## OFF

### 1NC – OFF

#### Their scholarship is hateful and a reason to lose the round—their author endorsed pedophilia and actively advocated for pedophilic content.

Moen 15 [Moen, O. M. (Professor of Ethics at Oslo Metropolitan University). “The ethics of pedophilia”. Etikk I Praksis - Nordic Journal of Applied Ethics, 9(1), 111-124. 2015-05-09. Accessed 2/2/2022. <https://www.ntnu.no/ojs/index.php/etikk_i_praksis/article/view/1718> //CHO]

If my arguments in this article are sound, then being a pedophile—in the sense of having a sexual preference for children—is neither moral nor immoral. Engagement in adult-child sex is immoralbecause it exposes children to a significant risk of serious harm, butit is perhaps not always blameworthy to the extent that we intuitively assume. Finally, the enjoyment of fictional stories and computer-generated graphics with pedophilic content is, in and of itself, morally acceptable. If these conclusions are correct, what practical implications follow? A central implication is that in dealing with pedophilia, our aim should not be to find outlets for our disgust and outrage, but rather, to minimize what is the real problem: harm to children. On the least revisionist side, the aim of reducing harm provides us with a good justification for upholding current bans on adult-child sex and child pornography. There are, however, also a number of more revisionist implications. One revisionist implication is that we should stop the outright condemnation of pedophiles. Condemning pedophiles for being pedophiles is unjust, and non-offending pedophiles, rather than deserving condemnation for their pedophilia, deserve praise for their admirablewillpower.4 Possibly, today’s condemnation also prevents pedophiles from telling health professionals about their attraction to children, and insofar as detection and counseling can help prevent abuse, this is very unfortunate. To prevent harm to future children, we would also be well advised to start teaching high school students not just what to do in case they are victims of sexual abuse (which, thankfully, we have started telling them over the last few decades), but also what to do in case they themselves are pedophiles. A certain percentage of high school students either are or will become pedophiles, and currently they are not given any advice on how to handle their sexuality. The production, distribution, and enjoyment of texts and computer-generated graphics with pedophilic content should almost certainly be made legal. Until or unless it can be shown that such texts and graphics lead to more adult-child sex, the justification for today’s widespread ban is weak.

#### Drop the debater—academic spaces have way too many sympathizers who ignore violence against children, and every act must be challenged in the most unflinching terms because anything else reinforces the epistemic bias in favor of rationalizing disgusting behavior.

Grant 18 [Alec Grant (Independent Scholar, retired from the Uiversity of Brighton where he was a Reader in Narrative Mental Health). “Sanitizing Academics and Damaged Lives” Mad In The UK, 12 April 2018. https://www.madintheuk.com/2018/12/sanitizing-academics-and-damaged-lives/ // Cho Recut

