

## Editor's Foreword

Each contribution to this issue of the *Journal* in some way addresses the role that data on near-death experiences (NDEs) play for people contemplating the possibility of the survival of consciousness after physical death. Each author approaches the subject from a different conceptual angle.

A recent trend in the field of near-death studies, exemplified by the book *Irreducible Mind: Toward a Psychology for the 21st Century* (2007), is to draw on converging evidence from a variety of transpersonal phenomena, including NDEs, to address the question of the relationship of mind and brain and the related question of the survival of consciousness after death. In the recently released English translation of his book *Consciousness Beyond Life*, retired Dutch cardiologist Pim van Lommel mentioned but did not fully develop such converging evidence from NDEs, deathbed visions, and past-life memories. Noting van Lommel's reference and inspired to develop the subject more fully, developmental psychology professor John C. Gibbs, Ph.D., wrote the first article of this *Journal* issue. Using numerous cases of all three phenomena from van Lommel's book and many other sources, he finds evidence for van Lommel's claim of the continuity of consciousness beyond life. For long-time readers of the *Journal*, Gibbs' discussion of relevant NDE cases may be particularly familiar, yet discussion of them along with the other two phenomena may generate in readers a sense of approaching familiar material from a new angle.

In light of Gibbs' article, it seemed only appropriate to include a review *proper* of van Lommel's book—and retired professional engineer Dan Punzak, P.E., fills the bill. With his background in science, Punzak focuses particularly on an aspect of van Lommel's book that Gibbs only briefly mentioned: the role of quantum mechanics in the claim of continuity of consciousness beyond life. He concludes that the book is “must reading” for people like readers of this *Journal*.

The issue ends with two Letters to the Editor. In the first, Dutch researcher, author, and lecturer, Titus Rivas, M.A., M.Sc., with his backgrounds in both philosophy and psychology and his affiliation with Merkawah/IANDS—The Netherlands, addresses me about points I

made in a review of Jeffrey Long and Paul Perry's book, *Evidence for the Afterlife*, for a recent issue of the Institute of Noetic Sciences newsletter. Rivas's points center around a possible disagreement between him and me regarding the issue of the survival of consciousness after death. In the second Letter, I reply to Rivas, taking a somewhat different tack in addressing the points he raised.

It is my hope that this issue, with its various angles on the same theme, sheds new light on readers' understanding of the role of data on NDEs in supporting or refuting the hypothesis that consciousness is essentially independent of the brain and survives its demise.

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