

ernest becker denial of death

Ernest Becker Denial of Death: Exploring the Human Struggle with Mortality

ernest becker denial of death is a phrase that resonates deeply within psychology, philosophy, and even popular culture. Becker, a cultural anthropologist and interdisciplinary thinker, fundamentally changed the way we understand human behavior by focusing on our relationship with mortality. His groundbreaking work, especially his Pulitzer Prize-winning book **The Denial of Death**, offers profound insights into why humans go to great lengths to avoid confronting their own finitude. If you've ever wondered why death is such a taboo topic or how our fear of death shapes our lives, Becker's ideas provide a fascinating roadmap.

The Core Concept of Ernest Becker's Denial of Death

At the heart of Becker's theory is the idea that humans are uniquely aware of their mortality, and this awareness creates a pervasive existential terror. Unlike other animals, humans understand that death is inevitable, and this knowledge can be paralyzing. The "denial of death," then, isn't about ignoring death entirely but rather about the psychological defenses we build to manage this overwhelming fear.

Becker argued that our culture, beliefs, and personal identities function as symbolic shields against death anxiety. These constructs give life meaning and continuity beyond our physical existence, allowing us to feel connected to something larger and more enduring—whether that's religion, legacy, or social status. This is why Becker's work is often considered a cornerstone of existential psychology and terror management theory.

Why Do We Deny Death?

Becker's analysis suggests that denial isn't just about avoiding scary thoughts. Instead, it's a fundamental survival mechanism. Here are some reasons why denial of death plays such a pivotal role:

- ****Preserving Psychological Stability:**** Constant awareness of death can lead to anxiety, depression, or paralysis. Denial helps maintain mental health by allowing individuals to focus on day-to-day life.
- ****Motivating Achievement:**** The fear of death pushes people to seek immortality through accomplishments, creative works, or family legacies.
- ****Creating Social Bonds:**** Shared beliefs about life and death help build communities and cultural identities that provide a sense of belonging.

Ernest Becker's Influence on Psychology and Philosophy

Becker's *The Denial of Death* is not just an academic treatise; it has shaped entire fields of study. His insights have been foundational to terror management theory (TMT), which explores how people react when reminded of their mortality. According to TMT, mortality salience — the awareness of death — can influence behavior in surprising ways, from increased nationalism to aggression or generosity.

In philosophy, Becker's work echoes existentialist themes from thinkers like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, who also grappled with meaning in the face of death. However, Becker's unique contribution was to blend anthropology, psychology, and cultural analysis, making his work accessible and applicable to real-world human behavior.

The Role of Culture in Denying Death

A major element of Becker's thesis is the role of culture in helping individuals deny death. Culture offers what he called "immortality projects" — systems of belief or practice that promise a form of symbolic or literal continuation after death. Examples include:

- Religious faiths promising an afterlife
- Artistic or scientific achievements that outlast the creator
- Nationalism or political ideologies offering collective immortality

These projects provide meaning that transcends individual mortality and reduce death anxiety by fostering a sense of permanence.

How Ernest Becker Denial of Death Impacts Everyday Life

Understanding Becker's denial of death theory can shed light on many everyday human behaviors that might otherwise seem puzzling. For instance:

- **Why people pursue fame or wealth:** Often, these are unconscious attempts to create a lasting legacy.
- **Why people cling to ideologies:** Beliefs can provide reassurance against the chaos of mortality.
- **Why some avoid discussing death:** Talking about death threatens the protective illusions that help maintain psychological equilibrium.

Practical Insights from Becker's Work

Reflecting on Becker's ideas offers valuable lessons for personal growth and mental health:

- **Embrace mortality awareness:** Rather than suppressing thoughts about death, acknowledging mortality can inspire more authentic living.
- **Build meaningful "immortality projects":** Engaging in activities that feel significant, such as creative pursuits or community service, helps create a sense of lasting impact.
- **Cultivate flexible beliefs:** Recognizing that many cultural and personal beliefs serve to manage death anxiety encourages openness and resilience.
- **Balance denial and acceptance:** While some denial is natural and protective, moving toward acceptance of mortality can reduce fear and increase life satisfaction.

Critiques and Continued Relevance of Becker's Ideas

While Ernest Becker's denial of death theory has been immensely influential, it's not without criticism. Some argue that his focus on death anxiety overemphasizes the role of fear in human motivation, potentially underappreciating other drivers like love, curiosity, or altruism.