Academics who sympathize with paedophilia constitute its intellectual public relations arm. Their role is to make child-adult sex presentable, more acceptable to the public, fit for polite society, sugar-coated, glossed with a scholarly veneer, sanitized. Snapshots of sanitizing academic activity from the last 40 years show how this seeps into and contaminates public policy, education and practice in insidious ways. This is done via the workings of power, privilege, perverse cronyism, and, as Pilgrim (2018) argues, as a result of widespread moral stupor and denial. It’s astonishing that this happens in the face of the psychological and development features of complex post-trauma which are often a consequence of child sexual abuse. By pathologizing adult survivors, often with the ‘Borderline Personality Disorder’ (BPD) tag, mainstream psychiatric business-as-usual plays out its role in suppressing the truth about the consequences of paedophilia among adult survivors. Pilgrim (2018) reminds us that care and mutuality are core ethical features of all sexual practices. As someone who was for many years associated with cognitive therapy, I’m interested in ‘cognitive, or thought distortions’, which are used by people in rationalising their behaviour in self-serving ways. We know from Pilgrim and many other writers, researchers and practitioners about the rationalisations of perpetrators of child sexual abuse and exploitation. They include: Children are not victims but willing participants; They want it; They enjoy it; It’s about friendship; It’s about love; It helps children develop and mature. According to Pilgrim (2018), the ‘heyday’ period of academic versions of such rationalisations was the 1970s. 1977 was the year of an unsuccessful lobby by French intellectuals to defend intergenerational sex. Included among these were the otherwise well-respected philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Jaques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. These figures were at the forefront of the use of academic authority to lobby governments to liberalise and decriminalise adult-child sexual contact. In 1978, Foucault took part in a France-Culture broadcast with two other gay theorists, Hocquengham and Danet, to discuss the legal aspects of sex between adults and children. They wanted a repeal of the law preventing this because they took the view that in a liberal (they really meant libertarian) society, sexual preferences generally should not be the business of the law. Foucault, Hocquengham and Danet made the following assertions: that children can, and have the capacity to, consent to such relations without being coerced into doing so; that abuse and post-abuse trauma isn’t real; that the law is part of an oppressive and repressive heteronormative social control discourse which unfairly targets sexual minorities; that children don’t constitute a vulnerable population; that children can and are capable of making the first move in seducing adults (they introduced here the category of ‘the seducing child’); that the laws against sexual relations between children and adults actually function to protect children from their own desires, making them an oppressed and repressed group; that – in the language of the sociologist Stanley Cohen – international public horror about sexual relations between adults and children is a form of moral panic which feeds into constructing the ‘paedophile’ as a folk devil, in turn provoking public vigilantism; that sex between adults and children is actually a trivial matter when compared with ‘real crimes’ such as the murder of old ladies; that many members of the judiciary and other authority figures and groups don’t actually believe paedophilia to be a crime; and that consent should be a private contractual matter between the adult and the child. Fast forward to 1981. The Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) has been active for seven years. This was a pro-paedophile activist group, founded in the UK in 1974 and officially disbanded in 1984. The group, an international organisation of people who traded in obscene material, campaigned for the abolition of the age of consent. Dr Brian Taylor, the research director and member of PIE, and sociology lecturer at the University of Sussex produced the controversial book Perspectives on Paedophilia, which had the aim of enlightening social workers and youth workers about the benefits of paedophilia. Taylor, who identified as gay, advocated ‘guilt-free pederasty’ (sexual relations between two males, one of whom is a minor). He argued that people generally are hostile to paedophilia only because they don’t understand it, and If they did wouldn’t be so against it. So it was simply a matter of clearing up prejudice and ignorance.

#### Reading blum solves

### 1NC – OFF

#### The counter-standard is *intending to maximize expected well-being*. Morality must be binding else it can’t be enforced so there’s no reason to follow moral codes and it can’t be called an obligation nor guide action.

#### Next, util relies on intentions to be coherent –

#### 1] Util relies on choosing between predictions, which presupposes the intention to make the world a better place. Proves its inescapable – ignoring it justifies rolling dices to decide actions by flattening the value of predictions.

#### 2] Consequentialist frameworks are contingent on events that are ever-changing, so they can’t be the basis of consistent duty. Outweighs – (a) butterfly effect means unforeseen consequences are inevitable (b) utility monster – you wouldn’t be culpable for making the world a better place if a satanic creature derived infinite pleasure from human suffering (c) Endpoints – Consequences cause infinite other consequences – the decision to stop calculating at some point is an intention.

#### 3] Solipsism paradox – pleasure can only be binding for the person experiencing it – aggregation requires that we care for others which is an intention. Else states only care about themselves so the aff will get rolled back since otherwise self-interested states would’ve already passed the aff, so negate on presumption.

#### Negate – they say states don’t have intentions which triggers presumption as it makes util incoherent.

**Presumption negates – A] If we deny the truth of the aff then you negate – textuality B] resolved in the resolution denotes certainty which means if they aren’t determined and uncertain then you can’t affirm**

### 1NC – OFF

#### Reject 1AR Theory arguments – 1) double bind – either you can put minor ink next to answer of my responses and extend your arguments to auto-win or the judge has to intervene to see if the 2ar answers to the 2n are good enough. Intervention o/w since it takes the round out of debater’s hands 2) they have 2 speeches on theory while I have 1 which means they can structurally preempt my answers and respond to them and I can’t do either 3) infinite abuse in the context of aff abuse doesn’t make sense since you can read 1ac theory and uplayer with other 1ar offs like Ks 4) they have 1 more minute on the theory debate due to a 7-6 skew which o/w since theory is mainly about substance 5) they can blow up dropped arguments , we cant frame them out but they can which means only dropped arguments for them are game over.

