

Editor's Foreword

This issue of the *Journal* addresses a variety of topics related to the scientific study of near-death experiences (NDEs). It opens with an article by Robert G. Mays, B.Sc., and Suzanne B. Mays, A.A., in which they bring recent research results to bear on the question of what constitutes an adequate explanation for the cause of NDEs. Proceeding methodically through an examination of various explanations, they conclude that the only explanation that accounts for all NDE-related data is a non-physical one—at the same time that they predict that physicalist explanations will continue to be asserted despite their inadequacy.

Next, P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., raises the question of when journalists' demands for NDE-related evidence from both researchers and near-death experiencers (NDErs) reach the point of harassment. After recounting some relevant cases, she calls upon the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) to consider adding to its website both a message to journalists and a warning to NDErs about the perils of disclosing their NDEs to the media and how to establish and maintain appropriate protective boundaries.

In the first of three book reviews in this issue, nurse Madelaine Lawrence, Ph.D., summarizes and responds to author of metaphysical and paranormal phenomena Michael Tymn's 2011 book, *The After-life Explorers, Volume 1: The Pioneers of Psychical Research*. Though she takes issue with some implicit conclusions she perceived Tymn to have conveyed in the book, she very much enjoyed reading about 12 pioneers of psychical research—some of whose names most readers would recognize but most probably not—to whom current researchers owe a debt of gratitude for laying some of the foundation for the field of near-death studies and related fields.

J. Kenneth Arnette, Ph.D. (physical chemistry), Ph.D. (counseling psychology) then reviews former Harvard neurosurgeon and NDEr Eben Alexander's second book published in 2014, *The Map of Heaven: How Science, Religion, and Ordinary People are Proving the After-life*. He recounts how Alexander drew from numerous fields as well as his own and others' NDEs to provide, in the end, not so much a map of heaven as an understanding of the ultimately spiritual nature

of human life on earth. Though, as an academic, Arnette expressed frustration that the material Alexander presented usually did not go deep enough, he nevertheless enjoyed the book as a quick read that he believes most readers will find accessible, thought-provoking, and ultimately quite satisfying.

In the final book review, Brian Stare, M.Ed., provides a summary and critique of consciousness investigator Alex Tsakiris's 2014 book, *Why Science is Wrong . . . About Almost Everything*. Tsakiris, drawing from his podcasts of interviews with leading consciousness researchers that are available at his website *Skeptiko.com*, presented highlights of those interviews that provide scathing evidence against prevailing assumptions that the material world is primary and that consciousness is an illusion. Highly complimentary about the book, Stare was frustrated only that Tsakiris sometimes did not capitalize on the potential to drive home his excellent points more forcefully.

This issue closes with two Letters to the Editor in which two authors each revisited a historical figure—one from the 19th century, the other from the 20th—for what they might offer to the field of near-death studies. First, Dan Punzak, P.E., reflects on the dying words of renowned painter J. M. W. Turner. Then hospice social worker Scott Janssen, M.A., M.S.W., in revisiting holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl's seminal work *Man's Search for Meaning*, highlights several references Frankl made to transpersonal experiences surrounding death. Thus, readers of this issue may end on an inspiring note about how the most challenging material circumstances can sometimes be not only endured but also transcended through experiences of a trans-material nature.

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