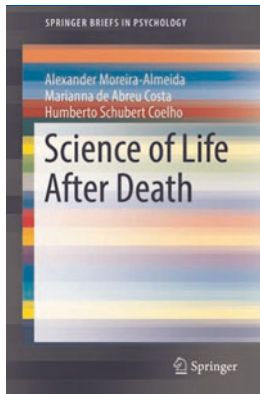


Book reviews

Edited by Allan Beveridge and Femi Oyeboode



Science of Life after Death

By Alexander Moreira-Almeida, Marianna de Abreu Costa and Humberto Schubert Coelho
Springer. 2022. £39.99 (pb). 101 pp.
ISBN 978-3-031-06055-7

Science of Life after Death does what it says on the cover – it considers the scientific evidence for life after death. This evidence falls under three main headings: studies of mediumship, near death experiences (NDE) and reports of people (particularly children) who claim to remember a previous life (referred to in the book as ‘Cases of Reincarnation Type’, thus CORTs). Anticipating the likely scepticism of many Western scientists, the evidence that forms the core of the book is preceded by a chapter ‘Setting the scene: addressing the main arguments against survival hypothesis’. The question is then raised as to what evidence we might look for in support of the hypothesis of personal survival after death. It is proposed that we might look for evidence of enduring memory, personal skills and recognisable personality traits. Accordingly, evidence for persistence of these factors is then considered in turn for each of the study populations, in particular for mediumship and CORT. For NDE the focus is more on whether or not the reported perceptions during the NDE are ‘veridical’. In each case, alternative explanations of the evidence are considered and eliminated. The final conclusion is that there is compelling scientific evidence for life after death.

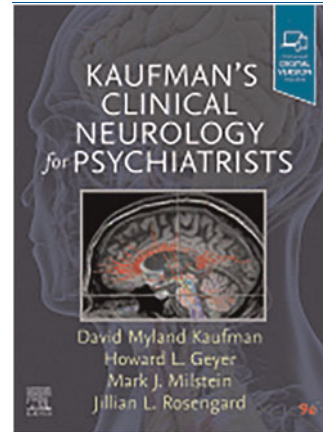
Two of the authors are psychiatrists and so, even taking into account the strict length limitations of the Springer Briefs in Psychology series, it was disappointing that the clinical implications of the evidence and conclusions were not explored, even if only briefly. I do hope to see this addressed in future publications. Another omission was the lack of attention to the theologies and beliefs of the world’s major faith traditions. What people believe, and the cultural context of belief, is important to understanding the scientific evidence. Reincarnation and resurrection, for example, are two radically different propositions. In general, the authors are quite negative towards the ‘dogmatism’ of traditional religion, and they tend to stay with the science (plus some philosophy), but some scientist readers may nonetheless beg to differ from the authors’ conclusions. None of this should detract from the interest and value of this book, which brings together some quite large fields of research that are often neglected in both theology and psychiatry. It offers an excellent introduction to this literature for those who may not be familiar with it.

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Declaration of interest

C.C.H.C. is an Anglican priest and Chair of the Spirituality & Psychiatry Special Interest Group (SPSIG) at the Royal College of Psychiatrists. The views expressed in this review are his own and do not necessarily represent those of the SPSIG.



Kaufman's Clinical Neurology for Psychiatrists (9th edn)

By David Kaufman, Howard Geyer, Mark Milstein and Jillian Rosengard
Elsevier. 2022. 700pp. £122.99 (hbk).
ISBN: 978-0323796804

Currently in its ninth edition, *Kaufman's Clinical Neurology for Psychiatrists* has deservedly become a classic in its field. The authors of this collaborative effort are experienced neurologists based in the USA, and the book beautifully summarises the knowledge needed to master the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and other examinations. Most importantly, this book prepares its readers – both psychiatry trainees and consultants – for clinical work in the 21st century. Despite its size, depth and scope, it is still succinct enough to be read and studied from cover to cover.

The book has two sections. Section I reviews basic clinical neuroanatomy and describes the approach to patients with a suspected neurological disorder, with focus on the neurological examination and the localising value of neurological signs. In addition to a chapter dedicated to the ‘hot topic’ of psychogenic neurological deficits, the authors cover areas that might be less familiar to psychiatrists, such as cranial nerve and peripheral nerve pathologies, as well as muscle disorders. Section II addresses the most common and clinically relevant neurological conditions, emphasising aspects a psychiatrist may encounter. For each condition, the authors explain neurological and psychiatric features, bedside examinations, appropriate tests, differential diagnosis and treatment options. They also correlate and contrast current (DSM-5) psychiatric diagnostic criteria to neurologists’ classification systems. The ninth edition of this classic, translated into Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Korean, was written 5 years after the eighth edition, thus ensuring that the content is constantly updated and timely. Together with new content (for example, the new classification of seizures and epilepsy), this new edition features high-quality illustrations and nearly 2000 multiple-choice questions – both in print and online.

Kaufman's Clinical Neurology for Psychiatrists has proven highly popular, as over 60 000 individuals have purchased a copy of its previous editions. What is the secret of this success? It all started with a course, ‘Clinical Neurology for Psychiatrists’, held at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. What happened next is apparently due to the first author’s wife and best friend of 50 years. In Kaufman’s own words, ‘she acted as my muse by originally suggesting writing this book by expanding the syllabus for my course’. Over 40 years later it can be agreed that the authors’ caveat stood the test of time: ‘readers should find this book, like