Editor’s Foreword

This issue of the Journal opens with an examination by Birk Engmann, Dr. med., of NDE-related literature of the European past. Reviewing selected German literature from the 19th and early 20th century—a time before the term “near-death experience” (NDE) existed—Dr. Engmann found publications addressing a phenomenon termed “state of apparent death” in which individuals appeared to have died yet later revived. He found a relationship between those publications and other publications of the same era that addressed the subject of the origin of dreams. Dr. Engmann walks readers chronologically through the publications on both topics and concludes that current debates between materialist and non-materialist interpreters of near-death phenomena echo similar debates in Germany over a century ago.

The next article brings readers squarely to the present with a description of a study by Rozan Christian, Ph.D., and me about married near-death experiencers’ reports of how their marriages changed in the aftermath of their NDEs. This study is based on Dr. Christian’s doctoral dissertation research. Though she completed the original study in 2005, at her dissertation defense we discovered an important flaw in her methodology. To her great credit, she continued the research such that the error was corrected, and with this publication, she fulfills a promise to her participants and herself to make her findings available to scholars. In short, her study, though preliminary, is the first to systematically examine the aftermath of NDErs’ marriages. Her results confirm earlier observations in the near-death literature that post-NDE marriages are relatively prone to distress and dissolution; they also reveal a nuance heretofore unidentified in that literature: a minority of marriages that are strengthened rather than weakened following an NDE of one of the marital partners.

The first book review of this issue was contributed by Harold Widdison, Ph.D. Sadly, Dr. Widdison died unexpectedly before his review could be finalized. I am grateful that his widow, Marie Widdison, had served as his editor, such that together we were able to complete final edits so his review could be published as he had wished. Thus, in Dr. Widdison’s final publication, he could not recommend Michael N. Marsh’s 2010 book Out-of-Body and Near-Death Experiences: Brain-
State Phenomena or Glimpses of Immortality? because of what Dr. Widdison perceived as Dr. Marsh's preconceived materialist philosophy and incomplete review of the near-death literature with which Dr. Marsh defended it.

This issue ends with Ohioan Nancy Clark’s ringing endorsement of Robert McLuhan’s 2010 book *Randi’s Prize: What Sceptics Say About the Paranormal, Why They Are Wrong & Why It Matters*. Ms. Clark, a near-death experiencer and former Ohio State University researcher, found Mr. McLuhan’s book to be a tour-de-force of balanced presentation and analysis of evidence regarding paranormal phenomena. She highly recommends the book to anyone wishing to become well-oriented to the broad field of psychic phenomena with which the field of near-death studies is so closely affiliated.

It is my hope that readers find this issue rich with its references to the past and present, the European and U.S., and the cautioning and affirming.

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