#### Resolvability OW infinite abuse

#### 1] Jurisdiction- If the judge can’t resolve an argument they don’t have the jurisdiction to vote on it because there is a risk of an incorrect decision

#### 2] Magnitude- resolvability means judge intervention which is worse than a shell with reasonability on it

#### 3] Probability- Judge intervention is 100% likely because no matter what 2NR responses don’t get answered to but you can resolve the theory debate with DTA

#### 4] Irreversibility- Judge intervention is the worst violation of fairness because it takes the debate out of the hands of the debaters which is irreversible since the decision would be incorrect

#### All theory paradigm issues the aff thinks are good must be in the 1ac since they have 1 more speech than me on theory so they should take a stance sooner so I don’t have to answer all of them in one speech while they can go for them in multiple – 2n issues are reciprocally answered by the 2ar.

## ON

### 1NC – Straight-turn

#### I’m Straight-turning Util – heaven exists and is the most desirable outcome under every relevant metric. It hijacks all their 1% risk calculus because heaven would offer infinite utility, hedonic value, and zero suffering.

McCall ND

Betsy McCall, [I went back to school in January, and among the goals of this project is probably a "second" major in philosophy. It was a secondary consideration to my astronomy major, but because courses can't really start until Autumn, I could get a serious head start on this one at the beginning. It's almost finished now. I have a couple areas of interest in Philosophy: history of/philosophy of science, and logic/skepticism.] no specific date but sometimes "Utilitarianism & the Afterlife," No Publication, <http://www.betsymccall.net/edu/philo/utilitarianism_afterlife1.pdf> CHO

