

ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH AND  
TOWARD THE FUTURE IN AGED  
AND YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH AND TOWARD THE  
FUTURE IN AGED AND YOUNG ADULTS

By  
Wilhelmenia Howell

This study is concerned with attitudes toward death and toward the future in aged and young adults. The specific hypotheses regarding these variables were:

I. There is a significant difference between attitudes toward death of aged and young adults along the positive-negative dimension.

II. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective, and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension.

III. There is a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between aged and young adults.

The subjects were 50 aged females and 50 aged males with a mean age of 70 and a mean of 14.90 years of education. The young adult subjects were 50 females and 50 males with a mean age of 18 and a mean of 13.03 years of education. The 200 subjects were volunteers.

The instruments used to assess attitudes toward death were:

1) death attitude scale, 2) semantic differential death attitude measure, 3) and death anxiety scale. The following instruments were used to

measure future time perspective: 1) personal events future time perspective measure, 2) and story-completion technique. The semantic differential future time attitude measure was used to measure attitudes toward the future. In addition to the attitudes toward death and future time measures, a personal data information form was completed by each subject.

The following statements summarize the findings concerning the hypothesis of this study:

1. Aged adults have more positive attitudes toward death than young adults.

2. Positive attitudes toward death are related to a shorter future time perspective and positive attitudes toward the future for the total sample.

3. The positive relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future is higher for aged adults than for young adults.

4. Young adults have a significantly longer future time perspective than aged adults.

5. Aged adults have more positive attitudes toward the future than young adults.

The results were discussed in relation to existing theory and proposals for future research were made. Additional, related findings are included in the Appendix.

ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH AND TOWARD THE  
FUTURE IN AGED AND YOUNG ADULTS

By

Wilhelmenia Howell

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
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1976

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1976

## DEDICATION

Mommy, Daddy, Cherry, Lawson, Leon and "my Shamus" . . .

My love, my heart, my gratitude . . .

Forever yours . . .

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Dr. Albert I. Rabin for serving as my guidance and dissertation committee chairman. I would also like to thank Dr. Robert Zucker, Dr. Norman Abeles and Dr. Lawrence Messé for serving as members of my dissertation thesis committee.

I feel that I have lived a full life,  
    Wholesome life,  
        Worthwhile, meaningful life,  
Regrets? I have few, then again  
Regrets? I have many.

I have felt intense feelings of  
    Happiness,  
        Sadness,  
            Loneliness,  
                Rejection,  
                    Confusion,  
                        Anger,  
Only to name a few  
Only to live again, experience again.

Love me, talk to me, accept me, understand me.  
Push me in the background? No!  
Aged? Yes, but still a person.  
Aged? Yes, but only aged.  
A human being, an individual -  
Don't deny me my personhood  
Because time has surmounted my physical being.  
Aged? Yes, but only aged!!

The world and all its happiness, successes,  
Disappointments belong to me  
For I am young, vivacious,  
Yet sad at times, lonely at times,  
Confused, angered and rejected at times . . .  
I have been daunted by the hands of time . . .  
That uncontrollable, unconquerable,  
Sometimes devious cosmic force

Where do WE "fit"  
    We both "fit"  
        Time makes us "fit."  
I, the aged, because I was once where you are,  
Never to return again.  
I, the young, "fit" because I shall, in due time,  
Become you - the aged

We fit because we are mortal  
Sometimes we fear the total cessation  
Of our physical being,  
Sometimes we feel that we welcome our mortality  
I shall die,  
    You shall die,  
        Young, old,  
            Time,  
                Death,  
                    Finite

W.H.

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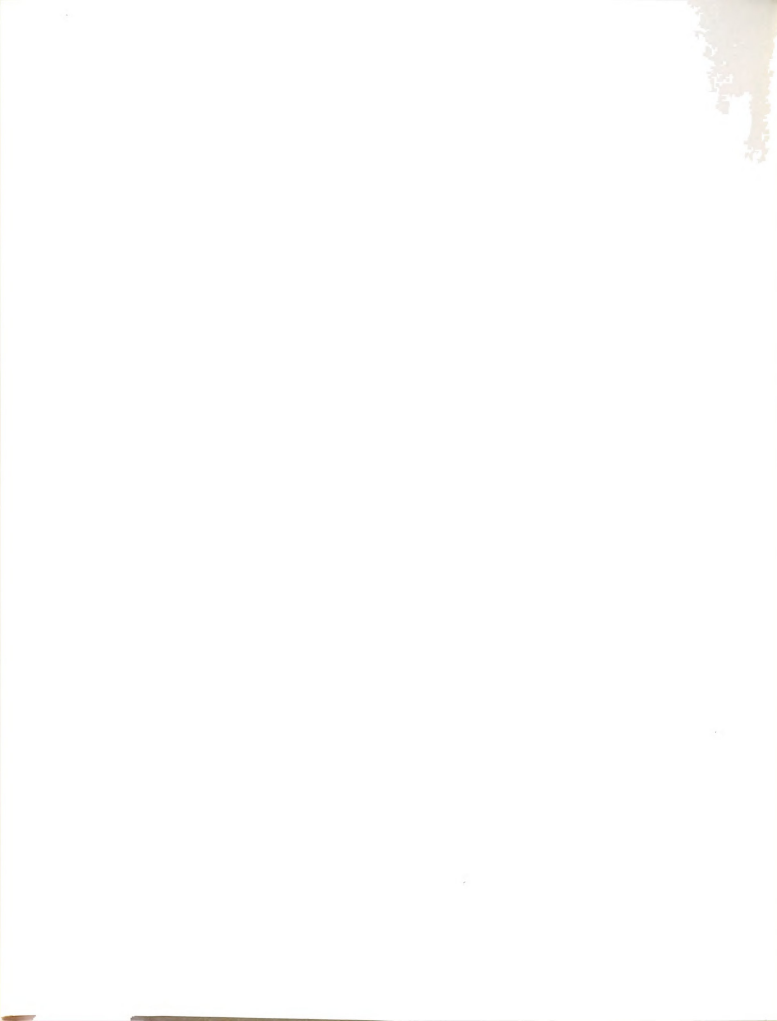
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## INTRODUCTION

In past decades the open discussion of thanatology and attitudes toward death was considered a taboo topic. Death was viewed as a natural event which consisted of the total cessation of the biological processes of the human organism. Essentially, this was the alpha as well as the omega of the discussion of death among family members as well as professionals. Freud [1959] stated very succinctly:

We were of course prepared to maintain that death was the necessary outcome of life, that everyone owes a debt to Nature and must expect to pay the reckoning--in short, that death was natural, undeniable and unavoidable. In reality, however, we were accustomed to behave as if it were otherwise. We displayed an unmistakable tendency to 'shelve' death to eliminate it from life. We tried to hush it up; indeed we even have the saying 'To think of something as we think of death.' That is our death, of course. Our own death is indeed unimaginable, and whenever we make an attempt to imagine it we can perceive that we really survive as spectators. . . . At the bottom no one believes in his own death. . . . In the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality [p. 305].

Even though the acceptance of one's own mortality appears to be a monumental task, it is interesting to note how readily the American society accepts the death of an aged person in comparison to the non-acceptance of the death of a young adult. Eaton [1965], Glasser [1966] and Kastenbaum [1967a] corroborate in their research findings in that the acceptance of an aged person's death is attributed to their lack of future worth. Their death is viewed as a "low social loss" while the death of a young adult is viewed as a "high social loss." The death

of an aged person is viewed as a "low social loss" because he is viewed as having had a full past with minimum, if any, contributions to make to the present or future, family, occupation or society. The death of a young adult is viewed as a "high social loss" because he is perceived by the American society as having a past filled with preparation for the future in which he has actively prepared to make contributions to his occupation, family and society.

Jung [1965] states:

How different does the meaning of life seem to us when we see a young person striving for distant goals and shaping the future and compare this with an incurable invalid or with an old man who is sinking reluctantly and without strength to resist into the grave! Youth--we should like to think--has purpose, future, meaning and value, whereas the coming to an end is only a meaningless cessation. . . . When an aged person secretly shudders and is ever mortally afraid at the thought that his reasonable expectation of life now amounts to only so many years, then we are painfully reminded of certain feelings within our own breast; we look away and turn the conversation to some other topic [pp. 3-4].

It appears as if the American society assigns future worth to individuals according to their age and their capacity to make worthwhile contributions to society. These attitudes regarding future worth are incorporated into the value systems of individuals in society. Dooley [1941] views the individual's perception of future time as an effective way in which the ego maintains its contact with the outer-environment. Orge1 [1965] expresses the opinion that those individuals regardless of age, who do not acknowledge the future are "holding off finality, the symbol of death, by an exaggeration of the normal, vain effort of the ego to repress the time that equals death" [p. 103].

According to Kastenbaum [1966] the most salient question to ask aged persons is "Whose time is this?" A very common response is "not mine." These aged persons view time as no longer belonging to them but are passive recipients to whom things happen. Arieti [1947] is of the opinion that in old age there is a restriction of the psycho-temporal field. The restriction is more obvious when aged persons express little or no interest in the future.

With the enormous influences one encounters in forming attitudes toward death and future time, the purpose of this study is to investigate aged and young adult populations' attitudes toward death and the relationship between attitudes toward death and future time perspective and attitudes toward future.

