# COMPANIONS OF UNCERTAIN STATUS

Mary Kathleen Roberts

## ABSTRACT

Imaginary companions are conceptualized as phenomena of world + x construction and reconstruction, and parameters relevant to whether or not a person constructs a world with an imaginary someone are presented. Access to a range of cases of imaginary companions is provided using a paradigm case formulation, and empirical data about imaginary companions is reviewed.

> Who is the third who walks always beside you?
> When I count, there are only you and I together.
> (T. S. Eliot, 1963, p. 67)

In creating a world, a person sometimes goes beyond the bounds of the real world. His or her personal world is less restrictive than usual and includes the possibility of something non-ordinary. In each of the

following examples, the person's world includes something that does not fit our usual constraints on what is real.

A young boy has several kings in his world. The kings live in back of the radiator where he can hear them arguing and chuckling together. Whenever he feels afraid, he has only to turn the valve of the radiator and they rush forth, giving him the courage to do whatever he needs to do (Wickes, 1966, p. 201).

A 63-year-old woman following the death of her husband often feels him lying beside her in bed. She is first aware of the heat of his body and then she turns to see him next to her. He says reassuring words to her, and his presence gives her great comfort (Sedman, 1966, p. 59).

A solitary sailor, seized by sickness during a storm, suddenly sees a tall man at the helm of his boat. He momentarily thinks that the tall man is a pirate, taking over his boat, but the tall man assures him that he is a pilot who will guide the boat safely through the storm (Slocum, 1905, p. 39).

In the introductory section below, I will highlight some of the difficulties that such companions raise in light of our concept of the real world.

## THE REAL WORLD

Because everything has reality only insofar as it enters into human social practices, the real world is essentially a behavioral world. Physical objects like chairs and tables, atoms and planets, all exist as such because people have social practices and conceptual systems that involve distinguishing them from other objects and treating them accordingly.

People also distinguish "real" objects, processes, events, and states of affairs from "imaginary," "illusory," or "hallucinatory" ones and treat them accordingly. When a person appraises an object as being real, he or she is prepared to act in relation to that object. (Cf. "What a person takes to be real is what he is prepared to act on." [Ossorio, 1982, p. 22]) But if a person appraises an object as being an illusion or hallucination, he or she has made a judgment that it does not make sense to act in relation to that object.

Judgments about what is real and what is not are made within the limits of a person's understanding and in light of the particular norms, requirements, and social practices of the community within which the person is operating. What at one time persons take to be real they may later treat as illusory or mistaken, and *vice versa*.

Because of the complex network of relationships and regularities that holds among objects, processes, events, and states of affairs in the real

world, people may run into difficulties if they attempt to treat imaginary objects, processes, events, or states of affairs in the same ways that they would treat real ones. For example, if they are acting in relation to some object that is not in fact real, it is unlikely that they will be able to bring off the interrelated sets of behaviors that go with that object.

To illustrate this notion, Ossorio (1981c) uses the example of "feeding alfalfa to an imaginary elephant" (pp. 14-15). If Wil says that there is an elephant over there, and Gil looks over and sees a table, Gil may challenge Wil's description and require that Wil back up his claim by treating the elephant in appropriate ways, for example, by feeding him something. If Wil offers the elephant some paper and claims to be feeding him alfalfa, Gil will not accept this behavior as successfully backing up Wil's original claim. Wil's "elephant feeding" further violates the network of interrelationships that holds among states of affairs in the real world.

The logical interconnectedness of everything in the real world provides constraints on our behavior so that we cannot call something just any old thing and get away with it, and we cannot engage in just any old behavior and get away with it. Similarly in a given human game, the logical interconnections among players, elements, eligibilities, contingencies, and so forth (codified in the rules) provide constraints on our behavior. We cannot engage in just any old behavior and still be playing *that* game, because certain moves count as a violation of the rules.

The logical structure of the real world not only provides constraints on our behavior. It also makes our behavior possible. If there were no patterns, regularities or limits to the kinds of relationships that objects, processes, events, and states of affairs could enter into, human behavior would be literally impossible. (No rules, no game.) Behavior involves distinguishing one thing from another, and what distinguishes one sort of object or process from another is the kinds of relationships into which it can enter.

Accordingly, if Gil had heard some snuffling and had seen the paper disappearing from Wil's hand, Gil might have become a bit twitchy. It is unlikely that he could dismiss what he had heard and seen as merely a strange happening totally disconnected from everything else in the real world. Instead, he would take it either that *he* was hallucinating, or that the real world was a very different place than he had thought it to be.

To illustrate the significance that such an event may have in a person's world, Ossorio (1976) uses the image of a face materializing out of the wall and then receding (pp. 6-8). In discussing how such an experience can affect a person's whole world, he points out that seeing

the face as real is like introducing a contradiction into a logical system. It changes the interrelationships within the whole system and not merely within an isolated part. If the face is real and I can behave in relation to it (e.g., if I can quickly reach out and touch the face before it recedes), my entire world is changed.

Depending on a person's degree of appreciation of issues of totality and logical structure, he or she will be more or less sensitive to how such a contradiction may wipe out behavior potential. At the extreme, a contradiction in a logical system undermines everything because it reveals that the structure itself is unsound. (Cf. "What kind of world is this if a face can come out of the wall?") In less extreme instances, persons may continue to operate within a structure that has certain inconsistencies as long as they learn to manage these irregularities and compensate for them.

Like the "Face in the wall," imaginary companions violate some of the consistency requirements of the real world. For example, an object in the real world can generally be perceived by all persons suitably placed, with appropriate differences between persons depending on their positions relative to the object. But with imaginary companions, collective perception is the exception rather than the rule (although it does occur). Likewise, in the real world, objects that move away from us generally have to go somewhere, but imaginary companions need not be anywhere when they are not with us.

Because of such violations, behavioral scientists tend to dismiss imaginary companions as merely imaginary or hallucinatory, and correspondingly to take it that behavior in relation to such companions does not really make sense. Scientific explanations that reflect this approach (reviewed in Roberts, 1988) tend not to increase our understanding of the phenomena.

In this paper, rather than emphasizing the ways in which behavior towards an imaginary companion does not make sense, the focus will be on understanding the sense that such behavior *does* make. The fundamental difference that an imaginary companion can make in a person's real world will be explained, as well as the ways in which people manage the inconsistencies that such a companion creates.

## CONCEPTUALIZATION

In the conceptualization presented here, I use the term "imaginary companion" as a generic term for such companions, and answer four questions about them:

1.  What kind of phenomena are these?

2. When is there a point in having a relationship to a companion who isn't purely and simply *real*?
3. What status can individuals of this sort have in a person's real world?
4. Under what conditions would such companions appear?

## World + *x* Construction

Persons are inherently world creators (cf. Roberts, 1985b). They not only construct worlds that give them behavior potential; they also routinely reconstruct those worlds in ways that give them more behavior potential. Such reformulation ordinarily occurs in response to a person's acquisition of new concepts and new social practices, in response to problem solving, and in response to the invention of new forms of behavior.

When a person invents a new form of behavior (e.g., a new game, art form, or conceptual-notational device), he or she may bring that invention to the larger community, demonstrate to others its viability as a social practice, and share it with them. The invention increases behavior potential for others as well as for its creator, and may also "call for far-reaching restructuring of our formulations of the world or parts or aspects of it" (Ossorio, 1982, p. 89).

In creating a new social practice, a person creates something out of nothing. Processes in the real world can be created out of nothing in this way, but objects ordinarily cannot be. For example, ordinarily a person cannot create a companion out of thin air and expect to demonstrate its viability to others. Reality constraints on real world construction prevent us from simply making objects up.

Sometimes a person may be in the right set of circumstances, however, and an imaginary companion may pop out (Athena-like) in his or her world. The creation of such a companion, like the invention of a new social practice, represents a world constructive or world reconstructive achievement that may bring with it a corresponding gain in behavior potential for its creator. In addition, the creation of the imaginary companion may call for some significant restructuring of the person's world to accommodate such a companion. At the very least the person must create a status that fits the kind of individual the new companion is.

In contrast to the invention of a new social practice, the creation of an imaginary companion is frequently not an achievement that a person can share with others. And although an imaginary companion may shake up some of its creator's notions about what is possible in the real world, it does not change our shared understanding of "the real world" in the

way that, for example, a significant scientific invention does (cf. Ossorio, 1978a, 1981b).

In inventing new social practices, persons are playing by the "rules of the game" for real world construction, and their inventions are therefore eligible to count as significant achievements within that game. But in creating imaginary companions, persons have gone outside the game, and hence their world construction counts differently.

Formally we may say that imaginary companions are phenomena of "world $+ x$" construction and reconstruction. The $x$ serves as a reminder that a person is operating outside the ordinary constraints of the real world in constructing this very specific aspect of his or her world. For convenience I will not repeat "world $+ x$" throughout the paper, but the "$+ x$" is to be understood when I write of imaginary companions as world constructive and reconstructive phenomena.

### Circumstances and Behavior Potential

Among the states of affairs that a person formulates as elements of his or her real world are the circumstances that provide that person with opportunities, limitations, and motivations for behavior. (Cf. "A person's circumstances provide reasons and opportunities to engage in one behavior rather than another." [Ossorio, 1982, p. 20]) The social practices that there are in a person's community are included in his or her circumstances. Without the availability of these behavior patterns, a person would not be able to behave at all.

The particular individuals with whom a person interacts are also included in a person's circumstances. Because so many social practices are joint enterprises that can only be engaged in with another person, the presence or absence of appropriate partners and fellow participants makes a difference in which social practices a person has the opportunity to participate. And because different people offer different opportunities and evoke different potentials in a person, the particular individuals in a person's world make a difference in what potentials get actualized when a person participates in social practices.

