried, knelt, stood up or lay down. They sometimes had animated conversations with their heavenly visitor; at other times there were long periods of silence. The attitude of the Local Bishop was very open-minded; he set up medical and theological commissions, and also gave permission for a book to be written on the matter. The findings of the medical commissions so far are that the teenagers are perfectly normal, and the long fasts inexplicable. The Rwandan psychiatrist Dr Muremyangango Bonaventure certified that the visions were not due to any mental aberrations, and even promoted the Kibeho apparitions in the later years of his life.⁴

To add to the authenticity of the Kibeho apparitions, one of the predictions made by the apparition literally came true. The Rwanda genocide (1994) that claimed 800,000 victims was another example of a fulfilled Marian prediction. During one of the apparitional experiences, on August 19th 1982, the Kibeho seer Alphonsine Mumureke was shown a vision of a river of blood, indicating a future catastrophic event awaiting the country. Ilibagiza (2008) writes: 'Suddenly Alphonsine let out a gut-wrenching scream that cut through the startled crowd (nearly 20,000 people) like a razor. 'I see a river of blood! Why did you show me so much blood...' the seer cried out, as Holy Mother revealed one horrifying vision after another'. The young visionary was subjected to so many images of destruction, torture and savage human carnage that she pleaded for an end to the visions. Even though predictions in the form of symbolic visions are conditional, sadly the Kibeho predictions came true; the local bishop gave official recognition to the Kibeho apparitions in May of 2001.

Two other Kibeho visionaries were also privileged to have other-worldly visions. Ilibagiza Immaculée, who was one of the observers at Kibeho from the very beginning, gives a detailed account (2008) of their otherworldly guided expeditions.³ The direct personal awareness of and contact with celestial dimensions by the seers has both similarities to and differences from two other reported occurrences: near-death experiences and astral travelling. Alphonsine Mumureke, who was a student at Kibeho College in Rwanda during the apparitions and the first visionary to see the Virgin, was told in advance that Our Lady would take her to travel with her. On 20th March 1982, Alphonsine announced to one of the sisters, the director of the college and one of her classmates that she, Alphononsine, would appear to be dead, but that they were not to bury her as she had been promised by an apparition that she was to be taken on a mystical voyage. As pre-announced, Alphonsine was found lying in her bed the following day. The subsequent enquiry commission, which included medical experts, was told that all the tests possible were done to ascertain whether she was dead or in a deep sleep. Four men tried rolling her on her side, but they couldn't move her. Then six men together tried to lift the slim teenager (weighing approximately 200 lb / 90 kg), but in vain.³

As indicated above, gravitational anomalies add to the authenticity of the apparitional experiences. The occurrence of externally induced gravitational anomalies implies that the apparition is capable of exerting a powerful influence on the force of gravity, and suggests that the events may involve a psychokinetic type of phenomenon.⁵ Alphonsine woke up after 18 hours of externally induced death-like sleep, and described her experiences over that passage of time. She recounted that she was initially transported to a very dark zone filled with shadows and groans of sadness and pain. She was taken to many other planes across the stars, until arriving in a place of golden light filled with happiness and laughter where she could hear songs sung by many joyous voices, even though she could not see anyone singing. When she asked Mary why she could not see the happy souls, Our Lady replied that she could not glimpse them because of her terrestrial status.

Anathalie Mukamazimpaka, another Kibeho visionary, was also privileged to have undertaken mystical voyages to other dimensions. At the end of a five-hour experience, she collapsed to the ground, her limbs having become frozen with the same rigidity that Alphonsine had experienced. That marked the beginning of a seven-hour expedition to different dimensions, accompanied by Mary. In the first world, they visited landscapes of varying shades of vivid colour and light, in which spirits travelled from place to place by gliding through the light. This description is reminiscent of the upper astral dimension or 'summer-land' mentioned in survival research literature.⁶ Another unusual land visited by Anathalie was illuminated only by white light. In it she saw seven handsome men wearing white cloaks, who were creating the most melodious music, but without any instruments. Our Lady described it to her as the place of communion, and told her that the men were angels watching over Earth and ministering to humanity.

