**Article**

# MORE-THAN-DEATH: A Critical Design Futures Narrative About the Taboo of Death

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## Abstract

*This paper introduces More-Than-Death as a critical design futures concept that reconsiders the taboo of death beyond human-centered life exceptionalism. Building on More-Than-Human and Post-humanist discourse, it frames death not as failure or absence, but as a relational and generative condition integral to ecological and multispecies futures. The paper reviews the cultural sequestration of death in Western societies and its limited treatment in design studies, where it is often reduced to object-oriented interventions. In response, it highlights speculative design as a method to problematize conventional end-of-life practices and to envision alternative futures; ranging from ecological death rituals to digital memorialization and interspecies mourning. By conceptualizing More-Than-Death, the paper argues for incorporating death discourse into design practice and education as a catalyst for rethinking sustainability, mortality, and coexistence in the Post-Anthropocene.*

## Keywords

## Introduction

This paper aims to conceptualize the term "More-Than-Death" in relation to the urgent concept of "More-Than-Human." By revisiting "tabooed death" from a speculative design perspective, the authors explore the possibility of freeing the discourse on death from "human exceptionalism," thereby reconsidering the meaning and relationship between life and death, as well as between death, others' lives, and the Earth. It is acknowledged that tabooing death may reinforce excessive human exceptionalism, potentially stalling critical thought on various life-and-death-related issues and closing opportunities for macro-level and multilateral  discussions essential to realizing a globally sustainable future society (Ellyard, 2011). While it is true that discussing death can seem naïve, the relationship between death and life demands careful consideration. Equally important is addressing the negative possibilities of avoiding discussions about death and ceasing to reflect on its significance.

This paper first reviews the debate on the tabooing of death, emphasizing how life is often framed through excessive human exceptionalism. It then examines how death is addressed in design research and explores critical and speculative design as future-oriented practices that interrogate the concept of More-Than-Death. These approaches challenge existing paradigms and offer designers a space to reframe the relationship between life and death toward more sustainable futures.  In this sense, the authors introduce speculative design, as a critical design futures approach, engaging with the consequences and implications of present actions. While death remains a taboo often overlooked by designers, it profoundly shapes future conditions. The future of humanity, coexistence, and life with non-human entities are deeply interconnected. Within this context, speculative design offers an exploratory and propositional approach to More-Than-Death, as further discussed in relation to design practice and education in the final section.

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In response, this paper interrogates the taboo of death through speculative design, challenging the contested boundaries that separate life and death in contemporary design discourse. We define 'More-than-Death' as a design-based, posthuman orientation that seeks to re-situate death not as failure or absence, but as a relational, ecological, and generative condition essential for rethinking life in multispecies futures.

## "Tabooed Death" As a Form of "Human Exceptionalism"

In order to better discuss the core concept of this paper, it is important to introduce human exceptionalism as part of the broader belief of the emerging term "Life Exceptionalism" that refers to the unique and special nature of life by distinguishing living entities from non-living entities thermodynamically and evolutionarily (Woollard & Brungardt, 2019). From this definition we turn into human exceptionalism which refers to, as Rosi Braidotti (2020) notes, the privileging of human life as uniquely valuable and distinct from other forms of existence, often leading to the marginalization or tabooing of death. Melanie Challenger (2022) echoes this view, framing human exceptionalism as a cultural ideology rooted in human exceptionalism; one that treats human life as transcendent while relegating death to denial or failure.

This framing positions death not as a shared existential condition but as an anomaly. Human exceptionalism elevates human life as sacred while excluding death from ethical discourse and public engagement. As Mellor and Shilling (1993) argue, this leads to the privatization of mourning and isolates individuals in their confrontation with mortality.