Yet, decades after its publication, his work remains remarkably relevant. In a world where death is often sanitized or hidden from public view, Becker's insights remind us that confronting mortality is essential for psychological health and genuine living. His ideas encourage a balance between the natural human need for denial and the courage to face life's ultimate reality head-on.

Modern Applications: From Therapy to Pop Culture

Becker's denial of death theory has influenced therapeutic approaches, such as existential psychotherapy, which helps clients explore death anxiety to live more meaningful lives. Additionally, popular media often reflects Becker's themes, exploring how characters cope with mortality through legacy, belief systems, or rebellion.

Whether through books, movies, or therapy, his work continues to provide a framework for understanding one of the most profound human experiences: the tension between life and death.

Ernest Becker's denial of death concept offers a powerful lens for understanding why we behave the way we do, especially when faced with the ultimate truth of our mortality. By exploring the psychological defenses we build and the cultural narratives we create, Becker invites us to reflect on what it means to live fully in the shadow of death. Embracing this awareness can lead to richer, more authentic lives—where fear of death no longer dominates but instead fuels purpose and connection.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was Ernest Becker and what is his main contribution to psychology?

Ernest Becker was a cultural anthropologist and interdisciplinary thinker best known for his work on the human denial of death. His main contribution is the book "The Denial of Death," where he explores how the awareness of mortality influences human behavior and culture.

What is the central thesis of Ernest Becker's 'The Denial of Death'?

The central thesis of 'The Denial of Death' is that much of human behavior is driven by an unconscious denial of mortality. Becker argues that people create and invest in cultural worldviews and self-esteem as a way to achieve a sense of symbolic immortality and overcome the terror of death.

How does Ernest Becker explain the concept of 'terror management'?

Ernest Becker's ideas laid the groundwork for Terror Management Theory (TMT), which suggests that the fear of death motivates humans to bolster their cultural worldviews and self-esteem to manage existential anxiety. By doing so, individuals protect themselves from the paralyzing terror associated with their mortality.

Why is denial of death considered a psychological defense mechanism according to Becker?

According to Becker, denial of death is a psychological defense mechanism because the conscious knowledge of inevitable death creates overwhelming anxiety. To function effectively, humans repress this anxiety and instead focus on symbolic immortality through cultural achievements, beliefs, and self-worth.

What role do cultural worldviews play in Ernest Becker's theory?

In Becker's theory, cultural worldviews provide a framework of meaning, order, and permanence that helps individuals feel that they are part of something larger and enduring beyond their physical death. These worldviews are essential for managing death anxiety and sustaining self-esteem.

How has Ernest Becker's denial of death influenced modern psychology and psychotherapy?

Becker's work has influenced modern psychology by inspiring Terror Management Theory and by highlighting the importance of addressing existential concerns in psychotherapy. It encourages therapists to explore clients' fears about mortality and the meaning of life to promote psychological well-being.

What criticisms have been raised regarding Ernest Becker's denial of death theory?

Critics argue that Becker's theory may overemphasize death anxiety as the primary motivator of human behavior, potentially neglecting other psychological and social factors. Some also critique the theory's heavy reliance on symbolic immortality and question its empirical testability.

Can Ernest Becker's denial of death be applied to understanding cultural conflicts?

Yes, Becker's theory suggests that cultural conflicts often arise because groups defend their worldviews to protect against death anxiety. When one group's beliefs are threatened by another's, it can trigger existential fears that escalate into conflict and violence.

How can individuals use insights from Becker's denial of death theory for personal growth?

By acknowledging and confronting the reality of death rather than denying it, individuals can live more authentically, prioritize meaningful goals, and reduce existential anxiety. This awareness can foster greater acceptance, compassion, and a deeper appreciation for life.

Additional Resources

Ernest Becker Denial of Death: Exploring the Core of Human Anxiety and Motivation

ernest becker denial of death represents a profound psychological and philosophical framework that has influenced how scholars and practitioners understand human behavior in relation to mortality. Becker's seminal work, particularly his Pulitzer Prize-winning book **The Denial of Death** (1973), dissects the intricate relationship between human consciousness, the fear of death, and the various defense mechanisms individuals employ to cope with existential anxiety. This article offers a comprehensive exploration of Becker's theory, its impact on psychology, and the enduring relevance of his insights in contemporary discourse.