A person's circumstances also encompass the relationships that a person has to these individuals. Obviously the kind of relationship that exists between two people affects what possibilities they offer and what they evoke in each other. Depending on what relationship they stand in to each other, different potentials will come to the fore and be actualized.

States of affairs like having good fortune, wanting someone to confide in, facing an irreplaceable loss, being near death, and others are also counted among a person's circumstances. Each of these states of affairs offers a set of possibilities and limitations for behavior.

Last but not least for our purposes, imaginary companions may be classified as being included in a person's circumstances. The concept of a person's circumstances is usually a cover term for a range of ordinary real world facts like social practices, fellow participants, relationships, states of affairs, and so forth, but imaginary companions may be admitted as a special category. Like a person's other circumstances, an imaginary companion provides a person with reasons and opportunities for behavior.

Having placed imaginary companions among a person's circumstances, we may note that there is a point in having an imaginary companion when a person in the circumstances he or she is in has more behavior potential with that imaginary companion than without. This statement leaves open the question of whether persons' circumstances are generally adverse or generally positive when they have companions. It merely states that to have an imaginary companion is normally to have more behavior potential in whatever circumstances one is in. Both deficit-type explanations (e.g., "It's no wonder she feels his presence; she'd be lost without him.") and enhancement-type explanations (e.g., "His radiator kings bring out the best in him.") may be appropriate in accounting for imaginary companions.

The statement also involves no presumption of motivation. It does not say that persons are motivated to increase their behavior potential and therefore have imaginary companions. Rather, persons find themselves in circumstances that include individuals of this sort, and then do not choose less behavior potential rather than more. (Cf. "A person will not choose to actualize less behavior potential rather than more." [Ossorio, 1982, p. 56])

### Reality

To understand the special place an imaginary companion may have in relation to a person's circumstances and real world, we need a concept more fundamental than the notion of the real world. In Descriptive Psychology, that concept is the concept of reality. Formally, reality is "the boundary condition on our possible behaviors" (Ossorio, 1978b, p. 35).

The basic reality question is simply "What can you get away with by way of behavior?" "Can you treat something as being so and carry it off successfully?" Rather than talking about a person's behavioral possibilities by reference to the circumstances that provide persons with possibilities, we use the concept of reality to talk directly about behavioral possibilities and limitations.

If we remove imaginary companions from embeddedness in a real world and look at only certain of a person's interactions with an

imaginary companion from the perspective of "Can he or she carry off the interactions?", imaginary companions may seem no different than real companions. Imaginary companions are real in the sense that they can be seen, and by some standards (or in some ways) persons can interact successfully with these companions.

But within the context of a person's real world, we cannot treat imaginary companions as simply real because they do not pass the consistency checks of the real world. Instead, imaginary companions may paradigmatically be given a status of "real but not like other real objects."[1] A person whose world includes such a status needs to learn to manage the complexities that the status creates. Because behavior towards an object that is "real but not in the way other things are real" hinges on in what ways the object is real and in what ways it is not, a person needs to be able to make and act on these distinctions. If a person is unable to do so, derision and ridicule by others may squelch the imaginary companion.

Lest this seem like a difficult or remarkable achievement, it should be noted that normal 3-5 year old children are able to do so. For example, a child would probably not take Gil up on his challenge to treat an imaginary elephant as fully real. If Gil said "I don't see an elephant," a child might reply, "Of course not. He's only there for me." The child's remark would not be a disclaimer to the effect that the elephant is not real, but rather a statement of fact about how the elephant differs from other real things.

If a person insisted that the imaginary elephant was fully real (e.g., that there was no difference in reality status between the imaginary elephant and the kitchen table), we would say that that person was distorting reality. But is a person distorting reality if he or she distinguishes imaginary objects from ordinary real objects, and only behaves in ways that are appropriate for each kind of object? As long as a person has an ordinary degree of contact with our common reality, it may be more accurate to say that a person who behaves toward an imaginary friend has expanded his or her real world by adding an additional category of reality. (Of course this is not an option under an ideology that says that the ordinary real world is all there is.)

A person who expands his or her world in this way has a hybrid world made up primarily of ordinary real objects, but with one or more non-ordinary real objects included as well. This is a fundamentally different world from the one in which the majority of us operate. To illustrate the extent of the difference, consider a person who was matter-of-fact about seeing a face pop out of the wall. That person's world would already have to be very different from the world we know. Likewise a world in which an imaginary companion can pop in on a person is

considerably less restrictive than the homebound, tables-chairs-and-apples world with which most of us are familiar.

Without the distinction between reality and the real world, we would be limited to the tables-chairs-and-apples world and have to explain away imaginary companion phenomena. But with the pragmatic notion of reality, we are able to account for the kind of place that an imaginary companion may have in relation to the real world.

### Parameters for World + $x$ Construction

A variety of facts about a person's life situation (being-in-the-world) is relevant to the appearance, maintenance, and disappearance of imaginary companions. In order to deal with these facts in an organized and systematic way, a parametric analysis will be presented. (This conceptual-notational device, and also the paradigm case formulation to be used below, are discussed systematically by Ossorio [1981a].) This parametric analysis is not set forth as the only analysis that could be given. But it is set forth here as being adequate, in a way that no other formulation has been to date, for systematizing the range of facts relevant to whether or not a person constructs a world with an imaginary companion.

Each of the parameters specifies one of the ways in which one life situation can be the same as or different from another life situation with respect to the potentiality for having an imaginary companion. The parameters are:

1.  Extent to which real world requirements for the systematic connectedness of everything press upon a person

2.  Gain in behavior potential that comes from having a relationship to an imaginary companion

3.  Degree to which circumstances facilitate the creation and maintenance of a companion

Particular instances of being-in-the-world-with-an-imaginary-companion (or without one) may be differentiated by designating values for each of the parameters above. For example, in sketching in values for the parameters in the case of the young boy whose world included radiator kings, we may note that:

1.  The relative incompleteness of a young child's world allows for some leeway when it comes to the coherence requirement. Moreover, these particular companions involve minimal violation of the consistency requirement because they are so closely associated with ordinary physical objects and processes.

2.  The faith-enhancing nature of the companions frees the boy to do
    as well as he can, and enables him to succeed when he might not
    otherwise if his self-confidence were not increased in this way.
3.  The presence of the old-fashioned steam radiator, as well as
    exposure to tales of genies and their powers, may have facilitated
    the creation of these companions. Parental prohibitions over turning
    the radiator valves may have been contributory, too.

We may also take advantage of the explanatory power of the
parametric analysis in understanding empirical data about imaginary
companions. For example, a study by Olson, Suddeth, Peterson, and
Egelhoff (1985) revealed notably high incidence rates for visual
hallucinations of a deceased spouse among widows in nursing homes
(see Appendix D). In light of the parametric analysis, the Olson et al.
results are not surprising. A woman in a nursing home generally does
not have much behavior potential. Thus, if her spouse is present with
her in any sense, he will bring to her a significant increase in possibili-
ties. And because requirements for real world consistency are relaxed
significantly when a person is institutionalized, there is little to keep a
widow in a nursing home from seeing her dead husband.

Finally the question posed above, "Under what conditions would
imaginary companions appear?" may be answered using the parametric
analysis. Companions appear when the balance of the parametric values
is in a favorable direction, and they are most likely to appear when the
balance is in an extremely favorable direction. That is, when the real
world requirements for the interrelatedness of everything are unusually
relaxed or temporarily lifted; when a person's gain in behavior potential
from a relation to an imaginary companion is maximal; and when
circumstances are optimally conducive to companion formation.

### Paradigm Case Formulation

Imaginary companions may appear in the worlds of children, bereaved
persons, the dying, and so forth. In order to provide formal and
systematic access to a variety of cases of world + $x$ construction, a
paradigm case formulation will be presented below. The formulation
involves three Paradigm Cases: an imaginary companion of childhood,
a ghostly companion, and a take-away apparition.

Each of the Paradigm Cases identifies some portion of the cases of
imaginary companions, but there is a range of other cases that are
related to, but different from, each Paradigm Case in potentially
important ways. These additional cases are represented as transforma-
tions of the appropriate Paradigm Case. Taken together, the Paradigm

Cases and their transformations systematize the range of cases of imaginary companions in a way that has not been done before.

The paradigm case formulation presented below does not provide exhaustive access to all possible cases of imaginary companions. For example, the formulation does not specifically provide access to cases where imaginary companions appear in the worlds of hospitalized persons (cf. Goldstein, 1976). Formal access is also not provided to cases where companions appear to sailors, mountaineers, and explorers (cf. Lilly, 1956; Solomon, Leiderman, Mendelson, and Wexler, 1957; La Barre, 1975; Siegel, 1977; Seifert and Clarke, 1979). If there were a pragmatic reason to do so, the formulation could easily be extended to include these cases.

In conjunction with presenting the paradigm case formulation, empirical data stratified along the lines of the Paradigm Cases and their transformations will be presented (cf. Ossorio, 1981a, p. 91 on the PCF stratified sampling design). Because research on imaginary companions has not been guided by a systematic formulation of this sort, it is not possible at present to report data relevant to each group of cases. Some empirical data is available for selected groups of cases, however, and this is reported below. In addition, conceptual and empirical issues unique to specific groups of cases are discussed.

## IMAGINARY COMPANIONS OF CHILDHOOD

The phenomenon of imaginary companions of childhood has fascinated American psychologists since the turn of the century, and has been the subject of a variety of empirical and clinical studies. Appendix A lists the major quantitative studies on imaginary companions since 1907, and Appendix B presents the major case studies since 1894. The early studies are included not merely for historical interest. They are also of value because their authors attempted to give a full description of the phenomenon, independent of any theoretical system. These descriptions were useful in formulating the range of cases of childhood imaginary companions.

