## Contents

Preface vii
Acknowledgments xiii
Introduction xv
Outline of the Argument and Remarks on Method xxvii

PART ONE | NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES AS RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

- 1.1. Introduction 3
- 1.2. Experiences of Dying and Death 11
- 1.3. The Formation of Near-Death Experiences: Moody, Ritchie, and Hampe 17
- 1.4. Near-Death Experiences and the Religious Metacultures of Western Modernity 33

PART TWO | THE DIFFERENT STRANDS OF DEATH: WESTERN DISCOURSE ON EXPERIENCES NEAR DEATH (1580-1975)

- 2.1. Introduction 45
- 2.2. Currents of Early Modern Near-Death Discourse 53
- 2.3. The Integration of Theosophical Narratives on Travels of the "Spiritual Body" (ca. 1860–1905) 117
- 2.4. The Advent of Parapsychology and the Figuration of "Out-of-the-Body Experiences" (1880–1930) 135
- 2.5. The Theosophical Discovery of the Tibetan Book of the Dead (1927) 153
- 2.6. Consolidation of Near-Death Discourse (1930–1960) 167
- 2.7. The Final Configuration of Near-Death Experiences (1960–1975) 185

## Contents

PART THREE | "NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES" AS RELIGIOUS PROTEST
AGAINST MATERIALISM AND MODERN MEDICINE IN THE 1960S AND 1970S
3.1. Introduction 227

- 3.2. Pushing Near-Death Experiences (I): Privatized Death 231
- 3.3. Pushing Near-Death Experiences (II): Reanimation, "Coma," and "Brain Death" 237
- 3.4. Pushing Near-Death Experiences (III): LSD- and Other Drug-Induced Experiences 245
- 3.5. The Imperative of "Individual Experience": Institutional Change of Religion in the 1960s and 1970s 251

PART FOUR | WISH-FULFILLING EXPECTATIONS, EXPERIENCES, RETROACTIVE IMPUTATIONS: IN SEARCH OF HERMENEUTICS FOR NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

- 4.1. Introduction 257
- 4.2. Excursus: The "Death-x-Pulse," or: How to Imagine the Unimaginable? 267
- 4.3. The Survival Value of Narratives? 279

PART FIVE | THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES FOR RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

- 5.1. The Presence of Religious Metacultures in Near-Death Discourse (1580–1975) 285
- 5.2. The Religious Functions of Near-Death Experiences 293

BIBLIOGRAPHY 313 NAME INDEX 337 SUBJECT INDEX 341