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*A New European Case of the Reincarnation Type*

## A NEW EUROPEAN CASE OF THE REINCARNATION TYPE

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## ABSTRACT

When selection is restricted to solved cases not taking place in the same family, there remain only a very small number of cases of the reincarnation type (CORT) that have been reported for Europe. The case described in this paper belongs formally to this rare category and consequently deserves recording. A number of features of the case are described: a premonition experienced by the subject's mother; three announcing dreams and their accuracy; the subject's specific behaviour, especially that relating to the opposite sex; a specific ailment affecting the subject; the subject's special skills; and two incidents of a psychokinetic or poltergeist nature experienced by the previous personality's mother after his death. Additionally, the case is rendered particularly unusual because it involves a chance encounter between the subject's mother and the previous personality at the moment of the latter's death, suggesting that the case could have evolved because this encounter offered an incentive for the previous personality to reincarnate with this particular mother. Because of the possibility of information leakage associated with this chance encounter, however fleeting that may have been, this devalues the case with respect to the child's statements about his previous existence: at least in theory they can be explained by normal means. It is therefore a minor drawback that the case in hand is not particularly strong with regard to the subject's statements.

## INTRODUCTION

Ian Stevenson, the father of reincarnation research, has denoted cases of children (subjects) who spontaneously seem to remember previous lives as 'cases of the reincarnation type' (commonly referred to as CORTs). The richest and most convincing come from South-East Asia (e.g. Mills, 1989; Mills & Dhiman, 2011; Stevenson, 1975, 1977, 1983a), but they have been reported from all countries where any effort has been made to find examples (e.g. Rivas, 2003; Stevenson, 1983b). The total number of European CORTs investigated is rather small (Stevenson, 2003). They are harder to find than in other parts of the world, which is probably why only a few researchers have made an effort to look for them.

The majority of European CORTs either remain unsolved, meaning that a previous personality could not be identified, or they are solved 'in-family' cases, denoting that the subject and the previous personality belong to the same family. In-family cases suffer from the intrinsic weakness that normal information transferred from family members to the subject about the circumstances of the previous personality cannot in principle be safely excluded (information leakage). Thus statements made by the subject alone are not sufficient to create a convincing or strong case.

In-family cases or, more broadly, cases with possible information leakage can nevertheless be very suggestive of reincarnation, if in addition to statements made by the subject they display other features, such as specific behaviour, special knowledge or abilities, or ailments or birthmarks corresponding to wounds inflicted on the previous personality.

The CORTs most desirable to investigate are those in which memories cannot easily be dismissed as having been acquired by normal means. As a rule these conditions apply in cases that can finally be solved that involve two separate families, who prior to attempts at solving had no contact with each other. These are extremely rare in Europe. Ian Stevenson has been the main researcher of CORTs worldwide, but from his publications we have just four such solved non-in-family cases from Europe (Stevenson, 2003, pp.51, 100, 105, 210). However, typical of many CORTs, these four also suffer from weaknesses that reduce their value or support for the reincarnation hypothesis; for example, in one of them (Wolfgang Neurath in Stevenson, 2003, p.100) the subject's and the previous person's family were closely related as neighbours, and another one (Helmut Kraus in Stevenson, 2003, p.105) could not be independently verified—as applies in the case described here.

There are a small number of additional such cases from other researchers, but these also have flaws similar to those of the current case. Peter and Mary Harrison (Harrison, 1991, p.11) have contributed their case of 'Nicola', which on closer examination still remains unsolved because references only to the previous personality's father, and not the (presumably male) previous personality, could be found in documents. Another impressive case is that of Jenny Cockell (1993, 2008), well-verified, but by the subject herself rather than by independent researchers. To be generous, one might add to this category the case of 'Christina', investigated and published by Rawat and Rivas in Holland (Rawat, 2007, p.95). The previous personality could not be verified, but a probable identity was traced. It is in this context that we believe that the case to be described here will be of some value as an instance of the rare category of European solved non-in-family cases.