Modern society frequently treats death as taboo. McGoldrick (2004) argues that death is a fundamental aspect of life, yet the dominant American culture has not addressed it effectively. Despite its inevitability, people often avoid engaging with it. Rothaupt and Becker (2007) observe that, even decades after Feifel's The Meaning of Death (1959), the theoretical foundations of bereavement remain in flux. In Western sociology, the tabooing of death has been a longstanding topic. Ariès (1975, 1977) traces its rise to the early twentieth century, especially after World War I (Sawai, 2002). While Gorer (1966) emphasizes bereavement, Ariès focuses on institutional and ritual contexts such as hospitals and funerals. Mellor and Shilling (1993), synthesizing these views, propose the concept of death's "public absence–private presence," capturing how modern societies segregate death from public discourse.

From a different perspective, the psychoanalytic theory also contributes to this discourse. Otto Rank's The Trauma of Birth (1930) linked existential death anxiety to the original trauma of birth. Becker (1973) extended this into a broader cultural critique, arguing that much of human activity -religion, creativity, nationalism- serves to deny mortality and achieve symbolic immortality.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2020) expressed dismay at the absence of funeral rites, questioning a society that values only survival:

"The dead - our dead - have no right to a funeral… What is society that finds no value in anything other than survival?" (Agamben, 2020)

COVID 19- as an example of a crisis that threatened human lives, illustrated how tabooing death reinforces human exceptionalism. While suggesting that anything supersedes life is dangerous, so too is denying death as a topic of reflection. The above discussion reveals that death taboo is not mere cultural neglect, but a deep-rooted psychological and structural mechanism.

## Contemporary Discussion Of "Death" In Design Studies and Potential of Speculative Design as A Critical Approach

Building on the previous discussion, our concept of More-than-Death challenges human exceptionalism by extending it into speculative and posthuman design domains. It highlights the relationality of life and death within ecological and multispecies entanglements. It also challenges the life–death binary by situating death as integral to sustaining life within broader material and social assemblages (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2015). Drawing on Agamben's (1998) distinction between zoe (bare life) and bios (qualified life), we question how social systems devalue meaningful existence. Liberating death from its taboo invites reflection not only on how we die, but how we live well; together with humans, nonhumans, and Earth.

From a design perspective, the perception of death warrants critical reexamination. Despite its profound cultural and existential relevance, death has been largely overlooked in design studies, and existing contributions remain scarce. Tibbles and Nickpour (2020) argue that end-of-life design proposals are typically interventional, fantastical, and object-oriented, lacking critical depth and coherence. These efforts are often fragmented, incremental, and operational in nature, offering limited conceptual or systemic insight.

Similarly, Hamraie (2017) emphasizes that design should move away from an interventional perspective on death or end-of-life design. Instead, it should engage in critical discourse and restructure the discursive material world of death. Design remains underdeveloped in terms of understanding and interrogating the taboo topic of death, often focusing on object-oriented design approaches. As Tibbles and Nickpour (2020) identified, these approaches include: (a) the design of the deathbed, (b) the design of the coffin, and (c) the design of the funeral. Nickpour (2019) emphasizes this point by stating that contributions to the design of death fail to consider three fundamental aspects: (1) the critical perspective in researching the end of life, (2) future vision and opportunity mapping, and (3) innovative approaches and impactful design proposals. The authors address the first point by introducing speculative design as a potential critical approach for developing a discursive framework for end-of-life design.

It seems reasonable to define speculative design here. It can be considered a subsidiary or transformative version of Dunne and Raby's 2000 critical design practice (Dunne, 1999), and is an important and pivotal intellectual practice when discussing the overlap between criticality and futures. It was first introduced in Dunne and Raby's (2013) work, where they define "Critical Design" as follows: "Critical Design uses speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions, and givens about the role products play in everyday life".

This term is further articulated in Speculative Everything (2013), a key reference in speculative design. Dunne and Raby (2013, p.47) describe speculative design as follows: by moving upstream and exploring ideas before they become products or even technologies, designers can look into the possible consequences of technological applications before they happen. We can use speculative designs to debate potential ethical, cultural, social, and political implications. This definition focuses on the function of exposing the implications and consequences that design actions might have, which is the core function when discussing criticality and futures.

