



**SPECIAL  
SUBSECTION  
PREFACE**

## Editor-In-Chief's Preface to the Target Article Section

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This Special Issue features a set of invited Commentaries on a provocative Target Article that raises tantalizing questions pertinent to frontier science. Note that it was peer-reviewed only with the focus of improving its theoretical and methodological clarity. Some scholarly journals are devoted entirely to the basic format of academic exchanges (e.g., *Psychological Inquiry*), whereas the *JSE* only occasionally publishes such content. To clarify, academic Commentaries can either support or challenge the underlying rationale or premise of the article in question. The fundamental goal of all reaction essays, however, is to address important or novel conceptual issues, methodological features, results, or conclusions. The *Journal* especially values and encourages Commentaries that transcend mere critiques by offering solution-oriented perspectives on new methods, hypotheses, or research designs per the editorial team's call for constructive bridge-building or "exchange and cooperation" efforts (Houran, 2022; Houran & Schofield, 2023).

The Target article by Nancy Smoot Tramont summarizes her late husband's (Charles Tramont) work with hypnotherapy (e.g., Tramont, 2008), which was used to deal with clinical cases he thought involved discarnate agency that was possibly "demonic or diabolical" in nature. Aside from controversies about the nature or efficacy of medical hypnosis (Cowen, 2016; Häuser et al., 2016; Williamson, 2019), her paper offers a timely case study of the "darker side" of spirituality explored in this issue. Managing Editor Brian Laythe assisted in the selection of authors who provided a set of cross-disciplinary Commentaries. Our deepest appreciation to these analysts who received no compensation for their evaluations: (a) *Peter Brugger*—neurology (e.g., Brugger & Mohr, 2008), (b) *Madeleine Castro*—interdisciplinary social science (Castro et al., 2014), (c) *Jack Hunter*—cultural anthropology (e.g., Hunter, 2017), (d) *Robert Klauber*—physics (e.g., Klauber, 2000). and (d) *Everton Maraldi*—transpersonal psychology and religious studies (e.g., Maraldi, 2014). In addition to a formal Reply by Tramont, Brian Laythe caps these Commentaries with a closing essay that juxtaposes the insights or arguments from these authors against his own expertise in social science and esotericism, or the Western mystery tradition.

In summarizing selected anomalous-altered experiences from Dr. Tramont via a qualitative approach (Creswell & Cresswell, 2022; Merriam, 2009), the Target article presents narratives and their sense-making that can serve as autoethnographic material for an independent review and analysis. *Autoethnography* uses first-person accounts to explore the nuances and complexities of a particular cultural, social, or personal phenomenon that traditional research methods may not be able to access (Ellis et al., 2011; Méndez, 2013; Reed-Danahay, 1997). The value of such information lies in its ability to provide a unique, subjective perspective on the studied topic (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). But note that Tramont's essay is muddled by at least a "double narrative" process (Kyrtatzis & Green, 1997). That is, it is an amalgam of content stemming from the individuals who orig-

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inally provided the accounts, as well as the author herself, who represents the voice of the “researcher” narrating or re-interpreting those experiences. The *Journal* does not endorse a particular conclusion about the Target Article, but hopefully, readers will appreciate how its claims can spark valuable deliberations about the relationship of narrative reality to physical reality (e.g., Cunningham, 2022).

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