The goal of Utilitarianism is to lay out a moral philosophy to provide us a way of living, and a way of making difficult moral choices correctly(Mill, 2001) in circumstances which are uncommon enough that experience has not, or cannot, prepare us for the solution. But in doing so, Utilitarianism must confront the same moral challenges confronted by all moral philosophies, including the consequences of belief in the afterlife(Hasker, 2005). The afterlife has provided a complex moral challenge for many moral philosophical frameworks throughout the ages, from Buddhism to Christianity. Buddhism posits that life is suffering, and that the ultimate goal of living is really to escape living altogether by achieving nirvana, or at least, a better life in the next reincarnation(Becker, 1993). Christianity similarly puts this life into a comparison with another better alternative, in this case, the possibility of an infinitely better afterlife in heaven with god and the angels(Pohle, 1920). In both cases, the philosophical frameworks have been forced to incorporate specific prohibitions against suicide in order to avoid the apparently logical conclusion that death is preferable to life, and we would do well to get ourselves there as quickly as possible. Mill, in arguing for Utilitarianism, does not specifically address this question, perhaps because Mill himself gave the afterlife little personal credence(Wilson, 2009). However, writing to a largely Christian Western audience, like Christianity, and a deep-seated historical affinity for belief in reincarnation(Haraldsson, 2005), Mill and his followers must be prepared to address this potential concern. There is nothing inherent in Utilitarianism that requires that the calculations of utility should apply only to this life, since according to common beliefs of the afterlife, our behaviour here on Earth certainly has consequences for our disposition in the hereafter. And if one rejects the possibility of an afterlife, no conflict arises: there is only this life to consider, and surely it must be a good thing to extend that life as long as possible, as long as it is predominantly still contributing positively to the overall positive side of the balance sheet, so to speak. But, when an afterlife is introduced, if the afterlife is permitted to be weighed against the present life, apparently strange contradictions become possible, depending on the characteristics assigned to the hereafter. For instance, if we consider the Christian conception of the afterlife (or something vaguely similar), where there is a heaven offering eternal rewards for good behaviour, and eternal damnation for bad behaviour (particularly on the Catholic view), does it not appear to serve utility if once the person achieves a certain level of moral perfection that they should die in order to secure that reward? Christianity has addressed this concern by prohibiting suicide(Pohle, 1920) (and making it a damning offense punishable by an eternity in hell) for someone attempting to speed their eternal reward. However, if we consider the overall utility of a people, would not designating a handful of “scapegoats” to kill the mostly likely heavenbound before they mess it up be an overall plus to utility if the utility of eternal rewards in the afterlife are to be taken seriously? And indeed, does not the problem become more acute if one accepts the efficacy of the Catholic confessional? Should it not be the appropriate thing to do be for priests to kill their confessants as soon as their penance has been completed while their sins are forgiven and their souls are still clean? Worse yet, does it not suggest that the most innocent, the children, would be best served by being executed at an early age? Nor does reincarnation protect against this concern entirely. According to the Buddhist philosophy, since “life is suffering”(Becker, 1993), should not the Utilitarian argue that escaping this life of suffering in the expectation of a better reincarnation not demand that the improvement in one’s lot not justify suicide, or murder? Particularly if the risk on continued living is to damage the chances of receiving that improved reincarnation or enduring additional suffering. Of course, one would require some kind of guidelines for when such a utility-motivated killing was appropriate, but these guidelines would depend very much on one’s views of the afterlife. If Utilitarianism is meant to be a scientific and testable approach to a moral system, the introduction of a non-testable utility calculation clearly introduces a paradox. To address the apparent paradox of murdering the best people in society under the rubric of improving the overall utility calculation, Utilitarianism will need to make some explicit claims. One possible way of dealing with this concern is to specifically require that considerations of the afterlife not be taken into effect for purposes of utility. That this might be the case is not obvious, and so some kind of argument will be needed. And since we are all going to die eventually some day, it must not be too general a claim about the negative utility of simply dying. Another possible way to address this problem is to explicitly claim that for those that function as the scapegoats, the utility sinks as it were, that their loss of utility is larger than any possible utility gains by those whom they send to their eternal reward. This would probably require some fuzzy math: by claiming that the utility gains of heaven were finite and punishments for this particular act were infinite and unforgiveable (the tactic employed by Catholics to prevent suicide(Pohle, 1920)). A third potential solution is to argue that the afterlife is inherently inferior to this life, for instance, in the manner of Tartarus to the Ancient Greeks (explicitly not the Elysian Fields). While it may or may not be explicitly unpleasant, it is a situation not as pleasant as remaining alive, and so would be a negative net effect on utility to go there too soon. A fourth possible solution might be to explicitly make a claim as a part of Utilitarian philosophy that there is no afterlife. This is perhaps the least radical of the scenarios outlined so far. In the absence of a religious moral structure, Utilitarianism is a favourite of the non-religious. While this might serve to narrow the appeal of Utilitarianism, it will provide a justification for not considering the afterlife in utility calculations that is not entirely ad hoc, and it would comport well with Mill’s own beliefs(Wilson, 2009). However, the argument Mill, I suspect, would mostly likely favour, is to simply argue that utility calculations can only be applied to this life for reasons of testability. He wanted this theory to be a scientific approach to morality that would provide a framework for making general and testable claims, as science does(Mill, 2001). It is often argued that science cannot test the claims of religion because religion is, by definition, inherently untestable: likewise is the afterlife. For this reason, Utilitarianism can only apply to this life, and utility calculations cannot extend beyond the grave without invoking theological explanations beyond the scope of this theory. While some may find this the most satisfying and non-confrontational, it nonetheless leaves unsolved the issue of the contradiction within the Utilitarian theory generated by the introduction of a positive afterlife, and therefore, leaves it open to possible criticism. The introduction of a positive view of the afterlife presents specific problems for the Utilitarian theory, whenever the utility calculation leads to the conclusion that the afterlife is preferable to the present life. These considerations will need to be addressed in some fashion by the Utilitarian theory or by individual Utilitarians so that paradoxical claims such as murder increasing utility can be avoided.

#### Next, their epistemological framework of a posteriori knowledge gives maximum leeway to our account of the afterlife.

#### 1] Pascals Wager – the existence of heaven is impossible to disprove but even a risk that we could get there would be worth staking everything on because it would be infinitely better than future attainable on Earth. Answering this negates because it creates a reverse pascals wager where we can never be sure that our decisions our ethical because of uncertainty that we could make a mistaken about consequences that are magnitudes larger.

#### 2] Death Paradox – we have no access to accounts about the experience of Death because at the point it’s too late. The next best thing is Near Death Experiences or (NDE). Mass accounts of NDE’s support an empiricist account that is excluded because of cognitive bias and elitism.

