

powerful internal tool to adjust our thinking and improve thinking outcomes' (13). As he points out, we can apply metacognition to influence feedback loops, address cognitive distortions or thinking errors, and catalyse neurochemical changes in the brain. As stated in the foreword of this book: 'Feedback is like karma: what goes around, comes around' (xix). This feedback loop is beautifully explained in this book with examples and figures.

Another important discovery of neuroscience that the author takes hold of to arrive at his practical conclusions, is neuroplasticity, which is explained as follows: 'The collection of ways in which the brain changes in response to what we do and experience. The concept of neuroplasticity is tied to the idea that we can change the way we think, and our corresponding abilities, throughout our lifetimes' (185).

After explaining the theoretical aspects of this change in the first part titled 'Know', the author proceeds further to explain practical applications of the theory in the second part titled 'Do'. The theory must be translated into action. According to the author, one must strive to become 'ego-symmetric' to really bring about an appreciable change in our personality. DiSalvo says: 'The ego-symmetric personality is able to detach from negative and erroneous information that, if indulged, would undermine the self's ability to achieve its goals. Being ego-symmetric is not the same as being "cold" and unemotional—instead, it's about being in better control of how negativity affects our ability to adapt and thrive' (54).

In the second part, DiSalvo mentions and explains in detail '30 Tools to Enhance Thinking and Catalyze Action' (75). However, the human personality is not like a machine that can be repaired by certain tools. Still, if sincerely followed, these practical suggestions, which are thoughtfully enlisted, are sure to transform one's personality, and this transformation varies from person to person depending upon various social, individual, and other factors. And as DiSalvo admits, this list is by no means exhaustive.

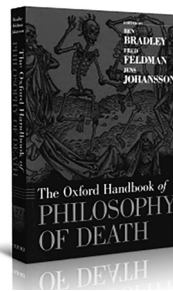
In the third part titled 'Expand', the author gives a detailed bibliography on this topic to expand the horizons of one's knowledge, which, the author claims, 'will change the way you think,

and—I can confidently say without hyperbole—change your life' (143).

The author asserts that this book does not belong to the genre of self-help literature flooding the book market. This belongs to the category of science-help books that deal with how to apply the latest discoveries of science to bring about positive internal change in human life. The author, being a science writer, 'uses the raw ingredients of science and research to cook practical advice' (blurb).

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The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Death

Edited by Ben Bradley, Fred Feldman, and Jens Johansson

Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP. UK. Website: <https://global.oup.com>. 2013. 528 pp. £145. HB. ISBN 9780195388923.

When God deserts a person, then they get to do the 'Jesus Seminar' (1985-) where the likes of the academically sound but spiritually dead, ex-Servite, John Dominic Crossan (b. 1934) lead the de-sacralisation of Jesus Christ who came back from the dead. Within Hinduism, they say that many sages are immortal. It is within the patrimonies of the Christian and Hindu faiths that the Virgin Mother of Jesus never died and many Hindu seers like Sri Trailanga Swami among others are still alive and roam this cooling and vast promontory called our world, where we are but only sojourners.

If one is a Roman Catholic and agrees with Crossan and his ilk that Christ was merely a historical human being who never came back from the dead, then that Christian is automatically excommunicated due to heresy. It is akin to saying that because one has to sit at various learned societies, one needs to prove that the Tibetan 'Bardo' is all nonsense. Ben Bradley, Fred Feldman, and Jens Johansson in their zeal for getting a book on death out in the book-market have written about a phenomenon which neither they nor their authors understand. None

in this book acknowledges that there is life after death and since they have no experiential moorings, they have reduced theology and eschatology to philosophy. If one wants to be charitable to the editors' and publisher's credentials, one can only sigh and say, 'they do not know of what they write.'

Now for a few illustrations about why this book should be avoided and erased from serious academic discourse. Philosophy is not about airy-fairy; it is about the verity of things or as far as we can comprehend these verities. Steven Luper's 'Retroactive Harms and Wrongs' (317–54) is a tour de force in learned nothings. Here he speaks of 'Harm' (318–21), 'Proactive Harm' (321–2), where he meaninglessly lambasts against Ben Bradley and writes: 'Of course, [Ben] Bradley's position presupposes that people have a welfare level while dead (namely 0). This I [Luper] question ... It is not plausible to attribute a welfare level to a subject at a time when that subject does not exist, or is for some other reason wholly incapable of attaining anything intrinsically good or evil. It is the capacity to attain intrinsic goods or evils that distinguishes subjects who have some welfare level from things that do not, such as shoes and shingles' (320).

Luper's pot-shots at Ben Bradley are just irrelevant rant. Everyone in this book questions everyone else. And why not? None of them bothered to study the Bible or the Hindu scriptures or even Vajrayana. They just had to get their non-experiential armchair meditations on death in this tome, since *Oxford Handbooks* are all the rage now. Writing for big publishers do not make philosophers; this is the takeaway from this book. Luper's most hilarious efforts at philosophising is in the section 'Retroactive Harm' (322–32):

However, even if we draw on an improved version of achievementism, we may be unable to show how retroactive harm is possible, since it is hard to see how something I achieve posthumously can be an intrinsic good I accrue. I accrue goods only while I exist; if I set out to do something, and I succeed with the help of post-mortem events, I succeed after I am dead. We are left wondering how I can accrue a good whose existence does not begin until my own is over.

(Should we say that my achievement is a good I can accrue before it (fully) exists? Do I take hold of the entire thing by accruing the first part of it, much as I might seize a snake by its tail?) (324).

Leave alone seizing a snake by its tail; Steven Luper could not even understand Ben Bradley's arguments he attacks in this puerile essay. This, with the caveat that Bradley, helped Luper write this chapter (334). Talk of the blind leading the blind in quid pro quos in high academics. What can be more gratifying to Bradley than Luper thinking him serious enough to intellectually disagree with?

'Immortality' (336–54) by John Martin Fischer, is a howler of a chapter. Fischer has no clue about mortality, leave alone immortality. Of course, he has to hedge his academic reputation by first mentioning that 'Immortality' is an 'overview' (337) chapter. Therefore, his nonsense about life and death, if challenged, can be passed off as opinions of others. Fischer is just mouthing what others have said; nothing more, nothing less. He cannot thus be blamed for what he writes! His quotation from Martha Nussbaum's (b. 1947) *The Therapy of Desire* (1994) has nothing to do with immortality except that Nussbaum speaks of the constraint of the human person in 'the here and the now' (345).

If the editors had the sense to interview, quote, and interrogate the teachings of the major religious traditions of the world, then this book would have been worth reading. An alumnus of a very well-known university in India derisively told this reviewer in 2017 that he finds a serious Indian journal too bland for his tastes. It is the like of him and his teachers who would read and glorify this meaningless book and pray to it as a bible on death. The real Holy Bible would be too lowly for this kind. Had the editors of the book under review even consulted the open access issues of serious journals around the world, including India, before venturing on their meaningless project; then it would have been worth at least some of this reviewer's time.

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