#### BACKGROUND TO THE CASE

I have made an effort to find CORTs in German-speaking countries since the turn of the century. The majority of contacts I have had with parents whose children claim to remember a previous life have been facilitated via the internet (Hassler, 2012). But over a period of 10 years I have found only two cases that were worth investigation and subsequent publication in a book in German about CORTs (Hassler, 2011).

In November 2011 a priest of a local Christian parish (Christengemeinschaft Erlangen, 2012), open to the idea of reincarnation and knowing of my interest in CORT, informed me by telephone of a mother living close by who had experiences with her son, who claimed to have lived before. I had no previous acquaintance with this mother or her family.

On 8 November 2011 I had the first interview with the mother concerned, whom I will call by the pseudonym 'Mrs Wolf'. She trained as a nurse and later studied psychology at the university in Paris. She started her professional career as a psychologist, and is now practising psychotherapy in a private practice. Forty-five years of age, she currently lives as a single mother together with three of her five children. The subject of the case reported here is her third child, a boy of 14 years, to whom I will give the pseudonym 'Rolf'. He has two older sisters and two younger ones.

Mrs Wolf has been open to the concept of reincarnation since her youth.

She told her story willingly but said she would rather not have it published under her real name: she wishes to avoid publicity for fear of being ridiculed. Her narration kept to the point, with no excursions into esoteric arguments. I therefore deem her account to be as objective as can be expected from a person recalling events that occurred 10 to 16 years earlier. As it turned out, some of the dates she gave were inaccurate by a year or two.

#### THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AS TOLD BY THE SUBJECT'S MOTHER<sup>1</sup>

##### *Premonitions*

Mrs Wolf reported that her experiences started in 1994 or 1995 (later investigation revealed that it was in fact in March 1996), when she was attending a disco in Erlangen, Germany. The more the evening progressed the more she grew apprehensive about driving home to Bamberg, where she then lived. She did not know exactly why this feeling arose. It became so intense towards the end of the event that in panic she was bold enough to ask a man who was a complete stranger to her whether he would allow her to stay with him overnight at his home. The only reason for this plea was to avoid the need to drive home in her car. When her request was declined, she stayed at the disco for as long as was possible, which was until at about 2 a.m., and then she was finally obliged to drive home. She decided to take the autobahn (motorway) and, contrary to her normal practice, drove very slowly, at no more than 80 km/h.

Another car on the autobahn overtook her, travelling at approximately 100 km/h. When it was back in her lane in front of her, she saw in the dim light someone on the road being hit by this car and knocked down. Mrs Wolf stopped her car near the victim and pulled him clear of the carriageway. It was a young man of about 18 years, and he looked at her for a brief moment before falling unconscious. He began bleeding from the mouth and nose but not very much. The lower part of his right leg was at an unnatural angle. Mrs Wolf took him in her arms and felt his pulse, which was becoming progressively weaker. Fearing he was about to die she said to him: "Don't be afraid. Go into the light and accept the facts as they are."

Not long after that he died in her arms: being trained as a nurse she was able to recognize the signs. The ambulance helpers tried to revive the young man, performing resuscitation on him for two hours, but to no avail.<sup>2</sup>

It was then that Mrs Wolf surmised that the young lad had attempted suicide. She believes that the strange feelings of panic she had at the disco were related to these events.

##### *Announcing Dreams*

For the rest of that dreadful night she asked a female friend to stay with her at her home. Towards dawn she succeeded in falling asleep. She dreamt about the accident victim, seeing and recognizing him clearly. He cuddled up to her and let her know his intention of coming to her, saying he wanted to be

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<sup>1</sup> This section has been checked with Rolf's mother to confirm that the facts are recorded correctly.

<sup>2</sup> This association of an ostensible case of reincarnation with a link forged at the scene of a fatal road accident might make Ellis's (2003) speculations concerning such a link in an otherwise very different case seem just a tiny bit less fanciful.

near her. She understood this to be a desire to reincarnate into her family. In her dream Mrs Wolf vehemently opposed that idea. She did not want to burden herself with a suicidal person, and said that he did not belong to her family and should return to his own. However, he did not accept this argument, refusing to go to his own family and insisting on coming to her as her child. They could not reach any agreement.