Anathalie recollected that she floated to further three different worlds with Mary, who identified herself as the Mother of the Word – each of which had its own characteristic colour and light. The plane next to the dimension of angels was also a blissful place; there, she saw millions of people dressed in white. It was described as the place of those cherished by God. From there they moved to a world in which the light was as dim as at dusk. Although the people who inhabited this dimension were apparently content, they appeared also to be sad and suffering – this was the place of purification. The last place they visited was a land of twilight, where the only illumination was an unpleasant shade of red. It reminded Anathalie of congealed blood, and there the inhabitants were thoroughly unhappy. Their anguish pained her intensely, and Anathalie recognised it as hell.³

The extra-somatic voyages of the Kibeho visionaries would make sense to those familiar with Robert Monroe's trilogy, and with his Para-physical and transcendental extra-somatic experiences, which have been an inspiration to particle physicists.^{7,8}

The pre-heaven stages revealed by Marian visionaries encapsulate a parallel with the 'three rings' identified by Monroe.

Fatima

The Fatima visionaries in Portugal in 1917 were also shown a vision of hell, and the Marian apparition at Fatima made mention of the realms of bewildered spirits and of heaven. Lucia Santos was the principal percipient of the Fatima apparitional occurrences. The others were her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marto. On May 13th 1917 these children were occupied in their village near Fatima in caring for the sheep that belonged to their families when they saw 'a Lady, all of Light' above a small oak tree. The apparition asked them to return to that place on the thirteenth day of each month for the next five months. She promised the children that a great miracle would be performed in October, so that everyone would believe in her appearances and in the messages she gave. The lady also confided in them, giving them special messages that were to be revealed later.

Each apparition lasted about ten minutes. Some 70,000 people saw the promised miracle that immediately followed the sixth and final appearance. In the Fatima visions, there is mention of light as God. Sister Lucy wrote: 'When pronouncing these words, 'God's grace', etc., she opened her hands for the first time, shedding onto us a very intense light, like a reflection coming from them, penetrating our hearts and the depths of our souls, showing us ourselves in God. He was that light, and we saw much more clearly than in the finest mirrors'.⁹

It was on July 13, 1917 that the apparition shared the three special messages – or secrets, as they are popularly known – with the instruction that the children were not to talk about them to anyone at that time. The first secret was a vision of a negative realm, and was presented in a symbolic way. It was as if a vision were inserted into a vision. Sister Lucia described it as follows.⁹

'She opened once again her hands, as in the previous two months. It seemed that the reflection penetrated the earth and we saw what seemed an ocean of fire; plunging in this fire were demons and souls like transparent burning coals, black or bronze, with human form, floating in the fire, driven by flames coming out of themselves, together with clouds of smoke falling on all sides, like the sparks falling in great fires, with no weight and no equilibrium, amidst screams and groans of pain and despair that horrified us and made us tremble with fear. Probably it was when I beheld this sight that I uttered that 'Woe' that people say they heard. The demons were of varied forms, horrible, disgusting and unknown animals, but transparent like black incandescent coals.'

In an interview with a high-ranking member of the Church hierarchy, Sister Lucy reaffirmed her vision of hell, but interpreted the hellfire as supernatural, not physical, and one that could not be compared to any fire that burns from wood or coal.¹⁰ Clearly a symbolic event is hard to interpret in terms that others will find easy to comprehend. Francisco, one of the Fatima percipients, could not initially see the apparition. He was instructed by the figure to pray more. He did that, and subsequently he was able to share the apparitional experience. Such a scenario is analogous to the visionaries who claim that the level of the dimension to which they travel is dependent upon their energy levels and the frequencies of light in their spiritual bodies.

