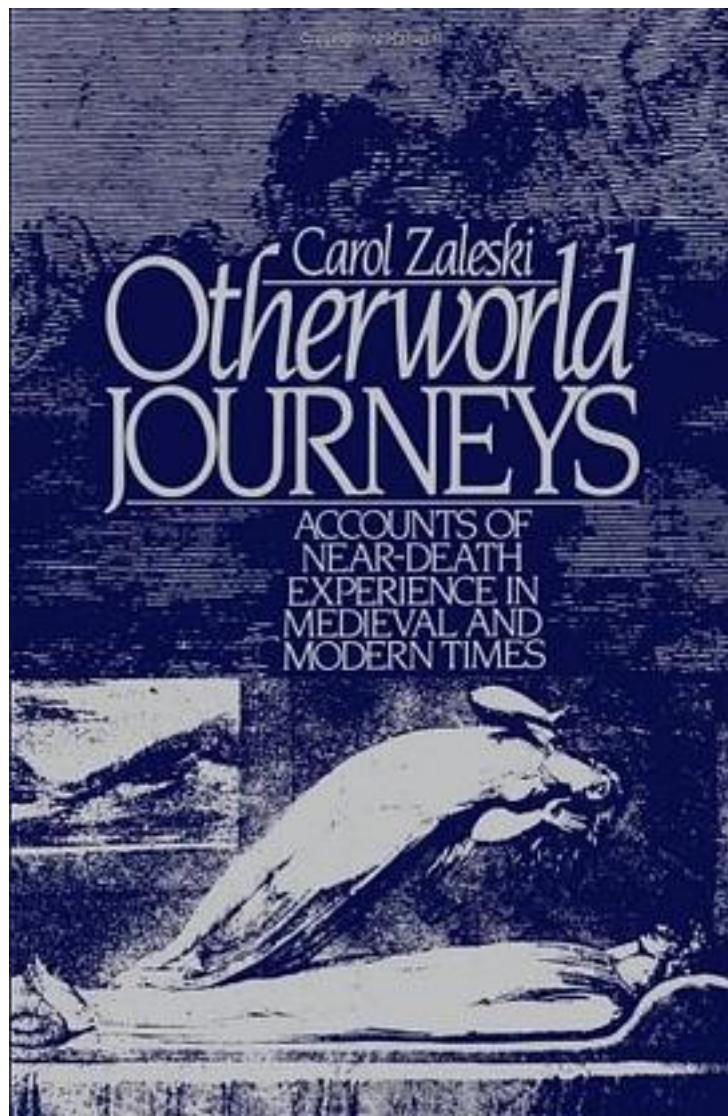


Otherworld Journeys



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著者:Zaleski, Carol G.

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Dozens of books, articles, television shows, and films relating "near-death" experiences have appeared in the past decade. People who have survived a close brush with death reveal their extraordinary visions and ecstatic feelings at the moment they died, describing journeys through a tunnel to a realm of light, visual reviews of their past deeds, encounters with a benevolent spirit, and permanent transformation after returning to life.

Carol Zaleski's *Otherworld Journeys* offers the most comprehensive treatment to date of the evidence surrounding near-death experiences. The first to place researchers' findings, first-person accounts, and possible medical or psychological explanations in historical perspective, she discusses how these materials reflect the influence of contemporary culture. She demonstrates that modern near-death reports belong to a vast family of otherworld journey tales, with examples in nearly every religious heritage. She identifies universal as well as culturally specific features by comparing near-death narratives in two distinct periods of Western society: medieval Christendom and twentieth-century secular America. This comparison reveals profound similarities, such as the life-review and the transforming after-effects of the vision, as well as striking contrasts, such as the absence of hell or punishment scenes from modern accounts.

Mediating between the "debunkers" and the near-death researchers, Zaleski considers current efforts to explain near-death experience scientifically. She concludes by emphasizing the importance of the otherworld vision for understanding imaginative and religious experience in general.

Review

"Zaleski's command of the literature, her careful analysis of the narratives, and her recommendations for interpretation make this book a classic in the study of religious experience and popular religion."--The Journal of Religion

"Zaleski...has had the excellent idea of putting recent near-death narratives in perspective by comparing them with those of an earlier period....An extremely interesting piece of work, and one that offers many shrewd insights."--John Gross, The New York Times

"The most important book on the topic."--Virginia Quarterly Review

"The most thorough, scholarly, and convincing study thus far published concerning the cultural and religious implications of near-death experiences....The most important book on the topic."--Virginia Quarterly Review

"A sophisticated postmodern, hence nonphilosophical, book about that timeless philosophical problem. The problem is how to explain mental objects (for example, a vision of heaven or an encounter with a leprechaun)."--The New York Times Book Review

"The first historical perspective on the subject....A brilliant, historically rich, commonsensical book."--Jonathan Cott, Vogue

"An open-minded and scholarly study, impressive in its intelligence, fairness, humanity, and breadth."--Boston Phoenix

"A work at once scholarly and engrossingly readable....A rich and eminently successful work."--Robert Ellwood, *Parabola*

"Wide-ranging and profound, revealing the imaginative and symbolic content of such experiences as well as their relationship to particular cultural and religious beliefs."--Library Journal

"[Zaleski's] provocative book should be read by all people interested in near-death experiences."--The American Rationalist

作者介绍:

Carol Zaleski is a Lecturer on the Study of Religion at Harvard University.

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评论

如果写濒死体验的文献，就照着这个作者的章节铺设框架写，结构太喜欢了。时代、文化背景、死后幻觉种种意象分析啥都齐了。

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