The following night the same young lad appeared in a dream, again asking her to become his mother. Mrs Wolf was no less disapproving of this idea than the night before. During the third night after the accident she dreamt of the young man again. This time he was standing at a picturesque lake. Nearby, at a cemetery on a hill, a funeral was taking place.<sup>3</sup> They were standing at a distance from the mourners. The man explained to her that this was his own funeral. Mrs Wolf was astounded and asked in her dream why he was being buried near this lake. He answered that this was his home lake—Lago Maggiore in Italy (later investigation revealed that the lake near the cemetery where he was buried was Lago di Pieve di Cadore). To Mrs Wolf this did not tally with the man's appearance, as he was fair-haired and blue-eyed instead of having what she regarded as a typical Italian look.

Mrs Wolf felt happy at the prospect that he would now go into the non-physical realm and might no longer want to come to her. However, he distinctly declared his desire to be with her, as he had done twice before. But this time she gave way a little, saying she would accept his coming under the following conditions: he must not have committed suicide; he should have cleared up matters with his own family; and he should return in 18 months. In saying this she had in the back of her mind that currently she had no husband or boyfriend; that she was fully occupied in looking after her elder daughter, who suffered from leukaemia; and even if she did have an unplanned liaison, she would use contraceptives. The young man in her dream indicated that he was happy with this reply, embraced her and went off towards the funeral procession. And so the dream ended.

#### *Contact to the Victim's Mother*

Using the information from the obituary, Mrs Wolf contacted the deceased youngster's mother and learned that he was 'Mario', a fair-haired, blue-eyed 18-year-old of German/Italian descent. Mrs Wolf said his parents lived part of the year in Italy near Lago Maggiore, where their son was buried, and most of the year they ran a shop in Erlangen, Germany (later it became clear that Mrs Wolf's memory concerning the specific lake was erroneous).

She learned from Mario's mother that, on the night of the accident, Mario had returned to his parents' home to take his mother's car for a quick spin. On a bend of the road near the autobahn he lost control of the car, which left the road and overturned in an adjacent field. It was thought that he had been able to get out virtually unharmed and that he must have run to the motorway, presumably in shock, where he was hit by a car as already described. Whether he had intended to commit suicide or only wanted to summon help is unclear.

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<sup>3</sup> In fact the funeral took place three or four days *after* the dream, but the decision to bury Mario's body in Pieve di Cadore had been made by Mario's mother immediately after his death.

In her conversation with Mario's mother, Mrs Wolf was careful not to reveal any details of her dreams. She was afraid of ridicule, or of causing relationship problems if the dream were to become reality.

#### *Succeeding Events*

One and a half years later, as Mrs Wolf recounted, she had an affair (later investigation revealed that it could have been no more than nine months later). Realizing that the condom used had been defective, she took the morning-after pill. Nevertheless she became pregnant. At the time she had forgotten about her dream concerning Mario, so she made no connection with the events reported above. On 9 September 1997, in Erlangen, Germany, Mrs Wolf gave birth to the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy to whom I have given the pseudonym 'Rolf'.

#### *Statements Made by the Subject*

One day when Rolf was three or four years old he said spontaneously to his mother: "I have lived before. I died in a traffic accident, but it was not so terrible. I was bleeding a little bit on my head and my leg was hurting."

This remark shocked her because, for the first time in years, she now remembered the accident and her subsequent dreams. The boy's description of the accident was exactly the same as she recalled it: a little bleeding on the head and a damaged leg. Rolf made his astonishing statement only once and while he was alone with his mother, so there were no other witnesses.

#### *Behavioural Features of the Subject*

Mrs Wolf (with no knowledge of the statements Mario's mother made later) characterizes her son as follows:—

1. Trendy clothes are very important to him. He acts as a trendsetter in clothing styles.
2. American clothes are his favoured ones.
3. He takes hours to style his hair.
4. He uses perfume (not only body lotion) on his body.
5. He is a charming young boy who knows how to twist everybody round his little finger.
6. His way of walking and his posture are a means of getting attention from others.
7. Girls of his age adore him.
8. If he were allowed to he would dye his fair hair.
9. He is helpful to others.
10. He has practical skills (e.g. gardening, setting up electronic devices).
11. He once showed an astonishing skill for painting a portrait very rapidly, but does not (yet) use this ability.
12. He is weak in resisting psychological pressure exerted on him.
13. He has shown some interest in religion and at his own request is going to be confirmed.