Alfred Jay (2005) has attempted to shed light on certain features of the Fatima apparitional occurrences, articulating them in terms of 'dark plasma' theories, thereby bringing the Marian apparitions into the realm of a physicist's imagination.¹¹ It has been recorded that during the preparatory phase of the Fatima apparitional occurrences, the percipients saw across the valley a dazzling globe of light like a miniature sun gliding slowly towards them. As it approached, the ball of light gradually resolved itself into a brilliantly shining young man. According to the children, they saw a 'light whiter than snow in the shape of a transparent young man, who was more brilliant than a crystal struck by the rays of the Sun'. He identified himself as the 'Angel of Peace', and invited them to recite a prayer. Then he disappeared by fading away.

Jay has shown that magma bodies can change their degree of opacity, and it is a well-known fact in metaphysical literature that super-magma bodies can change their appearance at will. These changes may occur on the surface of magma bodies, and may be very superficial. Jay argues that the super magma body may be using a technology that is similar to plasma-vision and LCD technology combined.

It has been documented that on September 13th 1917, an assembled crowd saw a bright ball in the sky coming from the east, which glided majestically into view for a few seconds and then vanished – at least as far as the crowd was concerned. The visionaries, however, saw a luminous globe perched on a little oak tree. The Virgin spoke to the visionaries, and then returned the way she had come – in the shape of an easily visible, luminous ovoid moving away in the direction of the sun; calmly, but with a certain speed, before fading. Lucia, the eldest among the seers of the Fatima apparitions of Our Lady, stated that during one of the apparitions, Our Lady opened her hands, and rays of light emanated from them. Jay suggests that this may have been done simply by increasing the rotational speed of the 'chakra' in the palm by an act of will, causing super-charged particles to swirl around rapidly in an intense magnetic field, radiating energy that was directed by the magnetic field aligned with the jet.¹¹ Such conjectures are purely hypothetical, however, and represent a physicist's attempt to comprehend the incomprehensible, but they are useful for

bringing Marian apparitional experiences to the attention of the technically minded, who might therefore appreciate them.

Medjugorje

The Marian apparitional occurrences at Medjugorje (Bosnia), started in June 1981, and are on-going. To some degree, these apparitional occurrences have some scientific endorsement and have been extensively written about.¹²⁻¹⁹ Parapsychological analyses of them have been published elsewhere.²⁰⁻²⁵ Like the visions of Lourdes and Guadalupe, the Medjugorje visions are self-validating apparitional occurrences that involve the fulfilment of a promised visible sign. Medjugorje is a collective occurrence involving six percipients: Vicka, Ivanka, Mirjana, Marija, Jackov and Ivan.

The First Two Days

I heard Ivan Dragicevic , one of the six Medjugorje percipients, speaking about his initial experiences in 1986 for the first time, and he has been repeating the same version of events consistently for the last 32 years. Truthful documentation of initial events is extremely important in the investigations of any paranormal-cum-mystical experiences, as first-hand accounts get dressed up by overenthusiastic witnesses with the passage of time. Even investigators get converted as eager elaborators. Here, I report a condensed version of what Ivan had to say about his experiences of the first two days, without altering his language style (translated from Croatian).

'In 1981, I was young, I was 16 years old. When I was young, I was very shy, very quiet. In those days, in the 1980s, it was a time of Communist regime in my country. There was no freedom, no freedom of speech, no freedom of faith. Our life was not easy at all. I was the oldest child in my family. As the oldest child, I always had to be the first one.

'It was June 24th 1981; it was a Wednesday, Saint John the Baptist's Feast day. That morning, just like any other holiday, our parents would let us sleep longer than usual, but not that longer so as to miss Holy Mass. But that morning my parents came to my bedroom five or six times telling me that I had to get up, that I had to get ready, that we were already late to Mass. I got up, woke my two younger brothers and went to Mass with our parents. Before we had even finished eating, some of my friends came from the village. That is what we used to do on Sundays or holidays.

'It was around 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we went to play soccer together. We went to a field that was close to my house and we played until 5 o'clock. When we all got tired, we started walking toward our homes. As we were walking, we met three girls. They were Ivanka, Mirjana and Vicka. Some

of my friends asked them where they were going and what they were doing. They said they were going for a walk, to look at their parents' sheep. When my friends ended the conversation, we continued walking towards our homes.

