

Precognitive and Prophetic Visions in Near-Death Experiences¹

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*For I am now in the place where men
chiefly prophesy, in sight of coming death.*
— The Apology

ABSTRACT

An investigation is reported concerning two types of precognitive phenomena that are associated with unusually deep near-death experiences (NDEs). Personal flashforwards (PFFs) refer to visions in which a near-death survivor glimpses events that will involve him personally sometime *subsequent* to his NDE. Prophetic visions (PVs) refer to a kind of preview of planetary-wide events. Data from approximately a dozen cases of each type are presented. Analysis of these data offers suggestive evidence that at least some PFFs contain veridical elements; PVs were found to disclose a pattern of remarkable uniformity across respondents, suggesting a global scenario over the next twenty years marked by a period of increasing catastrophe to be followed by an era of spiritual enlightenment. Various interpretations of the data on precognitive effects are offered, and empirical procedures to determine the possible predictive significance of PVs are proposed.

INTRODUCTION

In some earlier publications (Ring, 1980; Ring, 1981) dealing with near-death experiences (NDEs), I suggested that a small number of near-death survivors claim to be aware of events that they believe will take place in the future. In some cases, these perceptions appear to take place in the context of the *life review* phase of the NDE. In these instances, they should perhaps be construed as possible *life previews*; at any rate, I have previously referred to this phenomenon as a *flashforward* in order to make it evident that such perceptions refer to events that have not yet occurred in a person's life. In other cases, the future events that are reported relate not so much to an

individual's personal future as they do to global events. In these instances, they appear to be best understood as *world previews*. Because both kinds of future-oriented perceptions usually appear to the experient as a *vision*, in order to distinguish them I shall refer to the former as a *personal flashforward* (PFF) and to the latter as a *prophetic vision* (PV).²

In this paper I want to present and then evaluate some instances of both PFFs and PVs in order to arrive at an assessment of their significance for our understanding of NDEs in general. In regard to PVs, I think it is also important to attempt to determine their possible accuracy since the implications of these visions, if there is any substance to them, will be of the greatest concern to humanity at large. It will be expedient, however, to consider PFFs before turning our attention to the prophetic aspects of NDEs.

METHOD

Because PFFs and PVs are relatively rare occurrences in conjunction with NDEs, it has been necessary for me to conduct a special search for such cases. Although I have located a number of instances of each phenomenon on my own, I am also indebted to several near-death researchers for sharing their information with me.³ In some cases, individuals wrote to me at the International Association for Near-Death Studies describing such experiences. Subsequent correspondence and interviews, when they could be arranged, provided further information. In most cases, especially those involving PVs, I traveled to various parts of the United States to tape record interviews with near-death survivors, or arrangements were made for them to come to Connecticut to be interviewed. When personal interviews were conducted, I was usually able to spend at least two days with the respondent on the occasion of our initial meeting; in all of these cases, contact was maintained through correspondence, tapes, phone calls, or subsequent meetings. Finally, a few respondents completed some questionnaires for me (as part of a larger, on-going research project concerned with after effects of NDEs), and these furnished additional data.

Because the number of cases in my sample is small, it was not possible to undertake any meaningful statistical analyses; as a result, this study is necessarily of the case-history type. Although this is not my preferred research style, I felt in view of the potential significance of my findings that it was justified to publish these data in this form and at this time.⁴ Nevertheless, it should be clearly borne in mind

that the cases presented here have been specially sought out, and because of both the limited sample size and the method of sampling, the results need to be independently validated before they can be fully accepted.

The material dealing with PFFs is based on approximately one dozen cases, a few of which have already been described elsewhere (Ring, 1980). None of the information on PVs has been published before; it is based on a sample of thirteen cases.

RESULTS

Personal Flashforwards

Personal flashforwards usually occur within the context of an assessment of one's life during an NDE (i.e., during a life review and preview), although occasionally the PFF is experienced as a *subsequent* vision. When it takes place while the individual is undergoing an NDE, it is typically described as an image or vision of the future. It is as though the individual sees something of the *whole* trajectory of his life, not just past events as some previous accounts (e.g., Moody, 1975; Noyes, 1977) have implied. The understanding I have of these PFFs is that to the experient they represent events of a *conditional* future. That is, if he chooses to return to life,⁵ then these events will ensue. In this sense, from the standpoint of a near-death survivor, a PFF may be likened to a "memory" of future events (see, e.g., Roll, 1966). For him, however, it is seemingly a part of his "life design" which *will* unfold if he returns to physical life. I have already published (Ring, 1980) a few accounts of this kind of PFF.

In other cases an individual will report awareness of knowledge of a future event some time after the NDE itself. In some instances, the knowledge will manifest itself (again, usually visually and vividly) shortly after an NDE; in other cases, the individual will recall the knowledge *only when the actual event happens*. In this case, and this kind of occurrence has been related to me by several near-death survivors, it seems the event itself jars the memory of it, bringing back the NDE context in which the original perception was given. At such moments, there is usually an uncanny sense of *deja vu*; the event, which had already been experienced, is now fulfilled in fact, and its realization is accompanied by the shock of absolutely certain prior knowledge of its outcome.

A case that will serve to illustrate several of these features was provided to me by a woman who lives in the midwest. Her near-

death crisis resulted from a torn cervix while giving birth to her youngest child, in 1959. During her NDE she was met by various beings who conveyed knowledge to her. In particular, she noted:

. . . I learned that there is a time for me to die, and that particular time when I was giving birth was not it. Those beings showed me that if I continued down the path I was on at that time (it seems that I have complete freedom of choice) I would later be living HERE and DOING THIS. I found myself in a place that was not _____ [the town she expected to move to] and all three of our children were grown up. My husband and I had become middle-aged and the entire scenario went like this:

I was in a kitchen tossing a salad, dressed in a striped seersucker outfit. My hair had streaks of silver in it, my waist had thickened some, but I was still in good shape for an older woman. There was a strong feeling of peace of mind about my bearing, and I was in a joyful mood, laughing with my older daughter as we prepared dinner. The younger daughter [the newborn] had gone somewhere with some other children. This daughter was grown up too, but still there were some small children involved who were not in the picture at the moment [i.e., in 1959].

My husband had just come out of the shower and was walking down a hallway wrapping a robe around him. He had put on more weight than I had and his hair was quite silver. Our son was mowing our lawn but both offspring were only visiting. They didn't live with us.

