

Ninth Meeting: Two Kinds of Evil; Feldman on the Evil of Death

1. Two Kinds of Evil: Intrinsic and Extrinsic

x is intrinsically bad =df. x is bad in itself; x is bad independent of any consequences or preconditions; x would still be bad even if it didn't have any connection to anything else bad; x would still be bad even if it existed in total isolation.

Hedonism (restated): a state of affairs is *intrinsically* good for a person iff it is her experiencing some pleasure at some time; a state of affairs is *intrinsically* bad for a person iff it is her experiencing some pain at some time.

Something is extrinsically bad if it bears a certain connection to something intrinsically bad.

Two Interpretations of Rosenbaum's Principle (A):

- (Ai) A state of affairs is *intrinsically* bad for a person P only if P can experience it at some time.
- (Ae) A state of affairs is *extrinsically* bad for a person P only if P can experience it at some time.

2. Two Interpretations of Epicurus's "Evil Implies Awareness" Argument

Epicurus's "Evil Implies Awareness" Argument – "Intrinsic" Interpretation

1. At no time after death are we conscious.
2. If at no time after death are we conscious, then nothing intrinsically bad happens to us after death.
3. If nothing intrinsically bad happens to us after death, then being dead is not intrinsically bad for the one who dies.
4. Therefore, being dead is not intrinsically bad for the one who dies.

Epicurus's "Evil Implies Awareness" Argument – "Extrinsic" Interpretation

1. At no time after death are we conscious.
2. If at no time after death are we conscious, then nothing intrinsically bad happens to us after death.
3. If nothing intrinsically bad happens to us after death, then death is not extrinsically bad for the one who dies.
4. Therefore, death is not extrinsically bad for the one who dies.

CP: If something is extrinsically bad for a person, then it is bad for him or her because it leads to later intrinsic bads for him or her.

3. Feldman's Account of Extrinsic Badness and His View About the Evil of Death

EI: Something is extrinsically bad for a person iff he or she would have been intrinsically better off if it had not taken place.

“... in other words, it means that the life he would lead if it were to happen is intrinsically worse for him than the life he would lead if it were not to happen.”

- Feldman, *CWR*, p. 149

4. Four Puzzles About the Evil of Death

1. The No Subject Problem.

“How can being dead be a misfortune for a person, if she doesn't exist during the time when it takes place?”

- Feldman, *CWR*, p. 145

2. The Illegitimate Comparison Problem.

“.. the proposed conception of extrinsic value seems to require that we make a certain comparison—a comparison between (a) how well off a person would be if he were to go on living and (b) how well off he would be if he were to die. ... The second puzzle about the deprivation approach is that it appears that any such comparison is incoherent.”

- Feldman, *CWR*, p. 145

3. The Time of Death's Misfortune.

“Death ... the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that, when we are, death is not come, and, when death is come, we are not. It is nothing, then, either to the living or to the dead, for with the living it is not and the dead exist no longer.”

- Epicurus, “Letter to Menoecus.”

4. The Lucretian Problem.

“Think too how the bygone antiquity of everlasting time before our birth was nothing to us. Nature therefore holds this up to us as a mirror of the time yet to come after our death. Is there anything in this that looks appalling, anything that wears an aspect of gloom? Is it not more untroubled than any sleep?”

- Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*