### Paradigm Case

Observational studies of children place the first appearance of imaginary companions between 2½-3½ years of age, with 93% of companions appearing before age 4 (Ames & Learned, 1946; Svendsen, 1934). The first appearance of a companion to a child is usually sudden and unexpected (Hurlock & Burstein, 1932; Svendsen, 1934). The child does not decide to create a companion, but rather, a companion "comes . . . just naturally" (Vostrovsky, 1895, p. 396, quoting a child).

Once an imaginary companion has appeared in a young child's world, the child begins to exploit the new behavior potential that comes from having that relationship. The child may engage in animated conversations with his or her companion, or they may enter into active physical play together. This is not a matter of a child fantasizing in his or her head. Rather, a child "carries out the same activities and plays the same games as with a real playmate" (Bender & Vogel, 1941, p. 64).

In talking or playing with the companion, the child actually sees and hears the imaginary friend. As Harvey (1918)[2] notes, imaginary playmates "can be seen and heard as vividly as if they were living children" (p. 7). Hurlock and Burstein (1932) reach the same conclusion, stating that "in most cases, this comrade can be seen and heard as if he were real" (p. 388).

In fact, there was no question that children see or hear their companions until Despert (1940, 1948) objected to the notion of normal children "hallucinating." Wishing to disavow the idea that the experience of normal children was in any way comparable to that of schizophrenics, in her influential papers she stated emphatically that there was no evidence of true hallucinations or delusions in the normal preschoolers she studied. Although some subsequent writers followed Despert's lead, excluding imaginary companions from the category of childhood hallucination (e.g., Eisenberg, 1962; Rothstein, 1981), others continue to include imaginary companions as hallucinatory phenomena (e.g., Weiner, 1961; Siegel, 1977).

If the child sees, hears, and plays with the companion, what status does the child give to the companion? Adult recollections of imaginary companions indicate that children see the companion as real. Vostrovsky (1895) found that 81% of her respondents "speak definitely, in some way, of the reality of these companions to them" (p. 397). Hurlock and Burstein (1932) found that "as many as 81% of the girls and 60% of the boys testify that the playmate was real to them" (p. 386). Nagera (1969) quotes a 9-year-old's succinct appraisal of her companion: "I invented her . . . of course, she was real" (p. 191). Notice that the child recognizes a difference between an imaginary companion and a flesh and blood companion, but this is not grounds for denying reality to the "invented" one.

Parents of young children for the most part accept and may even encourage children's interactions with their companions (Svendsen, 1934; Manosevitz et al., 1973). While accepting a child's companion, parents also enforce some constraints on what the child can say about the companion. For example, if the plants are found uprooted and the child says "Mary [my companion] did it," the parents will hold the child accountable. Specifically, what the child says about the companion

cannot generally be used to evade the rules that hold in the parents' household. But as long as the companion is not used for purposes of evasion, parents seem to respect whatever place the companion has in the child's world (Munroe, 1894; Green, 1922; Svendsen, 1934).

Although parents generally respect the claims that children make concerning their companions, sometimes they may fail to appreciate the significance of a young child's behavior. Harvey (1918) gives the example of a child named Alice, whose companion May was squashed to death when Alice's mother inadvertently sat on her.

> Miss Alice says that she screamed, and did her best to keep her mother from sitting down in the chair, but her mother laughed, not seeing anything in the chair, and sat down. Miss Alice was terribly distressed, and cried for half a day, but May was dead and never reappeared. (p. 15)

The majority of companions do not suffer death by squashing. Instead, they seem to vanish uneventfully about the time that the child begins school (Smith, 1904; Hurlock & Burstein, 1932; Svendsen, 1934; Ames & Learned, 1946). Martin (1915) quotes a college student whose description of his companions' departure is fairly typical: "When they finally ceased one by one to come to see me I often regretted their absence and wondered what had become of them" (p. 253).

### Range of Cases

In the Paradigm Case just presented, an imaginary companion appears to a young child, can be seen and heard by the child, and is interacted with openly over a period of time. Parents respect whatever place the companion has in the child's world, and the companion enables the child to "do his own thing" in a way that the child couldn't otherwise. The companion disappears about the time that the child starts school. Additional cases of interest are identified by the following set of transformations.

*T1. Allow for a child to have more than one imaginary companion.*

Sometimes the child's first companion may serve essentially as a wedge, opening the door for other companions. The child's first companion may violate real world requirements only minimally, and may offer the child an opportunity to practice maneuvering in a world with an imaginary companion. Once the child has learned to manage in a world-with-a-companion, the child then is free to construct the kinds of companions who will give him or her the most behavior potential.

Green (1922), for example, describes a 3-year-old boy who initially had a companion named Mary. "Mary was a very vague and indefinite

being" (p. 24). Within a few weeks however, Mary had acquired an imaginary mother who became the more salient companion for the boy. Svendsen (1934) suggests that such "elaboration along family lines occurs more frequently than parents are aware" (p. 994).

*T2. Change the nature of the behavior potential associated with the companion from primarily expressive to primarily adaptive.*

Companions arise not only when a child needs some additional reality in order to have fun and express himself, but also when a child needs some additional reality in order to operate effectively in the adult world. There is a variety of circumstances in a child's life where a companion can be adaptive, but observers have focused on the role that imaginary companions may play in moral development (e.g., Munroe, 1894; Swett, 1910; Sperling, 1954; Fraiberg, 1959; Nagera, 1969).

In a situation where the child is struggling with a desire to do something he or she knows is wrong, an imaginary companion may suddenly materialize on the scene. The companion may add sufficient weight on the side of "Do what's right" so that the young child gives ethical reasons appropriate priority without needing a reminder from his or her parents. Alternately, the companion may appear as the one who wants to "do the deed." The child is then in a position to remind the companion of ethical reasons for not doing it, and the two may negotiate the reasons for and against the behavior. Such companions help the child learn to use relevant perspectives in making judgments, and acquire competence in making his or her own decisions.

*T3. Eliminate the requirement that the child play openly with the companion.*

Children sometimes tend to play secretly with their companion rather than openly. One reason for this is the danger of ridicule by siblings or playmates, which is painful to a child and can also result in a quick death for an imaginary companion. Harvey (1918) describes an instance where an older sister eavesdropped on her younger sister's conversation with her imaginary friend McGunty, and gleefully related the conversation to the family. The younger sister was never able to see McGunty again. "She tried as hard as she could to bring McGunty back, and was very lonesome without her . . . but McGunty's disappearance was permanent" (p. 21). Her sister's ridicule made it impossible for the child to carry off the relation to her companion anymore.

*T4. Allow the first appearance of the imaginary companion to occur after a child has started school.*

By the time a child starts school, we expect that child to have enough of a world so that the usual real world requirements would prevent the emergence of an imaginary companion. Thus, presumably a companion would need to offer an unusually good opportunity, or life would have to be relatively intolerable, to allow a school-age child to create and accept an imaginary companion.

Nonetheless, retrospective studies with adults indicate that it is not uncommon for companions to appear to older children. Hurlock & Burstein (1932) report that among girls, the most frequently reported time for companion appearance is between the ages of 5 and 7, and for boys, the most frequently reported time is after the age of 10 (p. 388). Nagera (1969) also notes that in his own direct observations of children, ages 9½-10 seem to be a second peak time for imaginary companions (p. 167).

*T5. Allow the relationship with the companion to continue after the start of school.*

Although research "shows" that imaginary companions disappear when children start school, some researchers do not believe that that is an accurate picture of what actually happens with childhood companions. For example, Ames and Learned (1946) state their personal conviction as follows:

> Though our present data do not yield this information, we believe that both imaginary animal and imaginary human companions continue in many children during the years from 5 to 10. As a rule these companions are kept entirely secret, or are shared with some other child, but are not divulged to parents. (p. 153)

Ames and Learned do not say what happens to covert companions after the child turns 10, but other writers have observed that imaginary companions may persist into adulthood. Harvey (1918) discusses three cases where imaginary companions from childhood continued to be visually present to young adults, and Hurlock and Burstein (1932) report that among high school and college students they studied, "one-fourth of the girls and almost half of the boys have maintained this friendship up to the present time" (p. 389).

### Children Who Have Imaginary Companions

Imaginary companions are not a rare phenomena. Estimates of the frequency of imaginary companions vary from 13% to 28% or higher,

depending on the range of cases included by researchers (see Appendix A). Some of the early studies found that girls were more likely to have imaginary companions than boys, but the more recent studies (Schaefer, 1969; Manosevitz et al., 1973) indicate that boys and girls have an equal incidence of imaginary companions. Researchers have also looked at a range of personal characteristics to try to create a profile of a child likely to have an imaginary companion, but no such personality profile emerges across studies (Jersild, 1968, p. 396).

## Analysis

The existence of a Paradigm Case companion in a child's world is not surprising, given that: (a) Parents allow a young child relative freedom from real world requirements when it comes to imaginary companions; (b) the companion increases the child's behavior potential; and (c) circumstances such as lacking playmates are conducive to companion appearance.

The disappearance of the Paradigm Case companion with the start of school also makes sense in light of increased parental constraints and changes in the child's circumstances. The start of school traditionally marks a transition point for children and their parents. It is the point where the child needs to leave the protection of home and adapt to the demands of the larger community. In anticipation of this break, parents may naturally increase their requirements on the child to speak and act in realistic ways. They may no longer give the school age child the same leeway as a younger child when it comes to imaginary companions.

At the same time, flesh and blood playmates become available to a child through school. To the extent that children value their imaginary companions because they are fun to play with, children may realize the same value with living children. In such cases, school playmates may take the place of the imaginary ones. The circumstance that brought forth the imaginary companion (i.e., no one with whom to play) no longer exists, and the imaginary companion vanishes.

