

# Letters to the Editor

## Misidentified Flying Objects

To the Editor:

Keith Basterfield (1994) pointed out that while near-death experiencers (NDErs) have no physical evidence to show for their experience, some of those who claim to have been abducted by unidentified flying objects (UFOs) have reported unusual scars on their bodies with no known cause. Actually, some NDErs have been found to bear physical marks on their bodies that they believe to have resulted from injuries sustained in a postmortem world. For example, one experiencer reported by Satwant Pasricha and Ian Stevenson (1986), who said that the god of death Yama's messengers cut off his legs at the knees, had deep fissures in the skin on the front of the knees. However, x-ray photographs of his legs showed no abnormality below the surface of the skin. Such instances recall the well-authenticated reproduction of bruise marks in the abreactive reliving, under hypnosis, of traumatic experiences, and are not indisputable evidence for the objectivity of the NDEs or UFO abductions.

This phenomenon, however, merits serious study because of its bearing, among other matters, on the aftereffects of NDEs. For example, if a frightening experience like the feeling that the legs were chopped off can produce appropriate marks on the skin, it is pertinent to ask whether pleasant experiences might not sometimes have healing or other beneficial effects on the state of health. There are hints in the NDE accounts of some experiencers, who were ill before their near-death crisis, having felt better or having been cured on recovery from the crisis (Krishnan, 1995). Future investigators would do well to verify such claims of healing and try to find out the underlying mechanisms, which could have practical applications.

Fowler Jones seems to approve of Michael Schuster's view that "the origins of physical reality lie in the nonphysical worlds" (Jones, 1994, p. 236). What exactly is meant by the word "nonphysical"? Few, if any, who use it care to explain. To say that a nonphysical entity has none of the qualities of a physical object, that it is an entirely





about the phenomenon. It came as a surprise to me that they were not even touched on in any of the discussions of Twemlow's paper. Jung also mentioned the case of a person who claimed to have boarded a UFO willingly and went for a flight through cosmic space. On returning he felt a burning sensation on his chest, which left a circular stigma. The experience was pleasant otherwise.

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