The Foundation of Ernest Becker's Theory

Ernest Becker's analysis is rooted in the premise that humans are uniquely aware of their mortality, a knowledge that simultaneously empowers and terrifies them. Unlike other animals, humans possess a self-consciousness that includes an understanding of the inevitability of death. This awareness generates a fundamental existential anxiety that shapes much of human behavior. Becker argued that this deep-seated

fear is largely unconscious but manifests in various cultural, psychological, and individual phenomena.

At the heart of Becker's thesis is the concept of "denial" — not in the simplistic sense of ignoring death, but as a complex psychological defense mechanism. This denial functions to shield the individual from paralyzing terror by constructing symbolic systems of meaning, such as religion, culture, and personal achievements, which provide a sense of immortality or lasting significance.

Psychological Roots and Influences

Becker's work draws heavily on psychoanalytic theory, particularly the ideas of Freud and Otto Rank. Freud emphasized the role of repressed fears and desires in shaping behavior, while Rank introduced the notion of the "will to immortality," which Becker expanded upon extensively. Additionally, Becker incorporated existential philosophy, referencing thinkers such as Kierkegaard and Heidegger, who grappled with the anxiety arising from human finitude.

The denial of death, according to Becker, is not merely a personal psychological phenomenon but a cultural one. Societies develop shared worldviews or "immortality projects" that help individuals transcend their mortal limitations by embedding their lives within larger, enduring narratives. These projects range from religious faith to heroic achievements and social institutions, all designed to mitigate death anxiety.

Core Concepts of Becker's Denial of Death

Understanding Becker's theory requires examining several key concepts: existential terror, symbolic immortality, and heroism.

Existential Terror and Anxiety

Becker posits that the awareness of death creates an unbearable existential terror that threatens to overwhelm the individual's psyche. This terror is unique to humans due to their cognitive abilities to anticipate the future and comprehend their mortality. Unlike physical pain or other fears, death anxiety is pervasive and existential in nature, influencing a wide range of behaviors from daily decision-making to long-term goals.

Symbolic Immortality

To combat death anxiety, humans engage in what Becker calls "immortality projects," which serve as

symbolic attempts to transcend death. These projects may include:

- Religious beliefs promising an afterlife
- Artistic or intellectual legacies
- Social status and cultural contributions
- Raising children or nurturing family lines

Through participation in these symbolic systems, individuals gain a sense of permanence and value beyond their physical existence. Becker believed these projects are essential for psychological health but also warned that excessive reliance on them could lead to destructive behaviors.

The Pursuit of Heroism

A central theme in Becker's theory is the concept of heroism, which he defines broadly as the endeavor to achieve significance and meaning within one's cultural context. Heroism, in this sense, is a psychological mechanism that helps individuals assert their value and counteract feelings of insignificance in the face of death. Becker's notion of heroism transcends traditional views of bravery, encompassing everyday actions that affirm one's identity and legacy.

The Impact of Becker's Denial of Death on Psychology and Beyond

Ernest Becker's work has had a profound influence on various disciplines, including clinical psychology, social psychology, and cultural studies. His insights have paved the way for new approaches to understanding anxiety disorders, motivation, and human resilience.

Integration into Terror Management Theory

One of the most significant developments stemming from Becker's ideas is Terror Management Theory (TMT), formulated by social psychologists Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski. TMT empirically tests Becker's hypothesis by demonstrating that reminders of mortality can increase adherence to cultural worldviews and escalate defensive behaviors intended to bolster self-esteem.

This research has shown that death awareness influences numerous aspects of human behavior, such as prejudice, aggression, and even consumer choices. The integration of Becker's denial of death into empirical frameworks underscores the theory's scientific robustness and relevance.

Applications in Clinical Psychology

Becker's theory has practical implications for therapy and mental health treatment. Understanding that many psychological symptoms and disorders may stem from unresolved death anxiety allows clinicians to tailor interventions that address existential concerns. Therapies such as existential psychotherapy and meaning-centered counseling draw upon Becker's insights to help patients confront mortality and find authentic purpose.

Cultural and Sociological Perspectives

Beyond psychology, Becker's denial of death offers a lens through which to analyze cultural phenomena. For example, nationalism, terrorism, and ideological extremism can be interpreted as extreme forms of immortality projects where individuals seek significance through group identity. This perspective aids in comprehending the underlying emotional drivers of societal conflicts and political movements.