14. He loves eating expensive meals.

15. He has **no** linguistic talent.

16. Some incidents suggest that he possesses some telepathic abilities.

The behavioural features 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 can be interpreted as specifically feminine. But as yet it is not clear whether Rolf will become homosexual or transgender.

#### *Bodily Features of the Subject*

In CORTs not only behavioural features should be compared between the subject and the conjectured previous person, but bodily features as well, as has been shown by Stevenson (1997).

Rolf has an infirmity of the knees. Since the age of three he has been fond of soccer and is training a great deal. At the age of twelve he began complaining about a permanent aching of his right knee, which spread to the left one six months later. He asked his mother to come with him to see a doctor. The doctor diagnosed Osgood Schlatter's disease and said that he would most probably have got over this by the time he was 18.

He is highly allergic to pollen of many sorts.

His blue eyes and his fair hair are consistent with Mrs Wolf's genetic disposition.

#### INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE

Mrs Wolf has no written record of the events described above. As far as possible witnesses are concerned, she declared that approximately six months after Mario's death she lost contact with the friend who kept her company for the remainder of the night of the accident, and she is unable to re-establish that contact. Nobody else was present when Rolf made his statements about 'his' accident, so there is no second witness for these statements. The only independent witnesses to any of the events could possibly be her mother-in-law and the parents of the victim, Mario. Her short contact with Mario's mother was discontinued just weeks after the accident. So the list of people to be interviewed is short, comprising, on the subject's side, Rolf and his mother, Mrs Wolf, in Uttenreuth, and Mrs Wolf's mother-in-law in Erlangen; and on the side of the previous personality, his father in Erlangen, and his mother in Weikersheim, all of them living in Germany.

#### *Result of the Interviews and Documents Found*

I interviewed Rolf on 12 June 2012. Only recently, after our first contacts, had his mother informed him about her experience on the autobahn, her dreams and her wondering whether he could possibly be the reincarnation of Mario. He said that he had no direct recollection of events from a previous life nor could he remember having once told his mother about his death in a car accident. I showed him ten items of Mario's personal possessions mixed with ten objects from my own household in order to see whether he recognized some of them and, if so, the 'correct' ones, but he did not recognise any of the objects. He was also taken to Mario's parents' shop but likewise did not react with signs of recognition. These negative results accord with what is known from

other cases. As a rule, memories of previous lives are forgotten by the age of seven or eight years.

Mrs Wolf's mother-in-law denied knowing anything about the case.

Letters to Mario's parents were not answered. Attempts to reach them via members of Italian clubs in Erlangen and shop-owners of Italian descent were not successful. From local government records I was able to ascertain Mario's dates of birth and death. On that basis I was able to find Mario's obituary and a short article about the accident in the local newspaper, *Erlanger Nachrichten*. The article confirms the above-cited statements made by Mrs Wolf, namely Mario's date of birth, 16 May 1977, and Mario's date of death, 9 March 1996.

It should be pointed out that Rolf's birth, on 9 September 1997, occurred exactly 18 months to the day after Mario's death, reflecting the 'agreement' reached in Mrs Wolf's dream.

Mario's place of birth was Ludwigshafen, Germany, his place of death was Baiersdorf near Erlangen, Germany, and his place of burial Pieve di Cadore, Northern Italy. The Pieve di Cadore cemetery is located in hilly countryside near the artificial lake, Lago de Pieve di Cadore. Apart from the exact lake this tallies well with Mrs Wolf's third announcing dream.

When Mario's father returned from Italy to Erlangen, I had an interview with him. He did not reveal much; only that his deceased son was a very charming person who was very much concerned about his appearance. He could not give the address of Mario's mother and sister because he had lost contact with his former family members. He is divorced and newly remarried.