During this scene was the only time an exception was made regarding the five physical senses. As I gained the knowledge of what our family would be like in the future, I could see, hear and smell. Particularly striking was the smell of the salad I was producing (cucumber) mingled with the smell of evergreens growing around the house and the odor of freshly-cut grass. Also I could detect my own cologne and soap from the shower my husband had vacated. This picture was only a glimpse, but it made one huge impression on me. I must have vowed right then to never forget it, because I certainly have not.

This correspondent added this intriguing follow-up commentary:

1. We look exactly like that right now [in 1981].
2. Our kids look like that picture too.
3. The rapport in our family is now as I've already described. We have a ball whenever we get together, talking and laughing.
4. Our older daughter has been married, had two daughters of her own, and been divorced. While she was being divorced and making a new life for herself with a job, I've helped her with raising the two small girls by babysitting every day for two years. They are very much a part of our family.
5. Our home here in _____ [the town she lives in] could fit that description too. I only wish I had paid more attention to the way the house was built . . .

Another case that exemplifies most of the characteristics of finely

detailed PFFs is this one, sent to me by a correspondent living in the western part of the United States. As a ten-year-old child, in his native England, he was rushed to a hospital and operated on for acute appendicitis (possibly peritonitis — he is not sure). During the operation he had an NDE during which he had an out-of-body experience (at which time he could see his body) as well as an episode involving telepathic communication with beings who seemed to be clothed in robes.

What makes this individual's experience noteworthy is what happened to him *afterward*. He writes:

After the operation, when convalescing, I was aware that there were some strange memories — and that's what they were — concerning events in my future life. I do not know how they got there . . . they were just *there* . . . However, at that time [the year was 1941], and indeed until 1968, I simply did not believe them.

His letter goes on to describe five specific “memories” of the future he had been aware of as a child. He claims all of them have actually come about as events in his life, except for the last of them (which pertains to the age and circumstances of his death). I shall quote his account of the first two of these flashforwards.

1. *You will be married at age twenty-eight.*

This was the first of the “memories,” and this was perceived as a flat statement — there was no emotion attached to it . . .

And this did indeed happen, even though at my twenty-eighth birthday I had yet to meet the person that I was to marry.

2. *You will have two children and live in the house that you see.*

By contrast to the first prediction, this was felt; perhaps “experienced” is the correct term. I had a vivid memory of sitting in a chair, from which I could see two children playing on the floor in front of me. And I *knew* that I was married, although in this vision there was no indication of who it was that I was married to. Now a married person knows what it was like to be single, because s/he was once single, and s/he knows what it's like to be married because s/he is married. But it is not possible for a single person to know what it feels like to be married; in particular, it is *not possible* for a ten-year-old boy to know what it feels like to be married! It is this strange, impossible feeling that I remember so clearly, and why this incident remained in my mind. I had a “memory” of something that was not to happen for almost twenty-five years hence! But it was not seeing the future, in the conventional sense, it was *experiencing* the future. In this incident the future was *now*.

(He then provides a floor plan of the room he and his children were in and refers to it in what follows.)

In this “experience” I saw directly in front of me, and to the right as indicated. I could not see to the left, but I did know that the person that I

was married to was sitting on that side of the room. The children playing on the floor were about four and three years old; the older one had dark hair, and was a girl (adopted, as it turned out); the younger one had fair hair, and I thought it was a boy. But as it turns out, they are both girls. And I was also aware that behind the wall . . . there was something very strange that I did not understand at all. My conscious mind could not grasp it, but I just *knew* that something different was there.

This “memory” suddenly became present one day in 1968, when I was sitting in the chair, reading a book, and happened to glance over at the children . . . I realized that *this* was the “memory” from 1941! After that I began to realize that there was something to these strange recollections. And the strange object behind the wall was a forced-air heater. These heating units were not — and to the best of my knowledge, are still not — used in England. This was why I could not grasp what it was; it was not in my sphere of knowledge in 1941.⁶

Such apparent memories of the future are certainly provocative, and it is easy to appreciate the striking effect they must have on an individual when they are later actually confirmed. Nevertheless, there is a sticky methodological issue that must be faced here before we can proceed with our delineation of PFFs. Put boldly, it is: how do we know these accounts are true? To be sure, there is scant reason to believe that all those persons who report PFFs (and who usually aver that many of them were fulfilled) are simply confabulating. At the same time, we must recognize that PFFs typically have the form of unsubstantiated and unsubstantiable self-reports: a person alleges to have had a vision of a future event and then also claims that the event later took place. Accordingly, we seem to be left in the uncomfortable position of having to acknowledge that such reports are sometimes made, but lacking the means to determine the truth of the testimony given. This of course is a general problem in near-death studies, and it has compelled at least one investigator (Sabom, 1982) to focus on potentially confirmable aspects of NDEs in order to avoid it.

In rare instances, however, a way can be found to circumvent this problem by compiling external corroborative evidence that independently supports the claim made by a near-death survivor. Fortunately, I have recently come across just such a case involving a PFF.

A woman now in her early fifties had an unusually deep NDE in 1971 as a result of heart failure and lung collapse during surgery. According to her account, she underwent a prolonged period of clinical death before being resuscitated. During her experience she, too, encountered guides who gave her considerable information about the future.⁷ What makes her NDE unique and of considerable

value here is precisely *what* she was shown.

Specifically, she was "shown" a picture of Raymond Moody! She was given his full name and told that she would meet him when "the time was right" in order to tell him her story.

The following account of this incident is based on an interview I conducted with this woman in her home in March, 1981.

This woman (whom I'll call Belle) has lived her entire life in a small Southern city, residing since 1971 in a home on a street one block long. Approximately eighteen months after her NDE, Raymond Moody, who was then beginning his medical studies, and his wife, Louise, moved to the same city where Belle had grown up. To the same street! But since the Moodys lived at the other end of the block, years passed without any meaningful interaction between the Moodys and Belle.⁸

Finally, four years *after* Belle's NDE, on Halloween night of 1975, Louise was preparing to take her elder son, Avery, trick-or-treating. Her husband had asked her, however, not to take him to any home unfamiliar to them. Meanwhile, up the block, Belle, who was feeling poorly, was saying to her husband:

Look, I placed these things [i.e., candies] there for the children when they come around, and no matter how cute you think they are, don't call me because I do not feel well tonight and I do not want to be bothered.

