A Review and Analysis of "Unsolved" Cases of the Reincarnation Type: II. Comparison of Features of Solved and Unsolved Cases[1]

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ABSTRACT: In this second of two papers, we present analyses of data from a large number (N = 856) of solved and unsolved cases of the reincarnation type in six cultures. The ratio of solved to unsolved cases varied among the cultures studied, as did the frequency with which the previous personality was identified as someone already known to the subject's family. In both types of case subjects began to speak about the previous life at about the same age, mentioned the mode of death of the previous personality with about the same frequency, showed a phobia related to that mode of death with about the same frequency, and referred to a death that was violent with high frequency. Subjects of unsolved cases stopped talking about the previous life earlier than did subjects of solved cases, and they mentioned the previous personality's name less frequently than did subjects of solved cases. In all cultures examined the incidence of violent death among the previous personalities of unsolved cases (as claimed by the subject) was significantly higher than that among previous personalities of solved cases. The possible relevance of these findings to the interpretation of unsolved cases is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

In Part I of this paper (Cook et al., 1983) we introduced readers to the subject of "unsolved" cases of the reincarnation type, explained the importance of this group of cases, and presented reports of seven representative unsolved cases. In this part we shall present some data from a large number (N = 856) of solved and unsolved cases that will show some important similarities and dif-

ferences between them. We recognize that we have singled out for comparison only a few basic features which we considered especially important for a preliminary examination of these two types of case. Furthermore, many data are missing, either because the information was unavailable or because we neglected to ask about certain features during the early years of these investigations. Nevertheless, we feel that the data we present are sufficient to allow us to begin to look at the similarities and differences between solved and unsolved cases and hence to generate hypotheses for further research.

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

For cross-cultural analyses within the various contingency tables, we used loglinear models and likelihood ratio testing as implemented by the BMDP3F statistical routine (Brown, 1979). This multivariate technique is recommended for the analysis of contingency tables with dimensions greater than 2 × 2. In the case of multidimensional tables, loglinear analysis permits investigation of the relationships between all pairs of variables simultaneously, and it also allows for the possibility of higher-order interactions among variables (Fienberg, 1977). The result is a more complete understanding of patterns in cross-classified data than would normally be obtained by simply analyzing each pair of variables separately.

The proportions of solved and unsolved cases in the six cultures were compared by estimating the lambda coefficients[3] for the loglinear model for the 2 × 6 table. These estimates were then divided by their respective standard errors to yield a Z score for each culture indicating how far the ratio of solved to unsolved cases in that culture is from the average ratio of solved to unsolved cases across all six groups. The same technique was also used in comparing the six cultures for several other features of the cases.

The comparisons between solved and unsolved cases as a whole were made using a chi-square analysis or an analysis of variance, depending on the nature of the data involved.

RESULTS

Proportion of Unsolved Cases in Several Cultures

The proportion of unsolved cases varies widely among the cultures in which we have studied cases.[4] Table 1 shows the numbers

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[3] Lambda coefficients are the parameters of a loglinear model; they are calculated from the logarithms of cell frequencies in a table. These calculations are similar to those of main effects in interactions in a factorial analysis of variance.

[4] Readers should understand that we can only consider cases that we have

Table 1

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CASES IN SIX CULTURES

Culture	N	Solved	Unsolved	Z
Burma	230	185 (80%)	45 (20%)	3.83***
India	266	204 (77%)	62 (23%)	2.82*
Lebanon	126	99 (79%)	27 (21%)	2.74*
Sri Lanka	117	37 (32%)	80 (68%)	−7.17***
Thailand	38	35 (92%)	3 (8%)	3.46**
United States[a]	79	16 (20%)	63 (80%)	−7.94***
TOTAL	856	576 (67%)	280 (33%)	

[a] In this and the following tables, figures for the United States are based on nontribal cases only.

* $p < .01$ ** $p < .001$ *** $p < .0001$.

and percentages of solved and unsolved cases in six cultures for which we have sufficient information to permit an analysis. The percentage of solved cases is low in Sri Lanka and the United States (nontribal cases), and it is high in Thailand, Burma, India, and Lebanon. In Figure 1 we have shown the incidence of solved cases by plotting the logits (logarithms of the ratio) of solved to unsolved cases in the six cultures.

A case is more easily solved if the subject seems to be referring to a relative or an acquaintance of his or her family. The proportion of unsolved cases in a culture might therefore be related to the frequency with which the previous personality is identified as someone already known to the parents before the development of the case. Table 2 and Figure 2 show some data relevant to this question for solved cases of the same six cultures. Among these six cultures only the data of India and Sri Lanka showed significant deviations from the average, but those of other cultures showed trends worth noting. The cultures with the highest proportion of solved cases (Burma and Thailand) are also among those with the