Much of the literature which is relevant to this research is nebulous and inconclusive. An attempt will be made to eliminate, or at least minimize, some of the conflicting results as will be reported in the review of relevant literature. Also, to the writer's knowledge, a study which compared the attitudes toward death of aged and young adult populations, and the relationship between attitudes toward death and future time in these populations has not been undertaken. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the clarification of aged and young adults' attitudes toward death as well as the possible relationship between death attitudes and future time.





## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

### Attitudes of the Aged Toward Death

Rhudick and Dibner [1961] investigated the relationship between "death concerns" and various sociological and psychological variables in a group of normal aged persons. "Death concerns" were operationally defined as the "introduction of death in the story response to a Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) card" [p. 46]. The authors hypothesized that death concerns in an aged sample were related to personality factors rather than to demographic factors in that high death concern in an aged sample was associated with neurotic tendencies. The sample consisted of 30 females and 28 males with ages ranging from 60-86. Selected TAT cards were used to assess death concerns in the sample. Females were administered cards 7GF, 12F and 18GF; males were administered cards 7BM, 8BM and 12M. In addition, both sexes were administered cards 1, 2, 3BM, 4, 6F, 10, 13MF and 15. The results indicated that of a possible maximum score of 24 on the stories, which was indicative of high death concern, the highest score obtained was 12. For this particular aged population, the lowest score ( $M = 3.6$ ) was received by the oldest age group (80-86). In this study the restriction of range of death concern scores appeared to indicate that the population had a fairly low concern for death. When the relationship between death concerns and affective state was tested, the authors concluded that death concerns in older persons seemed to be accompanied by depressive affect rather than anxiety or guilt. This finding was corroborated by Zung

[1967] in that, of the various mental and emotional illnesses among the elderly, depression seemed to be the most common.

Wolff [1970] conducted a study to explore the effect of personality types on the attitudes toward death among six groups of geriatric patients. The population consisted of 90 patients; 20 were females and 70 were males. There were 15 subjects in each of the following groups: 1) "passive-dependent personality"; 2) "schizoid personality"; 3) "compulsive personality"; 4) "inadequate personality"; 5) "unstable personality"; 6) and "paranoid personality" [pp. 190-192]. Depth interviews, psychological testing and psychiatric evaluations were used to determine reaction toward death. The results were: a) the subjects in the "passive dependent" personality group did not express any special concern about dying, but regarded death as a relief from painful events and as an unavoidable event; b) "schizoid personalities" did not show much anxiety when the topic of death was introduced; c) "compulsive personalities" found it very difficult to accept death as a reality over which they had no control; d) subjects with "inadequate personalities" were reluctant to discuss death; e) subjects with "unstable personalities" viewed death as a great threat; f) and subjects with "paranoid personalities" welcomed and wished for death and saw it as a liberation from togetherness with hostile people on this earth, feeling that only after death could they have peace.

Swenson [1961] studied 210 aged persons' (152 females and 58 males) attitudes toward death. All of the subjects were residents of Minnesota and were 60 years of age or older. Attitudes toward death were assessed by the use of a check-list and written essays. The results were:

a) 96 subjects had positive attitudes toward death (e.g., happiness, looking forward to death); b) 55 subjects had an active-evasive attitude toward death (e.g., just don't think about death); c) 21 subjects had negative attitudes toward death (e.g., think of death with some fear; very fearful of death); d) 38 subjects had passive-evasive attitudes toward death (e.g., none of the alternatives presented described how they felt about death or no response was given by the subject).

That aged persons who were residing in similar independent community living settings would reflect a less apprehensive attitude toward death than aged persons residing in a more traditional institution, was the hypothesis formulated by Shrut [1958]. The subjects were 30 ambulatory, unmarried white females residing in a home for the aged which was very much like older peoples' living condition in the community and 30 ambulatory, currently unmarried white females residing in a residential facility which was more traditionally institutional in terms of regulations and supervision. Attitudes toward death were assessed by a sentence completion test and 10 selected Thematic Apperception Test cards. The results were: a) the subjects who were residing in the traditional institution gave more responses that expressed fear of death, while subjects residing in the apartment-like setting expressed attitudes of indifference or equanimity toward death; b) in general, subjects residing in the apartment-like setting were significantly less preoccupied with fear or apprehension of death than subjects residing in the traditional institutional setting; c) subjects who were living in the apartment-like setting were more concerned with planning for continued living than were subjects residing in the traditional institutional setting.



Jeffers, Nichols and Eisdorfer [1961] investigated elderly persons' attitudes toward death. The subjects were a biracial group of 254 community volunteers, 60 years of age or older. During the course of a two-hour social interview, subjects were asked "Are you afraid to die?" The results were: a) 10% admitted to a fear of death; b) 35% had no fear of death; c) 17% were not afraid to die, but viewed death as being inevitable; d) 16% had ambivalent feelings about death; e) and 22% admitted to no fear of death, but felt that they dreaded the pain of dying, wanted to live as long as possible, did not want to be dependent or sick for a long period of time or gave no elaboration at all.

Attitudes toward death and dying in an aged nursing home population were the focal point of an investigation by Roberts, Kimsey, Logan and Shaw [1970]. The sample was comprised of 57 elderly persons. The age range was 60 and older with an average age of 78. The investigators devised a scale to measure attitudes toward death. They found that the subjects were not fearful but accepted it matter-of-factly. The investigators also presented the question "How afraid of death are you?" In response to this question a) only nine subjects reported any fear at all; b) 11 persons reported no fear of death in that they looked forward to dying. The investigators also presented the stimulus word "death" to the subjects. They found: a) 11 of the subjects gave a negative response to the word (e.g., "death is mighty bad" [p. 118]; five expressed positive feelings (e.g., "I feel like it is a place of rest" [p. 118]; c) and the majority of the subjects viewed death as a "process of life that is inevitable" [p. 118].

Christ [1961] conducted a pilot study to determine how a group of geriatric psychiatric patients felt about the topic of death. The sample

consisted of a group of 62 patients, age 60 and over. Eleven questions relating to death and a word association test were used to assess the subjects' attitudes toward death. He found that all of the subjects with the exception of two were considerably upset and anxious about the discussion of death. Christ concluded that the subjects were fearful of death.

Conscious attitudes of older persons toward death were studied by Feifel [1956]. The subjects were 40 white male veterans of World War I who were living at a Veterans Administration Domiciliary because of physical illness and inability to support themselves financially. The mean age of the sample was 67. The subjects were individually administered a questionnaire and rating scale as measures of attitudes toward death. Feifel found: a) 40% viewed death as being the end of everything; b) 40% viewed death as the beginning of a new existence; c) 10% perceived death as relief from pain or a peaceful sleep; d) and 10% did not express a direct opinion about their feelings toward death.

Attitudes toward death of dying geriatric patients were one of the focal points of the study by Kastenbaum [1967b]. The population consisted of 61 elderly patients whose ages ranged from 69 to 96 years. Thirty-one of the subjects were men with a mean age at death of 82.8 years. Thirty of the subjects were women with a mean age at death of 82.7 years. The median length of stay at the hospital was 25 months for men and 26 months for women. The method employed for gathering data was that each week a multi-disciplinary team gave detailed considerations to the case of a recently deceased patient. Preliminary gathering of information was conducted by psychologists, physicians, nursing

personnel, social workers, chaplains, occupational therapists, and other persons who might have had something to contribute to a particular case. A psychiatric consultant commented upon each case and prepared his independent summary. The results were limited to direct statements concerning death which were made by the dying patient. Some of the results were: a) 21 of the subjects expressed positive attitudes toward death (seven men and 14 women); three expressed negative attitudes (e.g., fear, alarm) (one man and two women); c) 11 expressed neutral attitudes (seven men and four women); d) and 21 of the subjects expressed attitudes ranging from a "calm waiting for death to a strong wish for an end to their suffering" [p. 99]. The remaining eight subjects "did not converse on the subject or their comments were not reported by staff members" [p. 99].

Howell [1972] investigated the relationship between death attitudes and sex. The subjects were 20 women and 20 men who resided in homes for the aged. The mean age of the subjects was 74. The following TAT cards were administered to each subject to determine attitudes toward death; 3GF and 12F to females; 3BM and 7BM to males; 11, 15, and 16 were administered to both sexes. The results indicated that there was not a significant relationship between attitudes toward death and sex. However, there was a trend toward males having more positive death attitudes than females.

One aspect of Liberman's [1966] study was directed toward comparing aged persons' awareness of their proximity to death. The sample consisted of a heterogeneous group of 22 elderly persons who died from one week to one year after completing a 12 to 15 hour interview and



1000  
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1000

testing session. The 22 dead subjects were matched with 22 control subjects who were still living after one year. He used a sentence completion task and selected Thematic Apperception Test cards to measure death awareness. A time estimation task was used to measure awareness of proximity to death. He concluded that elderly persons furthest from death showed the most preoccupation with it.

Scott [1896] sent out questionnaires entitled "Thoughts about Old Age, Disease and Death" with hopes of obtaining a general picture of the common notion on the subjects of old age, death and future life. The results reported here are limited to the replies received from the elderly respondents. Some of the results were: a) 70% longed to die; b) 30% did not long to die; c) 44% thought most of death in later years; d) and 14% did not view life as worth living any longer.

