



COMMENTARY

Editor's Preface to the Commentaries about the Leininger Case

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The popularity of survival-related research over the past decade plus has been accompanied by critical analyses by parapsychologists (e.g., Cunningham, 2012; Roll, 2006; Sudduth, 2009), as well as intense debates between advocates and skeptics (see e.g., *Journal of Parapsychology*, 80, pp. 169–264). Of course, these are not unexpected trends with highly controversial topics that can also challenge the belief systems of investigators and authors. The commentaries that follow thus underscore the importance of methodology and rules of evidence relative to cases of the reincarnation type (CORT).

The opposing views of Jim Tucker versus Michael Sudduth are augmented by an invited, two-part commentary by James G. Matlock. He was tasked with identifying key lessons in the Sudduth–Tucker exchange to advance new studies and resulting knowledge above and beyond the present controversy. In Part 1 (published in this issue), Matlock aims to clarify critical aspects of the Leininger case that speak directly to data accessibility, quality, and interpretation. Part 2 (appearing in a forthcoming issue) will discuss protocols that might pre-emptively close gaps between the viewpoints of CORT critics and advocates. Matlock's second essay will then be followed by some final reflections from Sudduth, which will formally close this series of exchanges and commentary.

This approach strives to fulfill our mission of constructive bridge-building as outlined in this issue's Editorial. Matlock's independent analysis and suggestions are not necessarily endorsed by the Journal, but hopefully the collective content of the commentaries will spark healthy debate and the development of improved research designs in this challenging domain.

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