Belle describes what happened next:

He said "OK" and sure enough someone knocked on the door . . . Louise didn't listen to Raymond [and] Bill [her husband] didn't listen to me, so when the knock came on the door, my husband said, "Belle, you told me not to call you, but you've got to see *this* one!" "Oh, boy," I said, [and] I got up and went up front. I don't normally ask the children where they are from or who they are because I usually know them, but this one I did not know and I said, "What's your name, child?" He looked up at me and said, "I'm Raymond Avery Moody, the third."⁹ Immediately his father appeared to my mind and it says . . . now!

Belle turned at once to Louise and said, "I need to talk with your husband." Louise, somewhat taken aback, apparently replied with words to the effect, "Oh, did you have one of these experiences Raymond is writing about?" Belle — who had no idea who Raymond Moody *was* but only knew he was the man to whom she was supposed to speak — asked Louise, "What experiences are you referring to?" When Louise said "near-death experiences," Belle said that she supposed she did since she had been pronounced dead.

The outcome of this strange encounter was that shortly thereafter, Raymond Moody was able to interview Belle, whose NDE is featured

in his second book, *Reflections on Life After Life* (1977). Ironically, at the time of their meeting in 1975, Moody's best seller-to-be, *Life After Life* (1975), was still at the printers, and Belle herself had no idea that she had just met the man whose name was destined to become synonymous with the study of near-death experiences. Furthermore, Louise Moody (1981) has independently confirmed all the essential details of Belle's reconstruction of this event.

Belle herself concluded her account of this episode with these words:

It was two days before we got together and this was in November of 1975, and they left in April of 1976. We had become very close and loving friends from that point on. It seemed to be a heck of a waste of time not to have known him from 1971!

Prophetic Visions

Prophetic visions differ from PFFs in two principal ways: (1) they relate to future events that have a global rather than a personal focus; (2) they have a high degree of inter-subject consistency. It is this latter characteristic that makes them especially remarkable just as it was the overall similarities among NDEs in general that captured the attention of researchers and the public alike during the 1970s. Nevertheless, given the consistency of these PVs, it is their specific content, as we shall shortly see, that arouses one's strong interest in their possible prophetic character.

Most individuals reporting PVs¹⁰ claim that the details of their visions were given to them during their NDEs, often in association with an encounter with guides or a being of light. In a few instances, however, the visions seem to unfold subsequent to the NDE itself, and it isn't clear whether the information was encoded during the NDE. In any event, most of those who have described their PVs to me state or imply that they know that they were given far more information than they can now recall. Furthermore, several of them observed that they were told they would not be *able* to recall much of this information but would be given access to some of it when and if it was needed. The following comment is typical of the way in which the information is sensed to be stored and of the conditions governing its retrieval:

At one point, I had complete knowledge of everything, from the beginning of creation to the end of time . . . [but] I was told [by her guides] that I would remain unconscious for five days so that all the things I had been shown would not resurface, so they could be stored for future reference . . . When given this information, you are given . . . the time . . . when you can

... speak of it. If you were to ask me a question now . . . [and] if the time wasn't for me to answer, I couldn't give you the answer (F1).¹¹

In most instances, however, there is a generalized recall of the broad outlines of the scenario. The following remark is representative:

I also had the general knowledge of certain events . . . it's not that I can pinpoint certain events . . . it's more like a general knowledge of things that are going to take place (M3).

What is it that *restores* knowledge of the specific events in the PV scenario? There seem to be various factors involved. One is the *temporal proximity* of the event. A number of individuals stated that within one to two days *prior* to an event they had foreseen, the knowledge of its occurrence would resurface. For instance:

Three Mile Island. I knew it was going to happen! I don't know *why*. Three Mile Island stuck in my mind . . . I knew it was going to happen, I knew it was going to happen. I was telling Vicky . . . I told her it was going to happen, and, do you know, two days later it happened (M2).

A second factor facilitating recall is a *reminder* of the original event. We have already seen an example of this in Belle's recollection of Raymond Moody when his son gave his name. In the case of PVs, individuals have remarked that being in a certain physical location reminded them of an event they had seen in their PV, and this would bring it back. A third factor is one not associated with any conscious knowledge of a particular trigger. Seemingly, *spontaneous recall* operates here, although it is sometimes the respondent's *post hoc* interpretation that it was simply time for this information to resurface.

The general scenario recounted in prophetic visions. I have already indicated that the broad outlines of the PV are much the same for different individuals. Indeed, PVs — as an aspect of NDEs — are analogous to NDEs as a whole in the sense that though no two are identical, the elements that comprise them occur again and again and form a coherent pattern. Keeping in mind that the number of cases of PVs in this sample is so small that any overall account must be regarded as *extremely* provisional, it is nevertheless possible to give the following summary of it. It is chiefly the fact that everyone I have talked to has given me a PV that conforms, at least broadly, to this model that emboldens me to offer it at all at this time.

There is, first of all, a sense of having total knowledge, but specifically one is aware of seeing the entirety of the earth's evolution and history, from the beginning to the end of time. The future scenario, however, is usually of short duration, seldom extending much beyond the beginning of the twenty-first century. The individual reports that in this decade there will

be an increasing incidence of earthquakes, volcanic activity and generally massive geophysical changes. There will be resultant disturbances in weather patterns and food supplies. The world economic system will collapse, and the possibility of nuclear war or accident is very great (respondents are not agreed on *whether* a nuclear catastrophe will occur). All of these events are transitional rather than ultimate, however, and they will be followed by a new era in human history, marked by human brotherhood, universal love, and world peace. Though many will die, the earth will live. While agreeing that the dates for these events are not fixed, most individuals feel that they are likely to take place during the 1980s.

Shortly, I will attempt to illustrate the various facets of the PV scenario by reference to interview materials, but for now let me present just a couple of summary statements from individuals who wrote to me or answered questionnaires.

First, from a man who had his NDE in 1943:

Our period of trouble has begun, it seems, certainly as far as the elements are concerned. I think you can expect to see some of the most disastrous upheavals between now and 1988 that we have had in recorded history. Most recently, the eruption of St. Helen's is an example. This will not only be in the elements, but in the breakdown of interpersonal relationships, between man and man, man and family, and nation and nation . . . My own impression is that we are not facing the end of the world, but that we are facing a great deal of upheaval until we have learned to stop being so materialistic and turn to the job He gave us of truly learning to love ourselves and one another (M5).

Next, from a woman who had her NDE in 1967, when she was only seventeen years old:

The vision of the future I received during my near-death experience was one of tremendous upheaval in the world as a result of our general ignorance of the "true" reality. I was informed that mankind was breaking the laws of the universe, and as a result of this would suffer. This suffering was not due to the vengeance of an indignant God, but rather like the pain one might suffer as a result of arrogantly defying the law of gravity. It was to be an inevitable educational cleansing of the earth, that would creep up upon its inhabitants, who would try to hide blindly in the institutions of law, science, and religion. Mankind, I was told, was being consumed by the cancers of arrogance, materialism, racism, chauvinism, and separatist thinking. I saw sense turning to nonsense, and calamity, in the end, turning to providence.

