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Book Review

THE UTTERMOST DEEP: THE CHALLENGE OF NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES **Gracia Fay Ellwood**

Lantern Books, New York, NY; 2001

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It is exciting for a researcher such as myself to see a true scholar come forward with the type of interpretative material that begins to build a context for understanding near-death experiences. And especially Gracia Fay, as her background in studies of things paranormal, religious, and spiritual is quite impressive.

In *Uttermost Deep*, Gracia Fay takes us on a journey through various models of the afterlife, heaven and hell, multi-world and one world frameworks. She gives the arguments and the evidence, along with stunning examples, evidence, if you will, of case histories that will make even near-death experiencers stand up and notice. Our view of the near-death phenomenon is too narrow, really. We must widen our "lens" if we want to see more truly, and this is exactly what Gracia Fay does in her book. In it, we have an opportunity to test all aspects of near-death states with previous research and case histories from a broad span of careful and important investigations, and into things like overshadowing entities, rapid cures, possession, astral travel, mysticism, spiritualism, religious traditions, group mind, ego death, the void, and much more. Her search is to make sense of "the dark night of the soul" and how frightening near-death episodes can be considered in light of all of the radiant ones most people report.

She makes a case that shamanism and mysticism form important backdrops to the study of near-death episodes. The making of a good shaman (wise one) is almost identical to what happens to typical near-death experiencers; the transmutation of spiritual death into transformed life echoes equally across the traditions of mysticism and the more modern stories of the near-death experience. *Uttermost Deep* brings us full circle until we are face-to-face with the issue of survival, and the likely possibility that both heaven and hell are real. Gracia Fay gives full weight to hellish near-death experiences while offering the first and final word to joy. No one else has attempted such an in-depth examination of the full spectrum of scenarios reported by near-death experiencers. I, for one, am most grateful to Gracia Fay Ellwood for this invaluable contribution to the field.

P.M.H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D. (Hon.) is the author of many books concerning near-death states, the latest being *FUTURE MEMORY*, *CHILDREN OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM*, and *THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO THE NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE*. Check out her website at www.pmhatwater.com for more

information about her other books and her "Brain Shift/ Spirit Shift" model for exploring transformations of consciousness.

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