



Understanding Human Nature: Definition and Theories

The theories related to human nature are manifold and diverse. The 'Tabula Rasa' theory by John Locke proposes that individuals begin life as a blank slate, implying all behaviors are learned over time through experiences.

On the contrary, biological determinism suggests that behaviors are primarily determined by genetic predisposition. Psychoanalytic theories introduced by Freud attribute much of our behavior patterns to unconscious desires or conflicts while social learning theorists like Bandura argue for a blend of environmental influence and personal process in shaping one's behavior. Existentialist philosophers such as Sartre contend that humans have freedom and responsibility to define their own nature through choices made in life.

The Concept of Death and Mortality in Human Psychology

It is crucial to note that humans are the only species aware of their finite existence which significantly influences behavior patterns. Terror Management Theory (TMT), proposed by social psychologists Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon and Tom Pyszczynski argue that much human action stems from an underlying effort to confront and manage the fear of death.

This realization typically leads people toward two responses: living in constant anxiety over their impending end or choosing pathways like religion or creating symbolic immortality through legacy work – essentially anything that provides a sense they will continue beyond physical death.

The Fear of Death: Origins and Influences on Human Behavior

This innate fear shapes individual behaviors in different ways depending on personal belief systems and cultural backgrounds. For example, those who believe in an afterlife or reincarnation may perceive death differently than those who do not have such beliefs.

Our society's collective denial of death adds another layer to how we manage our mortality-related fears: by idolizing youth, health and wealth while avoiding discussions about aging and dying. Thus, various coping mechanisms emerge ranging from legacy creation (career accomplishments), embracing spirituality or religion to obsessive focus on maintaining physical health among others.

Philosophical Perspectives on Death and the Fear of Mortality

In contrast, Absurdism (as discussed by Albert Camus) posits that humans' quest for meaning and clarity in a world devoid of it is absurd given the inevitable end – death. Despite the seemingly bleak view, Camus suggests an embrace of this absurdity by living fully engaged lives while acknowledging its ultimate futility. This contemplation on mortality thereby pushes individuals towards actively seeking purpose and value within their temporal existence.

Cultural and Societal Impact on Human Perception of Death

Societal structures also influence our perception of death. Modern society often isolates aging and dying individuals in nursing homes or hospitals, minimizing exposure to natural processes like aging and mortality.

This segregation can contribute further towards fear and misunderstanding around these inevitable aspects of human existence. Media portrayal is another important factor that typically paints death with hues of horror or tragedy instead framing it as a normal stage of life – therefore reinforcing fear-driven behaviors among people.

Strategies for Coping with the Fear of Death: Psychological Approaches

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) techniques have also shown effectiveness in managing thanatophobia - a clinical term for extreme fear of one's own death. By cultivating awareness and presence in the moment, MBSR assists people to live fully present rather than being preoccupied by future-oriented anxieties over dying.

Therapeutic approaches like Dialectical Behavioural Therapy encourage developing distress tolerance skills — including acceptance and radical openness — which can be very helpful when dealing with existential fears about death.