James Auger (2014) draws a compelling list of aspects for the function of speculative design, arguing that it borrows from other established adjacent fields such as industrial or graphic design but that speculative design "as a form of enquiry" does abandon the market imperatives to create an area where design could be a discursive tool rather than a conformative tool. He articulates a set of functions that position speculative design as a strategic and intellectual practice aimed at interrogating the present through the lens of the possible. Rather than engaging with known constraints or existing market demands, speculative design operates by arranging emerging; and often not yet available; technological elements to hypothesise future artefacts. In doing so, it renders the invisible visible, bringing latent technological, political, and cultural conditions into view and framing design as a means for reflective provocation rather than practical resolution. Drawing from these functions; speculative design can be interpreted as an ideological and intellectual practice that not only aims to produce provocative design output but also maps the systemic view in which design is positioned, as well as the implications and consequences of design actions.

Adding to Auger's discussion, a fundamental function and characteristic of speculative design is to create public debate on social issues. The public here involves two different types of audiences: experienced practitioners (designers) and everyday users (or the general public) (Pierce, 2015). The designs are for dissemination and engagement with users, as they are meant to circulate through various channels, such as magazines, exhibitions, and the Internet. Each channel has its own means of dissemination and communication: they can be sophisticated, elite, popular, and accessible. Yet, "the best speculative designs do more than communicate; they suggest possible uses, interactions, and behaviors that are not always obvious at a quick glance" (Dunne & Raby, 2013). Malpass (2013) argues that speculative design encourages users to reconsider how the present shapes the future and challenges them to rethink how we might transform societal trajectories. By envisioning how things could be, speculative design opens up new possibilities for futures that are not merely predicted or forecasted, but creatively constructed through informed, hypothetical extrapolations (Auger, 2013).

In the context of More-Than-Death, speculative design offers a critical lens for rethinking the future of death and our relationship with it. This approach allows us to question the current practices regarding the end of life and creates a platform for discourse on alternative futures that challenge conventional narratives about death. Speculative design

can be instrumental in debating and problematizing this concept by 1) proposing alternative death rituals that help designers and researchers envision how death might be experienced and ritualized in the future; whether through technological advancements such as digital afterlives (Heesen, 2023), multi-species relationships (Haraway, 2015), or sustainable ecological approaches to death; and by 2) facilitating debates on ethical implications, challenging our assumptions about death and dying through imagined new forms of post-death existence (Auger & Loizeau, 2008). It could explore how non-human entities or technologies might redefine life, death, and life after death. Speculative design can also help in 3) expanding the understanding of death's relationality, as the More-Than-Death concept pushes us to view death as not only a human experience but also as one intertwined with non-human life, technology, and ecology. Speculative design can map these relationships and envision scenarios in which death transcends individual human experiences, touching on a more complex, collective, and interdependent future.

For instance, speculative projects like Hesseldahl's (2024) "Designing for Death in a Divided Future" articulate contrasting futures where death rites either emphasize ecological symbiosis; such as biodegradable urns returning human essence to the earth; or digital memorialization through data encapsulation, reflecting divergent ideological approaches to mortality in the Anthropocene. Similarly, urban speculative design initiatives envision "Necropolis 4.0," integrating advanced technologies such as extended reality, AI, and biodegradable materials to create sustainable, green deathscapes that harmonize human, nature, and machine relations (Rahimi, 2025)