#### Summary

The following conclusions regarding aged persons' attitudes toward death emerged from the review of relevant literature: a) some aged persons accept death in a matter-of-fact manner, whereas some become anxious and evasive when it is mentioned; b) death is accepted as being the end of everything; c) place of residence appears to be related to attitudes toward death in that aged persons who reside in institutional settings have more negative attitudes toward death while aged persons who reside in apartment-like settings have more positive attitudes; d) some aged persons have positive attitudes toward death regardless of their residential setting; e) and some aged persons have negative attitudes regardless of their place of residence.

### Attitudes Toward Death in Young Adults

Middleton [1936] was one of the earliest investigators who explored some reactions, thoughts and attitudes toward death among college students. Middleton's subjects were 825 college students; 488 females and 337 males. The subjects were administered a questionnaire (devised by Middleton) which measured attitudes toward death and future life. Some of the findings were: a) there were no significant differences between the sexes in their reactions toward death; b) 8.36% imagined that death would be horribly painful; c) 12.48% reported that they had a strong horror or fear of death; d) 25.23% stated that they were absolutely afraid to die; e) and 62.28% said that their attitude toward death was one of indifference.

Lester [1970] replicated Middleton's 1936 study. His findings did not completely concur with those of Middleton. Lester's findings indicated that there were significant sex differences in attitudes toward death. The findings were: a) men thought of their own death more often than women; b) men pictured themselves dead or dying more often than women; c) and there were no significant differences between men and women in terms of fear of death.

A study was conducted by Lester [1967] to investigate the inconsistency in the fear of death in 85 undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses. He hypothesized that subjects who had inconsistent attitudes toward death might also have an increased fear of death as a result of inconsistent attitudes toward death. Therefore, subjects who agreed with a large range of statements would have a larger fear of death score than subjects who agreed with a smaller range of statements.

An equal interval scale was used to measure fear of death. The scale was comprised of 21 favorable and unfavorable statements about death.

Lester found that subjects who agreed to statements about death which expressed a large range of attitudes on a dimension of favorable/unfavorable, had a greater fear of death than subjects who agreed with statements which expressed a small range of attitudes.

Lester and Kam [1971] investigated the effect of the recent experience of the death of a close friend or relative on the attitudes toward death of the living individual. The population consisted of 100 female undergraduates at an Eastern women's college. Of the 100 subjects, 50 of them had experienced the death of a relative or close friend within the past five years and 50 had not. The subjects were administered a death attitude questionnaire, which was based on Middleton's work. The findings, which were based on the two groups and noticeable on only four items, indicated that subjects who had experienced a recent death of a relative or close friend; a) tended to think of their own death more frequently; b) were more inclined to entertain thoughts of some specific disease as a cause of death; c) were more likely to picture death as horribly painful; d) and were more likely to be depressed by cemeteries. There was not a significant difference between the groups in terms of fear of death.

Maurer [1964] hypothesized that there was a significant correlation between attitudes toward death and academic success. The subjects were 153 high school students. The investigator used an unstructured method to test for death attitudes. She presented the following questions to the subjects: "What comes to your mind when you think of death?" and



"What comes to your mind when you think of love?" The second question was added to counteract the perceived traumatic effect of the first question. The subjects' scores on the American Council of Education Test were used to measure level of intelligence and its relationship to attitudes toward death. Levels of intelligence were divided into the following four groups: Group I - very high scores (24 students); Group II - above average (29 students); Group III - below average (54 students); and Group IV - very low (46 students). The results given in the study appeared to have overlapped in that subjects' responses appeared to have been assigned to more than one evaluative category. The findings were: a) Group I - 17% denied any fear of death while 17% projected fear of death onto others and 21% admitted a fear of death; b) Group II - 7% denied any fear of death, 24% projected fear of death onto others and 31% admitted a fear of death; c) Group III - 11% denied any fear of death, 17% projected fear of death onto others and 43% admitted a fear of death; d) Group IV - 0% denied any fear of death, 13% projected fear of death onto others and 11% admitted a fear of death. The investigator concluded that "poor achievement is associated with greater fear, often so pervasive that it can be communicated only indirectly. . . High achievement is associated with a greater sophistication in acknowledging inevitability" [pp. 89-90].

Kastenbaum [1965] conducted an exploratory study to investigate adolescents' attitudes toward death and the implications of these attitudes. His population consisted of 260 high school students in a Southern California community. He used the concepts of "structuring principle" and "subjective time field" [p. 103] to explore the implications of attitudes toward death. Death attitudes and their implications



were assessed by presenting the following stimulus words, one at a time, to each subject: "death", "good", "real", "life", "bright" and "myself" [p. 103]. The subjects were to relate each stimulus term to a set of 15 paired-opposite words. The finding was that "adolescents have one frame of reference in terms of which he regards most things; but death is separated from this dominant view, and structured much differently" [p. 103]. Therefore, Kastenbaum concluded that "adolescents who fearfully evade and encapsulate the subject of death seem in effect to have organized their mental lives along the lines of dominant cultural attitudes" [p. 112].

Kahana and Kahana [1972] focused their pilot study on the influence of the subject's age, future time perspective and impending versus eventual nature of death on their attitudes toward death. Impending death referred to "whether or not the subject felt that information regarding time of one's death was desirable, given various degrees of proximity of death" [p. 38]. Eventual death referred to "knowledge of one's lifespan (i.e., distance of eventual death)" [p. 41]. The sample was comprised of 90 college students; 52 women and 38 men. The authors devised a semi-structured questionnaire which included some precoded and open-ended questions. The questionnaire included information on age, sex, college major and questions tapping attitudes toward awareness of impending death. All questions were asked in the third person. Results were as follows: a) significantly more subjects wanted to be informed of their own impending death (56.6%) rather than of their eventual death (17.8%); b) 20% did not want to be informed of their impending death while 74.4% did not want to be informed of their eventual death. It was concluded that for this particular sample, death was





accepted as an inevitable end to a full life cycle. However, the majority of the subjects expressed little fear of awareness of death when it was impending. In contrast, a larger segment of the sample did not want to be informed of their eventual death or life expectancy. Their findings suggested that "the avoidance of the topic of death by young adults may be due to a need to deny a fearful potential event" [p. 43].

Golding, Atwood and Goodman [1966] hypothesized that it is more difficult to recognize death-related words than neutral words. The subjects were 30 males who were enrolled in an introductory psychology course. A list of 40 death-related and neutral words were presented to measure the relationship between the recognition threshold of the death-related words and general fear of death. The investigators found that the mean trials for recognition of death words were greater than for neutral words. They concluded that subjects with a high death word threshold also had a high fear of death.

Lester and Lester's [1970] findings did not corroborate those findings of Golding, et al. Lester and Lester investigated differences between recognition thresholds for neutral and death-related words. The subjects were 25 volunteers. The Collett-Lester Fear of Death Scale and a list of 15 death-related words and 15 neutral words were used. The investigators found that recognition thresholds for death words were significantly lower than for neutral words. Based on this finding, subjects with a low recognition threshold of death words also had a low fear of death.

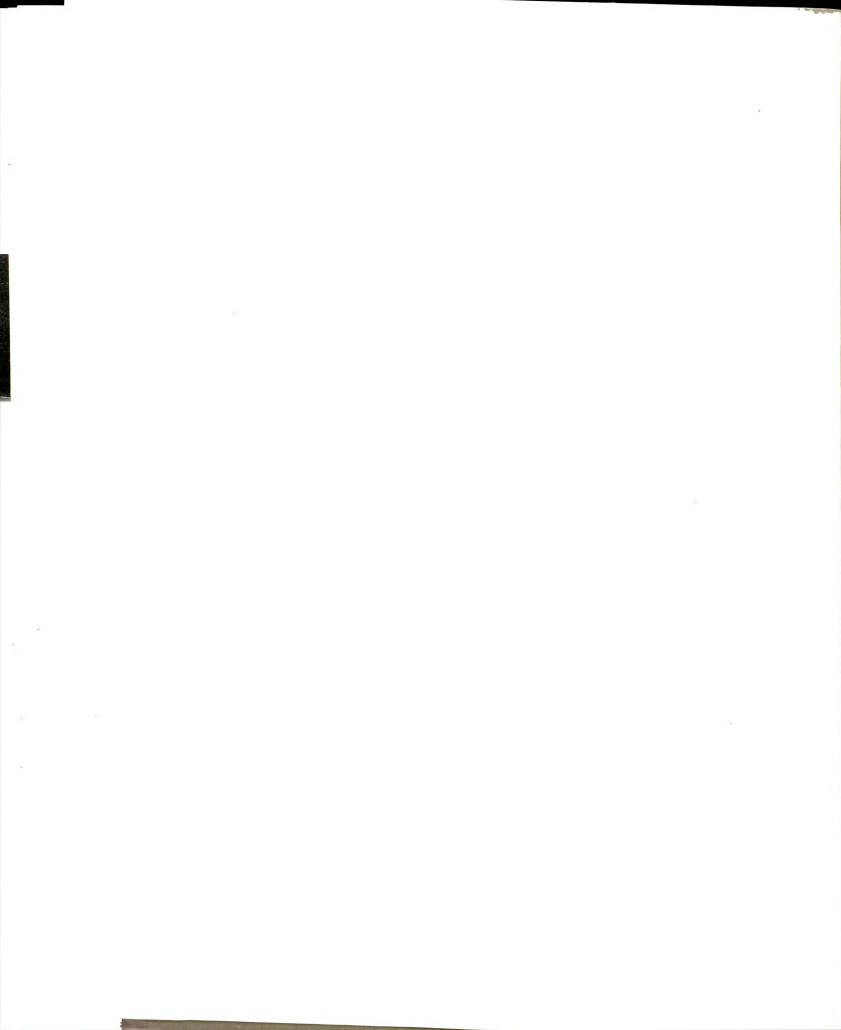
Feifel [1965] asked 85 mentally ill patients, mean age 36 years; 40 older persons, mean age 67 years; 85 "normals": (50 young people,



mean age 26 years, and 35 professional persons, mean age 40 years) "What does death mean to you?" He found that some of the subjects perceived death as the natural end process of life while other subjects perceived death as the cessation of bodily life, and in reality, the beginning of a new life.