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investigated, which means cases that have first come to our attention. Many cases may occur without our hearing about them. We believe that many of the cases we do not hear about are "same family" cases (those in which the subject and the previous personality are related, either closely or distantly) that are simply observed privately by the members of the families in which they occur. Our grounds for thinking this are that as we have continued studying these cases and have become acquainted (in recent years) with a larger number of informants, the proportion of "same family" cases that have come to our attention has increased, at least in India and Lebanon. On the other hand, many unsolved cases may also not be drawn to our attention because informants believe, incorrectly, that we would have no interest in such "weak" cases.
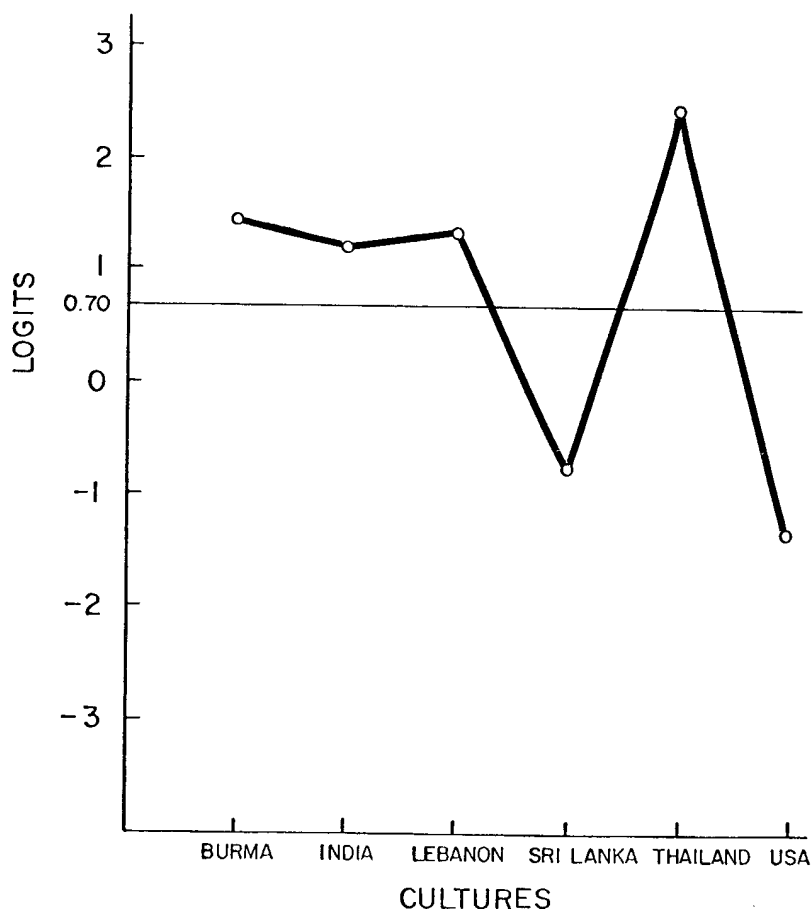
Fig. 1. Incidence of solved cases in six cultures.

highest proportion of cases in which the two families were related or *previously acquainted.* Similarly, Sri Lanka, a country with a very low percentage of solved cases, shows a relatively low percentage of cases in which the previous person was someone already known to the subject's family.

The other three cultures, however, show somewhat different results. The United States has the lowest percentage of solved cases, but in all of the solved American cases the previous personality was related to or acquainted with the subject's family. On the other hand, 77% of the Indian cases analyzed are solved, but only 57% of the families concerned in these cases were related or ac-

Table 2

NUMBER OF SOLVED CASES IN WHICH THE TWO FAMILIES CONCERNED WERE
RELATED OR ACQUAINTED BEFORE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CASE

| Culture | N | Families Related or Acquainted | | | | | | Families Unknown to Each Other | | Z^c |
		Related[a]		Acquainted[b]		Total				
Burma	154	83	(54%)	48	(31%)	131	(85%)	23	(15%)	1.50
India	183	29	(16%)	75	(41%)	104	(57%)	79	(43%)	−3.38*
Lebanon	80	19	(24%)	37	(46%)	56	(70%)	24	(30%)	−1.24
Sri Lanka	31	6	(19%)	9	(29%)	15	(48%)	16	(52%)	−3.35*
Thailand	32	22	(69%)	3	(9%)	25	(78%)	7	(22%)	.04
United States	16	15	(94%)	1	(6%)	16	(100%)	0	(0%)	1.84
TOTAL	496	174	(35%)	173	(35%)	347	(70%)	149	(30%)	

[a] The two personalities concerned are related either closely or distantly.

[b] These figures include those families who had heard of or about each other but were not otherwise acquainted.

[c] Derived from the ratio of the total number of cases with families related or acquainted to the number of cases with families unknown to each other.

* $p < .001$.

quainted. Lebanon, also with a relatively high proportion of solved cases, has an intermediate rate of previous personalities related to or acquainted with the subject's family.

The data seem to indicate, therefore, that there is no unvarying relationship between the solving of cases in a culture and the frequency in that culture with which the two families concerned in a case are related or acquainted.

Comparison of Features of Solved and Unsolved Cases

The remaining tables and figures present data related to several features for which we have been able to compare solved cases with unsolved ones.

Age at first and last speaking about the previous life. Table 3 and Figures 3a and 3b show the mean age in months at which subjects started and stopped talking about the previous life. There was no significant difference between solved and unsolved cases with respect to the mean age of first speaking about the previous life ($F = .4657$, $df = 1, 381$; n.s.). In both types of case, the subjects usually began to speak about the previous life at about three years of age; the mean age for both solved and unsolved cases was 37 months. Among the unsolved cases, subjects stopped talking about the previous life at an earlier age (70 months) than in the solved ones (90 months), and this difference was statistically significant ($F = 22.79$, $df = 1, 225$; $p < .00001$). We still have too little data, however,
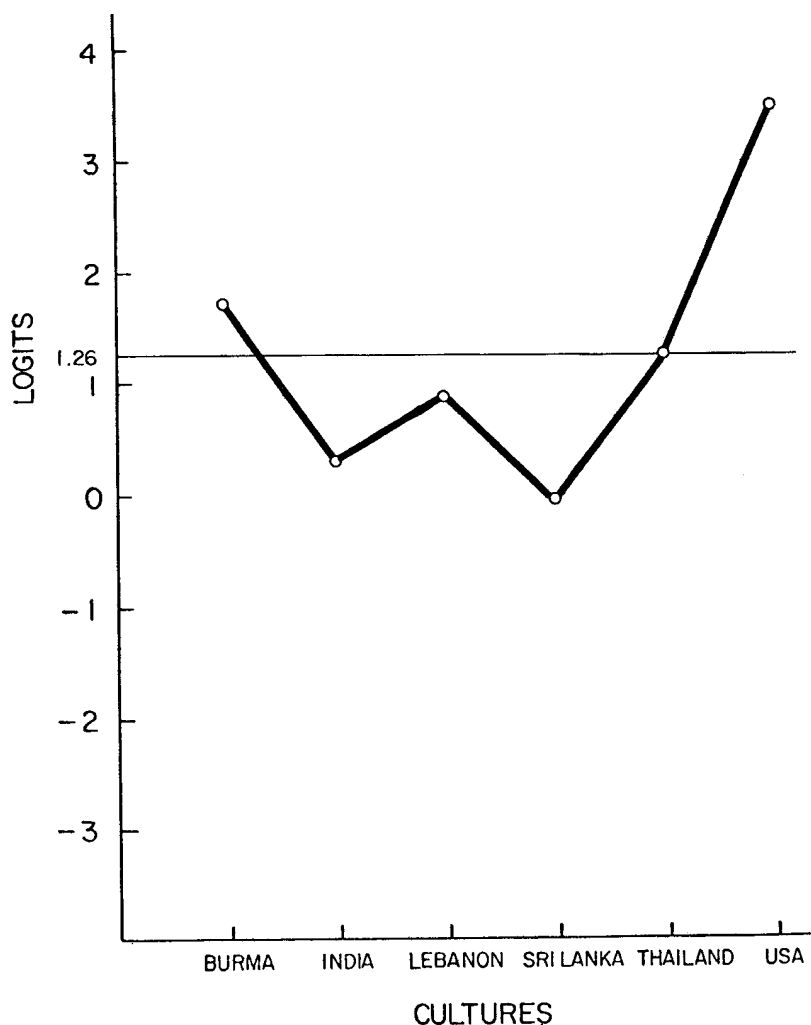
Fig. 2. Incidence of solved cases in which the two families concerned were related or acquainted before the development of the case.

