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The Definition of Bodily-Death as the Activation of the Human Psyche

Jock Matthew Agai

Department of Literacy and Reading Development, Sunshine International School, Bauchi 750102, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Whenever an individual is declared brain-death, there is at that point no medical evidence to proof that the deceased still lives, resulting in the burial or the preservation of the corpse. With the rise of parapsychology and quantum mechanics, the evidence to proof that the human life ends at death is gradually becoming doubtable, thus the need to engage in further study that embraces both views of a possible existence after bodily-death and a non-possible existence after bodily-death. This paper is a narrative -discuss regarding the interpretation of the Out-of-Body Experiences of people in connection to the study of a possible existence after bodily death. The author argued that the near-death experience can be used as an analogy or a reference-point for the study of death and this is in view of the resemblances between the near-death experience and other perceptions that are connected to brain-death. The target for this discussion is to further support an existing notion according to which there is a mystical being that exist in all human beings and the being, referred to as psyche leaves the physical body after death. The author used some references regarding the near-death experience to explain the dissociation of the psyche from the physical body. The author finally argued that, there is persona that leaves the body alongside the psyche which enables the experiencers of the near-death to be more conscious about the events surrounding their physical and otherworldly environments.

Keywords: Afterlife; Coherencies; Death; Near-Death Experience; Parapsychology; Transcendency

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Jock Matthew Agai, Department of Literacy and Reading Development, Sunshine International School, Bauchi 750102, Nigeria; Email: leadershipserve@yahoo.ca

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1. Introduction

Death is one of the natural phenomena that may happen to all that live. Over the years, human beings have devised various means to overcome death and the absence of a clear knowledge on overcoming death made human beings to come to terms with death as a way of life [1]. The ancient Egyptians mummified in order to keep their dead as though he/she was alive and the ancient Israelites buried on their ancestral lands in an expected family resurrection [2]. Knowledge about death and the afterlife are ongoing and there is a high interest among various scholars on the study of death. Medical practitioners, anthropologists, religious scholars and others sometimes differ on the definition of death [3].

A number of philosophers, theologians, neurologists and psychologists that are interested in the study of paranormal experiences are coming up with emerging knowledge that alleges that death might not be the end of life. There is also a debate about evidence regarding the reality of an afterlife. There are many aspects of paranormal studies that included mediumship, telekinesis, telepathy, near-death experience and many more [4]. The near-death experience is one of the channels in which some scholars are using to study or to justify the possibility of an afterlife. Raymond Moody made it clear that the near-death experience (NDE) is not evidence for an afterlife [5]. Yet, the NDE can be used as a good phenomenon in the study of death and the evidence for an afterlife [6].

This research is a study of the NDE and its contribution to the study of death and the afterlife. Not much has been studied and recorded about the NDE in Africa. There is a need to continue a formal collection and study of the NDE in Africa and this research is a contribution to this. There is a need for Africans to have interest in this topic because the NDE is global and prevalent in Africa as well. People in Africa have different interpretations regarding the meaning of NDE. While some regard it as a good experience initiated by the gods to enable the experiencer experience the afterlife, others regard it as a spiritual obsession or an evil possession. Yet, in some quarters in the northern parts of Nigeria for example, an NDE percipient could either be killed or excommunicated simply because of the perception according to which those that return to life after death are ghost (*patalwa*) and should not be accepted in the society. In other words, some religious and cultural groups in some parts of northern Nigeria equated NDE to brain-death and believe that those that experienced the near-death have truly died [7]. Any near-death percipient that is resuscitated at the time he/she is about to be buried could be classified a ghost and might killed by the people or excommunicated from the larger society. Others in Africa regard the percipients of the near-death as mentally sick or derailed people. This calls for the need to continue to research on the topic pointing out its relevance to the African society.