At the end of this general period of transition, mankind was to be "born anew," with a new sense of his place in the universe. The birth process, however, as in all the kingdoms, was exquisitely painful. Mankind would emerge humbled yet educated, peaceful, and, at last, unified (F4).

Now that we have some sense of the overall PV scenario, let us look more closely at some of its specific features.

Sense of total knowledge. In the state of consciousness a near-death survivor enters when receptive to a PV, it appears that there is, from a subjective point of view, total knowledge. This point has already been made by F1, but another individual, M1, was even more emphatic. He said that when he experienced this state of total knowledge, it was not that he acquired this knowledge but that he *remembered* it, that he *was*, in effect, all knowledge. Another respondent, M3, commented that the being of light who was with him at one point made a gesture with his right hand and there followed a panoramic vision, impossible to describe, showing everything "from the beginning of time to the end of time." Indeed, that or a similar phrase was used by several respondents in referring to their PVs.

Geophysical changes. Even though these near-death survivors often claim to have this panoramic vision of both past and future, it is future events that tend, not surprisingly, to be emphasized in their accounts. And pre-eminent among them are various geophysical changes that tend to be mentioned almost without exception in these scenarios. The following excerpts from interviews will convey both the range of the events foreseen as well as some of the conditions under which this information appears to re-emerge.

Earthquakes

The seismic activity is going to increase terribly and the United States is going to start suffering some great seismic problems (M2).

Well, it's like that earthquake that hit last week [in Italy]. I saw that coming. I see a lot of them coming . . . There will be a series of disasters happening (F2).

I saw earthquakes in South America, and in Italy, and the one that Greece just had (F1).

I kept thinking about Italy and I kept thinking about this earthquake, and I wrote it down on a piece of paper . . . I dunno, I was just reading and thought of this earthquake in Italy. So, in September, this massive earthquake happened in Italy . . . I dunno, I saw it on TV and god-damn! I thought I had *seen* it *before*. I knew I had seen the *picture*. I mean, I had seen the pictures before! Pictures came on the screen of this earthquake and the details and where it had happened and the map of it on TV, you know, [and] I thought, God, I've seen this *before*! There was no mistake in my mind (M6).

Volcanic Activity

I was shown Mt. St. Helen's eruption . . . I was also shown other volcanoes . . . I was shown Mt. St. Helen's . . . and on May 18, Mt. St. Helen's really erupted its heaviest, I turned to my husband and said, "Mt. St. Helen's just blew its top," and the people there just laughed at me. Later that night we

were watching TV and the very scenes that I had seen in my mind were shown on the TV and no one continued to laugh at me then (F1).

Land Mass Changes

Because of this pole shift [there is] a kind of magnetic pull [causing] the continents to move toward each other . . . Along the east coast [of the United States], there will be a significant rise in the tide because of the polar melt (M3).

They [her guides] showed Florida breaking off from the mainland, land rising and becoming an island (F2).

There may be a pole shift . . . there are going to be polar changes . . . it's not going to kill all the races off, but we're going to have to start again from square one . . . There's going to be a larger land mass (F1).

It [a higher being] said that there was going to be stress on events. And I saw mud slides . . . I saw California . . . I saw water pouring. I saw quicksand. I saw things shifting . . . [and] it looked like I was looking down on islands . . . and I watched them tip and elongate and stretch and groan . . . I'm interpreting this now as probably an indication of this pole shift business (F5).

Meteorological changes. The geophysical changes just described would naturally be expected to bring about a host of meteorological disruptions in their wake. These changes, too, have been glimpsed by near-death survivors who report PVs.

Oh, my God, that's going to be terrible. The weather is going to go crazy. We're just as likely to have snow in the middle of the summer nowadays as one hundred degree weather . . . I see droughts in other countries (M2).

I think around 1984, 1985, possibly even sooner, [we'll see] the beginnings of droughts. I guess we are even suffering some of that now [1980] (M3).

Supply and economic breakdowns. Such drastic changes in the world's physical state will necessarily disrupt commerce and, indeed, every aspect of global life. Famine, social disorder, and economic collapse will be the result. Here is just one brief summary of these foreseen effects:

We'll start getting more droughts, which will bring about shortages in crops and the shortage in crops will cause food prices to rise which will cause a strain on the economic situation which is already going downhill. Also at the same time . . . because of the shortage of food and the failing economy, I see a strengthening of arms which causes tension . . . These kinds of hostilities and [increasing] inflation start more hostilities (M3).

Nuclear war? These developments bring us, at least in the view of the individuals under examination here, to the brink of nuclear warfare. I place a question mark after the phrase, however, to indicate that these near-death survivors do not seem to agree *that* there

will be a war, only that the prospect of one (or a nuclear accident) will be enormously heightened during the 1980s.¹² In what follows, I will offer enough quotations, I think, to reflect accurately the entire range of their views here.

First, there are those who sense that there will actually be a war:

Well, it'll start in the Middle East . . . and it will be the end. It'll be the Third War (M2).

Anyway, by 1988, that will be the point when tensions finally grow to the point [of a nuclear war]. Yeah. And just from my own feelings, I think it will happen in April 1988 (M3).

Next are those who feel that, rather than a total war, there will be either a misuse of nuclear energy or illegal underground testing and that this will imperil humanity:

I can see a magnetized target of some kind and all this energy is being focused on it . . . It's not like an explosion, it's like an implosion. And the result of this process is going to produce . . . a tremendous amount of energy. But the important thing about this aspect . . . well, it's a series of negativisms that are going on around the earth and [as a result] the human beings on the earth will experience rather extravagant things, happenings and disruptions, and so on, starting very shortly and through this period of time . . . it will change everything (M4).

What I saw was warfare underground tests. And I saw a lot of shake-ups. Seismic activity kicked off by cheaty tests that nobody is admitting. And fallout . . . The word "nuclear skirmishes" if one can conceive of such a thing . . . I saw the aftermath. I saw the explosion places. I saw a chunk of New York City was gone . . . (F5).