about the age at fading to permit us to draw any firm conclusions, partly because we have only recently begun to ask informants regularly about this feature and partly because many subjects were still talking about the previous life when we last visited them.

   Frequency of mentioning the previous personality's mode of death. The subject mentioned the mode of death of the previous personality with about the same frequency in solved and unsolved

Table 3

MEAN AGE OF SUBJECTS (IN MONTHS) AT FIRST AND LAST SPEAKING ABOUT THE PREVIOUS LIFE IN SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CASES

Culture	Age Started Speaking		Age Stopped Speaking[a]	
	Solved	Unsolved	Solved	Unsolved
Burma	39.19 (N = 136)	37.71 (N = 28)	108.75 (N = 16)	72.00 (N = 3)
India	38.06 (N = 179)	39.02 (N = 56)	79.95 (N = 80)	77.00 (N = 29)
Lebanon	34.62 (N = 69)	28.11 (N = 18)	125.59 (N = 17)	80.17 (N = 6)
Sri Lanka	29.08 (N = 36)	35.68 (N = 71)	72.55 (N = 11)	69.97 (N = 33)
Thailand	37.91 (N = 22)	24.00 (N = 1)	107.20 (N = 5)	—[b]
United States	37.13 (N = 16)	38.05 (N = 61)	84.00 (N = 6)	59.50 (N = 30)
TOTAL	37.16 (N = 458)	36.68 (N = 235)	89.70 (N = 135)	69.54 (N = 101)

[a] The sample sizes for this category are small because systematic inquiry about this feature was begun only recently. Also, many subjects were still talking about the previous life at the time of our last contact with them.
[b] No data available for these cases.

Table 4

NUMBER OF SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CASES IN WHICH THE SUBJECT MENTIONED THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITY'S MODE OF DEATH

Culture	Solved				Unsolved			
	N	Death Mentioned	Death Not Mentioned	Z	N	Death Mentioned	Death Not Mentioned	Z
Burma	91	69 (76%)	22 (24%)	1.71	40	32 (80%)	8 (20%)	1.17
India	172	133 (77%)	39 (23%)	2.41*	59	47 (80%)	12 (20%)	1.26
Lebanon	79	63 (80%)	16 (20%)	2.39*	23	18 (78%)	5 (22%)	.77
Sri Lanka	35	23 (66%)	12 (34%)	-.20	77	54 (70%)	23 (30%)	-.19
Thailand	26	19 (73%)	7 (27%)	.72	3	2 (67%)	1 (33%)	-.22
United States	16	4 (25%)	12 (75%)	-3.66***	63	30 (48%)	33 (52%)	-3.16**
TOTAL	419	311 (74%)	108 (26%)		265	183 (69%)	82 (31%)	

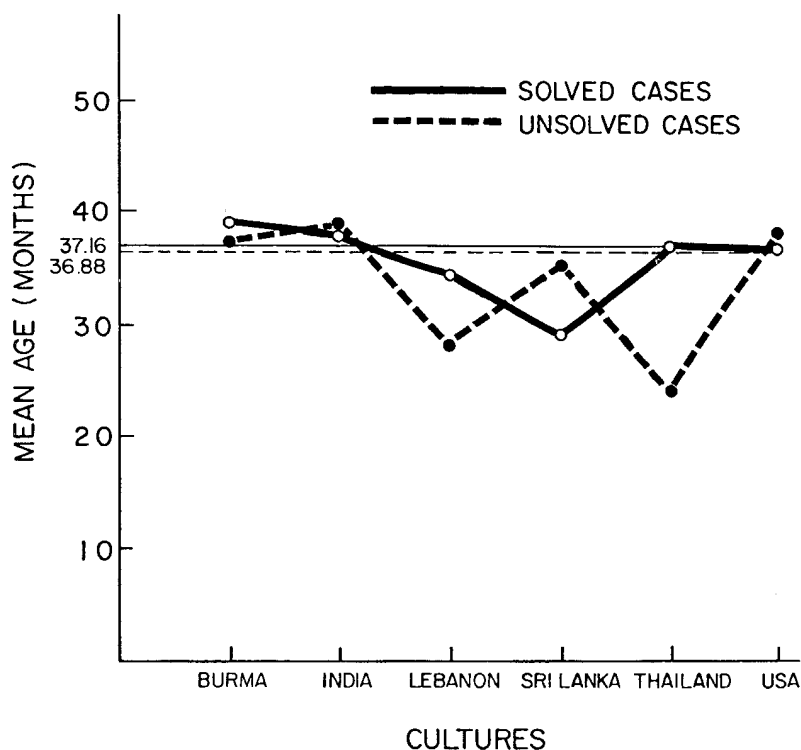* p < .05   ** p < .01   *** p < .001.

Fig. 3a. Age at which subjects first spoke about previous life.

cases in all but one of the cultures; the cases of the United States were exceptional. (See Table 4 and Figure 4.) For the cases overall, solved and unsolved cases did not differ significantly in this feature; this was true both for the cases considered as a whole ($\chi^2 = 2.14$, $df = 1$; n.s.) and across cultures ($\chi^2 = 2.15$, $df = 5$; n.s.).