Having experienced and studied the near-death for over 20 years, the researcher deemed it fit to record one of his experiences. Generally, this research is an interaction between the experience of the author and what has been written by prominent authors regarding the NDE. The near-death study is important to this research because the experience contributes to the view that death is the activation of the human psyche or a seeming activation of life in dissociation from the human body. The research will help in enlightening Africans to understand that the NDE is a universal experience that has nothing or very little to do with a percipient's physical or mental weaknesses and strengths, and that the NDE is not necessarily evil but a possible medical or psychological or natural and sometimes a religious condition. The cause of NDE is uncertain and can happen to any person whether during a life-threatening or a non-life-threatening conditions.

The purpose of this research is to attempt to apply the role of human experiences in the study of death and the afterlife. The researcher discussed firstly an experience he had pertaining the near-death and he compared his experience with concepts that are included in the study of the near-death. The author later discussed the near-death experiences of other people with the aim of creating similarities in the experiences. The major discussion in this research pertained to the definition of death as a separation or the dissociation of the body from the psyche and it is on this note that the researcher refused to classify death as the end of life but the activation of life using the psyche phenomena.

2. Materials and Methodology

This research is an application of the narrative method of data collection which makes it qualitative. The research-

er discussed his near-death experience citing other literary points already discussed by other authors in the fields of NDE and other extra ordinary experiences. In a nutshell, the researcher explained his experience using notes and references from other literatures to evaluate and analyze it. The near-death experience of Julia Fisher from Vienne has also been discussed in this research mainly due the connection it has with those of the author of this paper. Below is an excerpt regarding the experience of the author:

> *In 1994, when I was just 18, I had an encounter that marveled me to the point that I never knew the meaning of what happen until of recent. Having grew up from a Christian family in Jos, Nigeria, it was compulsory to have family prayer/devotion at night. Sometime in June 1994, I was leading one of the devotions holding and reading the Bible while other family members sat and listened as I preach. To my greatest surprise, I saw a bright ray of light from the sky that penetrated through the roof of our building and was directed at me. At that time, I saw no roof in the room as the light hovered over the entire room as though there was no rough. Though it was night, but the source of light I saw was too powerful comparable to the light directly from the sun. The light that was created as a ray fell on me. The process was fast. I could not comprehend and explain fully how powerful the light was, I only saw myself physically becoming weaker and weaker as I speak, and falling down until my mother held my arms to prevent me from falling. The brighter the light on me, the weaker I became physically. All other family members present began to cry wailing "oh, what is this, please brother, don't fall." I was immediately rushed to my room and made to lie down on bed. I couldn't see the light again in my own room, but the effects of the one I saw in other room where we prayed brightened my entire being for a long period of time like 3 hours. I couldn't talk because I never had the strength to do so when the light initially fell on me. But I was completely conscious of everything that was happening and was willing to talk. People from my neighborhood began to converge at our family house while others came to the room to greet and empathize with me. I heard some of them saying "take it easy boy, you pray too much and is not good for your health" while others said "he might have joined a cult and he is in the process of some of initiation." I had wished to respond and explain to them about what happened to me, but I never had the strength to do so. My physical body was completely weak but my mental mind or spiritual body or psyche was highly active. What shocked the most is that, while lying down on the bed, I saw people outside our family house coming to visit me and I heard what they were saying before they entered our family house. My view penetrated through walls and I could see and hear what people were saying even from far places. I seemingly became omnipresent and omniscience reason being that I could hear and read peoples heart from long distances. I garnered some strengths and told my mum who was nursing me, that I saw a woman we normally refer to as Maman Emma (meaning, the mother of Emma) coming to visit me and I knew what she will tell me before she came. I saw her outside our house laughing at me before she came into the room and she told the people outside our house, that she had always warned me to disengage myself from praying and fasting, but I had always refused to listen to her. I knew that was what she will tell me, and after I told my mother, Mamam Emma came into the room and told me that "you pray a lot and sometimes is not good, I told you to stop fasting but you refused to listen to me." I still couldn't say a word because I was physically weak. My body was as light as a feather. I knew I had a body, but my spiritual essence was more powerful and more visible in me than my physical body. I felt my physical body was already taken away from me and I knew that that was my last day on earth. I was very happy because I knew I was going to heaven and will never return to earth again. The new being in me which enabled me to know almost everything was pure, precious and seemingly holy. I saw the earth and everything in it as filthy and unpure. I told my mother with a calm voice to please tell everyone to repent and receive Christ because I won't be around again to tell them. I was certain that I won't be alive again in the human body. It was the happiest day of my life because*