'As we were walking, we heard a voice. Someone was calling us: 'Ivan, Ivan, Ivan, come to see our Lady. She is on the hill'. I didn't see anyone in front of me. I didn't see anyone behind me. The road was very narrow. There were a lot of trees and bushes around. Since I couldn't see anyone, I simply continued walking. As we continued to walk further and further, we were able to hear that voice louder and louder. In one moment, I turned around and I saw one of those three girls, Vicka. She was running toward the two of us, barefoot, shaking with fear. She kept calling us, 'Come with me, come with me, Our Lady is on the hill'. I was 16 years old at that time. I stopped and looked at her; I had no idea what she was talking about. I turned to my friend and asked him, 'What is she talking about? What lady? Don't pay any attention to her'. But then we realised that something odd was happening to her. So I told my friend to come with her. We were walking with her and looking how she was behaving.

'Suddenly we did not feel comfortable at all. We started to feel fear too. When we came to that spot, we saw the other two girls, Ivanka and Mirjana. They were kneeling on their knees, crying. They were looking toward the hill and staring at something. When we were approaching, one of the girls, Vicka, turned toward the hill and showed me her hand, saying, 'Take a look up there'. I looked three times and I saw the beautiful image of Our Lady. I think I looked at her no more than five seconds. When I saw her, I ran all the way home. After reaching home, I closed my bedroom door.

'The night that was before me was filled with fear, filled with so many questions: Is that possible? How could that be? Was that really Our Lady? I did see her, but still was not sure... That night before me was filled with fear. I was so scared, thinking, 'What if Our Lady comes to my bedroom, where would I hide? Where would I run away?'

'Around 3 o'clock in the afternoon on the following day, all those people who spent the day with us, told us, 'Why don't we go to that hill together? May be Our Lady left something there, a sign, so that we could all know that she was there'.

'Spontaneously, together with all those people, we started walking toward the hill. Before we even got to that spot, roughly 20 metres before, Our Lady was already waiting for us. She was holding Baby Jesus in her arms. She was floating on a cloud. She smiled and waved with her hand to come closer. That was a glorious moment that I will never, ever forget... and then suddenly, and

not with my power, we went across those rocks and bushes feeling no pain whatsoever. We were kneeling and we came closer to her. When we were right in front of her, we were overwhelmed. I cannot describe that excitement to you. She was holding Baby Jesus in her arms, and with her right hand she put her right hand on our heads and spoke her first words: 'My dear children, I am with you. I am your Mother. Be not afraid of anything. I will protect you. I will help you. I will guide you'. It was impossible for us to calm down.

'Then one of the girls who seemed to be most relaxed of us all, Vicka, asked her who she was and what her name was. She replied, 'I am the Queen of Peace. I am coming here, my dear children, because My Son has sent me to help you'. Then she said, 'Peace, Peace, only Peace. Let there be peace. Let Peace reign the world. My dear children, Peace has to reign between man and God and among people. Dear Children, this world and mankind are in grave danger. They threaten to destroy themselves''.

As of today, these apparitional experiences are going on uninterrupted, and nearly 40 million people have visited Medjugorje in the last 32 years from all around the world. My initial visit to Medjugorje was in December 1985; since then, I have visited the place several times.

Visionary Experiences Abroad

The Medjugorje visionaries travel across continents in response to the requests of various religious organisations. I recently had the opportunity to be present at two of their apparitions in Ireland. Ivan Dragicevic (47) was the percipient at St Saviour's church in Dublin on January 6th 2013, and Marija Pavlovic Lunnetti was the percipient at the Holy Trinity Church in the city of Cork on 23rd February 2013. Ivan continues to have daily apparitional experiences. These apparitions take place around 6:40 p.m., wherever the visionaries are living at that time. One such evening, Ivan sat in the front pew of the packed St Saviour's church. He was accompanied by his friends from Medjugorje. Ivan was silent and relaxed. After the Mass, Ivan came forward and knelt in front of the altar. The congregation sang hymns and said prayers. There was an apprehensive atmosphere. Suddenly, Ivan's facial expression began to change. He looked ahead and upward, smilingly, as though meeting a very familiar person. The congregation became silent; some closed their eyes and prayed, while others stared at Ivan. He appeared as though he was talking to thin air with the utmost respect, but clearly there was an invisible person in front of him.