Letizia 17

Phil Letizia, 10-31-2017, "What Will Heaven Be Like? Near-Death Experiences and the Promise of Life with God," Reformed Journal, <https://reformedjournal.com/will-heaven-like-near-death-experiences-promise-life-god/> CHO

Every few years a story of heaven with an exclusive glimpse into the afterlife gathers popular attention. In the 2010 New York Times bestseller Heaven Is for Real, a young boy’s near-death experience and description of his time in heaven captivated audiences. In 2014 the book was made into a major motion picture. These depictions, alongside the many anecdotal accounts of people detailing near-death or out-of-body experiences, have contributed to our collective cultural vision of heaven and the afterlife. What is it about these stories and experiences that is so compelling? Is it possible that many today find these stories more compelling than the biblical vision of heaven and the resurrection? The answers to these questions are of grave importance. What we say about heaven reveals what we hope heaven will be like. HEAVEN IN POPULAR IMAGINATION The popularity of near-death experiences reveals that the subject of heaven and the afterlife fascinates our modern culture. Terrence Nichols in his book Death and Afterlife (Brazos, 2010), writes, “The evidence from evolutionary biology and neuroscience strongly challenges the traditional Christian belief in a soul that survives bodily death. But there are other streams of evidence, usually ignored by those in the sciences that do support the claim that the mind survives physical death. These are the so-called near-death experiences.” Many people who have had these types of experiences recount emergency or operating-room scenes that include visions of bright light, the meeting of a religious figure, the experiencing of a “life review” or having a brief encounter with deceased family members and friends. Because of the strong anecdotal evidence from people across spectrums of culture, age, gender and religion, these experiences should not be dismissed. However, the degree to which these experiences, coupled with modern accounts of “heaven experiences,” have shaped the modern Christian’s expectation of heaven is striking. Have we allowed accounts of these experiences more than we’ve taken in the biblical witness, allowing them to shape our understanding of what heaven will be like? At a typical funeral in America today, one is likely to hear descriptions of heaven that focus extensively on the reuniting of loved ones and the hope that the deceased is now free to enjoy his or her greatest pleasures in earthly life without restriction. Though these may indeed be features of heaven and our lives with God, one attending a Christian funeral today would be tempted to think this was our highest expectation of heaven. Carol Zaleski, who has studied near-death experiences and the otherworld journeys of the ancient Greeks, Egyptians and Romans, concludes that, just like the ancients, today’s stories are “through and through a work of the socially conditioned religious imagination” (quoted in Scott McKnight’s The Heaven Promise: Engaging the Bible’s Truth About Life to Come [Waterbrook Press, 2015]). It is not surprising that our modern views of heaven and the afterlife seem to be shaped more by these socially conditioned imaginations than the Word of God itself. These visions of heaven have more to do with the hope of continuing on with the good things experienced here on earth than the promise of life with God in its longed-for fullness. In fact, these visions only tell part of the story. They neglect the triumphal return of Christ and the bodily resurrection of the dead. In other words, too many Christians have a truncated view of eternal life with God. Instead, the visions we carry around with us on a daily basis are often dominated by the cultural hopes of endless rounds of golf, fly fishing and family-reunion planning. McKnight concludes, “[A near-death experience] expresses what the person already believes. I’m not denying the experience or its impact. But the interpretation of that experience flows out of what one already thinks.” What we say about heaven reveals what we hope heaven will be like.

#### 3] Reflective Equilibrium – conceptions of the afterlife have persisted for thousands of years through multiple religions and is even more persistently persuasive than utilitarianism.[[1]](#footnote-1) That turns aggregates and averages since the belief in the afterlife is a consensus for agreement.

