

ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes the phenomenon of near-death-experience (NDE) and why it is a problem that cannot be ignored. It argues for the acceptance of the NDE as an authentic personal experience and examines competing arguments for and against such acceptance.

The dissertation explores the relationship between NDE as a transpersonal phenomenon and our current understanding of reality. It posits that the Newtonian mechanistic model of the universe is inadequate and as such cannot offer an acceptable explanation of the NDE. In its place, the holographic model, as postulated by physicist David Bohm and neurophysiologist Karl Pribram, is offered as a working assumption and conceptual tool for investigating the transpersonal or non-ordinary states of consciousness that is NDE.

In discussing out-of-body experience (OBE), the plausibility of disembodiment and non-ophthalmic vision is considered. As a prerequisite to understanding the phenomenon of NDE and OBE, the problems of consciousness and the established theories of the mind are examined.

It concludes that the holographic paradigm, at present, offers the best available model, consistent with our changing world-view, to understand the phenomenon of NDE.