While Paradigm Case companions depart at the start of school, some imaginary companions do *not* depart at this time, as codified in T5 above. In understanding cases where the companion does *not* disappear, notice that a companion may be born of lack of playmates, but offer the child different behavioral possibilities from those that later become available in relation to his or her schoolmates. In this case the imaginary companion will not disappear just because "real" playmates are now available. In accordance with the maxim that a person will not choose to actualize less behavior potential rather than more, the child will naturally maintain both sets of relationships and enjoy the potentials each offers.

In addition, the child may have become attached to his or her imaginary companion, and have more behavior potential with the imaginary companion than with any substitute. Even though living playmates have become available to the schoolchild, they cannot take the place of the imaginary companion. (If this sounds a bit farfetched, it is worth noting that Hurlock and Burstein (1932) found that 39% of their respondents "actually preferred these phantom playmates to any real companions" [p. 386]).

The more important the behavior potential or relationship that the companion provides is to the child, the less likely that the companion will vanish because of situational changes or increased parental requirements. Instead, the companion will go underground. The child will cease to talk about the companion or play openly with him or her, thereby avoiding the possibility of derision for having an imaginary friend. But this also closes off the possibility of negotiation with parents or siblings about the companion's existence. The companion then becomes subject only to the ecology of the child's own world construction.

While some facilitation from circumstances may be required to create a companion, and some pressure from increased real world requirements may be required to eliminate one, very little is required to maintain one (cf. the Awkward Range for personal relationships, Ossorio, 1983). Whatever covert ways the child finds to continue to interact with his or her companion will tend to keep the companion real. Once undercover, the child's companion may become less salient to the child, but the relationship will tend to continue for whatever behavior potential it offers.

The fact that companions may continue to exist through the school years and beyond has been a source of concern to some psychologists. Questions have been raised as to whether "children who create and then maintain their imaginary companions for a period of years finally become schizophrenic" (Bender, 1954, p. 51). Are imaginary companions "a precursor of contact disturbances as found in schizophrenia" (Despert, 1948, p. 532)?

At face value, there is some grounds for concern. When people have imaginary companions, their real world is different from the ordinary real world within which most people live their lives. People with imaginary companions effectively are playing with a wild card that other people lack. It makes sense to ask "Is this wild card a vehicle for stability and reality contact, or is it a passbook to craziness?" *A priori*, we cannot say that it is one or the other.

Empirically what evidence there is suggests that an imaginary companion is generally a vehicle for stability. Bender (1954) did follow-ups in "early adulthood" on 14 people who had reported imaginary

companions during psychiatric hospitalizations in childhood. None of the 14 had ever become psychotic.

Further analysis shows why children with imaginary companions would tend not to become psychotic. Part of the disability evident in persons diagnosed as schizophrenic is the inability to assign statuses to themselves and others, or to appreciate how stages and options fit into larger social patterns (cf. Kantor, 1977; Roberts, 1985a). However, to have an imaginary companion the child must be able to create a script for that companion. Creating such a script requires some degree of skill at status assigning and some appreciation of social practices. By their very nature, the abilities reflected in the maintenance of an imaginary companion tend to set children apart from the schizophrenic category.

Of course there are no guarantees of success playing with a wild card, and things may not go well for the child with imaginary companions. Sometimes the child's relation to a companion may be a vehicle for pathology. In understanding why companions may become pathological, consider the situation where a child "adopts" a family in the neighborhood. The child gradually spends more and more time with his or her adoptive family, and gets more and more attached to them. Finally the child decides "I'd rather live over there," because the child has more status and behavior potential with the adoptive family than at home. Similarly, a child who creates an imaginary family or community may come to have more and more behavior potential with this imaginary group, and become absorbed with them to the exclusion of his or her own family, peer group, and others.

Several cases in the literature where the child's ongoing relationship with imaginary companions became pathological seem to be of this sort (Green, 1922, pp. 33-40; Wickes, 1966, pp. 171-174). In both cases, however, the children would have been diagnosed as neurotic rather than psychotic, and who is to say that these children would not have become more disturbed without their companions.

Even when children who have had imaginary companions go on to become psychotic, the imaginary companion may not be the vehicle for the loss of reality contact. Despert (1948) made the interesting observation that "in 2 children who had had imaginary companions prior to the onset of schizophrenia, the imaginary figures were not involved in the delusional structure" (p. 535). Her observation supports the notion that children become psychotic in spite of their imaginary companions rather than because of them.

## GHOSTLY COMPANIONS

Lindemann (1944), in his classic paper on grief, notes that a person may continue to relate to a deceased person "not in terms of a religious

survival but in terms of an imaginary companion" (p. 142). In spite of this early recognition of the phenomenon, relatively little has been written about the origination, status, life span, range of cases, or incidence of ghostly companions. I was able to find only five reports of case studies dealing with such companions. Sedman (1966) describes the bereavement hallucinations of several British psychiatric inpatients; Matchett (1972) and Shen (1986) describe mourning hallucinations among Hopi Indians; MacDonald and Oden (1977) examine post-death visions among native Hawaiians; and Hoyt (1980-81) gives examples of mourning presences among psychotherapy outpatients.

The facts about ghostly companions presented below have been garnered primarily from the work of Rees (1971, 1975) and from studies of grief in non-psychiatric populations. Appendices C and D give an overview of the studies used. Most of these studies deal with the grief of widows and widowers, and I have taken a ghostly spouse as paradigmatic.

### Paradigm Case

As with an imaginary companion in childhood, the first appearance of a deceased spouse seems to be involuntary and unexpected. It is not generally a matter of the surviving spouse trying to conjure up his or her deceased partner. Rather the deceased partner simply appears. Gorer (1965) offers an example from a 48-year-old shopkeeper:

> I was upstairs after the wife died and I was watching television for the first time after she died; and all of a sudden I could see my wife as plain as anything, sitting in one of those chairs. I flew downstairs and never went in that room again . . . . It was very frightening. (p. 57)

Because of the vivid detail and extreme clarity of such a vision, it may seem to the perceiver for a moment as if the deceased person had actually come back to life. In the example given, the experience is like seeing the "Face in the wall" ("What kind of world is this if the dead return?"). The vision is upsetting and disruptive to the person's sense of the world as an orderly place.

For the majority of adults who see such a vision, however, the experience apparently is not frightening or disruptive. Instead, they seem to welcome it and find it a source of comfort and solace. Rees (1971), in a study of the entire widowed population of a well-defined area in Wales, found that 78% of widowed persons who had visual hallucinations of the dead spouse felt helped by them, and 73% of widowed persons who had illusions of the deceased spouse's presence felt helped by this experience (p. 40).

On seeing the phantom spouse, some people have impulses to engage in behavior towards him or her. Such impulses may be resisted. Parkes (1970b), for example, describes a London widow who noted "If I didn't take a strong hold on myself I'd get talking to him" (p. 194). Other people, however, simply engage in behavior towards the spouse, speaking to him or her or hurrying home to be with their phantom partner (Rees, 1971; Parkes, 1972).

If a person engages in overt behavior toward a ghostly spouse, there is of course a risk of detection by others. People easily develop ways to deal with this risk. As an illustration, Glick, Weiss, and Parkes (1974) present the "cover story" of one of their Boston widows:

> My neighbor next door knocked at the door one day and I was talking a blue streak, yelling out as though Burt [her deceased husband] was in the bathroom. She says, "You got company?" I says, "No." She says, "Who are you talking to?" I says, "Oh, just my wandering thoughts again." (p. 148)

Once established, the relationship to a ghostly spouse may last a long time. Rees (1971), who interviewed widowed persons as long as 40 years post-bereavement, reports that post-bereavement hallucinations "often lasted many years but were most common during the first 10 years of widowhood" (p. 37). If the relation to a ghostly spouse is taken, for example, as the last 10 years of a 40 year marriage, this longevity may be less surprising.

### Range of Cases

The description of a ghostly companion presented thus far may be taken as a Paradigm Case. In the Paradigm Case the deceased spouse appears unexpectedly, looking and sounding just as he or she did in life, and is a source of comfort to the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse interacts secretly with the phantom spouse, and their relationship endures over time. The transformations presented below identify a range of other cases that differ from the Paradigm Case in significant ways.

*T1. Change the deceased person to a parent, grandparent, sibling, friend, or other relation.*

Widowed persons are not the only ones to have ghostly companions. Children may continue to relate to their deceased parents, adolescents to their dead siblings, young adults to cherished grandparents, and so forth (Sherman & Beverly, 1924; Childers, 1931; Keeler, 1954; Balk, 1983; Hoyt, 1980-81).

*T2. Change the embodiment of the deceased from his or her familiar human form to any form recognizable as embodying the deceased's spirit.*

Just as the gods in ancient Greece could take on any shape they desired in interacting with mortals, the bereaved are not limited to human forms in embodying the spirits of their deceased relatives. One of my clients, a 75-year-old widow whose husband had died 3 years previously, occasionally felt the presence of a fine old dog by her bedside. She knew by the dog's loyalty and protectiveness that this was her husband, staying near her even though parted from her by death.

*T3. Allow for some initial shock, fear, or discomfort on seeing the deceased, with the relationship only later becoming comfortable.*

For a person to take the presence of a deceased spouse matter-of-factly, the person's world would already have to be different from the world most of us take for granted. Hence it would not be surprising if a person initially reacted with some discomfort to "seeing a ghost." But as long as a widow, for example, did not actively try to prevent reappearances of the ghost, she might "learn to love him." Even though the person's world initially had no place for this sort of phenomenon, the person might be able to restructure the world enough so that the ghostly spouse could have a place as a protector, guide, companion, or whatever.

*T4. Change the initial experience to one of illusions of the deceased rather than hallucinations.*

Sometimes a person's initial sense of the dead spouse's presence is not based on a hallucinatory experience, but rather on the misperception of some existing sight or sound. For example, a rustle of the curtains at night may be taken as the wife's nightgown, or a creak on the stairs as the husband's footfall. Although such misperceptions may be fleeting and easily corrected, they may help make the possibility of the dead spouse's presence real.