I saw and experienced the other side of me that was pure, clean and super powerful. At a point, people left the room but my mother stayed. I don't know how it happened, but I slept and excitedly knew that I will never see the next day. In the morning, I woke up and saw myself with my natural and actively normal biological body, and without any supernatural abilities as it was. I was shy and highly disappointed at myself because I was certain that the night of the experience was my last night on earth. I regretted coming back to my original self. I kept asking myself "why do I have this body again considering that it was weak and filthy?" "What will people say about me considering that I saw their filthiness and the filthiness of the world during my experience?" I had sincerely preferred to live with the supernatural body that showed-up on the night of my experience. The news of my experience was making the rounds on the streets of Jenta Adamu in Jos, and I suffered a stigma for a long period of time. As I walked the street, many people saw me and classified me as a mentally retarded patient. To them, my experience was a mental sickness.

For the past twenty years, I have been desiring to know the essence the or meaning of this experience but had no answer. I still have no doubt that the experience was real and appearing fresh in my memory. Out of curiosity, I began to study materials about Extra-Sensory Perceptions and Out-of-Body Experiences. While equating my experience to a near-death, I had questions. There was no any life-threatening situation that happened to me while most NDEs have been associated with life-threatening situations [8]. Again, I never saw myself going through a tunnel neither did I see myself flying up above the sky leaving behind my physical body as it has always been the case with others [9]. There was nothing like a life-review experience where I needed to narrate or preview all the good and bad things I have ever done, and I never heard any voice from the ray of light either welcoming me or telling me to return to earth [10].

In addition, the experience I had is vital to this study because I saw and experienced a different being in me that enabled me to be a seeming supernatural person. My physical body was weak yet, having great strength in connecting with the otherworld. Though I never saw myself flying up the sky, but I saw my body transformed possessing great abilities that was catalyzed by a *psyche* or a *spirit*. This research deals with the dissociation of the psyche from the body thus making my experience relevant.

The experiences of the near-death are unique and different from one individual to the other. Before the concepts of the near-death was introduced by Raymond Moody in 1975, people had knowledge about the concepts. A story has been told by Fox about Viraz, a Zoroastrian. Viraz was said to be a righteous man who died in 276 BCE. His death came about when he was asked to drink a medicine that had magical powers so that his soul could be released to the otherworld. The aim was for him to verify the reality of the Zoroastrian faith in connection to a possible afterlife. Initially, Viraz did not really wanted to drink the potion, but the priest persuaded him to do so. He then settled his will, made reconciliation with people; particularly his immediate family members and he went through the death rite and drank the potion [11].

Viraz promptly died in what might be referred today as near-death. He experienced the near-death for seven days and during that time, he went on a journey that led him to pass through both heaven and hell. During his afterlife experience, he met with Ohrmazd, the archangel and with Zarathustra. Both deities instructed him to bring back their greetings to the people of the world when he returned to earth. He passed through four levels of hell and four levels of heaven. He claimed to have passed through heaven in the highest ascending order until he reached "the endless light, where the paradise of Ohrmazd is located" [11]. Ohrmazd authorised the gods Srosh and Adur to show Viraz the awesome reward for those who are good on earth and to show him also the horrible punishments meant for the wicked. Viraz was said to have told his audience about his meeting with a popular scribe during his experience of death. He said the scribe had also "died" and had stayed around his body for a period of time "rejoicing in its liberation and singing Avestan hymns of praise to Ohrmazd'" [11]. Viraz soul or spirit or psyche returned to his body after his death-experience. This story is relevant because it enhances the teaching of a possible separation of the psyche from the body based on another person's experience.

There are known recuring features or cores of the

near-death experiences to include passing through tunnel, a bright image of light, entering a new realm or domain, reaching a point of no return, a life review process, a feeling of separation from the body, a feeling of peace and satisfaction, meeting other spiritual beings, an experience of reluctance to return to earth, a process of coming back into the physical body, the presence of a border or limit that allows entrance into the other realm, a feeling of deeper appreciation of life, less fear of death and so on and so forth [12,13]. The author experience some but not all of these features.