Frequency of phobias related to the previous personality's mode of death. These occur among both solved and unsolved cases. Thus the subject of an unsolved case who claimed that he or she had drowned in the previous life might show a phobia of being immersed in water, as do many subjects of solved cases in which the corresponding previous personality is known to have drowned. As shown in Table 5 and Figure 5, such phobias occurred with about the same frequency in solved and unsolved cases; the difference was nonsignificant both for the cases considered as a whole ($\chi^2 = .25$, $df = 1$; n.s.) and across cultures ($\chi^2 = 2.12$, $df = 5$; n.s.).

Frequency of mentioning the previous personality's name. Mention of the name (whether the given name, the family name, or both) of the previous personality by the subject may contribute
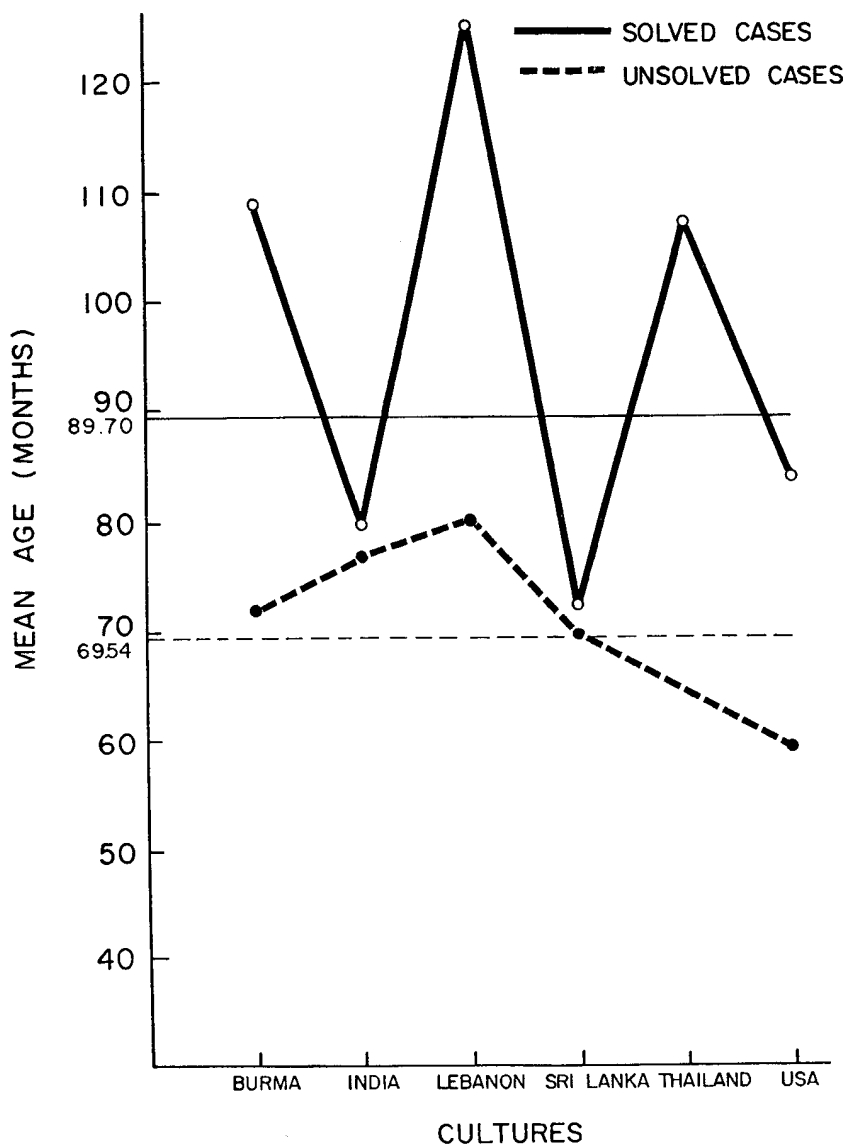
Fig. 3b. Age at which subjects stopped speaking about previous life.

importantly to the solution of a case. Our data show that the subject was reported to have mentioned the previous personality's name significantly more often in solved cases than in unsolved
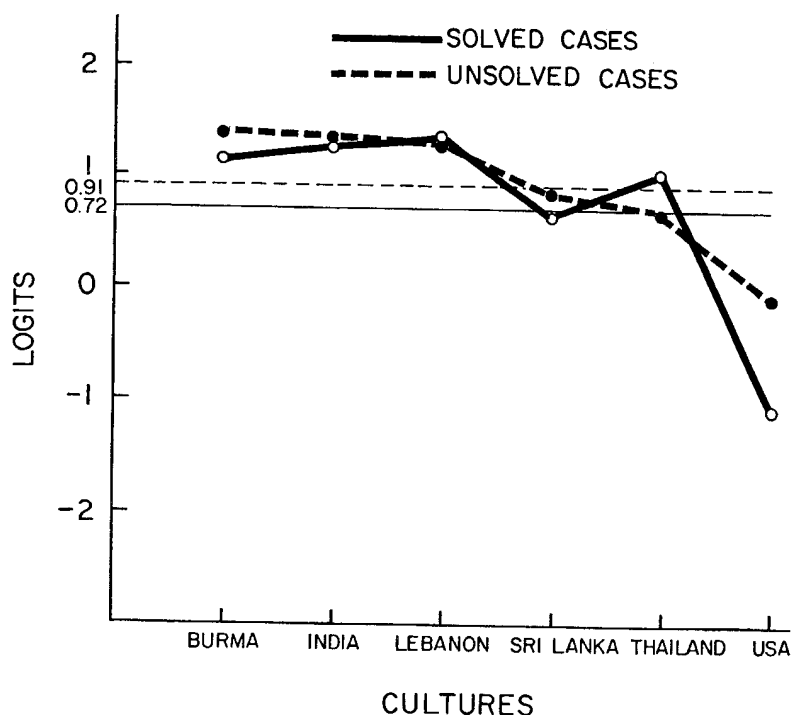
Fig. 4. Incidence of cases in which subject mentioned previous personality's mode of death.

ones. (See Table 6 and Figure 6.) This too was true both for the cases considered as a whole ($\chi^2 = 64.39$, $df = 1$; $p < .00001$) and across cultures ($\chi^2 = 22.18$, $df = 5$; $p < .0005$). The high incidence of the mention of the name in solved cases is not independent of the cases' being solved.