*T5. Allow for awareness of the deceased's presence without seeing and/or without hearing him or her.*

A person may experience the feeling that someone is present without actually seeing and hearing him or her. And when that someone is as familiar as a spouse, the person does not need to see or hear the other to identify with inner certainty who it is that is there. Accordingly, widowed persons often feel the presence of their deceased spouses

without seeing or hearing them. Notice that when this is the case, the spouse may be present without being placed in any particular position in space, as one widow describes: "He's not anywhere in particular, just around the place; it's a good feeling." (Parkes, 1972, p. 58)

*T6. Eliminate the requirement that the surviving spouse engage in overt behavior towards the phantom spouse.*

When the phantom spouse is present as described in T5, there may not be any behavior called for on the part of the surviving spouse. Like the extra companion who sometimes accompanies explorers, the ghostly spouse may help the living spouse master a sense of loneliness or danger but not invite interaction.

*T7. Eliminate the requirement that the relationship is an enduring one.*

Although relationships to ghostly companions tend to be long lasting, this is not necessary. Some may involve only a few brief encounters, and others may be of short duration, just long enough to help the surviving spouse through the initial adjustment to the loss. One of the widowed persons interviewed by Rees (1975) reported hearing "sounds of consolation for the first three months" (p. 69), but the relationship apparently ended after that.

### Adults Who Have Ghostly Spouses

Based on the bereavement studies included in Appendix D, 10% seems to be a reasonable estimate of adults who "see," "hear," or "feel" their deceased spouse. A higher percentage of adults may have the experience included by T5, "Allow for awareness of the deceased's presence without seeing and/or without hearing him or her." As indicated by the bereavement studies summarized in Appendix C, slightly less than 50% seems to be a reasonable estimate of the proportion of widowed adults who have experienced the presence of their deceased spouse in some form or another.

Just as boys and girls have an equal likelihood of imaginary companions in childhood, men and women have an equal likelihood of ghostly companions as adults. The proportions of men and women reporting bereavement hallucinations or illusions of presence were comparable within each of three bereavement studies (Clayton, Halikas, & Maurice, 1971, p. 601; Rees, 1971, p. 38; Glick et al., 1974).

In addition to collecting frequency data, researchers have investigated the relationship between phantom spouses and a variety of factors in the lives of men and women. These factors include age, change of residence, suddenness of death, and others. Across all the studies, only

one factor—marital harmony—emerges consistently as contributing to the presence of a ghostly spouse. As the data of Marris (1958), Rees (1971), and Parkes (1972) show, marital harmony increases the likelihood of a ghostly spouse appearing.

One factor that has not been examined is the relationship between having an imaginary companion as a child and having a phantom spouse as an adult. It seems reasonable that the childhood experience would increase the likelihood of the bereavement experience, because a person who has learned to maneuver in a world $+ x$ as a child may more easily accept a ghostly spouse in his or her adult world. It would be interesting to have empirical data on the connection between imaginary companions of childhood and imaginary spouses of widowhood.

### Analysis

Following the loss of a spouse, the natural reaction is world reconstruction to try to achieve a condition in which there is not a loss (Ossorio, 1975). As a result of such reconstructive efforts, a person may find himself or herself in a world in which a phantom spouse appears. If the person finds the appearance of the spouse helpful, he or she may create a special status for the envisioned spouse. This status may be one in which the spouse "is dead in body but not in spirit." Just as with childhood imaginary companions, if the person acts in any way whatever in relation to the ghostly spouse, and if the person learns to manage the complexities that having such a spouse creates, the ghostly spouse is likely to become an established part of his or her world.

When this is the case, the person does not have as great a loss of behavior potential. In some essential respects, things are as they would be if the spouse had not literally died. Because his or her spirit remains, the surviving spouse is able to preserve some of the possibilities that were uniquely shared with his or her life partner, but also to acknowledge the partner's bodily death.

In light of this analysis, it is not surprising that ghostly spouses are more likely when a marriage has been happy. To the extent that a couple had a good relationship, the surviving spouse has more behavior potential to lose when the partner dies, and more to gain back if the partner reappears in some form.

Concern has been expressed, however, about the adjustment of widows who continue to have affective ties to their deceased spouses. Glick et al. (1974) state that widows seem to have "special problems in recovery" when the dead husband's presence is "persistent and emotionally important" (p. 149). Likewise, Bornstein, Clayton, Halikas, Maurice, and Robins (1973) note that women who are depressed 13

months post-bereavement are more likely to have hallucinations than their non-depressed counterparts.

The issue of psychosis has also been raised in connection with phantom spouses, especially for those people who "see," "hear," or "feel" their deceased spouse. According to DSM-III-R, hallucinations are symptomatic of organic mental disorders, schizophrenia, affective disorders, or brief reactive psychoses, to name a few. Uncomplicated bereavement is noticeably lacking from the list of possibilities included under "hallucinations" in the DSM-III-R Symptom Index (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, pp. 538-539).

Some of these concerns are best understood against the background of Freudian theory. Freud, in his classic paper "Mourning and Melancholia," described the "work of mourning" in terms of the detachment of libido bit by bit from the lost object. According to Freud (1957), reality testing demands that all libido be withdrawn from its attachment to the object. The work of mourning is completed only when the ego has severed its attachment to the object and freed its libido. Freud noted, however, that this work is not accomplished without opposition. "This opposition can be so intense that a turning away from reality takes place and a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis" (p. 244).

Are ghostly spouses a vehicle for unresolved grief, loss of reality contact, and psychosis? What evidence there is suggests that this is generally not the case. The evidence includes the following:

1.  With only one exception, all the examples presented in this section are from non-psychiatric populations. (The exception is the 75-year-old woman to whom a fine old dog appeared.)

2.  Parkes (1972) found almost no correlation (.08) between "difficulty in accepting the fact of loss" and a widow's sense of her husband's continued presence. Likewise he found a non-significant correlation (.22) between "difficulty in accepting the fact of loss" and illusions and hallucinations of the deceased husband during the first month after his death (p. 208). This data suggests that widows with ghostly spouses do not have any special difficulty accepting the fact of loss, and that their reality contact is not problematic in this way.

3.  The researchers who express concern about the adjustment of widows with ghostly spouses also note that none of these widows is psychotic (Glick et al., 1974, p. 147; Bornstein et al., 1973, p. 566).

4.  Widows and widowers themselves report that the experience of the phantom spouse is comforting and helpful (Rees, 1971, p. 40; Glick et al., 1974, p. 147; Olson et al., 1985, p. 545).

5. Persons are not distorting reality if they add an additional status ("dead in body but not in spirit") and only behave in ways that are appropriate to that status.

If a person accepts the Freudian theory that a person must sever his or her attachment to the deceased completely, then there is an issue of unresolved grief for people with phantom spouses. But another way to formulate the question of unresolved grief is to ask "Is the person trying to live and behave in the same way that he or she would if the deceased were alive?" Merely to replay an old way of life with a phantom spouse might well lead to problems in adjustment, including but not limited to depression.

The following image, known as "Putting on *Hamlet*," illustrates the problems of replaying an old way of life without an essential person (P. G. Ossorio, personal communication, 1984).

> A repertory company has been putting on *Hamlet* successfully for some months when the only man who plays Hamlet suddenly disappears. In spite of his disappearance, the company decides to continue to put on their well-rehearsed play. Although no one plays Hamlet, everyone goes on with the show just as if Hamlet were there. The result is that Hamlet is more noticeable by his absence than he ever was by his presence.

The alternative, of course, is for the company to put on a different play, a play that does not call for Hamlet. Likewise for persons with unresolved grief, the alternative is to "put on *Macbeth*" (i.e., any play that does not require the deceased person). Notice that this alternate play may include a special part for the dead person as a ghostly companion, but this part will be different in important respects from the part the person played while alive. To what extent widows and widowers with ghostly spouses "put on *Hamlet*" as opposed to putting on a different play is an empirical question. Its answer would increase our understanding of both normal and problematic uses of phantom companions.

## TAKE-AWAY APPARITIONS

Visits by the dead, coming to "take away" the dying, have been reported all through history (Finucane, 1984). A classic essay on the subject was written in Victorian England by Frances Power Cobbe (1882), and a variety of case studies have been compiled since then by parapsychologists (Gurney & Myers, 1889, pp. 459-460; Myers, 1903, pp. 339-342; Bozzano, 1906; Hyslop, 1907, 1918a, 1918b; Barrett, 1926; Rogo, 1978).

The most recent studies involve large-scale surveys of physicians and nurses concerning their observations of deathbed visitors. Osis (1961) presents data on 135 cases in which dying persons in the United States are reported by their attending physician or nurse to have had hallucinations of persons. Osis and Haraldsson (1977) report data on 216 cases from the Northeastern United States and 255 cases from India.[3] In discussing these cases, Siegel (1980) notes the similarity between take-away apparitions and imaginary companions of childhood.

## Paradigm Case

The following description of an Indian high school student, whose mother had died when he was 2 or 3 years old, may be taken as paradigmatic.

> He was conscious of his surroundings and talked to his father until the last moment. Then, with one hand holding his father's and the other pointing toward where he saw his mother, he said, "Don't you see my mother? See! My mother is calling." Then he died—stretching forward to his mother, almost falling out of bed. (Osis & Haraldsson, 1977, p. 99)

As illustrated in this case, people who see take-away apparitions generally maintain normal awareness of and response to their environment. Osis (1961) notes that in 79% of his cases, people "hallucinated only the apparition and otherwise normally perceived their surroundings" (p. 71). Osis and Haraldsson (1977) report that in 66% of their cases, persons maintained normal orientation for time and place (p. 103).