Critiques and Limitations of Becker's Theory

While widely influential, Becker's denial of death theory has not been without criticism. Some scholars argue that his emphasis on death anxiety may overlook other foundational human motivations, such as the pursuit of pleasure or social connection. Additionally, critics point out that not all cultural or individual behaviors can be solely attributed to death denial, suggesting that Becker's framework may be overly deterministic.

Another critique involves the universality of death anxiety. Anthropological studies indicate that certain cultures possess different attitudes toward death that do not necessarily align with Becker's emphasis on terror. For instance, some indigenous communities celebrate death as a natural transition rather than a source of dread, complicating the notion of a universal denial.

Nevertheless, these critiques often acknowledge the value of Becker's work as a starting point for deeper exploration of existential issues rather than a comprehensive explanation.

The Enduring Legacy of Ernest Becker's Denial of Death

Decades after its publication, *The Denial of Death* remains a seminal text that continues to resonate across disciplines. Becker's profound insight into the human condition—the tension between the awareness of mortality and the drive for meaning—provides a robust framework for understanding the complexities of human motivation.

In an era marked by rapid social change, global crises, and renewed existential questioning, Becker's exploration of death denial offers crucial perspectives on how individuals and societies navigate fear, identity, and purpose. The theory's integration into contemporary research and clinical practice affirms its ongoing relevance.

Ultimately, Ernest Becker's denial of death challenges individuals to confront the realities of mortality with courage and creativity, encouraging a life lived with authenticity and awareness rather than avoidance. This enduring message underscores the power of his work to illuminate the profound interplay between death and the human spirit.

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ernest becker denial of death: The Denial of Death Ernest Becker, 2011-03-01 'It made me rethink the roots of our deepest fears and insecurities, and why we often disappoint ourselves in how we manifest them' Bill Clinton, Guardian Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1974 and the culmination of a life's work, *The Denial of Death* is Ernest Becker's brilliant and impassioned answer to the 'why' of human existence. In bold contrast to the predominant Freudian school of thought, Becker tackles the problem of the vital lie - man's refusal to acknowledge his own mortality. The book argues that human civilisation is a defence against the knowledge that we are mortal beings. Becker states that humans live in both the physical world and a symbolic world of meaning, which is where our 'immortality project' resides. We create in order to become immortal - to become part of something we believe will last forever. In this way we hope to give our lives meaning. In *The Denial of Death*, Becker sheds new light on the nature of humanity and issues a call to life and its living that still resonates decades after it was written.

ernest becker denial of death: Making Sense of Dying and Death Andrew Fagan, 2004 Health, illness and disease are topics well-suited to interdisciplinary inquiry. This book brings together scholars from around the world who share an interest in and a commitment to bridging the traditional boundaries of inquiry. We hope that this book begins new conversations that will situate health in broader socio-cultural contexts and establish connections between health, illness and disease and other socio-political issues. This book is the outcome of the first global conference on *Making Sense of: Health, Illness and Disease*, held at St Catherine's College, Oxford, in June 2002.

The selected papers pursue a range of topics from the cultural significance of narratives of health, illness and disease to healing practices in contemporary society as well as patients' illness experiences.

ernest becker denial of death: *The End of the Christian Life* J. Todd Billings, 2020-09-15 We're all going to die. Yet in our medically advanced, technological age, many of us see death as a distant reality--something that happens only at the end of a long life or to other people. In *The End of the Christian Life*, Todd Billings urges Christians to resist that view. Instead, he calls us to embrace our mortality in our daily life and faith. This is the journey of genuine discipleship, Billings says: following the crucified and resurrected Lord in a world of distraction and false hopes. Drawing on his experience as a professor and father living with incurable cancer, Billings offers a personal yet deeply theological account of the gospel's expansive hope for small, mortal creatures. Artfully weaving rich theology with powerful narrative, Billings writes for church leaders and laypeople alike. Whether we are young or old, reeling from loss or clinging to our own prosperity, this book challenges us to walk a strange but wondrous path: in the midst of joy and lament, to receive mortal limits as a gift, an opportunity to give ourselves over to the Lord of life.