Objectively speaking, Ivan's characteristic shy smile and subordinate gestures were suggestive of a grown-up son talking to an extremely loving and beautiful mother. It was a 'Royal Heavenly Lady' he was conversing with. The subtle differences in the

facial expressions of a man while he communicates with a woman were evident as Ivan conversed with the apparition.

Ivan continued to talk, with an occasional nodding of his head, for about 10 minutes, and natural lip movements were clearly visible, but for a witness it appeared like whispering. When he stopped smiling at the end of the apparitional experience, the corners of his mouth closed slowly and naturally, as when a loving and friendly person departs (our lips close suddenly in an artificial smile). Ivan's body language suggested that a real person was in front of him. When the celestial experience was over, Ivan crossed himself, and then walked over to a microphone, whereupon he recounted the messages of Our Lady. They concerned recommitting to prayer and fasting, and recognising the unconditional love of her Divine Son, and she requested that we love our neighbours like we love ourselves.

Marija Pavlovic Lunetti (47) claims to experience a daily apparitional experience. In her case, the Mass began at 5:00 p.m. in the Holy Trinity Church in Cork, where there was a large gathering. Some people were only a few feet from the altar where the Mass was celebrated, and the people were enthusiastic about being close to the visionary. Marija gave a small speech before the Mass, saying confidently: 'I SEE OUR LADY and Our Lady sees you all'.

After the holy Mass, Marija came forward and knelt in front of the statue of Mary at the front corner of the altar. She began to pray in silence for about 10 minutes, and it was possible to notice her countenance softening. The whole congregation was hushed. While people were gazing at the visionary, Marija was intensely concentrating on an invisible reality in front of her, and conversing with the celestial person. At the end of the apparition, Marija stood up and repeated the messages of Our Lady, which were all about loving Christ and one's fellow men.

The congregations in both the churches provided a receptive psi/spiritual environment for the apparition to manifest at the physical level. I have quoted these experiences as proof of the authenticity of the visionaries' claims to have experienced Marian apparitional visions.

Scientific Studies

A French medical team has reported on normal and altered physiological parameters¹⁵ concluding that there is both partial and variable disconnection from the outside world at the time of the apparitional experience (AE). Sensations travel in a normal manner to the brain of the Medjugorje seers, but the findings from evoked auditory potential tests and screening tests show that the cerebral cortex does not perceive the transmission of the auditory and visual neuronal stimuli received from

the surrounding environment. This indicates a disconnection located somewhere in the cortex, which can be thought of as a functional dualism.

An Italian team confirmed the French findings in 1985, and carried out a series of investigations in 1998. The tests were organised by Dr Marco Margenelli and Dr Giorgio Gangliardi, and the research was carried out in four sessions.¹⁷ Research was first carried out on April 22/23rd 1998, at the Casa Incontri Cristiani in Capiago Intimiano. On this occasion Ivan Dragicevic Marija Pavlovic Lunetti and Vicka Ivankovic were examined. The second research was carried out from July 23/24th 1998 in Medjugorje; and Mirjana Soldo-Dragicevic, Vicka Ivankovic and Ivanka Elez-Ivankovic were examined. The third research, which was only psycho-diagnostic, was conducted by psychologist Lori Bradvica on Jakov Colo. The fourth psycho-physiological examination was conducted on December 11th 1998 with Marija Pavlovic. The team recorded complete case histories, including the medical histories of the seers. They performed MMPI, EPI and MHQ; Tree tests; Person tests; Raven Matrixes; Rorschach tests; and Valsecchi truth-and-lie detection tests. The percipients were subjected to full neurological tests and computerised polygraph tests (recording skin electrical activity, peripheral cardiac capillary and heartbeat activities, and skeletal and diaphragmatic pneumography) during the AE and during the mediated hypnotic recall of the same apparitional experiences. The tests also included Holter's arterial pressure dynamic registration, Holter's electro-cardiographic/respiratory dynamic registration, pupillary reflexes and blink tests, and video-tape and photographic examinations.