Bromberg, Walter and Schilder [1933] administered a death and dying questionnaire to 70 "normal" individuals in different psychology groups. The findings were: a) many of the subjects only thought of their death when occurrences and circumstances warranted it; b) approximately three-fourths of the subjects felt that their own death was definitely improbable, not probable or inevitable; c) and fear of death was felt very often as a fear of losing pleasure potentialities.

Alexander, Cooley and Adlerstein [1957] were concerned with investigating whether "critical" words were more affectively charged than "basal" words. The subjects were 31 male undergraduates. The subjects were presented a list of 27 words. Eighteen of these words were designed as "basal" or basic words (e.g., sunset, criminal); three were sex words (e.g., lover, romance); three were school words (e.g., scholar, college); and three were death ("critical") words (e.g., burial, death). Each response to the stimulus word was measured by the response time, psychogalvanic response and response word. The investigators found that the subjects responded to words related to death with greater emotional intensity (indicated by psychogalvanic response magnitudes and latency of response time) than to other words. They concluded that overall, the subjects had a high fear of death which was perceived as being a negative attitude toward death.



### Summary

As can be seen from the review of relevant literature, some young adults have a strong horror or fear of death; many deny or project fear of death onto others. In addition, some avoid the topic of death, view it as a natural end process, the cessation of bodily life or an inevitable end to a full life cycle.

#### Comparison of Aged and Young Adults' Attitudes Toward Death

Death is a phase of life that cannot be escaped or bargained with by anyone. At one end of the continuum are aged adults and at the other end are young adults. For aged adults, the premise has been formulated that for some, old age is a preface to death. Young adults feel that their entire future lives are before them; hopefully, a life that will bring rewards and will possibly be untouched by death until they become aged. All of these adults, aged and young, have acquired some attitudes toward death. Do aged adults have more positive attitudes toward death than young adults? Do both populations express their attitudes toward death in a positive manner? Are positive and negative attitudes toward death expressed by aged and young adults? With respect to the review of relevant literature, a comparison of aged and young adults' attitudes will be set forth.

Some octogenarians had a lower concern for death [Rhudick and Dibner, 1961] than those aged persons who were sexagenarians and septuagenarians. Positive attitudes toward death were expressed by such words or phrases as happiness, looking forward to death [Swenson, 1961]. Some aged persons viewed death as a time for rest or a peaceful sleep [Roberts, Kimsey, Logan, and Shaw, 1970]. For young adults, such

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expression of positive attitudes was not reported in the literature review [Middleton, 1936; Kastenbaum, 1965; Kahana and Kahana, 1972; and Golding, Atwood and Goodman, 1966].

Many aged and young adults expressed negative attitudes toward death. Negative attitudes were expressed by such statements as the following: a) fearful of death [Swenson, 1961; Jeffers, Nichols and Eisdorfer, 1961; Kastenbaum, 1967b; Middleton, 1936; Alexander, Cooley and Adlerstein, 1957]; b) feeling that death is mighty bad [Roberts, Kimsey, Logan and Shaw, 1970]; a horribly painful experience [Middleton, 1936; Lester and Kam, 1971].

As can be surmised from the comparison of aged and young adults' attitudes toward death, the primary difference appears to be that aged adults tend to have less negative attitudes toward death than young adults. However, both groups have negative attitudes toward death.

#### Future Time in Relation to Attitudes Toward Death

Dickstein and Blatt [1966] investigated the relationship between degree of conscious concern and preoccupation with death and temporal experience. The subjects were 76 undergraduate students. They were administered a questionnaire which was designed to measure preoccupation with death; the picture arrangement subtest of the WAIS which measured the capacity for anticipation; and four story completion roots which measured the amount of time transpiring in the stories. They concluded that death concern was related to less anticipation and a foreshortened future time perspective in that subjects who reported that they were highly concerned or preoccupied with death seemed to live more in the present than in the future.





The relationship between future time perspective and attitudes toward death was the focal point of the study conducted by Hooper and Spilka [1970]. One-hundred seven male and 88 female college students were the subjects used in the study. They were administered five scales which measured future time perspective and nine scales which measured attitudes and views toward death. The results were: a) a positive view toward the future was associated with views of the future as being long, purposefully directed, organized; b) death was viewed as being a natural end, painful, lonely, encountering the unknown; c) and there was not a significant relationship between future time perspective and death attitudes.

Wohlford [1966] explored the hypothesis that one's perception of his personal death may be a significant determinant in his extension of personal time into the future. The sample consisted of 77 women and 70 men who were in an introductory psychology course. They were administered the Personal Association Measure which assessed extension of personal time. He found that subjects who expected the least traumatic death extended their life into the distant future. Dilling and Rabin [1967] corroborate this finding in that a foreshortened future time perspective is present in depressives where suicide is frequently entertained; therefore their closeness to death.

Kastenbaum [1966] explored the effect of time and aging on attitudes toward death in aged institutionalized persons. Most of the aged persons felt that time no longer belonged to them. According to Kastenbaum, this constituted an undesirable regression which could affect the aged person's desire for a life of longevity. He concluded



that for aged institutionalized men and women, the meaning of "death is intimately related to the meaning of time, that time is less fascinating and precious, that death is less formidable and devastating" [p. 336].

### Summary

From the review of relevant literature of future time perspective in relation to attitudes toward death: a) subjects who reported that they were highly concerned or preoccupied with death seemed to live more in the present than in the future; b) subjects who viewed their future death as being less traumatic extended their life into the distant future; c) and for aged subjects, death was not feared even though they realized the brevity of their future.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be investigated in this research are:

I) There is a significant difference between attitudes toward death of aged and young adults along the positive-negative dimension.

Attitudes toward death in aged and young adults differ significantly when the focal point is positive death attitudes. Young adults express significantly fewer positive attitudes toward death than do aged adults. Both aged and young adults express negative attitudes. One would predict aged adults to have more positive attitudes toward death than young adults.

II) There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension.



III) There is a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between aged and young adults.

When attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future are considered concomitantly, the relationship between these variables in young adults is moot. For some young adults, a preoccupation or a high concern with death is related to a foreshortened future time perspective [Dickstein and Blatt, 1966]. In opposition to this relationship, Hooper and Spilka [1970] found no relationship between future time perspective and death attitudes in a group of young adults.

Some aged adults have accepted their inevitable future death which is not viewed as a feared event. For them, death appears to be related to time and they view time as no longer belonging to them. Their future extension appears to be short range. It is predicted that young adults will have more negative attitudes toward death and a long future time perspective. Aged adults will have more positive attitudes toward death and a short future time perspective.

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## METHOD

This study was designed to investigate attitudes toward death and toward the future in aged and young adults.

### Subjects

#### Aged Subjects

The aged subjects were 50 females and 50 males with an age range from 60 to 88 and a mean age of 70. Four of the subjects were single, 65 were married, two were divorced and 29 were widowed. The mean health rating was good. All but three of the subjects were retired. For a vast majority of this population, occupation at retirement consisted of college professors, medical doctors, lawyers, public school teachers, nurses, etc. For females, level of education ranged from 12 to 20 years; for males 12 to 24 years with a mean level of education for the total aged population of 14.90 years.

The aged subjects were recruited via of the author contacting the presidents from the different branches of the local American Association of Retire Persons (AARP) and receiving permission from the presidents for her to attend the monthly meeting, present a brief statement regarding the research and recruit volunteers accordingly. All individuals who were interested in participating in the research placed his/her name, address and telephone number on a sign-up sheet. The volunteers were contacted by the author via telephone and an appointment was arranged for the testing. Also, many of the initial





volunteers gave the author the names of friends who they thought might be interested in participating. Of all the subjects contacted, there was approximately a 2% to 3% refusal.

All of the subjects had a minimum of 12 years of education, they resided in their private homes and most of them were very active mentally and physically.

### Young Subjects

The young subjects were 50 females and 50 males who were undergraduate students at Michigan State University. Age ranged from 18 to 25 with a mean age of 18. All of the subjects were single. The mean health rating was good. For females, level of education ranged from 12 to 15 years; for males 12 to 19 years with a mean level of education for the total young population of 13.03 years.