ernest becker denial of death: *Death, Dying, Culture: An Interdisciplinary Interrogation* Lloyd Steffen, Nate Hinerman, 2019-01-04 This volume was first published by Inter-Disciplinary Press in 2013. This inter- and multi-disciplinary volume examines how culture impacts care for the dying, the overall experience of dying, and ways the dead are remembered. Over the past three decades, scholarship in thanatology has increased dramatically. This text localizes a broad array of perspectives that research, analyze, and interpret the many interrelations and interactions that exist between death and culture. Culture not only presents and portrays ideas about 'a good death' and norms that seek to achieve it, but culture also operates as both a vehicle and medium through which meaning about death is communicated and understood. Sadly, too, culture sometimes facilitates death through violence.

ernest becker denial of death: Mortality, Immortality, and Other Life Strategies Zygmunt Bauman, 1992 Forfatteren opstiller den hypotese, at menneskets viden om, at det skal dø, har dybtgående indflydelse på den sociale opbygning i alle samfund

ernest becker denial of death: *Intimations of Mortality* Barbara A. Reich, 2022-03-17 In *Intimations of Mortality*, Barbara Reich offers an empirically-based critique of the failures of end-of-life communication and decision-making in the United States. Using England and Canada as occasional foils, Reich explores why U.S. physicians, patients, and families struggle to have the conversations necessary to provide seriously ill and dying patients with medical care consistent with their preferences. Reich also shows how a number of different factors -including payment mechanisms, liability fears, cultural phenomena, communication avoidance, death denial, and clinical uncertainty -impact physician-patient communication and medical decision-making, leave patients and families without the tools they need to make informed choices, and instead leave the default practices in place. Ultimately, this groundbreaking analysis unveils the interconnectedness of the many obstacles to better communication and decision-making in end-of-life communications and offers much-needed suggestions for improvement.

ernest becker denial of death: *Eschatology* Hans Schwarz, 2000-09-22 Schwarz guides readers through the range of opinions on the subject of the future, telling how readers' understanding of eschatology has developed and laying out the factors that must be considered when speaking meaningfully about the Christian hope in the 21st century. He surveys the teachings about the future in the Old and New Testaments and addresses the views of Christian and secular thinkers throughout history.

ernest becker denial of death: Der Wurm in unserem Herzen Sheldon Solomon, Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski, 2016-04-18 Die treibende Kraft in unser aller Leben Als Wurm im Herzen des Menschen bezeichnete der amerikanische Psychologe und Philosoph William James einst das Wissen um unsere Vergänglichkeit. In einer faszinierenden Studie, die auf zahlreichen Versuchen beruht, schildern die amerikanischen Psychologen Solomon, Greenberg und Pyszczynski,

wie sehr die Furcht vor dem Nicht-mehr-Sein unser alltägliches Leben beeinflusst – häufig unbewusst. Menschen, die in bestimmten Situationen vor Entscheidungen gestellt werden, reagieren anders, wenn sie zuvor mit dem Gedanken an ihre Sterblichkeit konfrontiert wurden: So fällt ein Richter ein härteres Urteil gegen eine Angeklagte, die moralische Normen verletzt hat, und Studenten beurteilen Kritik am eigenen Land negativer. Zwei Dinge, so zeigen die Autoren, spielen eine wichtige Rolle bei der Bewältigung der Furcht: unsere Geborgenheit in einer Kultur, die für Sinnstiftung und eine umfassende Ordnung sorgt, sowie das Gefühl jedes Individuums, ein bedeutungsvolles Leben zu führen. Sie sind der Antrieb für die kulturellen Leistungen der Menschen, für unsere Loyalitäten, aber andererseits auch für Unruhen und Kriege. Ein Buch voll überraschender Einsichten!

ernest becker denial of death: The Philosophy of Science Fiction Film Steven M. Sanders, 2007-12-14 Thought-provoking essays on movies from Metropolis to The Matrix. The science fiction genre, through films such as Blade Runner, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, and The Terminator, not only entertains us but makes us think—about the implications of new technologies, the parameters and possibilities of space and time, and, in the age of artificial intelligence and robotics, the meaning of humanity itself. The Philosophy of Science Fiction Film explores the storylines, conflicts, and themes of fifteen science fiction film classics. Editor Steven M. Sanders and a group of outstanding scholars in philosophy, film studies, and other fields raise science fiction film criticism to a new level by penetrating the surfaces of the films to expose the underlying philosophical arguments, ethical perspectives, and metaphysical views.