The 1998 Italian investigations demonstrated that from the beginning of their apparitional experiences, the percipients did not exhibit any kind of clinical symptom. They also noticed that the seers did not show any pathological symptoms, such as trance interference, dissociation states and loss of insight into their current reality. All of them showed varying degrees of stress-related symptoms due to their current position as visionaries, which involved exposure to excessive internal and exterior stimuli. The psycho-physical investigations were carried out on four states of consciousness, viz., the waking state, hypnotically induced apparitional mental state, altered state of consciousness at the time of the alleged apparitional period and the state of visualisation of mental images. The results demonstrated that the apparitional phenomenology could be compared to the visionary experiences from 1985, albeit with somewhat less intensity.¹⁷ Medical tests on the Medjugorje visionaries at the time of the AE pointed towards an objective and subjective or non-objective visionary experiences.² The repeated medical and scientific tests also led to the same conclusion. A detailed report on the scientific studies is beyond the scope of this paper.

The Medjugorje apparition did not manifest in the same place either, nor to the same chosen individuals. The duration of the apparitional experience was variable. Sometimes it lasted for two minutes and on other occasions, it lasted for up to an hour. The apparition does not appear to have manifested at the percipients' will and the seers say that it has not happened when they wanted it to happen. Sometimes, they prayed and waited but the apparition did not manifest until a little while afterwards, unexpectedly and un-forewarned. Sometimes she appeared to one and not to everybody. If the apparition hadn't promised an appointed time, nobody knew when she would appear, or if she would appear. It depends neither on time nor place, nor desire nor the prayer of pilgrim or visionary, but moreover on the will of the appearer. All these observations contradict alternate interpretations based on the hypothesis of autohypnosis and auto-apparition. The apparitional experience stops when the visionary gets the 10th special message, indicating the whole events follow a higher logic than a human logic.

Visions with RSPK

Voice phenomena observed during Marian apparitions have analogies with externally controlled RSPK (recurrent spontaneous psycho kinesis) activity, and visionary experiences involving RSSPK or RSPK-like activity may be instances of apparitions at the physical site.^{20,26} The voice extinction and sensory disconnection demonstrated in the Medjugorje percipients could be explained as probably due to psychokinetic-like activity of the apparition. True apparitional experiences prove the existence of psi, psi-like phenomenon and discarnate survival. Medical tests on Medjugorje percipients prove their neurological health and support the view that they are responding to an external agent. Ostensibly, an active apparition who has inserted herself harmoniously to our three dimensional world is manifesting at Medjugorje. Unlike in the generic apparitional experiences reported in the scientific literature of parapsychology there is to-and-fro communication for extended period of time taking place between the percipients and the apparition at Medjugorje. The Medjugorje apparitions are 'live' and active apparitional occurrences, and scientifically minded investigators have the opportunity to follow up these events.

The apparition has taken the Medjugorje percipients forward in time through the predictions, but she has also taken them backward in time by revealing her 2000-year-old terrestrial memories. A particular genetic combination determines the physical identity of a person, but it is memory that contributes immensely to the personal identity of the individual. This ostensible remembering throws light on the existence, continuation and identity of a sequence of earthly experiences of the apparition. The apparition has revealed her personal earthly memories in detail to some of the visionaries at Medjugorje.¹² One of them, Vicka, has kept a written record of the two-thousand-year-old recollections revealed to her by the apparition.