The young adults subjects were recruited via sign-up sheets which were posted in two large rooms where introductory psychology classes were held. The sign-up sheets contained the title of the research as well as spaces for his/her name and telephone number. The author contacted each student via telephone and a time was arranged for the student to participate in the research. All of the young adult subjects were volunteers.

### Instruments

The battery of instruments consisted of the following:

1. Personal data information form. This form consisted of demographic information such as age, sex, marital status, health (each subject rated his/her perception of his/her physical health), level of education completed, etc. (Appendix A).



2. A Likert-type death attitude scale was developed by the author. The following procedure was enacted to construct the scale: a large number of potential positive and negative death attitude statements were collected from students in three large summer school psychology classes at Michigan State University. The statements that were clearly double-barreled were discarded or rewritten and the remaining statements were used in constructing the death attitude assessment instrument. The instrument was comprised of 44 statements, 22 positive and 22 negative, which was administered to 178 respondents of various ages, races and educational levels. The respondent indicated his level of agreement or disagreement on a 4-point scale. Based on the internal consistency of the 44 statements, the final scale was constructed. The final scale consisted of 24 statements, 12 positively worded and 12 negatively worded, which had the highest level of internal consistency and reliability. The coefficient alpha (which is an estimate of the reliability of the total test) for the final instrument was .897.

The subject indicated his level of agreement or disagreement on a 4-point scale. The lowest possible total score was 24 and the highest possible total score was 96. Each positively worded statement was scored from 1-4, whereas the scoring was reversed for each negatively worded statement. The higher the total score on this instrument, the more positive the death attitudes. This instrument will be referred to as D1 (Appendix B).

3. The semantic differential test [Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1961] was used to measure attitudes toward death. The measure consisted of 8 paired evaluative stimuli concepts which were scored on a

1-7 point scale. If the stimulus word to the left was a positive concept, the scoring preceded from 1-7; if the stimulus word to the left was a negative concept, the scoring preceded from 7-1. The lowest possible total score was 8 with the highest possible total score being 56. For this particular scale, the lower the total score, the more positive the death attitudes. This scale will be referred to as D2 (Appendix C).

4. A death anxiety scale [Conte, H. R., Bakur-Weiner, M., and Plutchik, R., 1975] was used as a measure of death attitudes. The scale was composed of 15 statements which dealt with thoughts about death and dying. The split-half reliability for the scale was .76. The subjects had a choice of three response categories which were: "not at all" which received a numerical score of 0; "sometimes" which received a numerical score of 1; and "very much" which received a numerical score of 2. The lowest possible total score was 0 and the highest possible total score was 30. A low total score on this instrument was associated with positive attitudes toward death. This instrument will be referred to as D3 (Appendix D).

In this study, future time perspective is defined as the length of the time span which is conceptualized.

5. Measure 1 of the future time perspective measure which was developed by Wallace [1956] was used to measure the length of future time perspective. This measure consisted of ten blanks where the subjects were to write ten personal future events and an estimate of the time occurrence. The median for the ten estimated times of occurrence was calculated. If the calculated total time was not in years, the



time was transformed to years. For this measure, the longer the total time, the more extended the future time perspective. This measure will be referred to as FTP1 (Appendix E).

6. A semantic differential test [Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1961] was used to assess attitudes toward the future. The description of the test and scoring procedure were the same as for the semantic differential death attitude measure. This measure will be referred to as FTA2 (Appendix F).

7. The story-completion technique which was originally developed by Barndt and Johnson [1955] was used to assess future time perspective. The measure consisted of the beginning of four stories. The subjects finished each story and gave a time for the action described in the story. The median was computed for each set of stories. If the total time was not in months, it was transformed to months. The larger the total median time was on the instrument, the longer the future time perspective. This measure will be referred to as FTP3 (Appendix G).

Examples of the endings to the stories as given by an aged adult subject and a young adult subject can be found in Appendix H.

### Procedure

The battery of instruments was presented to each subject in a booklet form in the following order: personal data information form, FTP1, D1, FTA2, D2, D3, and FTP3 which was not included in the booklet. FTP3 was not included in the booklet because the beginnings of the four stories were read to each individual subject in a different room which was located away from the main testing room, by a research assistant or the author. The endings which were given by the subjects were recorded

and later transcribed by the author.

The young adult subjects were tested in groups ranging from five to ten in number. They were tested in classrooms. The aged adults were tested in their private homes by a research assistant or the author.





## RESULTS

In previous sections, a presentation was made of the hypotheses. Results for this investigation will be presented accordingly.

### Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I states that there is a significant difference between attitudes toward death of aged and young adults along the positive-negative dimension is supported in the expected direction. A multivariate and univariate analysis of variance was used to test hypothesis I. Table 1 gives the summary of multivariate analyses of variance for the three attitude toward death measures. There is a significant age ( $p < .0001$ ) effect. The univariate analyses of variance and relevant means reveal that there is a statistically significant age effect on D1 ( $p < .0001$ ), D2 ( $p < .0001$ ), and D3 ( $p < .0001$ ) with aged adults having more positive attitudes toward death than young adults on the three death measures (Table 2). As shown in Table 3, there is a significant difference between attitudes toward death for young and aged women on D1 ( $p < .001$ ), D2 ( $p < .001$ ), and D3 ( $p < .001$ ) measures. Young women have a lower mean score on D1 than aged women; young women's mean score is higher than aged women's on D2 and D3. These findings indicate that aged women have more positive attitudes toward death than young women on the three attitude toward death measures. There is a significant difference between attitudes toward death for young and aged men on D2 ( $p < .001$ ) and D3 ( $p < .001$ ) (Table 3) measures.

TABLE 1

Summary of Multivariate Analysis  
of Variance for Three Measures  
of Death Attitude (N=200)

Source	df	F	P
Age	3	44.05	<.0001
Sex	3	5.16	<.0019
Age X Sex	3	.98	<.4023

TABLE 2

Summary of Univariate<sup>a</sup> Analysis of Variance and  
Relevant Means for the Main Effect of Age on  
Measures of Death Attitude (N=200)

Variable	Mean Score		MS <sup>a</sup>	F
	Aged	Young		
Death 1	75.46	70.55	1,205.4050	15.94***
Death 2	24.50	34.97	5,481.0450	53.15***
Death 3	5.430	11.14	1,630.2050	89.38***

<sup>a</sup>df for each comparison = 1/196

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

\*\*\*p < .001

Aged men's mean death scores are lower than the young men's mean death scores on D2 and D3. These findings indicate that aged men have more positive attitudes toward death than young men. There is a trend toward significance on D1 ( $p < .10$ ) with aged men having a higher mean death score than young men, also indicating that aged men have more positive



attitudes toward death than young men. Therefore, hypothesis I which states that there is a significant difference between attitudes toward death of aged and young adults along the positive-negative dimension is supported in the predicted direction.

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Aged and Young Adults on the Three Measures of Death Attitudes

Subjects	Death 1		Death 2		Death 3	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Aged Women	75.08	7.461	25.22	10.972	6.18	3.863
Aged Men	75.84	7.993	23.78	11.60	4.68	4.128
Young Women	68.32	9.079	36.30	9.579	12.58	4.895
Young Men	72.78	10.021	33.64	8.101	9.70	4.127
Young Women	68.32	9.079	36.30	9.579	12.58	4.895
Aged Women	75.08	7.461	25.22	10.972	6.18	3.863
Young Men	72.78	10.021	33.64	8.101	9.70	4.127
Aged Men	75.84	7.993	23.78	11.608	4.68	4.128

### Hypothesis II

Hypothesis II which states that there is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension is confirmed in three pairs of the predicted relationships. Table 4 shows the combinations of correlations between attitudes toward death and the future time measures for the total population. Significant positive relationships are presented in D2 and FTP1 ( $p < .001$ ); and



D3 and FTP1 ( $p < .001$ ). These findings indicate that positive attitudes toward death are associated with a short future time perspective. There is also a positive significant finding in D2 and FTA2 ( $p < .001$ ) which indicates that positive attitudes toward death are concomitant with positive attitudes toward the future. There is a trend toward a significant negative relationship between D1 and FTA2 ( $p < .10$ ) which indicates that positive attitudes toward death are associated with positive attitudes toward the future. There is also a trend toward a significant positive relationship between D3 and FTA2 ( $p < .10$ ). This finding gives support to the preceding trend. Hypothesis II which states there is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension is confirmed in three pairs of the predicted relationships.

TABLE 4

Correlations of Death Attitudes and Future  
Time Perspective (FTP1 and FTP3) and  
Attitudes Toward the Future Measures  
(FTA2) for Adults

Variable	FTP1	FTA2	FTP3
D1	-0.11546	-0.12283	-0.08835
D2	0.23488***	0.25805***	0.07421
D3	0.39609***	0.12592	0.09323

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

\*\*\* $p < .001$

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### Hypothesis III

According to hypothesis III there is a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between young and aged adults. This hypothesis is supported by significant differences between three pairs of correlations (Table 5). A significant difference is present between D1 and FTP1 ( $p < .01$ ) indicating that for aged adults, attitudes toward death are accurate predictors of the length of their future time perspective. However, for young adults, attitudes toward death are not as accurate in predicting their length of future time perspective. Also, there is a significant difference between D2 and FTA2 ( $p < .001$ ) indicating that for aged adults, attitudes toward death are accurate predictors of their attitudes toward the future. For young adults, attitudes toward death are not accurate predictors of their attitudes toward the future. A significant difference is also present on D3 and FTP1 ( $p < .05$ ). This finding indicates that even though there is a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between young and aged adults, the difference is not strong. Because the difference in the relationship is not strong attitudes toward death are not accurate predictors of the length of future time perspective. Hypothesis III is supported on three pairs of correlations.

