



Life, Death, and Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings on the Big Questions

By David Benatar

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Do our lives have meaning? Should we create more people? Is death bad? Should we commit suicide? Would it be better to be immortal? Should we be optimistic or pessimistic? Since *Life, Death, and Meaning: Key Philosophical Readings on the Big Questions* first appeared, David Benatar's distinctive anthology designed to introduce students to the key existential questions of philosophy has won a devoted following among users in a variety of upper-level and even introductory courses. While many philosophers in the 'continental tradition'—those known as 'existentialists'—have engaged these issues at length and often with great popular appeal, English-speaking philosophers have had relatively little to say on these important questions. Yet, the methodology they bring to philosophical questions can, and occasionally has, been applied usefully to 'existential' questions. This volume draws together a representative sample of primarily English-speaking philosophers' reflections on life's big questions, divided into six sections, covering (1) the meaning of life, (2) creating people, (3) death, (4) suicide, (5) immortality, and (6) optimism and pessimism. These key readings are supplemented with helpful introductions, study questions, and suggestions for further reading, making the material accessible and interesting for students. In short, the book provides a singular introduction to the way that philosophy has dealt with the big questions of life that we are all tempted to ask.

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Editorial Review

Review

The selection of papers is excellent....Benatar has done a first rate job in fulfilling, and when necessary balancing, all those requirements and has produced an exceptionally good, interesting and informative collection of papers. Students and educated laypersons who read through the anthology will become familiar with some of the best and most representative works in the field which include many of the most central and important arguments on the issues discussed....This collection should prove to be an important contribution to the development of the discussion on Analytic Existentialism. (*Metapsychology Online Reviews, May 2010*)

Students and educated laypersons who read through the anthology will become familiar with some of the best and most representative works in the field which include many of the most central and important arguments on the issues discussed. While the articles are interesting and of a very high academic level, they are not too technical, too long, or otherwise difficult for students or the educated public to follow. Although there are already some anthologies that discuss the meaning of life, none relate the topic to questions of immortality, death, suicide, or the benefit of coming into existence as this one does. (Iddo Landau *Metapsychology Online Reviews, March 2010*)

About the Author

David Benatar is professor of philosophy at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Valerie Israel:

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Dustin Singh:

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