Contents

Introduction: Confronting the Reaper, 3
The Reaper—Mysterious and Evil, 3
The Structure of the Book, 5

I THE NATURE OF DEATH

1. The Search for Death Itself, 11

The Problems of Death, 11 Conceptual Analysis, 12 Analysis of Death or Criterion for Death? 14 The Biological Concept of Death, 19 Life as a Part of Death, 20

2. Life-Functional Theories of Life, 22

Life Itself, 22 Some Preliminary Objections, 25 Aristotle's Life-Functional Analysis of Life, 26 Some Modern Life-Functional Analyses of Life, 31 The Matthews Approach, 35 Conclusion, 38

3. Vitalist Theories of Life, 39

Vitalism, 39 The Empirical Problem, 42 The Jonah Problem, 43 The Failure of Analyticity, 45 DNA-ism, 46 xii Contents

Genetic Informationism, 51 Problems for Genetic Informationism, 54

4. The Enigma of Death, 56

The Gift of Life, 56
The Biological Concept of Death, 56
Perrett's Analysis, 58
The Standard Analysis, 60
Puzzles About Suspended Animation, 60
Problems Concerning Fission and Fusion, 66
The Mystery of Death, 71

5. On Dying as a Process, 72

Two Senses of 'Dying,' 72 Some Preliminary Proposals, 73 Smart's Analysis of Dying2, 77 Problems for Smart's Analysis, 78 A New Proposal, 80 More Mysteries of Dying2, 85 On Death and Dying2, 87

6. The Survival of Death, 89

The Termination Thesis, 89

Some Philosophers Who Have Accepted the Termination Thesis, 91

Doubts About the Termination Thesis, 93

The Argument from Definition, 96

The Argument from Dualism, 97

Corpses and People, 100

Death and Nonexistence As, 104

7. A Materialist Conception of Death, 106

A New Approach to Death, 106
The Lifeline, 107
Death Itself, "a Death," and Being Dead, 108
Death and Life, 110
Death and Existence, 113
Deaths, Lives, and Histories, 115
Death and Humanity, 117

Contents xiii

Death and Personality, 118

A Materialist Way of Death, 123

II THE VALUE OF DEATH

8. Epicurus and the Evil of Death, 127

Epicurus's Argument Against the Evil of Death, 128 Difficulties for the First Version of the Argument, 133 A New Version of the Argument, 135 The Fallacy in the New Version, 137 How Death Can Be Bad for the One Who Dies, 138

9. More Puzzles About the Evil of Death, 143

The Puzzles, 143 Axiological Preliminaries, 146 Things That Are Bad for People, 148 The Evil of Death, 150 Some Proposed Answers, 152 Conclusions, 156

10. Utilitarianism, Victimism, and the Morality of Killing, 157

"Thou Shalt Not Kill," 157

Hedonic Act Utilitarianism and the Morality
of Killing, 163

Why HAU Fails to Explain the Wrongness of Killing, 166

Theories Based on Harm to the Victim, 167

And Why They Fail, Too, 170

11. Why Killing Is Wrong, 173

Ideal Act Utilitarianism, 173
Vitalistic Act Utilitarianism, 174
Hedono-vitalistic Act Utilitarianism, 177
Problems for HVAU, 181
Justicism, 182
Justicized Act Utilitarianism, 185

12. Abortion and the Failure to Conceive, 191 *Three Examples, 193*

xiv Contents

Justicism, Murder, and the Failure to Conceive, 198 Justicized Act Utilitarianism and the Problem of Abortion, 200 The "Right to Life," 205 Advantages of This View, 207

13. The Morality and Rationality of Suicide, 210
Welcoming the Reaper, 210
Three Arguments for the Immorality of Suicide, 211
An Argument for the Irrationality of Suicide, 215
An Epistemic Argument Against the Rationality
of Suicide, 217
"Calculative Rationality" and Suicide, 219
Euthanasia, 223

14. Epilogue, 225

Notes, 229 Bibliography, 239 Index, 243