In the study of the near-death experience, Raymond Moody said that not all the cores or the features are expected to happen to someone at once [5,14]. It is likely that my experience can be associated with the NDE in view of other features that are similar. One thing that is certain is that, during my experience, I had no regard for earthly pleasures and all I wanted was to leave. Musgrave equally noted that percipients of the near-death take no pleasure in worldly materials but place their happiness in the future or in heavenly things [15]. This research is informed within the context of my experience according to which there is a psyche in humans and when fully activated, it leaves the body behind in an experience that can be equated to the NDE.

3. Result

The meaning of the NDE has been met by various interpretations. While some regard it as a brain malfunction caused by reduced Oxygen (anoxia) [16]. others especially in Africa generally see it as a deliberate move by the gods or God to reveal the hereafter to individuals in order to prepare them for a blissful afterlife [17]. Generally, the near-death experience suggests a situation in which the experiencer observes some weaknesses in his/her physical body that is associated with death in favour of another body that sees, experiences and records a travel to another realm of life. The experiencer in most cases do return to earth or is resuscitated to narrate the story of his/her experiences [18]. The words "near-death experience" was initially created by Raymond Moody who interviewed 150 people that had an experience closely associated with death. The people he interviewed claimed that they have been confirmed to be clinically death but came back to life. During their dying experiences, they saw themselves leaving behind their physical bodies [5].

The author of this research also explained that during his experience, his physical body was weak in favour of the spiritual body or psyche contributing to his immediate transformational change. Bruce Greyson and Surbhi Khanna noted that one of the most important legacies of the NDE is in connection with its transformational experience leaving the experiencers in a state of awesomeness for a very long period of time [14]. During my experience, the awesomeness was short and the transformational impact did not last for a longtime. When I came back to myself, my soberness was not mainly due to my experience but mainly due my already built knowledge in the Christian faith.

Julia Fisher from Vienne shared her near-death experience that happened in 2003 in which she saw herself floating above the earth and leaving behind her body. She saw her body lying down and on it were various hospital tubes and her psyche or soul became so light and enabled her transcend to the otherworld. She wrote:

> *I had the feeling it was a slightly bluish tint, a mix of white and blue light. I was drawn to it; it was something I had never seen in my life on Earth. I slowly moved toward this light, very slowly, at a walking pace. Then, I heard a voice—a voice that asked me, "Girl, do you want to go?" I was asked this question, but I didn't see anybody or anything, just a voice asking, "Do you want to go?" That was really the exciting part. I was standing in this dark room in front of a doorframe filled with white light and this blue color, this unique light frequency. I slowly moved toward this light, and I was asked again, "Girl, would you like to go on?" At that moment, I reflected on the whole situation, if you can put it that way. I thought about it and had only one thought: my parents. They dominated my mind. I immediately thought of my parents—Mom and Dad. As I was having this thought, it was like a force pulled me back, like Mom and Dad were pulling me back to my body at an incredible speed. That was the kind of near-death experience I had.*

She defined death as the separation of a symbiotic relationship between two beings in which one is mortal and the other immortal. In her view, death is not the end of life, but a transition of the immortal being into the otherworld [19]. This definition of death is in view of her experience. Dr. Robert Lanza and Bob Berman also taught about biocentrism which is a view according to which death does not exist. They said that death only exist because we measure it or define it using the body which tells that everything must be measured within the parameters of space and time. They argued that quantum mechanics is suggestive of the view that *consciousness* is immortal and cannot be fully measured using space and time. Their view is that, there are many universes and death is just an entrance into the universe that is immeasurable by time and space [20].