### Summary

The findings of this investigation confirm Hypothesis I which states that there is a significant difference between attitudes toward death of aged and young adults along the positive-negative dimension. The multivariate analyses of variance for the three attitudes toward



TABLE 5

Significance of the Difference of the Relationship of Death  
Attitudes and Future Time Measures Between the  
the Aged and Young Adult Populations

	FTP1	Z	FTA2	Z	FTP3	Z
D1 Young	-.06162	-2.12**	.02349	1.18	-.08970	-0.76
D1 Aged	.25444		-.15215		.01781	
D2 Young	-.14934	-0.69	-.14051	-3.85***	.06171	0.63
D2 Aged	-.05113		.43834		.02851	
D3 Young	.11434	1.87*	.10896	0.83	.04059	-0.07
D3 Aged	-.1559		-.00546		.05281	

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

\*\*\*p < .001

death measures yield a statistically significant age effect ( $p < .0001$ ). Aged adults have more positive attitudes toward death than young adults on D1 ( $p < .0001$ ); D2 ( $p < .0001$ ); and D3 ( $p < .0001$ ) with aged women having more positive attitudes toward death than young women. Aged and young men's mean attitude toward death scores differ significantly on D2 ( $p < .001$ ) and D3 ( $p < .001$ ) measures. Aged men have more positive attitudes toward death than young men.

Hypothesis II that there is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension is supported on three pairs of instruments. They are: D2 and FTP1 ( $p < .001$ ), D3 and FTP1 ( $p < .001$ ), and D2 and FTA2 ( $p < .001$ ). These relationships indicate that positive attitudes toward death are associated with a long future time perspective and positive attitudes toward the future.

Trends toward significance are present in D1 and FTA2; and D3 and FTA2 ( $p < .10$ ) which support the preceding relationships.

Significant differences between three pairs of correlations give support to hypothesis III which predicts a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between aged and young adults. The relationships are present in the following paired measures: D1 and FTP1 ( $p < .01$ ); D2 and FTA2 ( $p < .001$ ); and D3 and FTP1 ( $p < .05$ ). These findings indicate that D1 and FTP1; D2 and FTA2 are very strong in predicting the difference in the relationships of death attitudes and future time perspective; attitudes toward the future. Also, these findings indicate that aged adults' attitudes toward death are accurate predictors of the length of their future time perspective and attitudes toward the future. However, young adults' attitudes toward death are not as accurate in predicting the length of their future time perspective and attitudes toward the future. There is a significant difference in the relationship for aged and young adults on D3 and FTP1 but the difference is not as strong as in above stated paired measures.

#### Additional Findings

During the course of the investigation, a number of additional findings appeared of interest. Results and discussion of these appear in Appendix J at the end of the thesis.

#### Implications for Future Research

The results of this study indicate that there is a need for a more reliable measure of future time perspective and a more random sampling procedure.



The reliability of the assessment of attitudes toward death could be increased by presenting death related stimuli to subjects and measuring such physiological responses as heart-rate, pulse-rate, blood pressure and galvanic skin response.

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## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate attitudes toward death and toward future time in aged and young adults.

Age is a significant factor in contributing to the difference in death attitudes of the total population. Aged adults have more positive attitudes toward death than young adults. The finding that aged adults have positive attitudes toward death is supported by Roberts, Kimsey, Logan and Shaw [1970]; Kastenbaum [1967]; Swenson [1961] and Scott [1896]. There are several possibilities which can be viewed as contributing factors to aged adults positive attitudes toward death for this particular population. Firstly, positive attitudes could be attributed to the reality of their longevity and proximity to death and the death of loved ones, friends or acquaintances. The reality of these situations often serves as the intervening force which demands the acknowledgment and possibly the acceptance of their finiteness as a developmental phase within the human life cycle. Secondly, all of the aged subjects are volunteers. Because these aged adults agreed to participate in this research reveals the possibility that they had minimal anxiety negative attitudes toward death. Erikson's [1963] comments are relevant at this juncture:

Only in him who in some way has taken care of things and people and has adapted himself to the triumphs and disappointments adherent to being, the originator of others or the generator of products and ideas--only in him may gradually ripen the fruit of ego integrity. . . . It is the ego's accrued assurance of its proclivity for order





and meaning. It is a post-narcissistic love of the human ego--not of the self--as an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense, no matter how dearly paid for. It is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitutions. . . . For he knows that an individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one segment of history; and that for him all human integrity stands or falls with the one style of integrity of which he partakes. The style of integrity developed by his culture or civilization thus becomes the 'patrimony of his soul,' the seal of his moral paternity of himself. In such final consolidation, death loses its sting [Emphasis mine]. The lack or loss of this accrued ego integration is signified by fear of death: the one and only life cycle is not accepted as the ultimate of life. Despair expresses the feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life and to try out alternate roads to integrity [pp. 268-269].

Considering the nature of the aged sample--its success in achieving goals and the attainment of a "style of integrity"--it is understandable that death's "sting" is reduced.

The finding that young adults have more negative attitudes toward death than aged adults is supported by Middleton [1936]; Alexander, Colley and Adlerstein [1957]; Maurer [1964]; Kastenbaum [1965] and Golding, Atwood and Goodman [1966]. That young people have negative attitudes toward death could be attributed to the fact that only recently has the overt discussion of death been accepted into our society. Another factor could be that young people are painfully aware of death in a negative sense because of the type of exposure they have had to death. Many of them have not witnessed the calm dying of an aged relative but they have been exposed to and witnessed the violent types of death which can be viewed through various mass medias. An additional explanation is that all of the young adult subjects were volunteers. After the completion of the battery of instruments, many of the subjects



overtly verbalized that they wanted to participate in the research because they acknowledged the reality of their fears, anxieties and negative attitudes toward death. They felt that by participating in such research, they would possibly reap the rewards of being motivated to examine their attitudes toward death and attempt to incorporate their future death into their life as a natural process of life.

There are statistically significant findings to support hypothesis II which states that there is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension. These findings indicate the less negative attitudes toward death are associated with a short future time perspective and positive attitudes toward the future. These findings could be attributed to the acceptance of death because of the uncertainty of an extended future. It is to one's advantage to assume the responsibility for accepting the reality of death when the future is nebulous because of proximity to death, constant threat of total annihilation, and precarious confrontations with human survival. Even though one is in the process of attempting to accept one's inevitable death, one may maintain positive attitudes toward the future with hopes that no matter how short, the future will be rewarding. This attitude may also be related to successful past experiences in our sample.

Hypothesis III which states that there is a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, between aged and young adults is supported. The statistically significant difference in the relationship of death

attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between aged and young adults can be explained in terms of age. Aged adults are cognizant of their propinquity to death and the brevity of the future. Therefore, the predictability of a strong relationship between the variables for aged adults is conceivable. However, young adults' proximity to death is not reasonable and they are vulnerable to an uncertain future. This particular relationship between the two variables creates ambivalence and apprehension which contribute to the unpredictability of that relationship. Thus the obtained differences in the relationships confirm the hypothesis.

A very surprising and interesting finding is that aged adults have more positive attitudes toward the future than young adults. This most intriguing finding is the result of the feeling of optimism which is manifested in some aged adults' attitudes toward the future. They are aged, the major phase of life has been lived and they realize that regardless of future events, they will not be denied a life of longevity because they have already lived an extended life. They seem to have positive attitudes toward the future because of successful past experiences. Prevalent in this particular aged population is anticipated trips abroad, camp outs, family gatherings, meetings and national scenic tour trips. However, young adults are victims of a very unpredictable future. Because of the unpredictable future, feelings of pessimism and apprehension are generated. Therefore, hoping for an extended future yet acknowledging the uncertainty of a satisfactory future because of possible nuclear holocaust, economic insecurities, etc. they dare not become overly optimistic about the future.



## SUMMARY

This study is concerned with attitudes toward death and toward the future in aged and young adults. The specific hypotheses regarding these variables that were examined were:

I. There is a significant difference between attitudes toward death of aged and young adults along the positive-negative dimension.

II. There is a significant relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future, in adults, along the positive-negative dimension.

III. There is a significant difference in the relationship of death attitudes, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future between aged and young adults.

The subjects were 50 aged females and 50 aged males with a mean age of 70 and a mean of 14.90 years of education. The young adults were 50 females and 50 males with a mean age of 18 and a mean of 13.03 years of education. The 200 subjects were volunteers and had a minimum of 12 years of education.

The instruments used to assess attitudes toward death were:

1) death attitudes scale, 2) semantic differential death attitude measure, 3) and death anxiety scale. The following instruments were used to measure future time perspective: 1) personal events future time perspective measure, 2) and a story-completion technique. The semantic differential future time attitude measure was used to measure attitudes toward the future. In addition to the attitudes toward





death and future time measures, a personal data information form was completed by each subject.