#### STATEMENTS MADE BY THE VICTIM'S MOTHER

From the obituary I had the full name of Mario's mother and, with the help of the internet, I obtained her address. Our first interview was on 16 April 2012. Contrary to my expectations, talking with her about the death of her son and the ensuing events was not at all problematic, because she believes in reincarnation and had already had paranormal experiences. I did not have to ask her many questions, because she spoke freely about how she remembered the events. During my interview I avoided putting any leading questions, and I was careful not to reveal relevant information that I had received from Mrs Wolf (a verbatim account of our extensive conversation would be outside the scope of this report).

#### *Behavioural Features*

When Mario was alive, he and his mother had a close relationship. She characterizes Mario in the ways given in Table 1.

#### *Bodily Features*

Mario was reported to have had a birthmark on the right side of his body and a long, faintly visible scar above his eyebrows. None of these can be seen on Rolf. There were, I think, some facial similarities between Mario and Rolf, and while, because of my promise of anonymity, no photographs can be included here, those I have shown to others indicate that they could well be taken for brothers. Mario was allergic to pollen (as is Rolf today). Mario's mother confirmed the injury to Mario's right leg. It had been put in plaster when she saw him in hospital. This corresponds with Rolf's aching knees.

Table 1 *Statements about Mario's Behaviour and Character Compared with Rolf's*

| Statements made by<br>Rolf's mother about Rolf                                                                    | Statements made by<br>Mario's mother about Mario                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Trendy clothes are very important to him. He acts as a trendsetter in clothing styles.                          | Fashionable clothing and a perfect outfit were imperative. At school he was the clothing trendsetter.                                                                                                                     |
| 2 American clothes are favoured.                                                                                  | American-style clothing was his favourite.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 3 He takes hours to style his hair.                                                                               | He was very meticulous about his hairstyle.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 4 He uses perfume (not only body lotion) on his body.                                                             | He used perfume on his body.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| —                                                                                                                 | He even shaved his body hair.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 5 He is a charming young boy who knows how to twist everybody round his little finger.                            | He was very popular.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 6 His way of walking and his posture are a means of getting attention from others.                                | His gait was feminine and upright.                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 7 Girls of his age adore him.                                                                                     | Girls of his age adored him, but he rejected their approaches.                                                                                                                                                            |
| 8 If he were allowed he would dye his fair hair.                                                                  | Black hair was his favourite. From the age of 13 he knew he was gay and fell in love with a black-haired (but white) boy. He did not colour his hair. He darkened his skin using skin cream and a solarium.               |
| —                                                                                                                 | He was helpful to others.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 9 He is helpful to others.                                                                                        | His practical skills became manifest when he learned with speed to make ice cream or to drive a car. He ended his school career prematurely because he saw his future in making and selling ice cream.                    |
| 10 He has practical skills (e. g. gardening, setting up electronic devices).                                      | Mario was good at drawing and painting. He once did a drawing over the entire wall of his living room and an oil painting in one night.                                                                                   |
| 11 He once showed an astonishing skill for painting a portrait very rapidly, but does not (yet) use this ability. | Mario withstood the constant psychological pressure from his father and sister but also clearly expressed a wish to die. Whether his death must be understood as an escape from psychological pressure remains undecided. |
| 12 He is weak in resisting psychological pressure exerted on him.                                                 | Mario showed an interest in religion (Scientology).                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 13 He has shown some interest in religion and at his own request is going to be confirmed.                        | Once his greatest wish was to go for an exclusive dinner with his mother.                                                                                                                                                 |
| 14 He loves eating expensive meals.                                                                               | He liked to speak broken German.                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| —                                                                                                                 | He had linguistic talent, speaking Italian, German and American fluently. He was learning French easily.                                                                                                                  |
| 15 He has <b>no</b> linguistic talent.                                                                            | His mother granted him some telepathic abilities.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 16 Some incidents suggest that he possesses some telepathic abilities.                                            | Good table manners.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| —                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

*Circumstances of Mario's Death and his Burial*

When he was thirteen, Mario realized he was gay. A short time before his death he learned that a boy with whom he had fallen in love was already engaged to another man and wanted only a platonic relationship. He urgently wanted to consult his mother about this problem, but because of scheduling difficulties he had no opportunity to do so. Instead of getting an appointment with his mother he learned that she was going to divorce his father. As a result of this he would have to work closely with his father and sister, both of whom he hated. When he was young he had been severely hurt or, rather, bullied by them. Under this enormous psychological pressure Mario became depressed and it is perhaps understandable that—as his friends said later—he might have intended to commit suicide.