Furthermore, these three authors mentioned that the human body is one entity whose earthly existence is sustained by two components: the *soma*, which is the physical body and the *psyche*, which is the entity that carries alongside the persona of the body. The complete activation of the psyche results in it leaving the physical body and death is therefore not the end of life but the dissociation of the physical body from the psyche. While we can apply all preventive methods including sophisticated medical scheming to deny a fully activated psyche from leaving the body, there is at present a limitation in human scheming and the psyche must leave at will when it needed to do so. There is a need to support modern researches like cronyism aimed at preserving the dead for a possible future resurrection [21]. That means, the escaped psyche and the preserved body would have to be cojoined or an artificial psyche would have to be created to accommodate the cryonized body for the dead to rise again. The other possibility is to invent techniques that can prevent human beings from dying. Recently, possible cells recreation and sustenance together with the recreation and transplanting of organs to people that are living is seemingly dominating studies about how humans can last or live forever. Though this is beyond the scope of this research, yet further study needs to continue in this regard.

4. Discussion

4.1. Death as Dissociation

Against popular definition that death is the end of life, it has now been discovered in parapsychology that death is a stage in which there is a maximum activation or energization of the human psyche to the point that the human psyche can no longer return to body [19]. The activation of the psyche makes it to become too transcendent to the point that the body possesses no ability to sustain the powerfulness of the activated psyche. At this stage, it can be said the psyche has reached its point of no-return to the body. In some African cultures like those of the Yoruba of Nigeria, and the people of the Southern African region, the spirit of the dead, especially those of the ancestors could easily be accessed by the living. The dead might be called-upon for protection, healing and provision [22–24].

The Ergungu are Yoruba masquerades believed to have the power to recall the dead. Their job is to mediate between the dead and the living. They make the spirit of the dead to favour or curse the living [25]. Although these African practices are not scientifically studied, the possible survival of an activated psyche as proposed by this author could be in tandem with the recalling of the dead by some African traditional mediums. The aim of the recalling of the dead is not for the dead to appear with a physical body but for the dead to appear or show-up with a spiritual body alongside the deceased persona, a similar practice done by the Witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28).

Unlike the near-death experience, in which the psyche has not reached the peak of its activation and returns to its body, death is a permanent departure of the psyche because of its high omniscience. This suggest that the human body is not designed naturally to contain and sustain the activated human psyche forever, thus, the need for the body to remain seen even after the permanent departure of the activated human psyche. This means that, death is a permanent dissociation between the body and the psyche, but only when the psyche has reached its peak of activation. While we bury or carefully dispose the body alongside the brain, the psyche continues to live and the brain which no longer has life stops to record and interpret to us the activities of the departed activated psyche. This could be why it is generally said that death is not the end of life but a transition [26]. This definition of death as the activation of the psyche is due to the experiences of many people who defined the near-death as an experience in which the body is left behind and the psyche elevated to the point that it connects

with the otherworld. The experiences of death further teach that at death; the psyche leaves the body.

The body is important because over the years, it helps to build, stores and keeps memory of a persona in a person through the nervous system. A persona in this context means "your entire being or personality" that is connected to but not compulsorily limited to behavior and character. Persona in connection to an afterlife study means "knowing" and relating to the activity of the "conscious." Wilhelm Jordaan and Jackie Jordaan referred to the human body as a mere container of the human psyche [27]. It is therefore important to note that when the human psyche reached the point of its maximum activation and departure from the body, it leaves alongside the human persona meaning, it leaves alongside "knowing" and being "conscious" of its memory while in the body in addition to capturing the new space or environment it found itself. The departed psyche does not carry alongside the weaknesses of the body like sickness and general human inabilities. It is not surprising that the experiencers of the NDE do narrate vividly their experiences despite being associated with mental weaknesses. The persona is vital in this memory recollections.

Dr. Kenneth Ring in his *Mindset: Near-Death Experiences in the Blind* explained that blind people do not see themselves as blind during their near-death experiences [28]. It suggests that the sufferings of human beings end in the body and is not carried alongside to the otherworld by the human activated psyche. This illustration using samples from blind people suggest that it is only the psyche and the persona of the death that are carried alongside to the otherworld. The psyche and persona are cannot be injured before and during their journeys to the otherworld. The physical body despite its strengths and weaknesses is left behind. This is in tandem with the experiencers of the NDE who believe that death meant leaving behind the physical body and escalating the activities of the psyche that is pure and without any filthiness. The researcher is aware of the possibility of a negative NDE in which the experiencer experiences panic, fear and extreme feeling of isolation during his/her near-death experience [8], yet this does not suggest that the physical impediments of humans are carried alongside the activated psyche to the otherworld.

