

and to find final success—is several years too few. Has Rorvik never heard of Murphy's Law?

I think that Rorvik wrote the book as a means to summarize his career as a science writer in human reproduction, or to fulfill a desire to become involved in, and not just report on, a major scientific happening, or even to fulfill an ambition to write a novel. Or maybe he wrote it, as he admits in the afterword, to test the public conscience regarding human cloning.

Whatever his intentions, Rorvik produces what seems like an odd hybrid between a masters thesis in philosophy (complete with footnotes and bibliography) and a cheap science fiction novel. He presents a fairly complete discussion of the pros and cons of human cloning, test-tube fertilization and genetic engineering, but does so in an unorganized stream-of-consciousness style. Especially annoying are his frequent pseudo-conversations ("I said that I felt that . . . And he said that he felt . . . Then I said that . . . Then he said that . . .") Evi-

dently Rorvik shuns conversational quotations to avoid the appearance of a novel, and presumably shuns direct presentation of the issues in essay form to avoid the appearance of a technical review. The main failure is the attempt to combine serious philosophy with fictitious narrative, without complete sincerity in either. As a result the characters are stereotyped, the descriptions shallow, and the events predictable. The book is simply weak fiction.

But whether or not a human actually has been cloned, as described by Rorvik, is beside the point. Molecular biology is developing at such a pace that human cloning will soon be with us, if it is not here already. I see no way of avoiding it (and no, I don't think God will prohibit it). Rorvik succeeds in warning us of this eventuality and of some of the ethical questions involved. We should seek individually and collectively to answer some of these questions before human cloning becomes another "achievement" of technology for which we are morally and emotionally unprepared.

## Heavenly Bound

*Life After Life* by Raymond A. Moody, Jr. New York: Bantam Books, 1975, 189pp., \$2.25.

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Medicine has rediscovered that all life ends in death, and now seems marginally willing to explore the possibility of life after death. Raymond Moody, a psychiatrist trained in philosophy, writes one of the more straightforward and more widely circulated books on this topic. He draws on intensive interviews with some

fifty persons who were medically resuscitated, who came near death, or who observed a near death, in order to give a composite description of the experience immediately after dying.

Life after life includes a surprisingly pleasant sensation of leaving one's body and of reorientating oneself in a timeless, weightless state in which one's vision and hearing remain definitely intact but one is invisible and inaudible to others in the mortal state. One becomes aware of other spiritual beings and of a unique being of light who radiates love and warmth. The being of light extends perfect and instantaneous understanding without need of spoken language and draws one's reflections upon one's own life; in effect asking, are you prepared to die and what have you done with your

life—questions posed to induce reflection rather than to accuse or to threaten. Stressed are two life tasks: learning to love other people and acquiring knowledge. One is often reluctant to return to mortality and thereafter holds life more precious and no longer fears death.

Moody's writing is unpretentious and restrained. These qualities may enhance his credibility in the twentieth-century scientific community, which remains generally skeptical about after-death existence. Witness the fate of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, the pioneer in death and dying. When she first sought to interview terminal patients on the medical wards in Chicago, the attending physicians glibly informed her that they had no patients who were dying. She persisted, acquired international fame, and has had her stages of dying become dogma in the field. But now that she has turned her attention to life after death, the recurrent murmur in the audience is that she has now flipped out and has lost her scientific credibility.

Moody takes pains to abstract general phenomena from descriptive accounts without adding excessive speculations or forcing the narratives to conform to preconceived notions. This sets *Life After Life* a niche above most other current writings on the topic. The out-of-body experience of Moody's medical school professor, Dr. George G. Ritchie (*Return From Tomorrow* [Carmel, New York: Guideposts, 1978]), is more detailed but remains an individual account. The purported dictation of William James through the spiritualist, Susy Smith (*The Book of James* [New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1974]) has fascinating thoughts but

lacks clear separation of original phenomenologic observations from interpretations and explanations. The observations are in accord with Mormon beliefs, but the conclusions, presumably drawn by James himself, might well represent the thoughts of a brilliant man in a lower order of existence who is not privy to the inner working of the entire plan. Less suspect and more readily available to the Mormon audience is the thick book of Duane Crowther (*Life Everlasting* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967]). We find many of his accounts interesting but mistrustful because of uncritical mixing of folklore, hearsay and doctrine and because the material is forced into a preconceived Mormon belief system. For example, Crowther's introduction claims divine manifestations are available to a hierarchy of Saints from prophets down through stake presidents to faithful lay members of the Church—oblivious to non-Mormons and to the not-particularly faithful who also tell of life after life.

Moody explicitly says that he is "not trying to prove that there is life after death." However, most Mormon readers will most likely take literally the blurb from the cover jacket of the Bantam book edition and read his account as one that "actually gives history that reveals there is life after death." We view his description as a fugitive blink at another sphere of existence and not as an attempt to prove continuity of the soul. The accounts of life after death edify the believer, but could whet curiosity that distracts from the fullness of loving and learning here and now. We recommend this book but hope it does not make anyone so heavenly bound that they are no earthly good.

## *Herbs, Beeswax or Horsetail*

*Is Any Sick Among You?* by LaDean Griffin. Provo: Biworld, 1975, 228 pp., \$8.95.

*No Side Effects: The Return of Herbal Medicine* by LaDean Griffin. Provo: Biworld, 1975, pp., \$7.95.

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