Mario's mother remains undecided as to whether he intended to kill himself by running into that car on the motorway. He had been strapped in her car when he lost control, left the road and overturned in the field. A person does not fasten his seatbelt when he intends to commit suicide, she argued. He could have intended to signal for help by going onto the autobahn and in his state of shock have accidentally walked into the oncoming car. Writing off his mother's car in addition to his unsolved relationship problems could also have been just too much for him to bear. He may have thought he could evade the psychological pressure by killing himself.

Mario's mother confirmed that the cemetery at Pieve di Cadore, where Mario was buried, is situated in hilly countryside and the lake close by would have been visible from there, as seen by Mrs Wolf in her third dream.

*Psychokinetic Events After Mario's Death*

Mario's mother also reported events happening after Mario's death which she regards as post-mortem attempts at communication. She said she was in the habit of listening to soft music on CDs when driving her car. When Mario was with her he would protest at this, and switch it to radio-mode and a station transmitting pop music. Three weeks after Mario's death, when his mother was driving along a road they had taken regularly together, she was thinking about Mario, when the radio spontaneously switched from CD-mode to radio-mode without her intervention and started playing pop music. She interpreted this as having been initiated by Mario. Nevertheless, she asked a garage technician whether the radio could switch on automatically and was told that it was impossible.

About seven weeks after Mario's death another psychokinetic event happened to her. All the lights went out in the shop where she and some customers were. In fact, the entire local area was in darkness. She phoned the utility services to ask for help and was told that they knew of no power failure, but they promised to send a technician. Having already had the experience with her car-radio she suspected that Mario could be involved, so she said aloud: "Mario, stop that nonsense. You cannot switch off all the lights with customers present."

The immediate result was the return of power and the lights coming back on. She phoned the utility services a second time, but they could not give any explanation.

#### NORMAL MEANS OF EXPLAINING THE CASE

The weakest point in this case must be the fact that there are no independent witnesses either for the statements made by Mrs Wolf or for some of those made by Mario's mother. Besides, the two main witnesses are believers in reincarnation, which raises the danger of biased reporting. In theory the case could have been fabricated by Mrs Wolf, making use of the facts from the printed records in the newspaper. But there is no motive on her part to perpetrate such a hoax. She had nothing to gain and did not intend to make any profit from it. If she had, she would surely not have wanted to remain anonymous. No money was paid to her. From the interviews I gained the impression that the two witnesses were honest, rational people, and that their reports could be relied on as objective descriptions.

By breaking down the case into its components it might be possible to explain most of its elements normally or on the basis of parapsychological phenomena that are commonly interpreted as effects of the living. Mrs Wolf maintains that she did not say anything about Mario's accident or her involvement in it after Rolf was born until a few months ago. She says she had forgotten all about the event until Rolf made his surprising statement. The only people she had spoken to about the matter were her friend mentioned above and the priest who informed me about the case.

One reason for being so reluctant to talk about the event was her fear of being ridiculed, but she was even more concerned about the possibility that Mario's mother would try to contact Rolf (talking with others would increase significantly the danger of Mario's mother succeeding in finding him). From the dream she had formed the impression that for some reason Rolf's soul wanted to come to her, instead of to his previous mother or his former family. Perhaps irrationally, Mrs Wolf felt that it was her duty to protect Rolf from his previous mother. As a consequence she believes it to be impossible for her son to have unknowingly overheard her saying how Mario died.

Nor had she ever talked about the concept of reincarnation in front of Rolf. She adamantly insists that Rolf could not have known what he had said, as reported above, about his pre-existence and his presumed death in a previous life. I have no reason to doubt her, but it is possible that she might nevertheless be incorrect and that—unknown to her—Rolf had overheard a conversation she does not remember. If that is so, we must assume that a 3- or 4-year-old boy could have understood the concept of reincarnation and put the pieces together to dramatize and personalize what he had heard into a story, perhaps with the intention of pleasing his mother. If this explanation is unacceptable one might conceivably suggest that Rolf had strong paranormal abilities that enabled him to know the facts of the accident and then to personalize them into a reincarnation story.