Integrating a different perspective about death  into speculative design and future-oriented practices adds a vital layer of critical inquiry that challenges prevailing anthropocentric and linear narratives of mortality. Speculative design's capacity to imagine alternative futures enables designers and scholars to move beyond conventional death practices, which often isolate death as a private, tabooed event, toward envisioning death as an ecological and relational process embedded within multispecies and technological networks (Dunne & Raby, 2013; Auger, 2013). It could provide a conceptual anchor, speculative design can articulate futures where death is not merely an endpoint but a transformative passage that sustains life's entanglements, thereby fostering sustainable and ethically engaged death practices. This approach encourages the exploration of innovative rituals and technologies; such as biodegradable burial systems, digital memorial ecosystems, or interspecies mourning; which reflect the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman actors (Haraway, 2016; Heesen, 2023). Speculative design's emphasis on critical reflection and public engagement facilitates broader societal discourse on death's relationality, enabling communities to collectively reimagine mortality in ways that resist human exceptionalism and promote ecological responsibility (Malpass, 2017).

Considering the preceding discussion, we propose that the critical futures approach to interrogating the design for death can be accomplished through a speculative design lens. Speculative design could facilitate the development of future scenarios of current end-of-life practices; it could be an opportunity to initiate a debate and discourse about the future social quandary and map different alternative visions of the "More-Than-Death" concept. It could problematize its future consequences and implications, as well as identify propositional stances on how design and death could be aligned for better and more sustainable futures. We also situate design for death as a topic to be undertaken in design studies, advocating for deeper, more objective, and unbiased perspectives. The aim is to approach the subject not from an interventionist standpoint but rather with an interrogative and oppositional lens, encouraging critical reflection and debate.

The above is an overview of how death has been regarded as a taboo subject, potentially limiting various possibilities for consideration. Meanwhile, in design studies, even though contemporary discussions on death are rare, it is emphasized that design approaches such as critical speculative design may have a high potential for problematizing future consequences and implications and for identifying prepositional stances of how design and death could be aligned for a better and sustainable future.


**Reviewing Contemporary Arguments of More-Than-Human**

Hence, the authors introduce the concept of "More-Than-Death" as a way to reconsider death beyond the notion of human exceptionalism; which embraces the primordial interconnection between life and death while challenging and inverting the assumption of life's supremacy. This concept is built on on the roots of the "More-Than-Human". Therefore, it is sensible in this context to offer an understanding about the roots that shaped the discussion of this

paper by revisiting contemporary debates on the notion of More-Than-Human.

"More-Than-Human" is a concept that embraces the primordial relationality and interdependence of all living beings, debunking the concept of human exceptionalism. This concept attempts to reconstruct the boundaries between the familiar binaries of human and non-human, culture and nature, and humans and animals that have dominated Western thinking since at least the Enlightenment (Akama et al., 2020; Forlano, 2017).

In the wake of often unexpected and brutal feedback from nature; frequent flooding, heat waves, tornadoes, cyclones, or heavy rains; the positioning or conceptualization of "More-Than-Human" entities has been underscored in several disciplines, such as urban planning, community development, policymaking, and design (Akama et al., 2020; Jon, 2020). With related concepts such as non-human, multi-species, Anthropocene, more than human, transhuman, and the decentering of human, the More-Than-Human concept greatly expands our understanding of the multiple agencies, dependencies, entanglements, and relations that constitute our world (Forlano, 2017).

It is necessary to introduce a brief account of anthropocentrism, which is a very relevant factor in this discussion. In environmental ethics, anthropocentrism is defined as "the belief that value is human-centered and that all other beings are means to human ends" (Kopnina et al., 2018). This position prioritizes humans over all other organisms, granting them a privileged status that has historically justified the exploitation of non-human entities for human benefit (Rae, 2014). A long-standing debate in environmental ethics, sociology, and the philosophy of anthropocentrism revolves around how human agency contributes to environmental degradation (Kopnina et al., 2018). Donna Haraway expands this discourse by critiquing the human-centered worldview in favor of what she calls the "Chthulucene," where humans must embrace multi-species cohabitation and acknowledge the importance of intra-active, more-than-human assemblages (Haraway, 2015).