The following statements summarize the findings of this study:

1. Aged adults have more positive attitudes toward death than young adults.
2. Positive attitudes toward death are related to a shorter future time perspective and positive attitudes toward the future for the total sample.
3. The relationship between attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future is higher for aged adults than for young adults.
4. Young adults have a significantly longer future time perspective than aged adults.
5. Aged adults have more positive attitudes toward the future than young adults.

The results were discussed in relation to existing theory and proposals for future research were made. Additional related findings are included in the appendix.

## REFERENCES



## REFERENCES

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## APPENDICES



APPENDIX A  
PERSONAL DATA INFORMATION



APPENDIX A  
PERSONAL DATA INFORMATION

AGE \_\_\_\_\_

SEX: MALE \_\_\_\_\_ FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PLACE AN X NEXT TO THE APPROPRIATE WORD

MARITAL STATUS:

SINGLE \_\_\_\_\_

MARRIED \_\_\_\_\_

DIVORCED \_\_\_\_\_

WIDOWED \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTH:

POOR \_\_\_\_\_

FAIR \_\_\_\_\_

GOOD \_\_\_\_\_

VERY GOOD \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU RETIRED? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

PREVIOUS OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

PRESENT OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS OF EDUCATION COMPLETED \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX B  
DEATH ATTITUDE MEASURE





## APPENDIX B

### Instructions:

Below are some statements regarding attitudes toward death. Please indicate YOUR feelings about each statement by circling one of the following words which appears below each statement:

strongly disagree  
disagree  
agree  
strongly agree

1. Funerals make me more afraid of death.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

2. My eventual death is not a threat to me.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

3. I feel that I am more frightened about death than most people.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

4. Questions about death should be answered honestly.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

5. When I go to bed at night, I am bothered sometimes by frightening thoughts and feelings about death.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

6. I have discussed the topic of death with family members.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

7. For me, death is very scary.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

8. Death Education should be taught in public schools.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree



9. I view death as being very painful.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
10. The thought of my own death does not frighten me.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
11. I view death as being a tormenting experience.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
12. I have accepted my inevitable death.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
13. I feel that death is a horrible experience.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
14. Thinking about death enables me to accept my own mortality.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
15. The thoughts of my eventual death are very frightening to me.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
16. My death is inevitable.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
17. My death is a threat to me.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
18. I have considered how I want my body to be disposed of after I die.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
19. Death is terrifying.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
20. I am not afraid to die.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree
21. I dislike discussing the topic of death.  
strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

22. Death is inevitable.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

23. It is very difficult for me to accept my eventual death.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree

24. I think the topic of death should be discussed in the open.

strongly disagree      disagree      agree      strongly agree



APPENDIX C

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL DEATH ATTITUDE MEASURE



## APPENDIX C

### Instructions

The purpose of this study is to measure the meanings of certain things to various people by having them judge them against a series of descriptive scales. In taking this test, please make your judgments on the basis of what these things mean TO YOU. On each page of this book-let you will find a different concept to be judged and beneath it a set of scales. You are to rate the concept on each of these scales in order.

Here is how you are to use these scales:

If you feel that the concept at the top of the page is very closely related to one end of the scale, you should place your X as follows:

fair X : : : : : unfair

or

fair : : : : : X unfair

If you feel that the concept is quite closely related to one or the other end of the scale (but not extremely), you should place your X as follows:

strong : X : : : : : weak

or

strong : : : : : X : weak

If the concept seems only slightly related to one side as opposed to the other side (but is not really neutral), then you should place your X as follows:

active : : : X : : : : passive

or

active : : : : : X : : passive

The direction toward which you check, of course, depends upon which of the two ends of the scale seem most characteristic of the thing you're judging.



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If you consider the concept to be neutral on the scale, both sides of the scale equally associated with the concept, or if the scale is completely irrelevant, unrelated to the concept, then you should place your X in the middle space:

safe \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : X : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ dangerous

IMPORTANT: (1) Place your marks in the middle of spaces, not on the boundaries:

		THIS		NOT THIS	
_____	:	_____	:	_____	:
		X		X	

- (2) Be sure you check every scale for every concept--do not omit any.
- (3) Never put more than one X on a single scale.

Sometimes you may feel as though you've had the same item before on the test. This will not be the case, so do not look back and forth through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the test. Make each item a separate and independent judgment. Work at a fairly high speed through the test. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feelings" about the items, that we want. On the other hand, please do not be careless, because we want your true impressions.

DEATH

GOOD : : : : : BAD

UNPLEASANT : : : : : PLEASANT

SWEET : : : : : BITTER

SAD : : : : : HAPPY

FAIR : : : : : UNFAIR

UGLY       :       :       :       :       :       :       BEAUTIFUL

NICE : : : : : AWFUL

DARK : : : : : BRIGHT



APPENDIX D  
DEATH ANXIETY MEASURE



# APPENDIX D

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH AND DYING

Name or Code Number \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Listed below are a number of questions concerning thoughts that people sometimes have about death and dying. Please indicate how much you worry about the things described by each of the questions.

- |  | <u>Not at</u><br><u>All</u> | <u>Some-</u><br><u>times</u> | <u>Very</u><br><u>Much</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Do you worry about dying? . . . . .   | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 2. Does it bother you that you may die before<br>you have done everything you wanted to? . . .                                   | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 3. Do you worry that you may be very ill for a<br>long time before you die? . . . . .  | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 4. Does it upset you to thing that others may<br>see you suffering when you die? . . . . .                                       | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 5. Do you worry that dying may be very painful? .  | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 6. Do you worry that the persons most close to<br>you won't be with you when you are dying? . .                                  | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 7. Do you worry that you may be alone when<br>you are dying? . . . . .   | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 8. Does the thought bother you that you might<br>lose control of your mind before death? . . .                                   | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 9. Do you worry that expenses connected with<br>your dying will be a burden for other people? .                                  | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 10. Does it worry you that your instructions<br>or will about your belongings may not be<br>carried out after you die? . . . . . | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 11. Are you afraid that you may be buried<br>before you are really dead? . . . . .   | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 12. Does the thought of leaving loved ones<br>behind when you die disturb you? . . . . .   | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |



- |  | <u>Not at</u><br><u>All</u> | <u>Some-</u><br><u>times</u> | <u>Very</u><br><u>Much</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13. Do you worry that those you care about<br>may not remember you after your death? . . . | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 14. Does the thought worry you that with<br>death you may be gone forever? . . . . .       | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |
| 15. Are you worried about not knowing what<br>to expect after death? . . . . .             | _____                       | _____                        | _____                      |





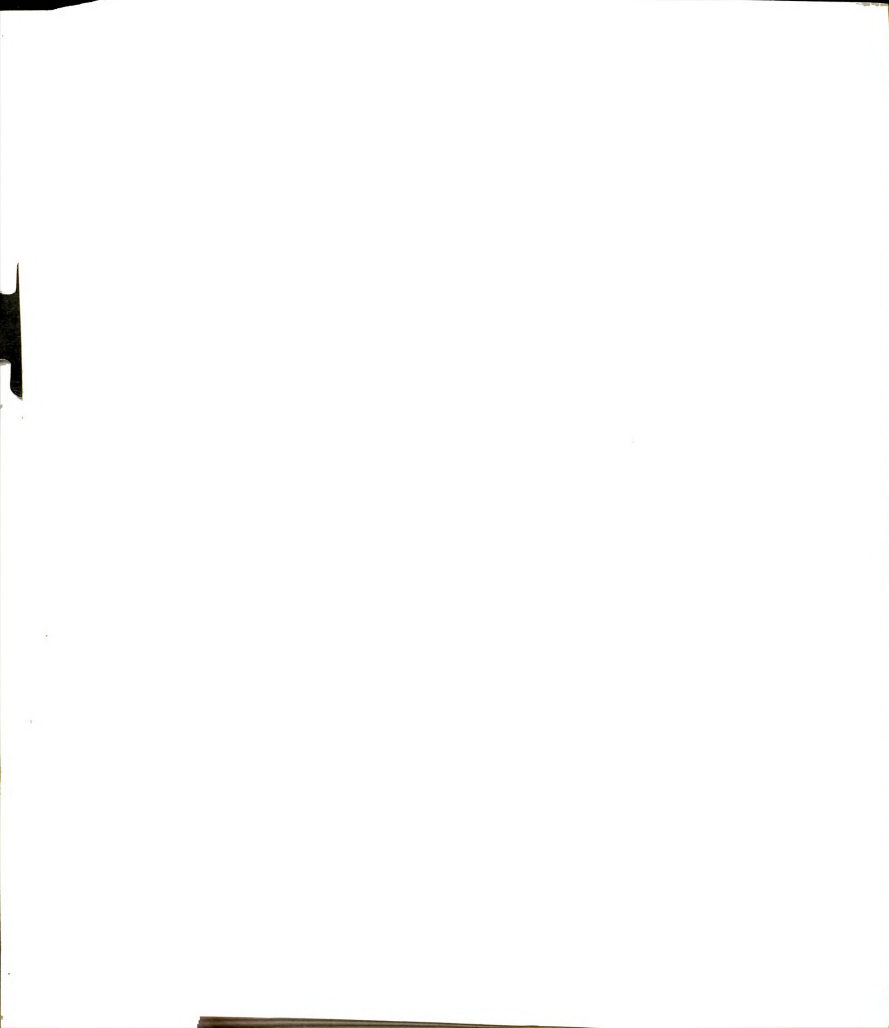
APPENDIX E  
FUTURE TIME PERSPECTIVE MEASURE



## APPENDIX E

Instructions: Write down TEN events that refer to things that may happen to you during the rest of your life. After each event write down the number of YEARS, MONTHS, WEEKS, DAYS, HOURS or MINUTES when you think the event might occur.