Finally, there are those who have a clear presentiment of a nuclear holocaust but cannot claim that it is a certainty:

I had a sensation, a feeling that — of nuclear bombs falling and the bright flash of the bomb . . . If people don't get their act together . . . there is going to be a nuclear war . . . Every once in a while when I'm coming home from work on the freeway, I get the feeling of a bomb going off. I believe it might be in L.A. and there's a big flash, and I'll look over there in the west and I'll see a big mushroom cloud (M7).

I had this series of dreams about this incredible threat of a war . . . This dream is [pause] this threat of a nuclear war. And everyone is talking about it. There was a great deal of tension about it. Things are very desperate . . . it's extremely frightening. Extremely. And it's put me in a state of near immobility. Because it's happening . . . I think it is in an Olympic year . . . It's all armored vehicles. It's all on land. Tanks and half-tracks. And soldiers as far as you can see them. And it's an offensive . . . I dunno, the phones are ringing off the hook. The U.N. is in joint session. Everyone's talking about it . . . This stuff is controlling my life right now. See, it's happening. It really is happening. This caused me to have a

nervous breakdown, a nervous breakdown. And I don't know what to do (M6).¹³

A new era of peace and human brotherhood. Whether the earth is shaken by natural catastrophes or nuclear warfare, or both, the earth and the life upon it does survive. More than that, however: a New Age emerges and the devastating changes that have preceded it are understood to have been necessary purgations effecting the transformation of humanity into a new mode of being. By analogy, just as the individual near-death survivor may have to experience the pain and suffering associated with the trauma of almost dying before positive personal transformation can take place (Ring, 1980), so the world may need to undergo a "planetary near-death experience" before it can awaken to a higher, more spiritual, collective consciousness with universal love at its core. Religious symbology, and Christian symbology in particular,¹⁴ is very evident here. It should be emphasized that almost all the PVs I have encountered state or imply a very positive outcome following years of destruction and upheaval, however produced. The following quotations will provide the flavor of this resolution:

At the end of this general period of transition, mankind was to be "born anew," with a new sense of his place in the universe . . . Mankind would emerge humbled yet educated, peaceful, and, at last, unified (F4).

In 1989 . . . I see a period when those who are good intentioned and those who have acquired a type of level of spirituality of close bondedness of human relationships, that the being of light, the Christlike figure will be able to dwell among us. [1989] was the end. I just have a general knowing of what was in 1989. Peace, contentment (M3).

[Christ] will come back and there will also be the Christ-like features in other people. Yes, this is true, He is coming (F1).

It's like a renaissance. I feel really good in 2005 (F5).

These, then, are the major elements that comprise the PV scenario. Before concluding this section, however, there are two ancillary aspects of PVs we need to consider. The first has to do with the timing of the events foreseen; the second, with their inevitability.

When does the scenario occur? Virtually all the near-death survivors state or imply that the major geophysical and meteorological changes forecast will begin during this decade. Probably most of them would agree that the changes have *already* begun and will be evident within a few years at most. The following sprinkling of brief quotations will convey the common time frames used.

I believe the war will start in 1984 or 1985 (F3).

I think you can expect to see some of the most disastrous upheavals between now and 1988 (M5).

It is to be 1988 or was to be. That [would] be the year everything would be wiped away, if we didn't change (F1).

The seismic activity is going to [be] within the next ten years (M2).

[The war will] probably be in the next ten years (M7).

I think around 1984, 1985, possibly even sooner [will see] the beginnings of droughts . . . Anyway, by 1988, that will be when tensions finally grow to the point [of nuclear war] (M3).

I've been told we'll see signs of its approach . . . There will be great natural catastrophes, an assassination attempt on the Pope, an intensification of the drug problem. Abortion will be legalized. Mercy killing will come to be accepted, both for the senile and for deformed children. Since we've already had most of those signs, I believe the three days of darkness [this respondent's term for the holocaust] will come soon (M8).¹⁵

Is the scenario inevitable? The common view of the near-death survivors who have these PVs is that not only is the scenario inevitable, but, properly understood (in the light of its outcome), it is desirable and necessary. Nevertheless, few of these individuals would argue that there is anything fixed concerning the exact dates involved or specific events. Most seem convinced of the general direction of the events that they feel they have glimpsed; none of them seems to have a rigid conception of the details of that unfolding pattern. Indeed, some openly admit that it can be affected to some degree by human action and an openness to God. The following are representative views of these individuals regarding these matters:

Yes, it's inevitable . . . From now on, we're going to see the seismic activity all over the world, and the weather and all of it is pointing to the fact that all that I'm saying is true . . . and it's going to happen (M2).

I really feel that the destiny cannot be changed (F2).

I firmly believe now that there was a chance at one time but now we are locked in, that there's no chance to turn back (M3).

[This scenario] is necessary, a necessary evil, if you want to call it that. It is part of the evolution toward this oneness (M8).

There will be survivors, but it's inevitable (M7).

I would be the first to say that the Christ did not give me a definite date or a definite series of events that I could look forward to but more or less events that I saw in general that would be indicative of some of the events of the future (M5).

It [was] given to me that in 1988, the world will be destroyed by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions but if the people will turn to God and honor Him, some of these things will be put off. The time now . . . is not running as close to 1988 (F1).

DISCUSSION

In seeking to understand PFFs and PVs, two separate questions need to be addressed, though the second one will pertain chiefly to PVs. The first question is, since both PFFs and PVs purport to represent visions of the future, differing mainly only in their scope (i.e., personal vs. global), how should we evaluate this claim? In parapsychology this issue is treated as the problem of precognition. That is, how is it possible, if it is possible at all, to have paranormal knowledge of future events? The second question is, what in any event are we to make of the *content* of PVs? Are these indeed likely to be prognostic visions of our planetary future or can they be explained on other grounds entirely? In part, the answer to the second question may depend on the first.

The Issue of Precognition

In the last ten years there has been renewed interest on the part of parapsychologists, philosophers, physicists, and mathematicians in the problem of precognition (Dean, 1974; White and Krippner, 1977; Braude, 1981; Tart, 1981), and many different theories have been proposed though no one theory has as yet achieved general acceptance. It would take us too long to describe each of these theories, but suffice it to say that most of them are based on either topological models (Rosen, 1977; Greene, 1980), biogravitational fields (Toben, Sarfatti and Wolf, 1975), hyperspace models (Tiller, 1977; Muses, 1977), or superluminal (i.e., faster than light) processes (Feinberg, 1969; Beynam, 1977).¹⁶ Whether any of these theories will eventually be recognized as offering a general solution to the problem of precognition, they at least can hold open the hope that such phenomena will one day be brought into the net of scientific theory.