Particularly striking is the way in which dying persons may alternate their attention and conversation between an apparitional visitor and the living people at their bedside. Hyslop (1918b) gives the example of a school age child who "scowled a little impatiently [at her deceased grandmother] and said 'Yes, grandma, I'm coming, but wait a minute, please.' " The child then turned back to her family to say goodbye (p. 624).

There can be little doubt that take-away apparitions seem real to the dying. In fact, dying people may summon all their remaining strength to respond to such visitors. The person who has been too weak to talk may speak to the apparition in a voice "strong and clear," and the person too weak to lift himself in bed may rise "clear up from the pillow" to embrace such a visitor (Barrett, 1926, p. 47; Hyslop, 1918b, p. 611). In India persons on their deathbeds have been reported to

resist a take-away apparition with their last ounce of strength (Osis & Haraldsson, 1977, p. 67).

The dying may entreat the living to see their visitors, and be "surprised," "fretful," or even "indignant" when those around them cannot see them (Bozzano, 1906, p. 72; Cobbe, 1882, p. 256). They may become upset when the living inadvertently brush their visitors aside. Barrett (1926) cites an instance where a woman went to see her dying sister: "As she sat down on a chair by the bedside, the invalid exclaimed, 'Oh, don't J—! Oh, you have sent Mother away, she was sitting there!' and she continued to seem much distressed" (p. 30). (Apparently sitting on the dead is not fatal in the way that it is for childhood imaginary companions.)

## Range of Cases

The Paradigm Case presented above helps to identify some portion of the cases of take-away apparitions. Each of the transformations introduced below picks out some additional cases and clarifies the way these cases differ from the Paradigm Case.

*T1. Change the take-away apparition to a spouse, stranger, religious figure, or other eligible person.*

Mothers are the most frequently seen take-away figures, but other relatives "appear" in the United States in the following order of frequency: spouse, offspring, sibling, and father (Osis, 1961). In addition, strangers may come to take away the dying, especially the reluctant ones, and religious figures may also be seen (Osis & Haraldsson, 1977).

*T2. Add a vision of relevant objects or environments to the take-away experience.*

Some people not only see apparitions coming to meet them. They also see the gateway through which they must pass ("The door is opening wider and wider, and when it is open wide I shall be going through it." [Barrett, 1926, p. 49]); the barrier that they must cross over ("Just wait, Mother, I am almost over. I can jump it. Wait, Mother." [Bozzano, 1906, p. 73]); or the vehicle that will carry them from this world ("Tom, bring the boat nearer; I can't get in." [Barrett, 1926, p. 33]).

People may even see the world to which they are going: "The dying wife was in full view of the two worlds at the same time, for she

described how the moving figures looked in the world beyond, as she directed her words to mortals in this world." (Bozzano, 1906, p. 73)

## T3. *Change the timing of the apparitional visitor.*

The experience of a take-away apparition occurs not only *in articulo mortis*, but also in the hours and days prior to death. Osis and Haraldsson (1977) found that in the Northeastern United States only 9% of such visions occur at the moment of death, while 60% precede death by more than 24 hours (p. 216). In the days before death, apparitions may offer assurance that "I'll be here when you come"; apparitions may promise to guide the dying person through the coming transition; they may offer comfort and solace; they may nudge the living to "come on"; and so forth.

A classic case in the literature is that of Daisy Dryden, a daughter of missionaries who died at age 10. For the three days prior to her death, she was in the regular company of her younger brother, Allie, who had died seven months before. Whenever Daisy felt uncertain about how her life would be in the "next world," she would ask Allie, and he would explain to her about heaven (Hyslop, 1918a).

## T4. *Change the purpose of the apparition.*

Not all apparitions seen in life-and-death situations welcome the dying. Sometimes the hallucinatory figure "rejects the patient and forbids him to enter post-mortem existence" (Osis, 1961, p. 74). Although not everyone would describe this as an instance of "rejection," the cases in which a person is sent back to life are an important subset in the paradigm case formulation.

## T5. *Allow for an outcome inconsistent with the purpose of the apparition.*

Not too surprisingly, being sent back to life by an apparition does not guarantee that a person will live, and answering a call to death, even from one's mother, does not necessarily mean that a person will die. The outcome may be at variance with the vision (Osis & Haraldsson, 1977, p. 149).

### People Who See Take-away Apparitions

Given that 13% to 28% of children have imaginary companions, and 10% of adults may "see" or "hear" their deceased spouses, it would be interesting to have data of this sort for take-away apparitions. Unfortunately, I was not able to find comparable data concerning what proportion of dying people see take-away apparitions. Available data,

however, does indicate that men and women are equally likely to have deathbed hallucinations (Osis, 1961, p. 48; Osis & Haraldsson, 1977, p. 74).

## Analysis

When people approach graduation, they begin to lose their attachment to their high school or college world before their time there actually ends. Likewise, people approaching death begin to lose their attachment to this world before their time here comes to an end. By the time death is imminent, a person could hardly be related to the world in the same old way anymore (cf. Cumming & Henry, 1961). Ordinary real world requirements do not carry the same weight for the dying as for the living.

At the same time, being dead is unthinkable from an Actor perspective. People cannot really see themselves as having no further possibilities for behaving. The prospect of death creates a situation where a person has to have a world $+ x$, that is, a world in which behavior will continue to be possible. (Cf. "If, for a given observer, the real world is such that it would leave him in an impossible position, he will not see it that way. Instead, he will see it as a world that does have a place for him, and he will act accordingly." [Ossorio, 1976, p. 12a])

Given these facts, it is not surprising that people *in extremis* construct worlds-with-imaginary-companions. At this point in life, a person who has a relationship to a take-away apparition has "everything to gain" by virtue of this relationship, and little to constrain him or her by way of real world requirements.

It is also not surprising that people see objects or worlds in addition to imaginary companions. Non-religious people may draw on universal symbols of transition and use them in their world $+ x$ construction at the time of death (e.g., a boat to carry the person over). Religious people, who already have guidelines about what the "next world" is like, may simply expand their current world construction to encompass that "next world," however they believe it to be.

In the Paradigm Case, persons at the moment of death "choose" the take-away apparition over the living people beside them. From the perspective of the dying, going with the take-away apparition is more to the point than staying with the living. From the perspective of the observers at the bedside, reaching out to the take-away apparition may represent a final self-affirming act, in which the person uses up all his or her remaining potential rather than dribbling it away.

In the days prior to death, take-away apparitions may be status-enhancing in a variety of other ways. For example, the apparition who promises "I'll be here" gives a person a connection to whatever is on

the other side, and hence behavior potential. The apparition who promises to be a guide through the valley of death increases behavior potential, because a person has more possibilities with a guide who knows the territory.

Apparitions also appear in situations of indecision and uncertainty, in which a person is faced with the issue of "Will I live? Will I die?" Recall how imaginary companions in childhood sometimes appear in situations of moral indecision. By suddenly materializing on the scene, such companions help the child give appropriate weight to relevant circumstances and corresponding reasons in making his or her decisions. Take-away apparitions may serve a similar function, frequently reminding people "Your children need you," "You have unfinished business," and so forth. Alternately, apparitions may invite the person to leave behind all worldly cares, and the person may affirm for himself his reasons for living. Dialogues with take-away apparitions tend to be short and to-the-point, clarifying whatever is most salient in a life-and-death situation.

Take-away apparitions may also be part of a person's attempt to face the reality of death. Being in the company of someone who has departed is a simple way of claiming (some sort of) membership in the community of the dead, and may help make the imminence of death more real.

## CONCLUSION

Imaginary companions were conceptualized as phenomena of world + $x$ construction and reconstruction, and parameters relevant to whether or not a person constructs a world with an imaginary someone were presented. In addition, access to a range of cases of imaginary companions was provided via a paradigm case formulation. The formulation involved three Paradigm Cases—an imaginary companion of childhood, a ghostly companion, and a take-away apparition—each with its own set of transformations.

A paper on imaginary companions would not be complete without some mention of the expressive companions of adults. Just as with children's imaginary companions, some adult companions are purely expressive, enabling adults to "do their own thing" in a way that they could not do otherwise. In concluding, the visions of William Blake will be mentioned as an example.

In the years from 1819-1825, Blake drew a series of portraits of historical figures who "appeared" before him. Varley, a fellow artist and friend who was present at these "sittings," reported that Blake could not control his visions, but rather had to draw whoever appeared. At times

Blake ran into difficulties, like those he encountered while drawing Sir William Wallace:

> Having drawn for some time, with the same care of hand and steadiness of eye, as if a living sitter had been before him, Blake stopt suddenly, and said, "I cannot finish him—Edward the First has stept in between him and me." (quoted in Keynes, 1971, p. 131).

Although nineteenth century accounts depict Blake as a lunatic in Bedlam (e.g., Boismont, 1860, pp. 86-88), modern Blake scholars take the position that Blake was "deliberately leading on his credulous friend" (Keynes, 1971, p. 134) and "humouring" Varley (Butlin, 1971, p. 58). Perhaps Blake simply had the great and famous for imaginary companions, and these relationships enabled him to do some extraordinary drawings.