These were conveyed in verbal and non-verbal language, which were Vicka's instruments for describing the apparition's life history as well as her memories, all evidence of her identity as the Mother of Christ and therefore a reaffirmation of the divine incarnation. The apparition has similarly set forth details of her terrestrial life to all the visionaries, with the exception of Mirjana, but there are distinct differences in the presentation of the information to the group. Vicka has been vouchsafed the longest exposition of terrestrial memories. Ivanka's record of the apparition's life story is in a distinctive format. These earthly memories authenticate that the visionary experiences are due to 'an apparition with a mind', distinct from a spontaneous appearance without a mind. These memories are thought to be quintessentially Jewish in nature. Once the worldly memories of the alleged apparition are published, they would support the claims of the Medjugorje seers that they are encountering an authentic Marian apparition. (Apparitional experiences of the visionaries can be viewed on YouTube).

Different Forms of Discarnate Survival

Craig Lundahl has made a daring correlation between the phenomena at Medjugorje and the views of those who describe post-mortem existence as consisting of two major divisions, with the possibility of a third.²⁷ Mother Mary has offered information about different forms of discarnate survival conveyed by the percipients of Medjugorje, which gave them glimpses of post-mortem conditions – heaven, purgatory and hell. Heaven is a richer reality of time, a state of fullness in which past, present and future are blended harmoniously. Purgatory, on the other hand, is timeless, where there are no quick changes; and eternal damnation is where no change is possible. Unlike physical personalities who live in the same space-time dimension, discarnate personalities trapped in the timeless dimension (purgatory) cannot bring about swift change in their personality, and could be trapped in that stage for centuries. There are different levels within this dimension, and they tally with Robert Monroe's description of the four locales found in his extra-somatic voyages.^{7,8} They also match the Austrian clairvoyant visionary Maria Simma's suggestion that there are three planes in purgatory.²⁸ Simma, whom I visited at her mountain house in Sonntag (Austria) in 1995, claimed to have had visitations by the 'poor souls' from purgatory for several decades.²⁹

Marian apparitions have also reaffirmed the existence of negative and positive entities. All the Medjugorje visionaries were shown heaven, purgatory and hell in visions – except Mirjana Drgicevic and Ivanka Ivankovic, who did not want to see hell. Two of the seers, Vicka and Jackov, claimed that they had been teleported to other realms by the apparition – little Jackov said he initially resisted having to leave his mother alone.¹² H.M. Brown recounts the detail that Vicka and Jackov were bodily transported to these realms, during which time they reportedly disappeared for twenty minutes.³⁰ According to Vicka, Ivan and Jackov, they had experienced true transportation.

Ivan claims to have been taken to heaven twice, in 1984 and 1988. Ivan was told by the apparition about the assisted visit to heaven one day in advance. Ivan said: 'Our Lady came and took me by the hand and in a moment I arrived in paradise. It is an area without internal frontiers, as in the valley of Medjugorje, with no boundaries, where inhabitants were singing songs. There were angels and people walking and singing, and all were wearing long dresses. All the people looked the same age. It is difficult to find the words...'

Teleportation involves destroying an object and recreating it – dematerialisation and re-materialisation - and so the term 'teleportation' might not be appropriate in this context, but we have no substitute term. According to Vicka, she walked only a few metres with the apparition before entering the new dimension, and so it was not distant travel ('tele' means 'distant'). The visionaries were physically transferred to another dimension, an inter-dimensional transportation. I cannot imagine any physicist currently explaining the mechanism of this inter-dimensional transfer, and I cannot disbelieve the visionaries, whom I have known for a long period. I simply conjecture that it could also involve some form of gravitational anomaly, as gravitation and electromagnetism are the two forces that could influence macro-objects.

It may be hypothesised that the 'mystical-transportation' reported by the Medjugorje visionaries also engross gravitational anomaly in the sense that the visionaries were conveyed out of the physical dimension but had 'physical experiences' in another dimension, breaking the normal laws of gravitation. Such a phenomenon indicates that the apparition is capable of causing powerful effects on gravitation (gyrokinesis), and hypothetically is proficient enough to generate 'an as yet unknown passage', like a miniature black hole or wormhole, for bringing about the claimed inter-dimensional transfer. A quantum physicist may also wonder whether the apparition accomplished the alleged transportation by generating an antimatter effect.