ernest becker denial of death: Protestantismus - Aufklärung - Frömmigkeit Andreas Kubik, 2011-06-16 Aufklärung und Frömmigkeit scheinen sich nicht miteinander zu vertragen. Größeres Wissen und die Bereitschaft zur Kritik bedrohen das Glaubensleben, wie andererseits ein intensives religiöses Leben sich nicht mit dem Ideal der Aufgeklärtheit zu vertragen scheint. Der Protestantismus hat traditionell größere Nähe zur Aufklärung als das katholische Christentum, bezahlt dies aber mit einer vermeintlichen Verarmung spiritueller Vollzüge. Doch gibt es im Windschatten der immer wieder beschriebenen »Rückkehr der Religion« neue Möglichkeiten des Gesprächs zwischen den verschiedenen Größen. Es kehrt auch das Bedürfnis wieder, aufgeklärtes Bewusstsein und gelebte Religion als miteinander verträglich zu denken. Der Protestantismus hat in seiner Geschichte und seiner Gegenwart große Potenziale, dieses Bedürfnis zu reflektieren und zu erfüllen. Die Beiträge widmen sich dem spannungsreichen Verhältnis von Protestantismus, Aufklärung und Frömmigkeit. Sie untersuchen zum einen geschichtliche Positionen: Die Aufklärung bedeutet historisch nicht einfach einen Abbruch, sondern vor allem eine Transformation frommen Lebens. Sie bieten ferner Schlaglichter auf gegenwärtige Wahrnehmungen aufgeklärt-religiösen Lebens innerhalb und außerhalb der Kirche. Sie fragen des Weiteren vor allem im Anschluss an Herder und Schleiermacher nach systematisch-theologischen Verhältnisbestimmungen von Aufklärung und Frömmigkeit, und bieten schließlich eine Reihe praktisch-theologischer Anstöße zur konkreten Arbeit in religiösen Handlungsfeldern wie Predigt, Jugendarbeit, Seelsorge und Kasualien.

ernest becker denial of death: Feuerbach and the Interpretation of Religion Van A. Harvey, 1997-03-06 Ludwig Feuerbach is traditionally regarded as a significant but transitional figure in the development of nineteenth-century German thought. Readings of Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* tend to focus on those features which made it seem liberating to the Young Hegelians: namely, its criticism of reification as abstraction, and its interpretation of religion as alienation. In this book, Van Harvey claims that this is a limited and inadequate view of Feuerbach's work, especially of his critique of religion. The author argues that Feuerbach's philosophical development led him to a much more complex and interesting theory of religion which he expounded in works which have been virtually ignored hitherto. By exploring these works, Harvey gives them a significant contemporary re-statement, and brings Feuerbach into conversation with a number of modern theorists of religion.

ernest becker denial of death: Volume 13: Kierkegaard's Influence on the Social

Sciences Jon Stewart, 2016-12-05 Kierkegaard has long been known as a philosopher and theologian, but his contributions to psychology, anthropology and sociology have also made an important impact on these fields. In many of the works of his complex authorship, Kierkegaard presents his intriguing and unique vision of the nature and mental life of human beings individually and collectively. The articles featured in the present volume explore the reception of Kierkegaard's thought in the social sciences. Of these fields Kierkegaard is perhaps best known in psychology, where *The Concept of Anxiety* and *The Sickness unto Death* have been the two most influential texts. With regard to the field of sociology, social criticism, or social theory, Kierkegaard's *Literary Review of Two Ages* has also been regarded as offering valuable insights about some important dynamics of modern society..

ernest becker denial of death: *The Human Being* Hans Schwarz, 2013-12-20 This overview of Christian anthropology by Hans Schwarz uniquely emphasizes three things: (1) the biblical testimony, (2) the historical unfolding of Christian anthropology through the centuries, and (3) the present affirmation of Christian anthropology in view of rival options and current scientific evidence. Schwarz begins by elucidating the special place occupied by human beings in the world, then ponders the complex issue of human freedom, and concludes by investigating humanity as a community of men and women in this world and in the world beyond. While maintaining a strong biblical orientation, Schwarz draws on a wide range of resources, including philosophy and the natural sciences, in order to map out what it means to be human. Schwarz's *Human Being* will interest anyone who is concerned with how in the face of fascinating scientific insights we can intelligently talk today about human sinfulness, human freedom, and human beings as children of the God who created us.

