The Philosophy of Death by Steven Luper

A Work Of Impressive And Comprehensive Scholarship

The Philosophy of Death is a discussion of the basic philosophical issues concerning death, and a critical introduction to the relevant contemporary philosophical literature. Luper begins by addressing questions about those who die: What is it to be alive? What does it mean for you and me to exist? Under what conditions do we persist over time, and when do we perish? Next, he considers several questions concerning death, including: What does dying consist in; in particular, how does it differ from ageing? Must death be permanent? By what signs may it be identified? Is death bad for the one who dies? If so why? Finally he discusses whether, and why, killing is morally objectionable, and suggests that it is often permissible; in particular, (assisted) suicide, euthanasia and abortion may all be morally permissible. His book is a lively and engaging philosophical treatment of a perennially fascinating and relevant subject.

My Personal Review:
A hot political topic these days, 'end of life' issues is seen by some as an essential consideration that everyone should address, while others seen it as an opening wedge for government operated 'death panels'. Death is the inevitable consequence of life. That is why "The Philosophy Of Death" by Steven Luper (Professor and Chair of the Philosophy Department, Trinity University) is such a timely and highly recommended title for both academic library Philosophy collections and so well written that it is fully accessible and enthusiastically commended for non-specialist general readers as well. Professor Luper covers in the first half the philosophical aspects of a natural death as part of the process of life, and in the second half deals with the issues of an imposed death such as homicide, suicide, euthanasia, and abortion. A work of impressive and comprehensive scholarship, "The Philosophy Of Death" is enhanced with an extensive section of references and a thorough index.

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