The conceptualization of imaginary companions presented above is of sufficient scope, plausibility, and responsiveness to account for companions like Blake's "odd fellows" as well as the more mundane companions discussed above. Operating with this kind of understanding may make it possible to deal more sensitively and competently with children, the widowed, the dying, and others who have a companion of uncertain status.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appendix A

Empirical Studies of Imaginary Companions

| Author(s) | Date | n | Data source(s) | Age Range | Incidence (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brittain | 1907 | 40 | Repeated interviews | 13-20 | 27.5 |
| Hurlock & Burstein | 1932 | 701 | High school and college student questionnaire | 15-40 | 27.5 |
| Jersild, Markey, & Jersild | 1933 | 400 | Child interviews and school records | 5-12 | 35.8 |
| Svendsen | 1934 | 119 | Child, mother interviews and school records | 3-16 | 13.4 |
| Ames & Learned | 1946 | 210 | Parent interviews, behavioral observation, and clinic records | 2-10 | 21.4 |
| Schaefer | 1969 | 800 | High school student biographical inventory | | 18.3 |
| Manosevitz, Prentice, & Wilson | 1973 | 222 | Parent questionnaire | 3-5 | 28.4 |

## Appendix B
## Case Studies of Imaginary Companions

| Author(s) | Date | Data source(s) | n | Explanation | Additional function(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Munroe | 1894 | Personal observation | 1 | Ethical ideal towards which child is striving | Provide entertainment |
| Vostrovsky | 1895 | Personal reminiscences and observation reports | 46 | Good playfellow; friend in need of help | Aggrandize the self |
| Swett | 1910 | Personal observation | 1 | Supporting actor in child's moral dramachild | Tempt, castigate the |
| Harvey | 1918 | Reports by psychology students | 37 | Idea that becomes as vivid as a percept | Provide playmates |
| Green | 1922 | Contact with normal children | 5 | Daydream | Permit expression of instinctive motives |
| Wickes | 1927 | Work as a school psychologist | 24 | Archetypal personification | Aid in the process of individuation |
| Harriman | 1937 | Reports by psychology students | 6 | Reflection of a creative impulse | Compensate for companion deprivation |
| Bender & Vogel | 1941 | Observations on a child psychiatric ward | 14 | Positive mechanism used in time of need | Compensate for deficits in parent-child relations |
| Piaget | 1951 | Personal observation | 1 | Symbolic game | Assimilate reality without the need to accomodate |
| Sperling | 1954 | Child psychoanalysis | 1 | Prestage [sic] of the super-ego | Preserve the illusion of omnipotence |
| Fraiberg | 1959 | Personal observation | 2 | Means for problem-solving | Master childhood fears; control naughty impulses |

## Appendix B (con't.)
## Case Studies of Imaginary Companions

| Author(s) | Date | Data source(s) | n | Explanation | Additional function(s) |
|-----------|------|----------------|---|-------------|------------------------|
| Murphy | 1962 | Research on children's coping | 1 | Coping device | Provide support during mother's absence |
| Nagera | 1969 | Child assessment; adult psychoanalysis | 10 | Fantasy attempt at wish fulfilment | Compensate for losses; "prop" the superego |
| Bach | 1971 | Personal observation; adult psychoanalysis | 3 | Element in series of nipple-feces-penis-child | Preserve omnipotence; deny helplessness |
| Benson & Pryor | 1973 | Retrospective report; adolescent psychotherapy | 2 | Narcissistic guardian | Provide "self-mirroring with approval" |
| Myers | 1976 | Adult psychoanalysis | 4 | Splitting of the self-representations | Ward off anxiety |
| Klein | 1985 | Parental report | 3 | Transitional self | Externalize and mirror aspects of the self |

## Appendix C
## Experience of the Dead Person's Presence

| Author(s) | Date | n | Population | Incidence (%) | Mean time since death |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marris | 1958 | 72 | Young or middle-aged widows from London's East End | 50 | 2 years |
| Hobson | 1964 | 40 | Widows in a small market town in the Midlands of England | 80 | [½-4 years] |
| Yamamoto, Okonogi, Iwasaki, & Yoshimura | 1969 | 20 | Tokyo widows of men killed in car accidents | 90 | 42 days |
| Parkes | 1970 | 22 | London widows referred for longitudinal study by GP's | 68<br>55 | 1 month<br>13 months |
| Rees | 1971 | 293<br><br>227<br>66 | Entire widowed population of a well-defined area in Wales:<br>Widows<br>Widowers | 47<br><br>46<br>50 | [Up to 40 years] |
| Parkes | 1975 | 59<br>18<br>41 | Widowed in Boston:<br>Faced an unexpected death<br>Death with longer notice | 61<br>19 | [2-4 years] |
| Balk | 1983 | 33 | Illinois teenagers who had lost a sibling | 50 | 23.6 months |
| Olson, Suddeth, Peterson, & Egelhoff | 1985 | 52<br>46<br>6 | Residents of two NC nursing homes:<br>Widows<br>Widowers | 61<br>33 | [Not given] |

## Appendix D
## Bereavement Hallucinations

| Author(s) | Date | n | Population | Significant differences | Incidence[a] (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gorer | 1965 | 80 | Cross section of Britishers who had lost a relative | | 7.5 |
| Clayton, Desmarais, & Winokur | 1968 | 40 | Relatives of patients who died in St. Louis hospitals | | 7.5 |
| Parkes | 1970 | 22 | London widows interviewed 1 month post-bereavement | | 9.1[b] |
| Rees | 1971 | 293<br>226<br>67 | Entire widowed population of a well-defined area in Wales | Widowed<br><20 years<br>>20 years | 14.0[b]<br>16.8<br>4.5 |
| Clayton, Halikas, & Maurice | 1971 | 109 | Surviving spouses in St. Louis interviewed at 1 month | | 6.4 |
| Bornstein, Clayton, Halikas, Maurice, & Robins | 1973 | 92<br>16<br>76 | Surviving spouses in St. Louis interviewed at 13 months | Depressed<br>Non-depressed | 5.4<br>18.8<br>2.6 |
| Glick, Weiss, & Parkes | 1974 | 49 | Young Boston widows studied longitudinally | | 10.0 |
| Olson, Suddeth, Peterson, & Egelhoff | 1985 | 46 | Widows residing in two NC nursing homes (mean age = 80) | | 47.8[b] |

[a] May include visual, auditory, and tactile hallucinations.

[b] Visual hallucinations only.

# NOTES

1.    The concept of "real but not like other real objects" may have a familiar ring to mathematicians. In solving quadratic equations such as $x^2 + 1 = 0$, mathematicians proceed as if there were a number $i$ whose square is -1. Such numbers do not fit within the real number system because the squares of both positive and negative real numbers are positive. These numbers were once given the status of "imaginary," but because it makes sense to act on imaginary numbers, today they are given the status of "real but not like other real numbers."

2.    Nathan A. Harvey was recognized as an authority in the field of imaginary companions for many years. It may have been more than coincidental that Mary C. Chase named her imaginary white rabbit "Harvey" when she wrote her play by that name in 1943/1944. Unfortunately Mrs. Chase is deceased, and her husband does not know where she got the name (Robert L. Chase, personal communication, June 1, 1987).

3.    The studies by Osis (1961) and Osis and Haraldsson (1977) have been criticized for sampling bias. Osis had only a 6% response rate from 10,000 physicians and nurses surveyed nationally in 1959-1960, and a 20% response rate from 5000 physicians and nurses surveyed in the Northeastern United States in 1961-1964. The representativeness of the data for the U.S. population as a whole is not a particular problem here, however, because the data is used only to contribute to a fuller description of the phenomena.

# REFERENCES

American Psychiatric Association. (1987). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (3rd ed., rev.). Washington, DC: Author.

Ames, L. B., & Learned, J. (1946). Imaginary companions and related phenomena. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 69,* 147-167.

Bach, S. (1971). Notes on some imaginary companions. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 26,* 159-171.

Balk, D. (1983). Adolescents' grief reactions and self-concept perceptions following sibling death: A study of 33 teenagers. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 12,* 137-161.

Barrett, W. (1926). *Death-bed visions.* London: Methuen.

Bender, L. (1954). Imaginary companions. In L. Bender (Ed.), *A Dynamic Psychopathology of Childhood* (pp. 51-79). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Bender, L., & Vogel, B. F. (1941). Imaginary companions of children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 11,* 56-65.

Benson, R. M., & Pryor, D. B. (1973). "When friends fall out": Developmental interference with the function of some imaginary companions. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association, 21,* 457-473.

Boismont, A. B. de (1860). *On hallucinations: A history and explanation of apparitions, visions, dreams, ecstasy, magnetism, and somnambulism* (R. T. Hulme, Trans.). Columbus, Ohio: Riley. (Original work published 1853)

Bornstein, P. E., Clayton, P. J., Halikas, J. A., Maurice, W. L., & Robins, E. (1973). The depression of widowhood after thirteen months. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 122,* 561-566.

Bozzano, E. (1906). Apparitions of deceased persons at death-beds. *Annals of Psychical Science, 3,* 67-100.

Brittain, H. L. (1907). A study in imagination. *Pedagogical Seminary, 14,* 137-206.

Butlin, M. (1971). *William Blake: A complete catalogue of the works in the Tate Gallery* (rev. ed.). Boston: Boston Book & Art Publisher.

Childers, A. T. (1931). A study of some schizoid children. *Mental Hygiene, 15,* 106-134.

Clayton, P., Desmarais, L., & Winokur, G. (1968). A study of normal bereavement. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 125,* 168-178.

Clayton, P. J., Halikas, J. A., & Maurice, W. L. (1971). The bereavement of the widowed. *Diseases of the Nervous System, 32,* 597-604.

Cobbe, F. P. (1882). *The peak in Darien, with some other inquiries touching concerns of the soul and the body: An octave of essays.* Boston: George H. Ellis.

Cumming, E., & Henry, W. E. (1961). *Growing old: The process of disengagement.* New York: Basic Books.

Despert, J. L. (1940). A comparative study of thinking in schizophrenic children and in children of preschool age. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 97,* 189-213.

Despert, J. L. (1948). Delusional and hallucinatory experiences in children. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 104,* 528-537.

Eisenberg, L. (1962). Hallucinations in children. In L. J. West (Ed.), *Hallucinations* (pp. 198-210). New York: Grune & Stratton.

Eliot, T. S. (1963). *Collected poems: 1909-1962.* New York: Harcourt.

Finucane, R. C. (1984). *Appearances of the dead: A cultural history of ghosts.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

Fraiberg, S. (1959). *The magic years.* New York: Scribner's.

