

* * * * *

MOREIRA-ALLMEDIA, ALEXANDER and SANTOS, FRANKLIN SANTANA (Eds.). (2012). *Exploring frontiers of the mind-body relationship*. New York, NY: Springer. xx + 243 pp. ISBN 978-1-4614-0646-4, Hardback, \$129.00. *Reviewed by David Lukoff.*

As someone who has been both excited about the rapid expansion of the scientific knowledge base in areas such as neuroscience, physics, biology, consciousness, as well as philosophy, but also overwhelmed at the explosion of publications, this book is a godsend. In this edited book, leading researchers and scholars who are experts in these areas have written succinct, yet in depth summaries and reflections about their relevance to understanding the human mind. It is self-consciously in the tradition of William James's radical empiricism, and the editors, Alexander Moreira-Allmeida and Franklin Santana Santos, follow their own admonition to researchers about the, "need to enlarge timid scope and deal with a much wider range of phenomena if they in fact wish to make a truly significant contribution to the understanding of mind and its relationship with the brain ... specifically experiences called 'anomalous' and/or 'spiritual'" (p. xv). Experts from many areas are brought to bear on these questions to facilitate and integrate competing research paradigms. This collection grew out of a conference, thus providing the authors with a chance to refine their reflections based on dialogue with their co-presenters as they wrote their chapters.

The first three chapters set the philosophical context for the entire book project by bringing into question the domination of reductionistic materialism in mainstream science, particularly when applied to understanding mind-body topics and issues such as anomalous experiences. This articulates the evolving postmaterialist psychology approach spearheaded by Lisa Miller and Len Sperry. The next two chapters examine the contributions of physical and biological science to the understanding of the mind. The authors of these are physicist Chris Clarke and physician Deepak Chopra, who are experts in their own areas as they venture thoughtfully into this new territory. The support for nonlocality of both matter and mind is, "building a bridge between spirituality and science" (p. 91). The next two chapters present a lucid overview of neuroimaging, which is certainly one of the most exciting areas currently in contributing to the understanding of mindfulness as well as mental functioning more broadly, and is graphically illustrated with brain image findings. It provides a good antidote to the simplistic positing of and search for a 'God spot' in the brain. In addition, it highlights the limitations of the 'brain as computer' models of mind.

Anomalous experiences have been a focus in my own research (Lukoff, 2007), and I think that their study has important implications for both transpersonal therapeutic approaches and understanding the mind-body relationship. There are at least 10 well-established anomalous experiences (Cardena, Lynn, & Krippner, 2000), of which this book has chapters on near-death experiences, mediumship, and past lives. Additional anomalous experiences, such as mystical experiences and psychic experiences, are covered in other chapters.

Collectively, these perspectives highlight the possible avenues for unmasking and understanding transcendental realities, which are notoriously difficult to research (as William James also pointed out in his work on empirical radicalism). Moreira-Allmeida and Santos describe theirs as a balanced psychobiological approach, with which I would concur.

I found myself actively involved while reading this book, as I was underlining sections, marking some areas for PowerPoint slides in my own courses and workshops, and writing down references to retrieve. This recently published work (copyright 2012) is a tour de force of contemporary scholarship, so do not wait until used copies are available for a few dollars. By then, these authors will undoubtedly have moved on to new territory and vision. This is a book by the cutting edge thinkers and researchers of consciousness in our times. I personally believe we have a plethora of contemporary Einsteins addressing these topics, whose contributions to this book make it a wonderful selection to aid in one's ongoing reflection.

REFERENCES

- CARDENA, E., LYNN, S. J., & KRIPPNER, S. (Eds.), *Varieties of anomalous experience: Examining the scientific evidence*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.
- LUKOFF, D. (2007). Visionary spiritual experiences. *Southern Medical Journal*, 100(6), 635–641.

The Editors

Alexander Moreira-Allmeida, M.D., Ph.D., was trained in psychiatry and cognitive-behavioral therapy at the Institute of Psychiatry of the University of São Paulo, Brazil, where he also obtained his Ph.D. in Health Sciences investigating the mental health of Spiritist mediums. Formerly a postdoctoral fellow in religion and health at Duke University, he is now a professor of psychiatry at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora School of Medicine and Founder and Director of the Research Center in Spirituality and Health, Brazil (www.ufjf.br/nupes-eng). His main research interest involves empirical studies of spiritual experiences, as well as the methodology and epistemology of this research field. His publications are available at www.hoje.org.br/elsh.

Franklin Santana Santos, M.D., Ph.D., was trained in geriatrics at Clinical Hospital of the University of São Paulo, Brazil, where he also obtained his Ph.D. in Health Sciences investigating delirium in elderly patients. Formerly a postdoctoral fellow in cognitive disturbances at Karolinska Institute (Sweden), he is now Professor of post-graduate program of University of São Paulo School of Medicine and collaborator researcher of Laboratory of Neuroscience (LIM-27) at the Institute of Psychiatry of the University of São Paulo, Brazil. He is a leader in the studies in issues related to death, dying and Palliative Care in Brazil. His main research interests involve cognitive disturbances, thanatology, palliative care and medical education, and he has published several articles and books about these topics.

The Reviewer

David Lukoff, Ph.D., is a Professor of Psychology at Sofia University and a licensed psychologist in California. He is the author of 80 articles and chapters on spiritual issues and mental health (several in this journal) and co-author of

the *DSM-IV* category Religious or Spiritual Problems. In addition, he is currently Co-President of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology.

* * * * *

Editors: Moreira-Almeida, Alexander, Santana Santos, Franklin (Eds.) Free Preview. This book on the frontiers of mind-body relationships is a scholarly embodiment of creative and open-minded science. C. Robert Cloninger, MD Wallace Renard Professor of Psychiatry, Genetics, and Psychology, Washington University School of Medicine St. Louis MO. Show all. "Alexander Moreira-Almeida and Franklin Santana Santos have edited an excellent volume of essays, all written from a nonphysicalist perspective. Two major strengths of the book are: (1) the inclusion of parapsychology as a science particularly suited to work on the mind-body problem; and (2) recognizing the contribution of spiritual experiences, including experiences near death, to the mind-body problem. Exploring Frontiers of the Mind-Brain Relationship edited by Alexander Moreira-Almeida and Franklin Santana Santos. New York: Springer, 2012. xxix + 243 pp. \$129.00. ISBN 9781461406464. Part IV takes up case studies of phenomena that imply a separation of mind and body and suggest that some aspect of the human being may survive bodily death. None of the four chapters explicitly address Hameroff and Chopra's quantum soul model, but readers who have come through the book from the beginning will reach them with it in mind and it seems appropriate to assess them in relation to it. British physician Peter Fenwick asks "Can Near-Death Experiences Contribute to the Debate on Consciousness?" Alexander Moreira-Almeida. Franklin Santana Santos. Editors. Exploring Frontiers. Since the new developments of neurotechnologies for studying the brain functioning in the second half of twentieth century, a new wave of enthusiasm for materialistic explanations of mental phenomena has invaded philosophy and -psychology departments worldwide. The culmination of all this was the so-called "decade of the brain" in the 1990s. However, a closer examination of the arguments presented by some of these new materialists reveals recurrent patterns of analogies and metaphors, besides an old rhetorical strategy of appealing to a distant future, in which all the problems will ... Oct 2012. Exploring Frontiers of the Mind-Brain Relationship. pp.233-236.