Raymond Moddy mentioned that the "life review" process is one of the core features of the near-death experience according to which a percipient of the near-death tell and review the activities of the his/her experiences before, during and after the near-death experience. In most cases, the percipient gives an accurate report about his or her experiences. People that experience the near-death are confident, sure and certain about their experiences and they don't regard it as a fantasy but a reality [11]. The life review process indicates that the percipient's persona including knowing his/her culture, beliefs, values and many more are journeyed into the otherworld. It is on this note that Kock stated that despite the dying or weakening of the brain during a near-death experience, the activated psyche that transcends the activity of the human body stores or vividly keeps the memory of the dying person [29]. This suggest that death means leaving behind the physical body when the activated psyche has reached its peak of activation, and most importantly, the activated psyche leaves alongside the persona of the deceased which continues to live in an unknown place. This definition is based on the interpretation of the experiencers of the NDE.

When activated maximally to its peak point, the psyche becomes superconscious making the experiencer to become highly aware of all activities around the him/her. Potts noted that during the near-death experience, there is a seeming separation of the physical body from the psyche and the psyche displays some uniqueness that makes it superhuman to the point that the experiencer could know, hear voices and be aware of the activities that pertained to his/her resuscitation [30]. Greyson echoed a similar view when he noted that the body created after the departure from the physical body is seemingly celestial [31]. Kingsley Kinya and Agai Jock noted that those who experience the near-death do see themselves as having an invisible body that is not natural but superhuman, possessing unique abilities to operate supernaturally [32]. During my experience, I had an ability to see through walls and through the hearts of people that came to visit me.

Whenever an individual experiences the near-death, culturally, Africans regard it as a medium through which the gods or ancestors deliberately unveil the hereafter. The reason is that African traditions have a religious view that is in tandem with the visions or experiences of the near-death [17]. In Africa for example, the believe in a higher

being or God or the gods is normal likewise the believe that being good attracts a good reward in the afterlife. Africans also believe that human beings will at a point in time die to meet their beloved dead ones that are already living alongside the ancestors in the otherworld. Africans associate God or the gods with light and beauty and they believe and ritualize supernatural experiences such as exorcism, mediumship, spirituality and other Out-of-Body activities that connect the living with the spiritual world. Seemed the near-death assumedly leads the experiencer to experience the otherworld and narrate similar stories as those already believed in Africa, Africans would see the near-death experience as special and selective to the experiencer initiated by the gods in what might be termed as a *sacred revelation* of the otherworld [32].

More so, seemed the gods or ancestors are regarded as more powerful than human beings, Africans believe that the gods have the power to takeaway a life through death and resuscitate the dead. Whenever a percipient of the near-death narrates his/her experiences to the living, Africans can easily associate the experience as being true because the near-death otherworld have many similarities with the African view of the otherworld [33]. The association of the near-death experience as a mental problem is prevalent in postmodern Africa against traditional or culturally inclined Africa. The designation of near-death percipients as ghosts in some parts of northern Nigeria are mostly perceived when the experiencer is about to be buried. The tradition of the killing of the experiencers who are mostly perceived as ghost is gradually fading in postmodern Nigeria. The physical brutal killing was done with a view according to which the experiencer truly died and this is in tandem with the African view that those who experienced the near-death have truly died and are allowed to be returned or resuscitated by the gods so that they can tell those who are alive about the need to be humble, value human lives and respect the gods.