Frequency of mentioning violent versus natural death in solved cases. Table 7 and Figure 7 show the frequency with which the subject mentioned the previous personality's mode of death among the solved cases for which we have information about the actual mode of death. In these cases, subjects mentioned the mode of death more frequently when the corresponding previous personality had died violently than when he or she had died naturally. This difference was highly significant for the cases as a whole ($\chi^2 = 100.17$, $df = 1$; $p < .00001$) and was consistent, though not significant, across cultures ($\chi^2 = 7.98$, $df = 5$; n.s.). Among Indian cases with violent death, the subjects mentioned the mode of death with significantly greater frequency than did the subjects of cases of
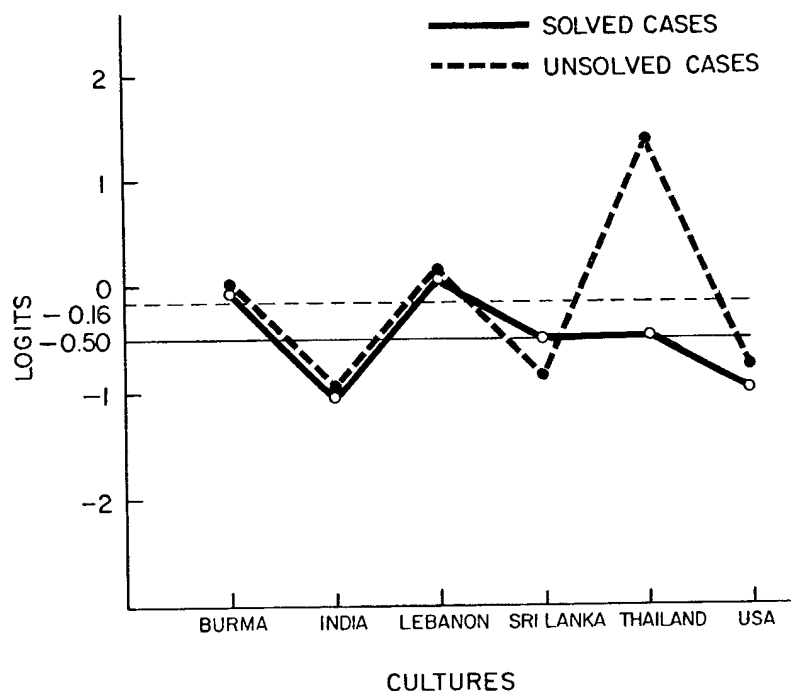
Fig. 5. Incidence of cases in which subject had a phobia related to previous personality's mode of death.

other cultures ($p < .05$); among the cases of the United States with violent death, the mode of death was mentioned with significantly less frequency ($p < .01$).

Mode of death of the previous personality. A high incidence of (claimed or verified) violent death (compared with the incidence of violent death in the general population of the culture) occurred in both solved and unsolved cases of all cultures studied. Nevertheless, one of the most significant differences that we have observed thus far between the two groups of cases is in the mode of death by which the presumed previous personality died or was said to have died (by the subjects of unsolved cases). Table 8 and Figure 8 present our data for these features. For the cases overall, unsolved cases have a significantly higher proportion of violent deaths than do solved ones. Among the solved cases, the rate of violent death ranged from 41% in the cases of Thailand to 69% in the cases of Lebanon. Among the unsolved cases in which the subject mentioned a mode of death for the presumed previous personality, the rate of violent death ranged from 85% in India to 100% in Thailand.

Table 5

NUMBER OF SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CASES IN WHICH THE SUBJECT HAD A PHOBIA RELATED TO THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITY'S MODE OF DEATH

	Solved				Unsolved			
Culture	N	Phobia	No Phobia	Z	N	Phobia	No Phobia	Z
Burma	35	17 (49%)	18 (51%)	1.34	14	7 (50%)	7 (50%)	.30
India	91	24 (26%)	67 (74%)	-1.99*	32	9 (28%)	23 (72%)	-1.75
Lebanon	51	26 (51%)	25 (49%)	1.84	13	7 (54%)	6 (46%)	.57
Sri Lanka	29	11 (38%)	18 (62%)	.02	65	20 (31%)	45 (69%)	-1.72
Thailand	13	5 (38%)	8 (62%)	.06	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	1.16
United States	11	3 (27%)	8 (73%)	-.83	31	10 (32%)	21 (68%)	-1.32
TOTAL	230	86 (37%)	144 (63%)		157	55 (35%)	102 (65%)	

* $p < .05$.

Table 6

NUMBER OF SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CASES IN WHICH THE SUBJECT MENTIONED THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITY'S NAME

	Solved				Unsolved			
Culture	N	Name Mentioned[a]	Name Not Mentioned	Z	N	Name Mentioned[a]	Name Not Mentioned	Z
Burma	123	93 (76%)	30 (24%)	2.03*	32	6 (19%)	26 (81%)	-2.48*
India	168	137 (82%)	31 (18%)	3.72***	57	32 (56%)	25 (44%)	1.92
Lebanon	63	51 (81%)	12 (19%)	2.58**	24	14 (58%)	10 (42%)	1.72
Sri Lanka	34	17 (50%)	17 (50%)	-2.12*	78	38 (49%)	40 (51%)	1.07
Thailand	25	17 (68%)	8 (32%)	.22	3	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	-.31
United States	16	5 (31%)	11 (69%)	-3.15**	63	22 (35%)	41 (65%)	-.77
TOTAL	429	320 (75%)	109 (25%)		257	113 (44%)	144 (56%)	

[a] These figures include instances in which the subject mentioned only the first or the last name of the previous personality.