The background is a shared sense that a human-dominated worldview can no longer sustain a sustainable world. In particular, the study of human–environment relationship in geography has gone through a dizzy series of theoretical, philosophical, and methodological transformations in the past 20 years, with the matter of "nature" being neglected in radical geography and human geography as a whole. Today, there are fierce debates about the epistemological and ontological status of "nature," about how best to understand the production of "socionature" in an age of globalized capitalism, and about how we should understand our ethical-political commitments in a world in which social life is always "More-Than-Human" (Whatmore, 2006).

In the field of design studies, this concept has become increasingly important as an opportunity to rethink dominant human-centered design approaches since the 1980s (Akama et al., 2020; Forlano, 2017; Jain, 2018).

## A Post-Human Perspective

Another connected concept is the post-human perspective within transhumanist discourse. Braidotti (2020) articulates posthumanism as a convergence of critiques against both humanism and anthropocentrism, emphasizing the need to move beyond the idea that human life is the central or most important form of existence. In her view, posthumanist thought insists on the entanglement of human and nonhuman actors, recognizing that life and death are co-constitutive processes embedded within broader ecological and material assemblages. This perspective destabilizes the notion of human exceptionalism by foregrounding the relational and processual nature of existence, where death is not an absolute end but part of ongoing transformations within multispecies worlds (Braidotti, 2020). Haraway (2008) had also examined the same ideological platform through her concept of "companion species," which highlights the myriad ways in which humans are always already in relation with animals, microorganisms, landscapes, and technologies. Haraway's work demonstrates that respect, curiosity, and knowledge emerge from these interspecies associations, and that such relationality fundamentally undermines the logic of human exceptionalism.This discourse provides a critique of anthropocentrism by proposing that human species have evolved beyond traditional boundaries. This shift, which is often associated with the integration of technology and other non-human entities, challenges the idea of human exceptionalism and places humans within a broader network of more-than-human relationships (Rae, 2014). Rae identifies four key aspects of post-human thought: 1) the decline of anthropocentric thinking as traditional human exceptionalism erodes; 2) the inseparability of humans and their increasingly technological environment; 3) the acknowledgment that human environments are co-constituted by non-human agents, including animals and technology; and 4) the necessity of perceiving human identity through

the relational lens of these interconnected systems (Rae, 2014). This post-humanist approach coheres around the idea that anthropocentrism, which falsely dichotomizes the "pure" human from the "impure" non-human, is a flawed and outdated framework. Instead, post-humanism and more-than-human thinking converge to promote a vision of multi-species entanglement, where humans, animals, and technology are all part of an integrated ecological system (Haraway, 2015). This perspective critiques the exploitation and domination justified by anthropocentrism and calls for an ethical reorientation toward coexistence with non-human actors in a shared world.

On the contrary, Nick Bostrom's work provides a crucial counterpoint within posthumanist debates on death, particularly through his transhumanist advocacy for overcoming biological limitations such as aging and mortality. For Bostrom, there is "nothing good about death and ageing," and he contends that we have compelling moral reasons to pursue technologies that could arrest or reverse senescence (Bostrom, 2005; Hauskeller, 2013). This position stands in contrast to posthumanist thinkers like Braidotti (2020) and Haraway (2008), who emphasize the entanglement of life and death and the importance of accepting mortality as part of ecological and multispecies relationality. While Bostrom's vision is future-oriented and deeply invested in human enhancement, it risks reinforcing a form of human exceptionalism by privileging the indefinite extension of human life over the acceptance of death as a shared, transformative process. In the context of "more-than-death" practices, Bostrom's arguments invite critical reflection on the ethical and existential implications of technologically mediated mortality, highlighting the tension between the desire to transcend death and the posthumanist call to embrace our mortal entanglements (Bostrom, 2005; Hauskeller, 2013).