4.2. Death as Psyche Activation

In the modern study of psychology, the word "psyche" means "soul" and in other cases associated with the "mind" or the "spirit" depending on a person's specialization [32]. Contemporary researches in psychology have continued to associate the human psyche with a person's persona that pertained to mainly character expressed in his/her behavior [34]. This was not the case in early Greek thought. In the writings of Homer (900 BCE) for example, the word "psyche" is not limited to the "self" or "spirit" but that psyche meant an independent being in every individual that makes its own decision and seemingly controls the individual. Wilhelm Jordaan and Jackie Jordaan expressed Homer's and the Greeks earliest perception of the psyche this way "it does not mean the spiritual centre of the *I*, but refers to an autonomous entity which, as vital energy, inhabits a person's body and leaves it when the person dies." The body is merely the container of this vital energy [35]. Harry Boer also noted that earlier Greeks thought propagated by people like Zeno (300 BCE), Socrates (399BCE), Philo (20 BCE) and others created a form of sacredness for the psyche according to which it does not die [35]. Reese William echoed on Plato's stance according to which the soul cannot be destroyed thus immortal [36].

More so, the psyche can therefore be regarded as an independent superbeing that is likely divine and sacred inbuilt in human beings having a relationship with the body and seemingly possessing the capacity to dominate and control the activities of the body. The relationship is not parasitic but commensalistic where both entities benefit from each other and without harming each other. Seemed the body is material; there will always be a time that the body will become weak prompting the psyche to leave. The psyche leaves temporarily when the body is or can be resuscitated and it leaves permanently when the body can no more be resuscitated in a word popularly referred to as "death." All forms of Out-of-Body experiences in which the experiencer returns to narrate his/her experiences falls under the category of a temporary shift or displacement of the psyche in the body and sometimes from the body. When this happens, it suggests that the psyche is activated but has not reached its peak thus creating the possibility of its control of the body and in some cases a return to the body to narrate an experience.

5. Theoretical Framework

There are cases in which the psyche is fully activated or reaches its peak of activation. This might be caused by sickness, old age, trauma, accidents, injuries, other

life-threatening situations and sometimes by unknown or unexplainable reasons where a person is diagnosed to be in good health yet, he/she dies or experience death. These reasons and others might result in an individual experiencing brain-death where he/she cannot return to the body to explain his/her experiences to their listeners [12]. Those that experienced the near-death are not regarded as individuals that have died, but as those that had an experience that is closely connected or associated with death. Raymond Moody in 1975 coined the word "near-death experience" to describe people that have come "close to" or "near to" to death but have not died [5]. Agai said that there are people that might also experience the near-death and died without talking about their experiences to other people [17].

When the psyche is totally or fully activated, it becomes pure or perhaps sacred or perhaps too divine that it becomes difficult and impossible to return to the body. This does not mean that the body becomes unholy or unruly or bad or evil, but the psyche decides that it will leave the body because the body is unfit to contain the activated status of the psyche. This could be in tune with the Homerian and Platonian perceptions of psyche as that which leaves the body at will and never returns but continued an existence in the otherworld. Psyche activation that leads to death could be defined as a form of a psyche transcendency in which the psyche becomes seemingly omniscience knowing and understanding everything far and beyond human thinking-capacity, yet carrying alongside a disembodied persona of the deceased to the otherworld. There are many stories of people who experienced the near-death during which they could explain clearly scenes that happened away from where their bodies were kept. Imagine an NDE percipient kept in a particular room, yet he/she could explain things that happen outside the room where he or she was kept. During my near-death experience, I saw people outside the room I was kept and I could read their thoughts.

My experience triggered the need to classify the psyche as an entity that is far beyond the Freudian categorization of it as the conscious and unconscious processes in human beings that is responsible for shaping childhood experiences and recollecting them where necessary and Carl Jung ordinarily regarded the psyche as a shared archetypal experience stored in the human innate and released during the NDE [34]. The origins or cause of the psyche being released from the body at will is still being debated. Most importantly, percipients of the NDE have always admitted that during their experiences, they obtain a new being or body that is different from the physical body [37]. Greyson wrote about of a 26-year-old lady who described how her psyche left her physical body behind during a near-death experience:

> I (the real me, the soul, the spirit, or whatever) drifted out of the body and hovered near the ceiling. I viewed the activity in the room from this vantage point. The hospital room was to my right and below me. It confused me that the doctors and nurses were so concerned about my body they had lifted to the bed. I looked at my body and it meant nothing to me. I tried to tell them I was not in the body. Obviously, they did not hear. One of the most outstanding things about this experience is that my hearing became extremely acute. I heard things about the gravity of my situation, some of these from the nurses' station many yards away. I watched the hospital personnel work. I listened to their comments, and I began to feel sorry that they were working so hard, when I felt so happy and feeling no pain where I was [31].