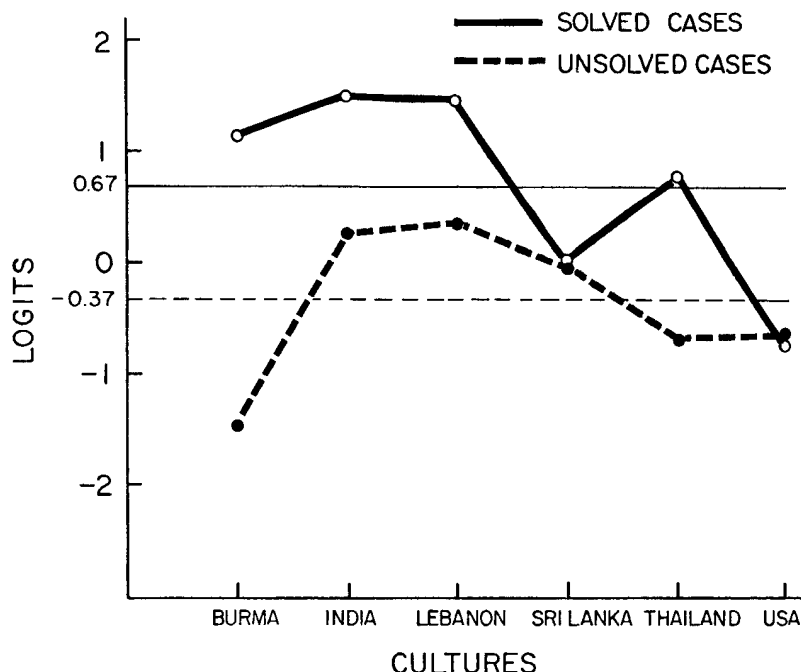* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

Fig. 6. Incidence of cases in which subject mentioned previous personality's name.

The difference between the two groups of cases considered as a whole was highly significant ($\chi^2 = 91.23$, $df = 1$; $p < .00001$); and again the difference was consistent, but not significant, across cultures ($\chi^2 = 4.91$, $df = 5$; n.s.).

DISCUSSION

We have presented the results of only a few comparisons of many that could be made between the features of solved and unsolved cases. We plan to analyze other features of the cases and to increase the number of cases analyzed. So far as we have gone in the analyses, however, the unsolved cases show close similarities to solved ones in four features: the age at which the subjects started talking about the previous life, the frequency with which the subjects mentioned the mode of death, the incidence of phobias related to the mode of death, and the high incidence of (claimed or verified) violent death in the previous life. On the other hand, the two types of cases differed significantly in three other features: the age at which the subject stopped talking about the

Table 7

NUMBER OF SOLVED VIOLENT- AND NATURAL-DEATH CASES IN WHICH THE SUBJECT MENTIONED THE PREVIOUS PERSONALITY'S MODE OF DEATH

	Violent Death				Natural Death			
Culture	N	Death Mentioned	Death Not Mentioned	Z	N	Death Mentioned	Death Not Mentioned	Z
Burma	55	51 (93%)	4 (7%)	.79	34	18 (53%)	16 (47%)	.93
India	87	85 (98%)	2 (2%)	2.45*	76	43 (57%)	33 (43%)	1.58
Lebanon	55	53 (96%)	2 (4%)	1.73	21	8 (38%)	13 (62%)	-.58
Sri Lanka	19	17 (89%)	2 (11%)	.01	14	5 (36%)	9 (64%)	-.69
Thailand	11	9 (82%)	2 (18%)	-.89	14	10 (71%)	4 (29%)	2.11*
United States	5	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	-3.16**	6	1 (17%)	5 (83%)	-1.49
TOTAL	232	217 (94%)	15 (6%)		165	85 (52%)	80 (48%)	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 8

PREVIOUS PERSONALITY'S MODE OF DEATH (ACTUAL OR PRESUMED) IN SOLVED AND UNSOLVED CASES

	Solved				Unsolved[a]			
Culture	N	Violent	Natural	Z	N	Violent	Natural	Z
Burma	168	76 (45%)	92 (55%)	-1.13	37	35 (95%)	2 (5%)	.68
India	193	95 (49%)	98 (51%)	-.26	47	40 (85%)	7 (15%)	-1.24
Lebanon	94	65 (69%)	29 (31%)	3.52*	18	17 (94%)	1 (6%)	.49
Sri Lanka	35	19 (54%)	16 (46%)	.51	55	49 (89%)	6 (11%)	-.54
Thailand	32	13 (41%)	19 (59%)	-1.22	2	2 (100%)	0 (0%)	-.74
United States	14	6 (43%)	8 (57%)	-.66	30	29 (97%)	1 (3%)	1.07
TOTAL	536	274 (51%)	262 (49%)		189	172 (91%)	17 (9%)	

a For unsolved cases, figures are based on the mode of death mentioned by the subject.
* $p < .001$.
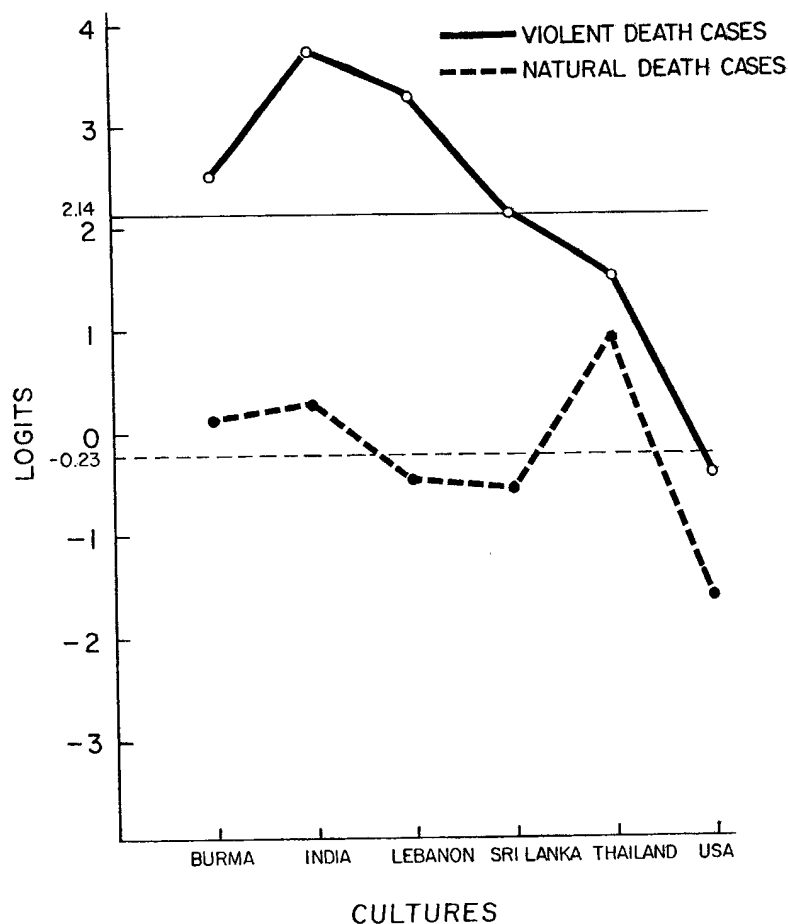
Fig. 7. Incidence of solved violent- and natural-death cases in which subject mentioned previous personality's mode of death.