#### 4] Heaven solves the explanatory gap – current scientific understanding cannot provide a comprehensive theory of death. Reject 1ar recontextualization that jettisons their epistemological framework in favor of Hail Mary appeals to prior intuitions and deontological constraints

Cait 18

Cait (Writer at Medium), 11-25-2018, "Religion: Humanity’s Oldest Coping Mechanism," Medium, <https://medium.com/@cjwachsmuth/religion-humanitys-oldest-coping-mechanism-4d5e743b4e66> CHO

Even as an atheist, I do understand what religion provides for people. It can give hope, understanding, love and comfort. It provides answers for questions too difficult to comprehend and what it doesn’t answer, it asks. People who have religion always have something. Religion is the oldest coping mechanism. Before science came along, we used it to explain the natural phenomena of the world. Harsh weather was a message from the gods. Disease was punishment. The sun was a god itself. Before we could understand why things happen, we looked to a higher power. It made things simpler. So why do people need it now? We can explain so much with science. Natural disasters are no longer the result of an angry god. Every day new medical discoveries are made. We study history, science, and we even know why the sky is blue. But there are explainable disasters that we can’t cope with. Things like death, poverty and acts of cruelty don’t sit well with us. And we still have questions. The big one… what happens after we die? Every religion has different answers. Heaven, hell, purgatory, reincarnation. We are loved, we are judged, we are resurrected. It saves us from the unbearable answer of “nothing”.

#### 5] Thinking through heaven is the most utilitarian way to approach the world and deters in-round violence resultant from threats of imminent and inevitable mass extinction.

Roberts 19

Nicole F. Roberts, [Dr. Nicole (Fisher) Roberts is the Executive Director of Feed A Billion, an international nonprofit that feeds girls around the world to prevent exploitation, and the founder of Health & Human Rights Strategies, a health care and human rights-focused advising firm in Washington, D.C. Roberts is also the host of The Global Good Podcast. Roberts contributes to Forbes, contextualizing health, and highlighting ideas, companies and people that are changing the health landscape. Her writing has appeared in numerous journals and publications, and her talks can be found on the United Nations website and various news and sports outlets. Roberts holds a doctorate in public health from the University of North Carolina, a master’s degree in public policy from the University of Chicago and an undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri.] 3-29-2019, "Science Says: Religion Is Good For Your Health," Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolefisher/2019/03/29/science-says-religion-is-good-for-your-health/?sh=7f0b76db3a12> CHO

Theologists, scientists and thought leaders have attempted for centuries to understand the impact that religion can have on human beings; both mentally and physically. And it is commonly accepted around that world that religion and spirituality are among the most important of cultural factors – giving structure and meaning to behaviors, value systems and experiences.

Thus, there is ample reason to believe that faith in a higher power is associated with health, and in a positive way. For example, researchers at the Mayo Clinic concluded, “Most studies have shown that religious involvement and spirituality are associated with better health outcomes, including greater longevity, coping skills, and health-related quality of life (even during terminal illness) and less anxiety, depression, and suicide. Several studies have shown that addressing the spiritual needs of the patient may enhance recovery from illness.”

### 1NC AT: Moen

#### Pleasure its good but its absence isn’t bad—you have no offense under util.

Benatar 97 bracketed for language Benatar, David (Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa). “Why It is Better Never to Come Into Existence.” American Philosophical Quarterly, Volume 34, Number 3, July 1997.

Having rejected alternative evaluations, I return to my original diagram. To determine the relative advantages and disadvantages of coming into existence and never coming to be, we need to compare 1) with 3), and 2) with 4). In the first comparison we see that non-existence is preferable to existence. The advantage is a real one. In the second comparison, however, **the** pleasures **of the existent**, although good,are not a[n] realadvantage over nonexistence, because the absence of pleasures is not bad. **For the good to be a real advantage over non-existence,** [the absence of pleasure] it would have to be the case that its absence were bad**.** To illustrate this, **consider an analogy** which, because it involves the comparison of two existent people is unlike the comparison between existence and non-existence in this way, but which nonetheless may be instructive**.** S is prone to regular bouts ofillness**.** Fortunately for him, **he** is also so constituted that he recovers quickly**. H lacks the capacity for quick recovery, but he never gets sick. It is bad for S that he gets sick and it is good** for him **that he recovers quickly.** It is good that H never gets sick**, but it is not bad that he [doesn’t]** lacks the capacity to **heal speedily. The capacity for quick recovery, although a good for** S, is not a[n] real advantage over H. This is because the absence of that capacity is not bad for H (and H is not worse off than he would have been had he had the recuperative powers of S). S is not better off than H in any way, even though S is better off than he himself would have been had he lacked the capacity for rapid recovery