ernest becker denial of death: *Our Changing Journey to the End* Christina Staudt, J. Harold Ellens, 2013-11-12 This novel, cross-disciplinary collection explains how dying, death, and grieving have changed in America, for better or worse, since the turn of the millennium. What does dying with dignity mean in a diverse society with rapidly advancing technology, an aging population, and finite resources? In this fascinating collection, scholars from across the nation illuminate the remarkable changes that have taken place in recent years, are now underway, and loom on the horizon as they lead readers on an exploration of the ways Americans think about and handle dying and death. Volume 1, *New Paths of Engagement*, addresses changes in the circumstances and expressions of death, dying, and grief in 21st-century America. Volume 2, *New Venues in the Search for Dignity and Grace*, delves into the challenges inherent in creating a medical and social system that allows for an optimal end-of-life experience for all and proposes ways in which society can be reshaped to move toward that ideal.

ernest becker denial of death: *The Power of Others* Michael Bond, 2014-05-01 Teenage cliques, jihadist cells, army units, polar expeditions, and football hooligans – on the face of it, each of these groups might seem exceptional, but the forces that bind and drive them can affect us all. In recent decades, psychologists have uncovered how and why our innate socialness holds huge sway over how we think and act, propelling us to both high achievement and unthinking cruelty. We are beholden to our peers, even when we think we're calling the shots. This is the power of others. In this captivating work, science writer Michael Bond investigates the latest breakthroughs in social psychology to reveal how to guard against groupthink, build better teamwork, identify shared objectives, become more ethical, and survive moments of isolation. A fascinating blend of evolutionary theory, behavioural science, and remarkable case studies, *The Power of Others* will teach you to truly harness your collective self.

ernest becker denial of death: *From Walt to Woodstock* Douglas Brode, 2014-05-02 With his thumbprint on the most ubiquitous films of childhood, Walt Disney is widely considered to be the most conventional of all major American moviemakers. The adjective *Disneyfied* has become shorthand for a creative work that has abandoned any controversial or substantial content to find commercial success. But does Disney deserve that reputation? Douglas Brode overturns the idea of Disney as a middlebrow filmmaker by detailing how Disney movies played a key role in transforming

children of the Eisenhower era into the radical youth of the Age of Aquarius. Using close readings of Disney projects, Brode shows that Disney's films were frequently ahead of their time thematically. Long before the cultural tumult of the sixties, Disney films preached pacifism, introduced a generation to the notion of feminism, offered the screen's first drug-trip imagery, encouraged young people to become runaways, insisted on the need for integration, advanced the notion of a sexual revolution, created the concept of multiculturalism, called for a return to nature, nourished the cult of the righteous outlaw, justified violent radicalism in defense of individual rights, argued in favor of communal living, and encouraged antiauthoritarian attitudes. Brode argues that Disney, more than any other influence in popular culture, should be considered the primary creator of the sixties counterculture—a reality that couldn't be further from his conventional reputation.

ernest becker denial of death: Denial of Death Ernest Becker, 2024-05-15 Dalam buku ini, Ernest Becker, di satu sisi, membahas motivasi dasar perilaku manusia, kebutuhan biologisnya untuk menyangkal mengakui kematiannya sendiri. Teror kematian, yang begitu dahsyat dan membuat manusia kewalahan membuat kita bersekongkol untuk menyembunyikannya, dengan menciptakan sistem kepahlawanan yang memungkinkan kita untuk percaya bahwa kita bisa melampaui kematian dengan berpartisipasi dalam sesuatu yang bernilai abadi. Di sisi lain, Becker juga mengungkapkan, sistem kepahlawanan itu selalu bersifat paradoksal—proyek heroik yang bertujuan untuk menghancurkan kejahatan justru malah membawa lebih banyak kejahatan ke dunia. Tidak berlebihan jika dikatakan bahwa Becker memberi kita cara baru untuk memahami bagaimana manusia menciptakan begitu banyak kejahatan—perang, pemusnahan etnis, dan genosida.

ernest becker denial of death: Teaching Death and Dying Christopher M. Moreman, 2008 The academic study of death rose to prominence during the 1960s. Courses on some aspect of death and dying can now be found at most institutions of higher learning. These courses tend to stress the psycho-social aspects of grief and bereavement, however, ignoring the religious elements inherent to the subject. This collection is the first to address the teaching of courses on death and dying from a religious-studies perspective. The book is divided into seven sections. The hope is that this volume will not only assist teachers in religious studies departments to prepare to teach unfamiliar and emotionally charged material, but also help to unify a field that is now widely scattered across several disciplines.

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