

Introduction to Ethics
Dr. Heather Salazar
Main Theses, Week 1

Nagel: "Death"

1. "Death is dreadful...." (according to some) (1)
2. Death is not bad in itself. (according to others) (1)
3. "If death is an evil at all, it cannot be because of its positive features, but only because of what it deprived us of" (1)
4. "[I]t is a good simply to be alive, even if one is undergoing terrible experiences." (2)
5. "The value of life and its contents does not attach to mere organic survival...." (2)
6. "[M]ore [life] is better than less." (2)
7. "The added quantities need not be temporally continuous...." (2)
8. "[W]e do not object to death merely because it involves long periods of nonexistence." (3)
9. "[D]eath is not regarded as an unfortunate state..." (3)
10. The fear of death cannot be because "death is a mysterious and therefore terrifying positive *state*." (3)
11. "[W]hat you don't know can't hurt you." (according to some) (4-5)
12. But you *can* be injured by something of which you are unaware and of which you will forever be unaware. (4-7)
13. Some object that there is no person to be harmed once death occurs since there is a problem about who is harmed and when it occurs, but this isn't a problem. (4-7)
14. There is an asymmetry between the time before one's birth and after death, but one is a loss and the other is not. (4-8)
15. "[D]eath, no matter how inevitable, is an abrupt cancellation of indefinitely extensive possible goods." (10)