

Review of: "The Near-Death Experience and the Question of Immortality: A Philosophical Approach"

Rosemary Sage¹

¹ Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University

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The author presents a well-written, interesting paper on the value of reported near-death experiences, to help answer queries about the existence of an afterlife. The question raised is whether any form of afterlife, or personal immortality, makes sense and is desirable. Reference is made to the essay by Bernard Williams: "*The Makropulos Case: Reflections on the Tedium of Immortality*" (1973), and considers responses to this case. Although this section is well argued it comes over as disdainful to people reporting near-death experiences (NDE).

The following section is well balanced and comments on "*The Religious Factor*," including a description of Wittgenstein's view that it is *timelessness*, as opposed to *infinite duration*, that constitutes eternal life, to give food for thought to readers, as is the evaluation of Wittgenstein's claim that personal immortality solves nothing of philosophical interest. This point is important, as it undermines the notion that anything empirical, including immortality, God's voice or manna from heaven, solves anything. These could be the product of our digital simulation to further philosophical perplexity.

At this point, the work of Federico Faggin, an Italian physicist, engineer, inventor and entrepreneur is pertinent. He is best known for designing the first commercial microprocessor, the Intel 4004. He led the 4004 project and the design group during Intel's microprocessor development. He now runs the *Foundation for Consciousness* in America, and his work would illuminate this debate and is mentioned in *The Robots are Here, How the World is Changing Education and Technology and Learning* - books by international authors published by Sense and Brill academic publishers (Editors R. Sage & R. Matteucci).

Personal continuing existence, is argued as a reality by Faggin, as although body mass dies energy cannot be extinguished, but is merely reformed. This provides some vindication to those who claim they glimpsed such an existence in their near-death experiences.

The author aims in the first half of the paper at a review of NDE. Some criticisms could be softened. In discussing a near-death account of *Benedict*, whose claims are speculative, they are described as "*apparently delusional*". The author, criticises those who "*use esoteric language in order to make nonsense appear erudite*" and the "*so-called 'death of God'*" theologians, calling them as "*55-year-old men in jeans*". Theologians and philosophers take Thomas Altizer and similar thinkers, seriously, so the comparison is merely opinion.

In many ways, this is a useful article, but it could be made into two and expanded on the themes presented. The first would be improved by a more balanced approach to the evidence and would provide the reader with some more

introductory information, such as the work of the American Consciousness Foundation. The second, dealing with questions of the value and coherence of immortality, could be expanded as well but is a useful contribution to literature.