previous life, the frequency with which the subject mentioned the name of the previous personality, and the percentage of cases in which the previous personality died (or was said to have died) violently.

Shorter Duration of Speaking About Previous Lives in Unsolved Cases

That subjects of unsolved cases did not speak about the previous lives for as long as did subjects of solved cases (Table 3) seems to
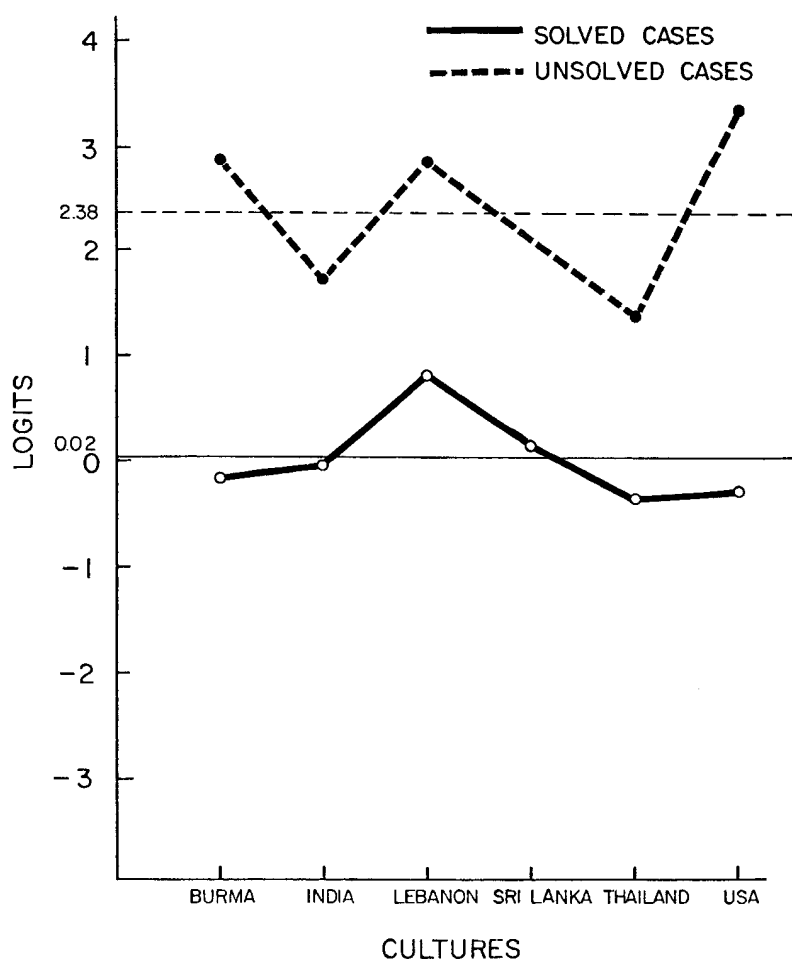
Fig. 8. Incidence of violent mode of death among previous personalities.

us irrelevant to the question whether unsolved cases derive from fantasies or not. The shorter duration of speaking about the previous life in unsolved cases almost certainly is related to the comparatively small amount of attention that the subject of an unsolved case receives from his or her parents and other persons. Such persons may rapidly lose interest in the child's statements if they cannot be verified. Moreover, when a case is solved, the two families concerned usually meet (if they did not already know each other before the case developed), and they often exchange visits for months or years. Such visits provide stimuli for the subject to

continue talking about the previous life when he might otherwise forget it.

Incidence of Violent Death in Solved and Unsolved Cases

The incidence of violent death among the presumed previous personalities was much higher in unsolved cases than in solved ones, and this was one of the most significant differences between the two types of case. There are at least several possible explanations for this difference. Unsolved cases may be children's fantasies and nothing more, and it seems possible that a child fantasizing about a previous life would include in the fantasy the feature of a violent death. Texts in child psychology and child psychiatry often imply, and sometimes assert, that violence is a frequent theme in children's fantasies. We have not yet found any statistical evidence in the literature that this is so, and the belief that it is so may be more widespread than the violence that actually figures in children's fantasies. Nevertheless, the present cases may in fact provide a type of data supporting this belief.

Solved cases, however, also show a high incidence of violent death—one much higher than that occurring among the general population of the areas in which we have studied these cases; and whatever else they may be, solved cases are not exclusively fantasies, since most of the details in them correspond to facts in the lives of persons who actually existed. The explanation that unsolved cases are nothing but fantasies seems inadequate, therefore, since it does not address the question of the high incidence of verified violent death among solved cases (as well as other verified details). It seems unlikely that we can distinguish unsolved cases from solved ones solely by supposing that the former are fantasies whereas the latter are not.

Unsolved cases may have a higher incidence of violent death compared with solved ones because the subjects of unsolved cases may have fewer memories of a kind that permits the identification of a person corresponding to the subject's statements, even if those memories are of a real previous life. A violent mode of death may be remembered more easily than a name, for example; but a name is usually more essential for tracing and positively identifying a person. The high incidence of violent death in unsolved cases may therefore result from the relatively easy penetration of memories of a violent death combined with a lesser ability to remember names that permit identifying the person who died violently.