At a phenomenological level, however, there is no doubt whatever that in altered states of consciousness there can be a total collapse of one's linear time sense (Tart, 1969; Wilber, 1979). This is not only an axiom of the literature on mystical experience in general, but I have previously shown (Ring, 1980) that it is particularly common in NDEs. For that reason, I proposed (Ring, 1980; Ring, 1981) that only a hyperspace model (such as Greene's, for example) can account for paranormal aspects of NDEs. For example, a four dimensional theory of consciousness that would have the effect of "spatializing" time (Greene, 1980) could make sense of the apparent precognitive phenomena we have considered.

Although it is not possible for most people to visualize four dimensions,¹⁷ an intuitive grasp of this kind of formulation can be afforded by this analogy. Suppose that you are a character in someone else's novel. Suppose further that you are completely identified with that character as you go through your life. Suddenly, you experience an altered state of consciousness and are "lifted up" to a higher dimension in which you are identified with the mind of the author of the novel in which you have been a character. In this moment, you have total knowledge of your past and your future, for you have a complete grasp of the character's life's trajectory (including his death on page 269). All at once, however, you are "returned" to your ordinary consciousness where past is past and future is future, but, even though you are again identified with your character, you retain a few isolated fragments of the total knowledge you had when you were conscious of a higher dimension. You know, for example, that one day you will be living in Finland . . .

This of course is only an analogy (not an explanation), but something like this seems to happen to near-death survivors reporting either PFFs or PVs, and hyperspace models do *allow* for such possibilities. Therefore, it seems to me at least conceivable that the kind of phenomena reported in this study could not only be true but could, in principle, yield to scientific understanding. At this point, however, it is simply not possible to make a definitive judgment, one way or the other, but we have sufficient grounds, I believe, to argue that PFFs and PVs *could* reflect paranormal precognitive knowledge. To go beyond this statement will require contemporary psychology to transcend its "Newtonian" models of consciousness and explore the equivalent of "quantum mechanical" conceptions.

The Interpretation of Prophetic Visions

If we assume, for the sake of argument, that precognition is possible, then it follows that PVs could represent advance visionary knowledge of the earth's future.¹⁸ Of course, there are a variety of *alternative* interpretations that are also conceivable, and unless there are compelling reasons to discount them, there is no compunction whatever for us to endorse the apocalyptic visions of these near-death survivors as holding any special prognostic significance for the human race. In any case, the interpretation of PVs — remembering also their small number — needs to be made with utmost caution, particularly given their extreme content and their capacity, if taken seriously, to generate a wide range of individual and collective reactions based on fear, hysteria, or simply passivity.

In this portion of this paper, therefore, I will consider and evaluate five possible interpretations of PVs and will conclude by suggesting some empirical procedures by which these alternatives can be assessed more rigorously.

The psychodynamic interpretation. One possibility that quickly comes to mind is that PVs of the kind we have considered might be of psychodynamic origin. It has been suggested, for example, that these near-death survivors are simply projecting their own fears of the future or their unconscious conflicts onto the world scene. Their own fears of annihilation, then, are given an external apocalyptic locus. Another variant of this kind of interpretation has it that the individual who was, after all, very close to death has unconsciously registered the physical symptoms of his near-death state and has used them as an inadvertent basis on which to generalize to "the death of the world." That is, since he is dying, he somehow transforms this into "the world is dying."

Though superficially plausible, these psychodynamic interpretations have certain flaws. For example, the fact that *all* the PVs have a similar form and content makes the first psychodynamic interpretation unlikely. Why only *these* PVs? Why not a greater variety of projected global futures since near-death survivors can be expected, like the rest of us, to have a considerable range of expectations of the future? Yet only *one* scenario seems to surface in the PVs we have examined. Similarly, the second interpretation has difficulty in explaining the beauty, peace, and other extremely positive features of the NDEs these near-death survivors also report.¹⁹ If people are generalizing their own apparent near-death state to the world at large, we would not expect the NDE to have the form and content that has been so often recounted by near-death survivors, including those under study here.

Accordingly, I am inclined to look elsewhere for an explanation of the PV.

The archetypal interpretation. Michael Grosso (1982) has suggested an archetypal interpretation for the visionary aspect of NDEs. The underlying idea here is that the typical PV scenario is a reflection of a universal death-rebirth motif that is found in mythology and religion and, furthermore, can be experienced directly in certain profound altered states of consciousness. For example, the work of Perry (1974) has demonstrated such an archetype in some acute psychotic states, and Grof's (1975) research with psychedelics has disclosed a clear death-rebirth archetype in conjunction with perinatal (birth-related) memories. Under the circumstances prevailing at

the time of the NDEs reported in this paper, it is certainly reasonable to assume that a personal near-death drama could be experienced symbolically at this archetypal level.

In my judgment, it is cogent to argue that at least some aspects of NDEs may represent archetypal imagery, but such an interpretation is in itself unable to explain two common features of PVs, viz., their specificity and their (apparent) paranormal character. Therefore, it again seems that a comprehensive explanation for PVs will have to be sought elsewhere.

The Zeitgeist interpretation. There is no doubt that escatological ideas are rampant (e.g., Goodman, 1979; White, 1980) as we approach the end of the millenium. In addition to the Bible, popular books and contemporary Christian thought have given a great deal of salience to images of widespread destruction and devastation. The early 1980s have also seen an increasing concern with the likelihood of a nuclear war, and large-scale social protest movements have resulted, particularly in Europe. All of these fears and expectations, however, have been "in the air" for some time. Is it not possible, then, that near-death survivors are simply "picking up on" what many people already think and feel?²⁰ If this were so, no special weight need be given these visions, as the following excerpt (from a near-death survivor) makes clear:

I'm acutely aware of all the "visions" and predictions of late across the globe about war, but I recognize a sameness to them that occurred once before that I can remember – and that was in April of 1969. About six months before a certain date in April (can't remember which one), psychics suddenly started declaring that on that date California would sink into the ocean and the West Coast would be destroyed. Everyone started picking up the same date in their dreams – everywhere – be they psychic or not. A hit song was written about it, warning everyone to boat up to Idaho. I picked it up too, along with everyone else I knew . . . That crazy date was popping up everywhere. We all held our breath. It didn't happen. There was a small earthquake, but not too bad. California held.

This kind of incident (and undoubtedly many other similar contagions have occurred, without result) should give us pause that even a collectively shared vision such as the PV must have predictive significance. Until some of the empirical checks I will suggest shortly can be carried out, the Zeitgeist interpretation, it seems to me, cannot be ruled out as a possible explanatory factor in the occurrence of PVs.