In the light of this discussion, the authors would tend to discuss death practices that acknowledge the agency of nonhuman others and the ecological cycles of decomposition and renewal that could be seen as "more-than-death" practices; which are practices that resist the sequestration and privatization of death and instead affirm its place within a network of ongoing relations (Haraway, 2008).

**Conceptualizing "More Than Death"**

Referring to the contemporary arguments of "More-Than-Human" as counterarguments to human exceptionalism and the excessive human-centered approach under the urgent demands of a sustainable world, the concept of "More-Than-Death" can emerge accordingly as a counterargument to "tabooed death."

The "More-Than-Death" concept embraces the essential relationality and interdependence of life and death, doubting the idea of excessive human exceptionalism. This concept attempts to deconstruct the boundaries between the familiar binaries of life and death, as well as the worlds of the living and the dead, by addressing the current situation where death is often tabooed, both socially and academically, and unconsciously given less attention. While existential philosophy has long emphasized the profound individuality of death, it is also important to consider complementary perspectives that approach death as relational.

Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, emphasized that only one's own death can be truly authentic (*eigentlich*); a perspective that has deeply influenced existential and phenomenological understandings of human finitude (Heidegger, 1927/1962). This view frames death as an individual, inward-facing experience that discloses the meaning of one's existence.

The concept of More-than-Death does not seek to negate the existential significance of this perspective. Rather, it aims to supplement it by asking how death might also be understood as a relational phenomenon; one that unfolds within ecological, technological, and multispecies contexts. In this sense, More-than-Death is not a rejection of existential thought, but a proposal to expand our ethical and imaginative engagement with death.

Lest we, as Agamben laments, fall into the trap of viewing the recent situation—where mass deaths from COVID-19 are buried without funeral rites—through a narrow lens, the concept of More-Than-Death can greatly expand our understanding of the dependencies, entanglements, and relations between life and death that shape our world. Underlying this is the recognition that a worldview that considers death a taboo and turns away from the subject of thought may no longer make sense of dignified human life and death. Mellor and Shilling argued that, in contemporary society, death has been excluded from the public sphere and reassigned to the private sphere. The decline of the religious order that once provided people with "ontological security" by "liberating them from witchcraft" has resulted in the loss of the public meaning of death and the diversification of approaches to death.

Because the existential anxiety evoked by death can no longer be dealt with in the public sphere, death is excluded from the public sphere and relegated to the private sphere, where the public gaze does not extend. In this "privatization" of death, people are left alone to face their existential anxieties, such as the fear of emptiness after death (Mellor, 1993; Mellor & Shilling, 1993). Such a context may lead to the exclusion of publicly discussing death or even thinking about how to live and die with dignity.

In addition to considering the individual perspective on life and death, it is important to adopt a broader view that encompasses all lives on a global and cosmic scale, taking a long-term approach rather than a short-term one within the cyclic system of life and death. This perspective encourages reflection on the interconnectedness of life and death across time and space.

**Discussion**

In this paper, the authors explore the provocative concept of "More-Than-Death." The relationship between life and death can be reconsidered from both micro- and macro-perspectives: from the viewpoint of the individual and the social group, from the time axis of a single life, and from the broader time axis of the ecosystem and the Earth. This concept seeks to provide an opportunity to challenge the current tendency to treat death as a taboo. Such a view has led to an oversaturation of what Agamben calls "bare life," neglecting the socially meaningful lives that can emerge through a respectful acknowledgement of death.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis and numerous political conflicts worldwide, where death feels close to us on a global scale, it is crucial to protect not only human life but also non-human life and the Earth itself. As urgent calls to address the global environmental crisis grow louder, we must not shy away from reflecting on the significance of death. We do not intend to promote the dangerous idea that these matters take precedence over life; however, given that death is highly taboo and, as a result, the concept of "bios" is not adequately addressed, we must have the courage to reconsider death, and its relationship with life, from multiple perspectives.