Historically, gravitational anomalies have been reported at other Marian apparitional sites. In the alleged Garabandal Marian apparitions (Spain, 1962 - 1965), gravitational anomalies occurred in the form of unexplainable weight gain or weight loss of the visionaries during their apparitional experiences.^{31,32} The mechanism involved in increase of weight is the reverse of levitation; both are gravitational anomalies. In order to break of the scientific scepticism surrounding this unusual experience of the visionaries, we may postulate several mechanisms by which an inter-dimensional transfer could happen, but that does not imply Our Lady used any of them.

Ivanka on the Afterlife

Ivanka Ivankovic Elez (46), another of the Medjugorje visionaries, claims to have had the privilege of seeing her deceased mother, Jagoda, with the assistance of the apparition. She reports that this was like a vision superimposed on another vision. She declares that she has not a grain of scepticism about the continuity of life after death. Her mother died unexpectedly and alone in May 1981 at the age of 39, before the commencement of the apparitional occurrences, owing to an attack of bronchial asthma. Ivanka's last daily apparition was on May 7, 1985. She says that on that occasion, she saw her deceased mother for the third time. She claims to have seen her dead mother for the first time in June 1981 during her usual apparitional experience.

Ivanka claims to have an annual apparitional experience on the anniversary of the first apparitional occurrence. Here I am quoting her confident words in an interview: 'All of us ask ourselves, is there life after life? I am standing here before all of you as a living witness, and I can tell you there is life after life because on that day in May I was able to see my late mother. I was able to hug her and my mother told me – My daughter, I am proud of you'.

Marian apparitions reaffirm the existence of different forms of discarnate survival. Kibeho visionaries had their own visionary experiences of otherworldly realms, possibly in the form of extra-somatic experiences. Fatima visionaries had a visual display of the negative realm. It is obvious that adherents of Newtonian physics would struggle to accept the claims of these visionaries, but the courtroom logic offers enough room for believers to trust them. Physicists cannot believe in a non-physical realm without an intermediate phase or some form of continuity of physical universe.³³ Lower zones may be such an extension of the physical universe - a greater universe. Other discarnate realms are non-physical/spiritual with their own objectivity.

Concluding Remarks

Research into NDE has belied its early promise.³⁴ It would be a deception of the public on the part of survival researchers to tender an ultra-optimistic picture of post-mortem existence in their publications without incorporating the information about after-death existence obtained through Marian apparitions. There is still no consensus of opinion about the certainty of discarnate existence among the survival researchers. Dr Vernon Neppe has opined that the combined total of evidence and data for discarnate survival is absolutely overwhelming, to the extent that it is scientifically cogent.³⁵

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, if the discarnate realm is a reality, we are bound to take into account the existence of a multitude of less advanced spirits roaming in an earth-bound, disturbed state, and they may be constantly trying to influence the incarnate spirits. If earth-bound spirits exist, opportunistic spirit attachments are a possibility and clinicians cannot ignore the paranormal component of psychiatric disorders including suicidal behaviour.³⁶

The collective percipience, the powerful motivation of the appearer, the quasi-physical features of the apparition and the integration of the appearer with the natural environment are the main features of true apparitional occurrences. All of these are recorded in the apparitional manifestations of Mary. The likelihood that Marian apparitional experiences are authentic has been demonstrated by scientific investigations.^{2,15,20,21} If we supplement the categories of evidence itemised by survival researchers with the evidence of Marian apparitions in recent centuries, we have a corpus of compelling reasons to support those who are proponents of a belief in universal and eternal discarnate survival. Therefore, Marian apparitions challenge the reductionist hypothesis of mind-consciousness complex. In scientific circles, a paradigmatic shift has started taking place in favour of a non-reductionist model of the brain-mind-consciousness complex.³⁷⁻⁴¹ The conclusion drawn by some academics⁴¹ who have probed into the mysteries of consciousness is that - as first told by Hans Christian Andersen - the Emperor of Materialism has been discovered to be wearing no clothes! Medjugorje has started catching the attention of transpersonal psychologists.^{42,43}

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