The prophetic interpretation. This, of course, is the interpretation that most of those who have had PVs would give of their experience. Some of these near-death survivors, in fact, while not claiming the status of prophets, nevertheless feel that their role might be similar.

For example, one person remarked:

I know in the past God has had prophets of all different religions and I'm not what you could call a prophet, but yet I have been given some message to give to the people from God (F1).

Another individual said he felt that:

. . . my job is not to bring back the message of fear and hopelessness, but a message of love and hope (M5).

Finally, Alex Tanous, referring to his vision, says that while he has made countless predictions and forecasts, he has

. . . made only one prophecy . . . My prophecy involves the future of mankind (Tanous, p. 165) (M8).

Of course, a prophecy is, in any event, not necessarily a preview of a certainty but a conditional statement (e.g., unless these changes are made, then . . . or if these conditions continue to prevail, then . . .; and so on). Therefore, a prophecy could conceivably be "true" even though the event prophesized does not occur. This makes it convenient for the prophet but difficult for the researcher who is looking for a clear confirmation or disconfirmation of a PV.

Since the major events of the PV have not yet occurred, there is, in one sense, no way this interpretation can be tested. Yet there are still some suggestive indications that bear on its *a priori* plausibility (quite apart from the cogency of other alternatives). One is that at least some of the specific predictions that have been made by near-death survivors who have reported PVs have been *wrong*. Another is that, to my knowledge, there are *only* retroactive claims of successful predictions. Neither of these points greatly undermines the prophetic interpretation at this stage, but neither do they serve to increase one's confidence in it. I will shortly suggest some other means by which it can be evaluated before its predictions are "due" to be fulfilled.

The alternative futures interpretation. A woman once wrote to me describing a detailed and vivid out-of-body experience that had occurred to her in conjunction with an apparent near-death incident involving her pregnancy. What made this case unique in my records was her own assertion that as far as she could determine afterward *none* of the events that she had "seen" while out of her body had actually taken place! Yet her account had all of the realistic detail usually reported by persons whose recollections tally with the facts (e.g., Sabom, 1982). How is such an anomaly to be explained?

One possibility is suggested by the hypothesis of *alternate futures*.

This notion is based on the so-called many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics (see, e.g., Zukav, 1979), but there is reason to think that this hypothesis may be applicable to psychology as well as physics. Let me briefly delineate the hypothesis in the context of modern physics, following which I will try to show its possible relevance to the phenomena of PVs.

In quantum physics it is not possible to predict individual outcomes of sub-atomic processes. In this realm, all one can do is predict *probabilities* of outcomes. For example, of three possible alternatives, A, B, C, one might be able to predict that the chance of A occurring is 60 percent, B, 30 percent, and C, 10 percent. But in any given instance, one would not be able to state *which* of these outcomes would in fact occur. Nevertheless, let us say that in *this* case, outcome B is observed. How are we to understand this event?

The conventional (Copenhagen) interpretation argues that each potential outcome is associated with a wave function. At the instant of occurrence, however, the wave functions associated with outcomes A and C “collapse” while the wave associated with B is in effect “converted” into a certainty. Thus, the instruments of detection register outcome B.

In 1957, however, another interpretation was suggested by Everett, Wheeler, and Grahman (Everett, 1957). Their view, the many-worlds interpretation, holds that all *three* outcomes actually occur, but in different and forever separate universes. Outcome B happens to be the occurrence registered in our physical universe and thus can be measured, but outcomes A and C *also* happen – but they happen “elsewhere.” Despite its apparent outlandishness and untestable character, the many-worlds interpretation is taken seriously by not a few modern physicists.

Now Greene (1980) has already pointed out that in principle hyperspace conceptions of consciousness imply the existence of “potential futures.” If this is so and if PVs lend themselves to hyperspace interpretations, it is possible that an occasional near-death survivor will become aware not just of one but of *several* alternate futures, only one of which might occur in our reality.

This theoretical possibility has recently received some preliminary support. The last interview I conducted for this study (with F5) disclosed just such an outcome: a view of *multiple* possible futures.

In this case, the respondent had an NDE (her second) when she nearly drowned at the age of fourteen (in 1956). She relates that while out of the body and *above* the water, one part of her consciousness focused on the body below her and the requirements to save

that body. Her consciousness *split*, however, and another part was aware of:

... three lines of trajectories that would lead toward futures . . . Each of them is an alternate arrangement of things I saw (F5).

She referred to these trajectories as Futures A, B, and C, respectively. I will briefly describe them here. Future A was a future that *would have* developed if certain events had not taken place around the time of Pythagoras three thousand years ago. It was a future of peace and harmony, marked by the *absence* of religious wars and of a Christ figure. Future B was, in effect, the classic PV scenario I have delineated in this paper. Future C was an even more destructive version of Future B. Both Futures B and C projected to her simultaneous images associated with these separate future tracks from about the end of the century backward toward 1956; this was also true for the future-oriented events of the non-realized Future A except that these images were fewer and less detailed than those connected with B and C. F5 seems to feel that we are currently headed for Future B.

This individual, then, was aware of three potential futures, only two of which had to her any present possibility of manifesting on earth (since Future A was only a "might have been"). How *many* potential futures there might be is, of course, impossible to know, but *that* there may indeed be potential futures, set to unfold for us like plays already written but not produced,²¹ is made more plausible by F5's account of her NDE.

It is possible, therefore, that respondents reporting PVs may have "tapped into" only one of a set of alternate future scenarios and, not having any reason to suspect other possibilities, have *mistaken* their *alternate* future scenario for *the* future. In this way, these PVs may convey to them a sense of absolute certitude concerning the shape of the future but still be in error. Again, to use quantum physics as the basis for an analogy, one could say that what they have become aware of is the certainty of a *probability*.

Of course, even if the alternate futures interpretation outlined here is correct, one would still have to ask: why are reports of PVs seemingly limited to the one future we have described?

Empirical Procedures for Evaluating PVs

We have already come to appreciate some of the difficulties associated with the evaluation of PVs and the various interpretations that have been given for them. Nevertheless, from an empirical standpoint, we are far from helpless here. I want to offer the follow-

ing suggestions for ways to bring empirical procedures to bear on PVs.

