

Abstract

Title: A Good Death: On the Value of Death and Dying

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This dissertation examines different suggestions for what makes for a good death from the perspective of the dying person. In using three axiological theories, the Hedonistic theory, the Desire-fulfilment theory and the Objective-list theory the author tries to find whether any of the suggested ideas of a good death are universally valid.

In distinguishing between particular deaths and mortality it is argued that the value of a particular death is decided mainly by the value of the stretch of life the dying person is deprived of in death. The idea that mortality is a blessing is questioned and consequently it is argued that there is nothing problematic *per se* from an individual perspective with extension of life or immortality. Instead this will depend on the character of the extended or immortal lives we live.

In discussing the timing of death, ideas about a natural life span of man are refuted and it is argued that the best timing of death is decided mainly by what such a death deprives the individual dying person of in terms of further life.

In discussing a number of suggested ideas of a good death it is generally reached a sceptical conclusion as to the claim that they are univally valid suggestions for a good death. The ideas that are found to have fairly strong support from the axiological theories, e.g. ideas about continuation of relationships and relief of suffering, do however not imply that there is something axiologically special about the period of dying. Consequently, the ideas that it is important to be aware of and cognitively accept imminent death or that we should make it a habit to ponder death when death is not imminent are not found to universally make for a better death (or life).

Key words:

Good death, good dying, palliative care, immortality, acceptance of death, awareness of death, tame death, appropriate death, peaceful death.