Freud, S. (1957). Mourning and melancholia. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 14, pp. 243-258). London: Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1917)

Glick, I. O., Weiss, R. S., & Parkes, C. M. (1974). *The first year of bereavement.* New York: Wiley.

Goldstein, A. G. (1976). Hallucinatory experiences: A personal account. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 85,* 423-429.

Gorer, G. (1965). *Death, grief, and mourning.* New York: Doubleday.

Green, G. H. (1922). *Psychanalysis in the classroom.* New York: Putnam.

Gurney, E., & Myers, F. W. H. (1889). On apparitions occurring soon after death. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, 5,* 403-485.

Harriman, P. L. (1937). Some imaginary companions of older subjects. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 7,* 368-370.

Harvey, N. A. (1918). *Imaginary playmates and other mental phenomena of children.* Ypsilanti, MI: State Normal College.

Hobson, C. J. (1964, September 24). Widows of Blackton. *New Society,* pp. 13-16.

Hoyt, M. F. (1980-81). Clinical notes regarding the experience of 'presences' in mourning. *Omega, 11,* 105-111.

Hurlock, E. B., & Burstein, M. (1932). The imaginary playmate: A questionnaire study. *Journal of Genetic Psychology, 41,* 380-391.

Hyslop, J. H. (1907). Visions of the dying. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 1,* 45-55.

Hyslop, J. H. (1918a). Death visions. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 12,* 375-391.

Hyslop, J. H. (1918b). Visions of the dying. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 12,* 585-645.

Jersild, A. T. (1968). *Child psychology* (6th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Jersild, A. T., Markey, F. V., & Jersild, C. L. (1933). Children's fears, dreams, wishes, daydreams, likes, dislikes, pleasant and unpleasant memories: A study by the

interview method of 400 children aged 5 to 12. *Child Development Monographs, 12*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Kantor, C. (1977). Discipline, negotiation, and the schizogenic family: A study of normal and schizogenic socialization. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 38*, 3398B. (University Microfilms No. 84-22724)

Keeler, W. R. (1954). Children's reaction to the death of a parent. In P. H. Hoch & J. Zubin (Eds.), *Depression* (pp. 109-120). New York: Grune & Stratton.

Keynes, G. (1971). *Blake studies: Essays on his life and work* (2nd ed.). Oxford: At the Clarendon Press.

Klein, B. R. (1985). A child's imaginary companion: A transitional self. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 13*, 272-282.

La Barre, W. (1975). Anthropological perspectives on hallucination and hallucinogens. In R. K. Siegel & L. J. West (Eds.), *Hallucinations: Behavior, experience, and theory* (pp. 9-52). New York: Wiley.

Lilly, J. C. (1956). Mental effects of reduction of ordinary levels of physical stimuli on intact, healthy persons. *Psychiatric Research Reports, 5*, 1-9.

Lindemann, E. (1944). Symptomatology and management of acute grief. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 101*, 141-148.

MacDonald, W. S., & Oden, C. W. Jr. (1977). *Aumakua*: Behavioral direction visions in Hawaiians. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 86*, 189-194.

Manosevitz, M., Prentice, N. M., & Wilson, F. (1973). Individual and family correlates of imaginary companions in preschool children. *Developmental Psychology, 8*, 72-79.

Marris, P. (1958). *Widows and their families*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Martin, L. J. (1915). Ghosts and the projection of visual images. *American Journal of Psychology, 26*, 251-257.

Matchett, W. F. (1972). Repeated hallucinatory experiences as a part of the mourning process among Hopi Indian women. *Psychiatry, 35*, 185-194.

Munroe, J. P. (1894). Case of self-projection in a child. *Pedagogical Seminary, 3*, 182-184.

Murphy, L. B. (1962). *The widening world of childhood: Paths toward mastery*. New York: Basic Books.

Myers, F. W. H. (1903). *Human personality and its survival of bodily death* (Vol. 2). New York: Longmans & Green.

Myers, W. A. (1976). Imaginary companions, fantasy twins, mirror dreams and depersonalization. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 45*, 503-524.

Nagera, H. (1969). The imaginary companion: Its significance for ego development and conflict solution. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 24*, 165-196.

Olson, P. R., Suddeth, J. A., Peterson, P. J., & Egelhoff, C. (1985). Hallucinations of widowhood. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 33*, 543-547.

Osis, K. (1961). *Deathbed observations by physicians and nurses*. New York: Parapsychology Foundation.

Osis, K., & Haraldsson, E. (1977). *At the hour of death*. New York: Avon Books.

Ossorio, P. G. (1975, July). Seminar conducted at the University of Colorado, Boulder, CO.

Ossorio, P. G. (1976). *Clinical topics* (LRI Report No. 11). Whittier, CA and Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1978a). *Meaning and symbolism* (LRI Report No. 15). Whittier, CA and Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute. (Originally published in 1969 as LRI Report No. 10)

Ossorio, P. G. (1978b). *"What actually happens": The representation of real world phenomena*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. (Originally published

in 1971 in an earlier version as LRI Report No. 10a. Whittier, CA and Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute. Later listed as LRI Report No. 20)

Ossorio, P. G. (1981a). Conceptual-notational devices: The PCF and related types. In K. E. Davis (Ed.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 83-104). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press. (Originally published in 1979 as LRI Report No. 22. Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1981b). Explanation, falsifiability, and rule-following. In K. E. Davis (Ed.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 37-55). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press. (Originally published in 1968 as LRI Report No. 4c. Los Angeles, CA and Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.)

Ossorio, P. G. (1981c). *Ex post facto: The source of intractable origin problems and their resolution* (LRI Report No. 28a). Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1982). *Place* (LRI Report No. 30a). Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Ossorio, P. G. (1983, March). Seminar conducted at the Linguistic Research Institute, Boulder, CO.

Parkes, C. M. (1970a). The first year of bereavement: A longitudinal study of the reaction of London widows to the death of their husbands. *Psychiatry, 33*, 444-467.

Parkes, C. M. (1970b). "Seeking" and "finding" a lost object: Evidence from recent studies of the reaction to bereavement. *Social Science & Medicine, 4*, 187-201.

Parkes, C. M. (1972). *Bereavement: Studies of grief in adult life*. New York: International Universities Press.

Parkes, C. M. (1975). Unexpected and untimely bereavement: A statistical study of young Boston widows and widowers. In B. Schoenberg, I. Gerber, A. Wiener, A. H. Kutscher, D. Peretz, & A. C. Carr (Eds.), *Bereavement: Its psychosocial aspects* (pp. 119-138). New York: Columbia University Press.

Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, dreams and imitation in childhood* (C. Gattegno & F. M. Hodgson, Trans.). New York: Norton. (Original work published 1951)

Rees, W. D. (1971). The hallucinations of widowhood. *British Medical Journal, 4*, 37-41.

Rees, W. D. (1975). The bereaved and their hallucinations. In B. Schoenberg, I. Gerber, A. Wiener, A. H. Kutscher, D. Peretz, & A. C. Carr (Eds.), *Bereavement: Its psychosocial aspects* (pp. 66-71). New York: Columbia University Press.

Roberts, M. K. (1985a). I and thou: A study of personal relationships. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 231-258). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Roberts, M. K. (1985b). Worlds and world reconstruction. In K. E. Davis & T. O. Mitchell (Eds.), *Advances in Descriptive Psychology* (Vol. 4, pp. 17-53). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Roberts, M. K. (1988). *Companions of uncertain status* (LRI Report No. 48). Boulder, CO: Linguistic Research Institute.

Rogo, D. S. (1978). Research on deathbed experiences: Some contemporary and historical perspectives. *Parapsychology Review, 9*, 20-27.

Rothstein, A. (1981). Hallucinatory phenomena in childhood: A critique of the literature. *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry, 20*, 623-635.

Schaefer, C. E. (1969). Imaginary companions and creative adolescents. *Developmental Psychology, 1*, 747-749.

Sedman, G. (1966). A phenomenological study of pseudohallucinations and related experiences. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 42*, 35-70.

Seifert, R., & Clarke, C. (1979). The third man. *World Medicine, 15*, 56.

Shen, W. W. (1986). The Hopi Indian's mourning hallucinations. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 174*, 365-367.

Sherman, M., & Beverly, B. I. (1924). Hallucinations in children. *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology, 19,* 165-170.

Siegel, R. K. (1977). Normal hallucinations of imaginary companions. *McLean Hospital Journal, 2*(2), 66-80.

Siegel, R. K. (1980). The psychology of life after death. *American Psychologist, 35,* 911-931.

Slocum, J. (1905). *Sailing alone around the world.* New York: Century.

Smith, T. L. (1904). The psychology of day dreams. *American Journal of Psychology, 15,* 465-488.

Solomon, P., Leiderman, P. H., Mendelson, J., & Wexler, D. (1957). Sensory deprivation: A review. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 114,* 357-363.

Sperling, O. E. (1954). An imaginary companion, representing a prestage [*sic*] of the superego. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 9,* 252-258.

Svendsen, M. (1934). Children's imaginary companions. *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, 32,* 985-999.

Swett, H. P. (1910). Her little girl. *Pedagogical Seminary, 17,* 104-110.

Vostrovsky, C. (1895). A study of imaginary companions. *Education, 15,* 393-398.

Vostrovsky, C. (1896). Helen: The life history of certain imaginary companions. *Studies in Education, 1,* 98-101.

Weiner, M. F. (1961). Hallucinations in children. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 5,* 544-553.

Wickes, F. G. (1966). *The inner world of childhood: A study in analytical psychology* (rev. ed.). New York: Appleton. (Original work published 1927)

Yamamoto, J., Okonogi, K., Iwasaki, T., & Yoshimura, S. (1969). Mourning in Japan. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 125,* 1660-1665.