First, it's obvious that our data base of such cases is almost ludicrously small – especially in the light of the “heavy” generalizations that rest on them. The first task, then, is to increase our sample of PVs. Doing so will not only bring us more data on PVs, but it may show that certain interpretations (e.g., the psychodynamic one) have been prematurely dismissed, especially if we can obtain supplementary information on certain personality features of near-death survivors reporting PVs. Greater heterogeneity of PVs would, if found, also lower the subjective probability that the particular PV scenario described here has prophetic significance.

Second, it's important to determine what the prevailing conceptions of the short-run future are, both among near-death survivors and the general public. To the extent that others share a sense of the future of the kind implied by the PVs we have reviewed here, that would indirectly support the *Zeitgeist* interpretation. In undertaking such investigations, one could also assess the role of religious beliefs in structuring one's view of the future as well as determining what other factors (including personal non-NDE visions) have influenced that view.

Finally, to determine the possible prophetic nature of PVs, one must make an attempt to discover whether any specific predictions about global events can be recorded *in advance*. This would solve the problem of the unsupported retrospective claim of such predictions often made by those reporting PVs. For just this reason, we have established at the International Association for Near-Death Studies a Premonitions Registry. Anyone who wishes to record a premonition of a future event relevant to a PV may write or call (203-486-4170) us. Near-death studies researchers may also record such data with us. In this way, it might be possible to assess the prognostic value of these PVs *before* the major events predicted take place.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have presented some preliminary findings suggestive of the possibility that a small minority of near-death survivors may have had glimpses of the future disclosed to them during or after their NDEs. Personal flashforwards (PFFs) offer intriguing hints that one's personal future may in some sense independently exist as part of a “life design” that only gradually unfolds in manifestation. Recent hyperspace theories of precognition may be able to account for such phenomena. Prophetic visions (PVs) relate to the earth's

future over the next twenty years and reveal a noteworthy consistency across independent reports. PVs suggest an approaching time of widespread catastrophic change, beginning in the 1980s. Because of the implications of these PVs, I urge that the phenomenon be investigated much more extensively before reaching any conclusions. This is certainly one new direction in near-death studies that deserves further and careful exploration.

NOTES

1. I wish to express my thanks to the Academy of Religion and Psychical Research for its support for some of the research reported in this paper. I am also indebted to the following colleagues for their constructive comments on an earlier draft of the manuscript: F. Gordon Greene, Bruce Greyson, Michael Grosso, John White, and Mark Woodhouse.
2. These terms should not be taken to imply that the personal flashforwards are *necessarily* precognitive (i.e., that the events foreseen will actually take place) or that the prophetic visions will prove to be accurate. That they may (in some cases) be so is possible, but the labels used here to refer to them reflect the frame of reference and interpretation of the experient. I will address this point later in this paper.
3. In particular, I need to acknowledge Raymond Moody's encouragement to re-interview several of his respondents concerning their PVs. In addition, Joe Green kindly provided a transcript of an interview he conducted with a near-death survivor who related a PV. Finally, I want to thank John Audette for bringing my attention to PVs for the first time in 1977.
4. My reasons for this statement will be apparent later.
5. I have discussed these NDE decisional points at length in *Life at Death* (see Chapter 4).
6. Other persons who have had PFFs based on NDEs occurring in childhood have also claimed that they were aware of devices then of which they only later learned the names.
7. She was also one of the thirteen respondents in my sample to disclose a prophetic vision; I will return to that portion of her experience later in this paper.
8. Belle said that *after* meeting Moody, she realized that the man she had sometimes noticed jogging must have been Moody, but she had never paid much attention to him or glanced at his face.
9. It was unusual for Avery to introduce himself in this fashion.

According to Belle's account:

. . . What was even stranger . . . was that he gave me his full name. They said he never, never gives his full name, Raymond Avery Moody, the third. This was the first time he had ever given out the full name. And that was my signal and his father immediately appeared in my mind and I knew who he was and that it was time to talk to him, to give him certain information.

From my own knowledge of the Moody family, I can also attest to the fact that their son, Avery, is always referred to by that name.

10. It is my impression that an unusually high proportion of near-death survivors reporting PVs have had particularly deep or prolonged NDEs. In addition, virtually *all* of them have related an encounter with a "higher being" or beings of some kind, which is *not* typical of *most* NDEs.
11. In this section, for purposes of cross-referencing quotations, I will give each respondent a code label. F and M denote female and male, respectively.
12. This, of course, is probably the view of most persons at this time in history. The near-death survivors differ here only in their claim that they have already had a *vision* of these developments.
13. A few observations about this case are in order here. M6 was interviewed jointly by Raymond Moody and me on November 19, 1981. On this occasion, M6 described a series of precognitive dreams he had had, following his NDE, in which he had seen scenes of events that later came to pass. He believes that what appeared to him in these dreams were scenes he *originally* saw during his NDE. Since his "track record" with previous dreams was so accurate, his series of dreams about a nuclear war are naturally extremely disquieting to him. He seems to believe that the Olympic year in question is 1984. Interestingly enough, M6, at the time of this NDE, chose to "override" the decision of the luminous beings he encountered. They said that they wanted him to go with them "because we don't want you to see and experience things that will happen otherwise that will hurt you a great deal." M6 insisted on returning, however.
14. Most, though not all, of the thirteen near-death survivors here are Christians.
15. This quotation is from the book, *Beyond Coincidence* (1976), by the well-known psychic, Alex Tanous, whom I also interviewed for this project. In it he states that his vision came to

him in the fall of 1967, well before many of the “signs” that have now occurred took place. The quote is from his chapter, *Three Days of Darkness* (pp. 165-169), which describes his vision in detail. In his (1982) interview with me, he stated that his initial understanding of his vision has only been reinforced by recent events.

16. Obviously, these models are not mutually exclusive.
17. There have been a few gifted persons, however, with the ability to become aware of or even to “visualize” four dimensional forms (see, e.g., Coxeter, 1972). I am grateful to F. Gordon Greene for pointing this out to me.
18. This thesis would be even more compelling if it could be shown that certain individuals who have reported PVs have also had PFFs that came to pass.
19. It might seem that the highly positive final outcome stated or implied in PVs could represent a projection of the tremendous peace individuals often experience while on the threshold of death, but the fact that my respondents typically report that their feelings of peace and well-being *preceded* their PV militates against this interpretation.
20. I am currently conducting a research project to determine how widespread this apocalyptic orientation is in the public at large.
21. Perhaps the concept of alternate futures would help to make sense of those predictions by psychics and clairvoyants that prove *false*. In any event, this interpretation would imply that those failures might be attributable to individuals tuning into *alternate futures* that do not manifest rather than assuming that they represent the inability to distinguish fantasy from psychic imagery.

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