Mrs Wolf's premonition of the accident could be explained as precognition, a well-known phenomenon in parapsychology that has no link to a beyond. But this designation is not much more than renaming. In essence nobody truly understands this process: all we have to hand are descriptions of many similar phenomena. The announcing dreams might be reduced to Mrs Wolf's wishes to fulfil an unconscious psychological need to have a child, in combination with

telepathy or clairvoyance to convey to her some information about the cemetery and its surroundings. The exact timing of Rolf's birth 18 months later, the time specified in the dream 'agreement', could be seen as precognitive or as a coincidence. Yet it is doubtful that any unconscious need really existed, because Mrs Wolf in her dream objected strongly to the idea of having the accident victim as her future son.

The similarity of 13 behavioural features between Mario and Rolf might in principle be declared to be coincidental, but the degree of correspondence with no obvious contradictions is quite remarkable. The aching of Rolf's knees needs no explanation because it has no bearing on Mario's fate. It is a casual connection like Rolf's and Mario's allergies. Allergies are commonplace today and it is not unlikely for two people to show them.

The psychokinetic events may have nothing to do with a deceased person, despite the attributions of the experient. There was a focus-person present with obvious psychological needs who might have caused them in order to prove to herself the survival of her son's soul. But it must be kept in mind that there is no known proof or *modus operandi* for a living person to exert psychokinetic wonders with any degree of intentionality; talking about psi-fields does not really explain how psi is working (Roll & Persinger, 2001). One only knows that things like this have happened all over the world for many ages, and they cannot all be explained as fraud or deception or as any other normal event (Gauld & Cornell, 1979).

#### PARANORMAL ELEMENTS OF THE CASE

It is not possible with this case to settle the argument about whether its different aspects can be taken apart and accounted for separately regardless of their possible interconnection, as has been done above. When all the elements of the case are considered as a unity, it would seem very unlikely that so many improbabilities and inexplicable paranormal phenomena could fall into place to mimic reincarnation.

There is Rolf's unexpected knowledge of facts that he could not have known normally, together with his desire, as a small child, to put these into a personalized reincarnation story. Mrs Wolf's emotional premonition of future events, causing her deep concern, fits together with her announcing dreams in which she correctly sees the countryside around Mario's place of burial and foresees the date of birth of her future son. In addition to this, 13 behavioural features between Mario and Rolf happen to coincide. The young boy has a weakness of his knee and feels pain where Mario's leg was injured. Finally the deceased Mario seems to interfere with happenings on earth. All these wonders are covered easily by the reincarnation hypothesis or by a spiritualistic concept which includes reincarnation.

#### CONCLUSION

Though formally a much-desired solved European non-in-family case, this one drops back to the level of a solved 'in-family' case on account of the announcing dreams and the link between Mrs Wolf and Mario at the site of the accident. One might wonder if the case would ever have occurred without this connection. The correspondences between the behavioural features of Mario

and Rolf are somewhat tenuous, and the essential facts of the case are not supported by testimony from independent witnesses. Nevertheless, taking all its elements together, it is still an intriguing case.

Jim Tucker has introduced a 'strength of case scale' for CORTs that measures aspects such as birthmarks corresponding to fatal wounds, verified statements about a previous life, and unusual skills or aptitudes related to a previous life. Tucker reported a mean value of 10.4 for the 799 cases from six countries he considered initially (range = -3 to 49; Tucker, 2000); while Stevenson's European CORTs gave a mean value of 6.4 (Stevenson 2003, p.252). Tucker scored the case in hand as 4 (1 for verified statements about the previous life, 1 for identification of the previous personality, and 2 for the distance between the previous personality's main residence and the subject's birthplace), which is below average. This rating must not, however, be misinterpreted as an absolute objective measure for individual cases. It remains subject to individual judgement, implying also higher scores.

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