The society for Psychical Research was founded in London and in the USA in 1882 and their intention was to promote the scientific and statistical study of psychical experiences [17]. It is important to note that the total application of scientific methods into parapsychology is questionable and reason being that parapsychology is beyond mainstream logical scholarship thus the need to study it with priority to individual's experiences. It is therefore important to note that understanding parapsychology requires the combination of other fields of knowledge like sociology, anthropology, numerology, mystic rituals, science and psychology. Of recent, more people and scientists are fascinated by the knowledge of parapsychology to the point that psychobiology and quantum mechanics are gradually added in the study of parapsychology [17,38].

While mainstream psychologists expressed doubt in regarding parapsychology as an important field of knowledge because individual experiences are subjective, the statistical collection of peoples experiences documented,

studied and analyzed by medical doctors, psychiatrists and many other people like Christophe Hampe, Kenneth Ring, Michael Sabom, Raymond Moody, Bruce Greyson and many more calls for a need to rethink and find a way to include this subject into mainstream psychology. The coherencies and the universality of the NDE suggest that it can be studied statistically and, in some areas, scientifically. Just because a subjective experience cannot be kept in a test tube and be buretted or measured using physical quantities does not suggest that the knowledge must be thrown away. What is real is real to the experiencer and the experiencers of the near-death are found all over the world sharing similar stories about their experiences.

6. Conclusions

I know that there is a difference between the physical body and the human psyche because of the similarities of my experience and the experiences of others. I experienced the dissociation between the two and I had a feeling of a temporarily activated psyche which dominated the activity of the physical body. I could easily align with the idea that death is not the end of life but a release of the body from the psyche when the psyche is completely activated. The psyche is an embodied persona of the deceased that transited into the otherworld having features that characterized the life of the deceased before death especially the features of "knowing" and "consciousness." In other words, the dead knows himself/herself and understood his/her environments before, during and after death and this assertion is in view of the experiencers of the near-death. Irrespective of its cause, death is the dissociation of the body from the psyche when the psyche is totally activated. The activated psyche carries the personality of the dead into the other realm of existence.

The near-death experience is not evidence for an afterlife, but a channel that can be used to explain what entails the meaning of death. This is in view of the connections between the meaning of death and the experiences associated with the near-death. This research is a contribution to the view that death is not the end of life. The researcher contributes to the view that the psyche or the soul is seemingly a living thing that leaves the body after physical death. While other philosophers emphasized the view that the psyche cannot be destroyed thus immortal, this researcher added to the assertion that the psyche must be activated and fully activated before it can leave the body permanently leading to the death of the body. While death might be viewed by others as the end of life, this research proposed the view that, death is the activation of the psyche, a seeming activation of life.

Some aspects of important philosophical questions pertained to the purpose of existence and on what happens after physical existence. This research contributes to the study of the purpose of human life and of the aftermath of human existence. The transformational impacts of the near-death experience do create a view according to which less value is attached to earthly pleasures and more value to the unseen world that can be measured or discovered by the activity of the psyche. There is literally little or nothing officially studied on the connection between the NDE and its African perspectives. This research contributes to filling this academic gap by reading the NDE from an African perspective. The researcher pointed out that the NDE to an African is a celebrated connection between the gods and humans whereby the gods reveal some aspects of the otherworld to human beings. The researcher also discouraged the classification of NDE percipients in Africa as ghost or strictly mentally derailed people. Health workers and other Africans need to begin to officially record statistics on near-death studies and the subject should be studied with a view that the experience is universal and might be medically or psychologically or culturally connected. The NDE is not a demonstration of some strengths or weaknesses but a natural phenomenon that is hardly artificially induced.

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Conflicts of Interest

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