When death is so close at hand and considered a taboo subject, it may be necessary to make a paradigm shift in the way we think about it. Forming the Narrative of Change (NoC; Wittmayer et al., 2019), as Futurology has shown, an NoC by design may create an opportunity for people to think about a new paradigm of life and death (Hayama & Zurlo, 2020). From the viewpoint of design and future studies, design may offer possibilities for the future by providing a new view of life and death.

More-Than-Death, as a future-oriented concept, should cross the boundaries and realms of functionality. It is not about designing services for bereaving or decoratively designing coffins; it should be more of a visionary and critical approach to map and identify possible innovations that are impactful to humanity and highlight the negative consequences and implications of how we currently deal with end-of-life care. More-Than-Death should account for humans alongside other-than-human entities, avoiding a position of superiority. It should engage with post-Anthropocene discourse, exploring how humans might respond differently in the future.

In this context, design does not merely forecast technological possibilities but critically engage with the ethical, social, and ecological implications of how death is culturally constructed and materially enacted. By doing so, speculative design fosters public discourse and reflexivity about death's relationality, encouraging a shift toward More-Than-Death paradigms that embrace death as an interconnected, multispecies process essential to sustainable futures. Thus, design acts as a vital tool for reimagining death rituals in ways that align with ecological sustainability and technological innovation, ultimately contributing to more inclusive and resilient futures.

Our argument is that designers should be courageous in tackling tabooed concepts such as death; it is not about death itself but about dealing with a sensitive and emotional state that is usually overlooked. Reflecting upon practice and education, "More-Than-Death" could be viewed as a fundamental issue that should be incorporated into educational curricula and design studios. This would aim to shift the design paradigm toward topics that affect not only our social life but also the environment, with the goal of achieving more sustainable futures. Therefore, a speculative design is a possible approach for facilitating this paradigm shift and mindset transformation. Its boldness to question sensitive topics is a catalyst for change that should be actively incorporated when studying various future end-of-life scenarios, or to create an alternative view of designing for death from a positive perspective and for designers to begin to become familiar with it. Future-oriented design practices do not predict the future; they focus

on the changes needed to achieve a better future. It helps the public make future concepts—even the most sensitive and provocative ones—tangible, and facilitates the process of introducing controversial and wild futures concepts to the public, since they can viscerally interact with them. Speculative design as a Future-oriented design can reveal profound new connections between death, technology, and ecology by envisioning mortality as a collective, relational phenomenon embedded within both natural systems and emerging technological networks.This convergence challenges traditional human exceptionalism by situating death in an interrogatable position within a network of interdependencies among humans, nonhuman life, and technological agents. It urges to highlight the environmental and social imperatives to transform death systems away from corporatized, resource-intensive models toward sustainable, community-oriented approaches (Kirkpatrick et al., 2021). Speculative design practices emphasize honoring relationships not only among humans but also with the planet, aligning with posthumanist calls to acknowledge entanglement and relationality in mortality. It can expose how death is not an isolated human event but a collective phenomenon shaped by technological innovation and ecological realities. By doing so, it opens pathways for more inclusive, ethical, and sustainable death practices that reflect the complexity of life and death in the Anthropocene.

However, most importantly, we have to note that the very act of discussing death is naïve, and the idea of life and death is fraught with risk. Human life is always open to death. In other words, human existence is "finite," and we are always aware that it will end at some point. Heidegger calls this "Sein-zum-Tode" (Heidegger, 1927/1962). By being aware of death, humans become aware that their lives are limited, and that they can give meaning to their lives based on this premise. In other words, through an awareness of death, people can discover their "Eigentlichkeit" and be led in the direction of living more essentially. As Rothaupt and Becker (2007) conclude, bereavement research is entering a new dawn. Through careful and in-depth interdisciplinary discussions, new methodologies will enable a deeper exploration of art and the transformation of bereavement. In the light of this discussion, we may be able to think and act better, so that those in mourning can embrace wisdom and affirm their own lives and those of their deceased loved ones.

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