#### Robust Scientific analysis concludes that death would be a pleasure bomb comparable to powerful hallucinogens *even if* trips to heaven are illusory

Martone 19

Robert Martone, [Writer @ Scientific American] 9-10-2019, "New Clues Found in Understanding Near-Death Experiences," Scientific American, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/new-clues-found-in-understanding-near-death-experiences/

Imagine a dream in which you sense an intense feeling of presence, the truest, most real experience in your life, as you float away from your body and look at your own face. You have a twinge of fear as memories of your life flash by, but then you pass a transcendent threshold and are overcome by a feeling of bliss. Although contemplating death elicits fear for many people, these positive features are reported in some of the near-death experiences (NDEs) undergone by those who reached the brink of death only to recover. Accounts of NDEs are remarkably consistent in character and content. They include intensely vivid memories involving bodily sensations that give a strong impression of being real, more real even than memories of true events. The content of those experiences famously includes memories of one’s life “flashing before the eyes,” and also the sensation of leaving the body, often seeing one’s own face and body, blissfully traveling through a tunnel toward a light and feeling “at one” with something universal. Not surprisingly, many have seized on NDEs as evidence of life after death, heaven and the existence of god. The descriptions of leaving the body and blissful unity with the universal seem almost scripted from religious beliefs about souls leaving the body at death and ascending toward heavenly bliss. But these experiences are shared across a broad range of cultures and religions so it’s not likely that they are all reflections of specific religious expectations. Instead, that commonality suggests that NDEs might arise from something more fundamental than religious or cultural expectations. Perhaps NDEs reflect changes in how the brain functions as we approach death. Many cultures employ drugs as part of religious practice to induce feelings of transcendence that have similarities to near-death experiences. If NDEs are based in brain biology, perhaps the action of those drugs that causes NDE-like experiences can teach us something about the NDE state. Of course, studying NDEs has significant technical hurdles. There is no way of examining the experience in animals, and rescuing a patient at death’s door is far more important than interviewing them about their NDE. Moreover, many of the drugs used to induce religious states are illicit, which would complicate any efforts to study their effects. Although it’s impossible to directly examine what happens to the brain during NDEs, the stories collected from them provide a rich resource for linguistic analysis. In a fascinating new study, NDE stories were compared linguistically with anecdotes of drug experience in order to identify a drug that causes an experience most like a near-death experience. What is remarkable is how precise a tool this turned out to be. Even though the stories were open-ended subjective accounts often given many years after the fact, the linguistic analysis focused down not only to a specific class of drugs, but also to a specific drug as causing experiences very similar to NDEs. This new study compared the stories of 625 individuals who reported NDEs with the stories of more than 15,000 individuals who had taken one of 165 different psychoactive drugs. When those stories were linguistically analyzed, similarities were found between recollections of near-death and drug experiences for those who had taken a specific class of drug. One drug in particular, ketamine, led to experiences very similar to NDE. This may mean that the near-death experience may reflect changes in the same chemical system in the brain that is targeted by drugs like ketamine. The researchers drew on a large collection of NDE stories they had collected over many years. To compare NDEs with drug experiences, the researchers took advantage of a large collection of drug experience anecdotes found in the Erowid Experience Vaults, an open-source collection of accounts describing firsthand experiences with drugs and various substances. In this study, the recollections of those who experienced NDEs and those who took drugs were compared linguistically. Their stories were broken down into individual words, and the words were sorted according to their meaning and counted. In this way, researchers were able to compare the number of times words having the same meaning were used in each story. They used this numerical analysis of story content to compare the content of drug-related and near-death experiences. Each of the drugs included in these comparisons could be categorized by their ability to interact with a specific neurochemical system in the brain, and each drug fell into a specific category (antipsychotic, stimulant, psychedelic, depressant or sedative, deliriant, or hallucinogen). Few similarities were found when the accounts of one stimulant drug were compared with another within the same stimulant drug class, and few if any similarities were found between accounts of stimulant drug experience and NDEs. The same was true for depressants. The stories associated with hallucinogens, however, were very similar to one another, as were stories linked to antipsychotics and deliriants. When recollections of drug effects were compared with NDEs, stories about hallucinogens and psychedelics had the greatest similarities to NDEs, and the drug that scored the highest similarity to NDEs was the hallucinogen ketamine. The word most strongly represented in descriptions of both NDEs and ketamine experiences was “reality,” highlighting the sense of presence that accompanies NDEs. High among the list of words common to both experiences were those related to perception (saw, color, voice, vision), the body (face, arm, foot), emotion (fear) and transcendence (universe, understand, consciousness). The researchers then sorted words into five large principal groups according to their common meaning. Those principal components dealt with perception and consciousness, drug dependency, negative sensations, drug preparation, and also a group that included disease state, religion and ceremony. NDEs reflected three of these components related to perception and consciousness, religion and ceremony, disease state, and drug preparation. The component related to perception and consciousness was labeled “Look/Self” and included terms such as color, vision, pattern, reality and face. The component “Disease/Religion” contained elements such as anxiety, ceremony, consciousness and self, whereas the component related to preparation “Make/Stuff” contained elements such as prepare, boil, smell and ceremony. Again, ketamine had the greatest overlap with NDEs in this type of analysis.