Two features in our data seem to support this conjecture. First, the data in Table 7 indicate that a violent death is indeed more

memorable than a natural one. Among the solved cases of these six cultures, subjects mentioned the mode of death more often when the corresponding previous personality had died violently than when he or she had died a natural death. Second, the data in Table 6 indicate that subjects mentioned the previous personality's name more often in solved cases than in unsolved ones; this memory undoubtedly contributed to the solution of these cases.

A third possible explanation for the high incidence of violent death in unsolved cases is that they may consist of a mixture of real previous life memories and fantasies. A child who recalls a real life that ended violently would be likely to remember and talk about that death, as the data in Table 7 indicate. On the other hand, a child who recalls a life that ended naturally might frequently *not* remember the mode of death; such a child might then supplement his or her real memories of a previous life with fantasies about a violent death. The net result for these two types of unsolved case would be an incidence of presumed violent death much higher than the real incidence of violent death among solved cases, in which the mode of death has been verified.

Verified Information in Some Unsolved Cases

The explanation that unsolved cases are nothing but fantasies seems inadequate for yet another reason. Among the statements attributed to the subjects whose cases were reported in Part I of this paper, there were several showing that the subject had accurate knowledge of information that he or she seems not to have learned normally. Thusari Wijayasinghe, for example, said that "a god had been burned" in Panadura, presumably a reference to some riots that had occurred there in 1958, 11 years before Thusari was born, in which a Hindu temple had been burned and a priest killed. Anusha Senewardena referred to the free buns that had been distributed in schools in Sri Lanka for a couple of years in the 1950s, several years before her birth. Finally, Maung Soe Ya gave an address in Mandalay at which he said he had lived; we learned that this was an actual address in Mandalay. Neither Maung Soe Ya nor his parents, however, had ever been to Mandalay, which was about 550 kilometers from their home in Rangoon; nor did they have any connections there.

In all the foregoing examples, we felt satisfied that the child could not have obtained the information normally. These examples show that even among unsolved cases, the subjects have made statements that cannot be attributed to fantasy and also apparently not to cryptomnesia. As with the solved cases, an adequate as-

sessment of unsolved cases must address the issue of how the subjects acquired the accurate information they did in fact have.

Reasons for Failure to Solve a Case

We have already said—and emphasized—that unsolved cases of the reincarnation type *may* derive from fantasies, and it is not our intention to insist that they do not. On the other hand, we have shown that unsolved cases closely resemble solved ones in four important features. Moreover, unsolved cases frequently have still other features that phenomenologically resemble those of solved cases: these include birthmarks that the subject relates to the previous life, apparently untaught skills, claims of having changed sex from one life to another, and turmoil in the family caused by the subject's rejection of his parents.[5]

We therefore feel justified in supposing that some unsolved cases may derive from memories of a real previous life that are too few in number or too lacking in detail to permit verification. For each of the cases described in Part I of this report, we offered one or more possible explanations of our failure to solve the case. We suggested that a case might not be solved because: (a) the subject gave insufficient or insufficiently specific detail; (b) the person whose life was remembered lived in a time or place so remote that we have been unable to verify his or her existence; (c) the subject misremembered some essential detail, especially proper names; (d) the subject's parents, from lack of interest or carelessness, either forgot important details of what the subject had said or made faulty inferences about his or her statements (or behavior) that misled the investigators; (e) the subject mixed fantasies among real previous life memories in a way that misled investigators; (f) informants for the side of the previous personality suppressed facts; or (g) we did not search thoroughly enough for a corresponding deceased person.[6] If we were to take advantage of all these possibilities, we might conclude that *no* unsolved cases are derived from fantasies, and that *all* arise from memories of previous lives.

Yet this cannot be a correct conclusion either. We can definitely show that at least some unsolved cases are minimally of mixed

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[5] For examples of subjects of solved cases whose memories of previous lives involved them in serious turmoil with other members of their families, see the cases of Prakash Varshnay, Jasbir Singh, Ravi Shankar Gupta (Stevenson, 1974); Veer Singh (Stevenson, 1975); Gamini Jayasena (Stevenson, 1977); and Erkan Kılıç (Stevenson, 1980).

[6] We should note that some of these features, especially (c), (d), and (e), occur also in some solved cases. For an example of faulty inferences on the part of a subject's parents, see the case of Imad Elawar (Stevenson, 1974).

origin; that is, they include some fantasies, even though they may also include correct statements. For example, in the case of Maung Soe Ya, it seems most unlikely that a Dr. Soe Paing lived in Mandalay after the introduction of Jeeps to Burma (in 1945). If the Dr. Soe Paing with whom Maung Soe Ya identified himself actually existed, he might have lived so far back in time that the living persons among whom we made inquiries could not have heard of him. But in that case the detail of owning a Jeep would be incorrect, and therefore an added fantasy. Alternatively, he could have owned a Jeep and lived more recently in some other town of Burma; but in that case the detail of having lived in Mandalay would be wrong.

Unsolved cases may therefore consist of at least three types: pure fantasies; memories of previous lives that are unverifiable because of a lack of sufficient information needed for verification; and an assortment of real memories of previous lives mixed with embroiderings of irrelevant and incorrect details or of normal memories of events in the child's (present) life.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We wish that we could offer some boldly lettered signs that would indicate the frontier between fantasies or errors and memories of previous lives. Unfortunately, we cannot boast of this accomplishment. The form of the cases does not appear to discriminate adequately between fantasies and memories of previous lives, nor does either the number of the subject's statements or the intensity or other qualities of the unusual behavior that often accompanies them. We feel justified in thinking that the group of unsolved cases probably includes some whose subjects have memories of previous lives that are insufficiently strong and detailed to permit verification. Since this, however, is a *general* conclusion that may not be relevant to some *particular* cases, we can only recommend a careful investigation and analysis of each case as the best guide, however uncertain, for distinguishing the several types of cases that we must presently group together as unsolved.

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