

Editor's Foreword

Although near-death experiencers often report that during their experiences time was altered or lost all meaning, time is a primary factor in usual waking consciousness, and it provides the organizing principle of this issue of the *Journal*.

The issue opens with a historically-focused article by Carlos S. Alvarado, Ph.D. He provides a review of material published by a few French physicians and psychologists during a 15-year period around the turn of the 20th century. In these publications, the Frenchmen described and speculated on the mechanisms underlying several phenomena they had observed in the dying: panoramic memory, changes in affect, and a sense of detachment from the physical body. In providing this material—including translations of some key phrases and passages from the original French—Dr. Alvarado hopes that future reviewers of the near-death literature will include reference to these pioneering figures in the field of near-death studies.

Moving to the first decade of this century, Ryan A. Rominger, Ph.D., reports on his exploratory online study of 37 near-death experiencers. In Dr. Rominger's dissertation research, published in this *Journal* in 2009, he had observed a possible ceiling effect in one assessment instrument he had used, Luther Wheat's (1991) Human Spirituality Scale. To further explore this matter, he conducted the study he reports in this issue—which yielded interesting preliminary results on both the ceiling effect question and other phenomena pertinent to the field of near-death studies.

Publications released at the very end of 2011 are the focus of the last two works in this issue. First, retired cardiologist Pim van Lommel, M.D., responds to the ways he found his own work misrepresented in publications by neurologist Kevin Nelson and cognitive researchers Dean Mobbs and Caroline Watt. He editorializes on the role of citation accuracy in the ongoing debate in the professional literature between philosophical materialists, who believe all subjective phenomena can be explained by physical mechanisms, and dualists, who see evidence of subjective phenomena that defy explanation based on physical mechanisms.

Finally, retired translator and editor Rudolf H. Smit and theoretic-

cal psychologist and philosopher Titus Rivas, M.A., M.Sc., review Nelson's book *The Spiritual Doorway in the Brain*. Their observation is that Nelson's position with regard to near-death experiences is one of philosophical materialism, and their premise is that defense of the materialist hypothesis regarding near-death experiences holds up only when authors selectively disregard publications describing phenomena that materialist theory cannot explain.

It is my hope that in this issue, *Journal* readers will find this journey through the past 125 years of near-death literature both informative and thought-provoking.

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