#### Extinction doesn’t destroy future generations – humans didn’t originally exist and evolved instead out of microorganisms which proves live can always exist by generating spontaneously.

#### Death causes euphoria through a last hurrah– brain studies.

Stromberg 13 [Joseph Stromberg (Internal Medicine resident UNC-Chappell Hill via BUMedicine. Former science writer at Smithsonian). “A Last-Second Surge of Brain Activity Could Explain Near-Death Experiences”. Smithsonian. August 12, 2013. Accessed 12/18/21. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/a-last-second-surge-of-brain-activity-could-explain-near-death-experiences-28726479/> //Xu]

The Michigan team, led by neurologist Jimo Borjigin, took a very different approach to examining these episodes. They sought to use electroencephalography (EEG, a technique that measures electrical activity among different areas of the brain) to track what exactly goes on in the seconds after the heart stops pumping blood, or the lungs stop taking in oxygen.Of course, they couldn’t do this with human subjects, so they subjected lab rats to what seems to be a pretty gruesome experience in the name of science: They anesthetized nine rats and forcibly induced cardiac arrest, causing the rodents’ hearts to stop pumping blood, while they monitored brain activity with an EEG. They found that, in all nine rats, brain activity continued for roughly 30 seconds after the animals’ blood stopped pumping. The activity persisted in all six regions of the brain they monitored, and gradually declined over the course of the 30 seconds before disappearing. Although the team had predicted they’d find some activity, “we were surprised by the high levels,” George Mashour, a co-author, said in a press statement. “At near-death, many known electrical signatures of consciousness exceeded levels found in the waking state, suggesting that the brain is capable of well-organized electrical activity during the early stage of clinical death.” To see whether this activity was caused by something specific about cardiac arrest in particular—say, the experience of pain—they also suffocated other rats while measuring their brain activity. They found virtually the same patterns of data, indicating that the activity is inevitably generated by the brain in the final moments before it shuts down. In both cases, many characteristics of the brain activity correlated with the activity they’d measured earlier in the rats when they were fully conscious. The clear implication is that these rats may have been going through their own near-death experiences in the lab, just before dying. If these same patterns of brain activity occur in humans just after cardiac arrest—something that will be difficult to determine, given the problems of hooking up people to EEGs while they’re being resuscitated—it could go a long way toward explaining why humans have out-of-body experiences when they near death without the need to invoke souls or the afterlife. Just as the activity in our brains during the REM stages of sleep accounts for the experience of dreaming, this data could account for the sensation of continuing awareness after clinical death. Other researchers have previously speculated about physiological explanations for the other typical descriptions of near-death experiences. It’s been documented that when people faint, for example, the loss of blood flow to the brain can generate a narrowing of the field of vision—perhaps explaining the tunnel often described in their memories. The release of epinephrine and other chemicals in the brain during moments of stress, meanwhile, could account for the sense of euphoria.

1. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/news-polls/ipsos-global-dvisory-supreme-beings-afterlife-and-evolution#:~:text=Just%20over%20half%20of%20global,%22heaven%20but%20not%20hell%22>. CHO [↑](#footnote-ref-1)