EVENT	TIME OF OCCURRENCE
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____



APPENDIX F

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL FUTURE TIME MEASURE



## APPENDIX F

### THE FUTURE

BRIGHT \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ DARK

BITTER \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ SWEET

FAIR \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ UNFAIR

UNPLEASANT \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ PLEASANT

HAPPY \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ SAD

BAD \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ GOOD

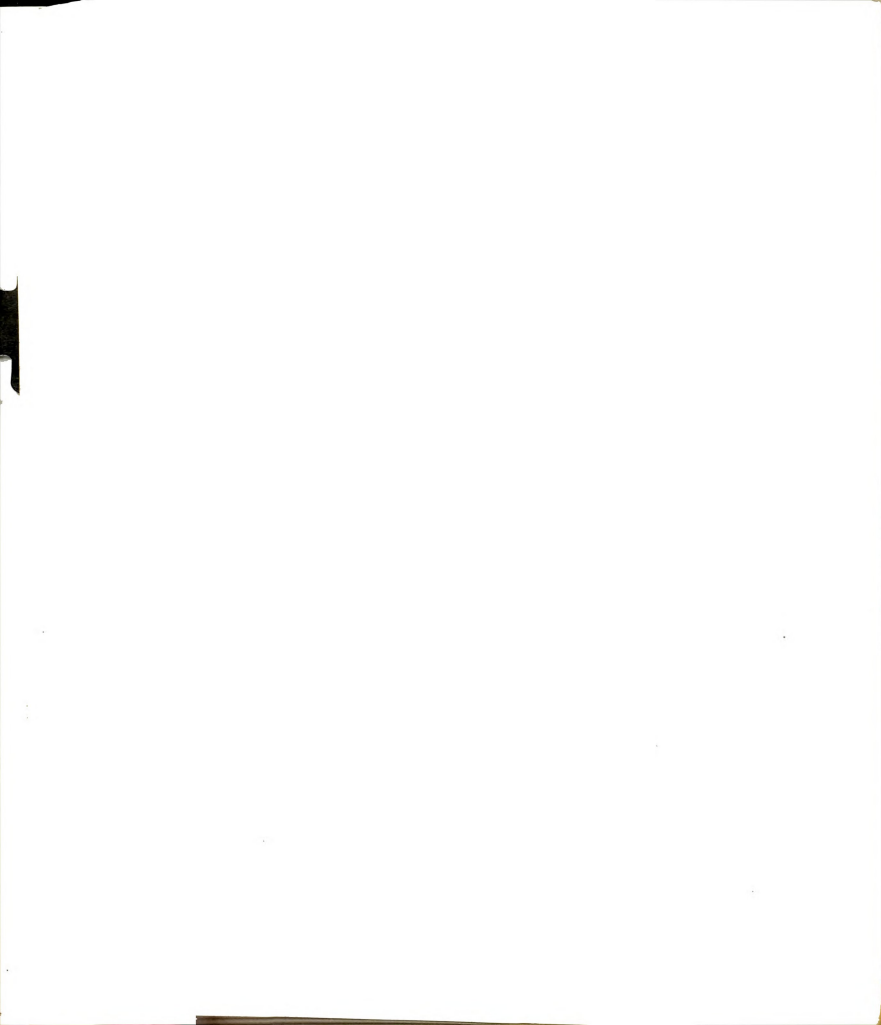
BEAUTIFUL \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ UGLY

AWFUL \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ NICE





APPENDIX G  
STORY-COMPLETION TECHNIQUE



## APPENDIX G

### STORY COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

The beginning statement of four stories will be read by the examiner to each subject(s); the subject(s) will finish the story, and his response will be written by the subject or the examiner. If no reference to interval of time involved in the story is included, the examiner will ask "How long a time was involved in the story--not in telling it, but in the action described?"

The following stories will be presented as follows:

#### Story I

I want to see what kind of story you can tell. I'll start one for you, and then you finish it any way you wish. I'll start it now. "At 3 o'clock one bright sunny afternoon in May, two men were out walking near the edge of town." Now you start there and finish the story for me.

#### Story II

That was fine. Now I'll begin another story which as before you may finish any way you want to. Here it is: "10 o'clock one morning, Sue met her friend Ann near the center of town." Now you start there and finish it for me.

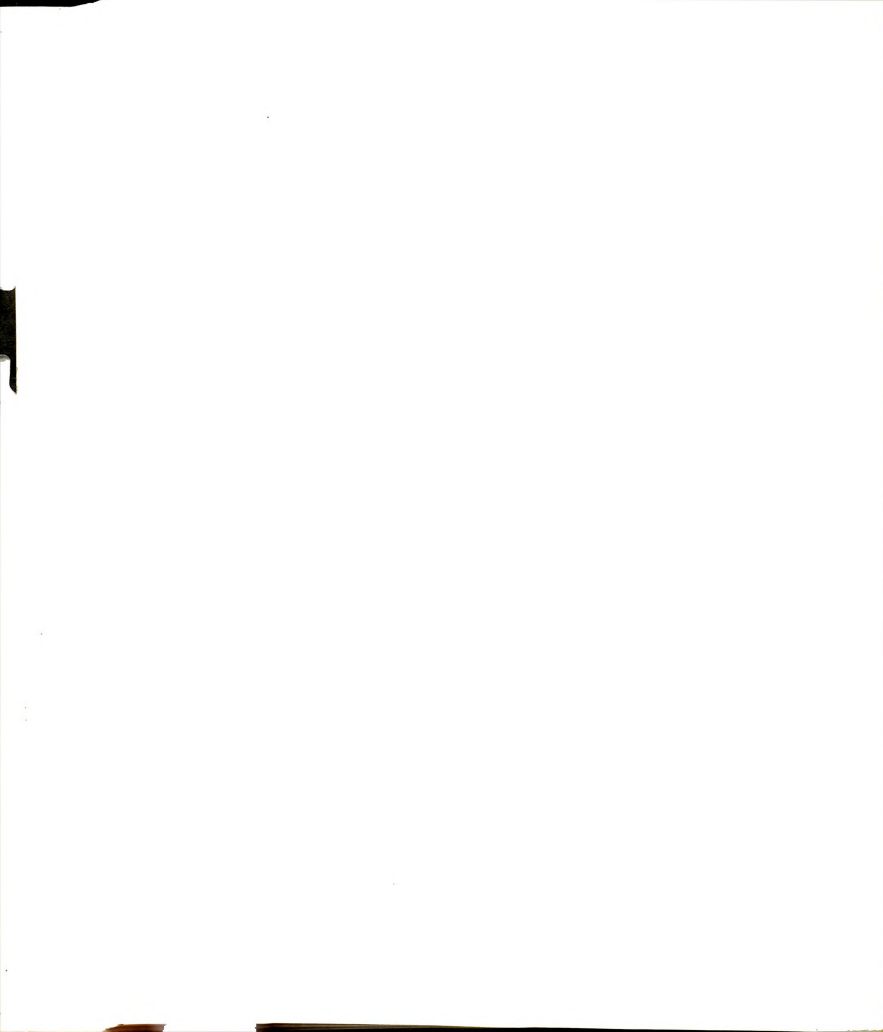
#### Story III

That was pretty good. Now here is the start of another story which you may again finish in anyway you wish. "Edna is having a cup of tea in a restaurant. She is thinking of the time to come when. . .

Now you finish it for me.

Story IV

Here is the last story that I'll give you. I want you to finish it in any way you wish, just like you did on the other stories. Here it is: "After awakening, Bill began to think about his future. In general, his plans involved. . ." Now you start there and finish.



APPENDIX H  
EXAMPLES OF STORY-COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

## APPENDIX H

### EXAMPLES OF STORY-COMPLETION TECHNIQUE

#### AGED FEMALE

##### Story 1

Examiner: "At 3 o'clock one bright sunny afternnon in May, two men were out walking near the edge of town."

Subject: "They were on their way to find a place to fish and when they found a place to fish they decided they would talk. But they didn't get any fish because they were enjoying themselves just by talking to each other." 2 hrs. 30 min.

##### Story 2

Examiner: "10 o'clock one morning, Sue met her friend Ann near the center of town."

Subject: "They decided that they want to do some shopping and perhaps have lunch. So they decided they would go and look for some bed spreads which each of them needed. But they didn't find what they wanted so they went to another store and still didn't find what they wanted. So they decided to go look for cloths for the children; one of the boys needed a jacket--they didn't find one but the did find a dress for one of the girls. Then they decided to go have lunch."

1 hr. 30 min.



Story 3

Examiner: "Edna is having a cup of tea in a restaurant. She is thinking of the time to come when. . ."

Subject: "She would go down and see an art gallery show."

1 hr.

Story 4

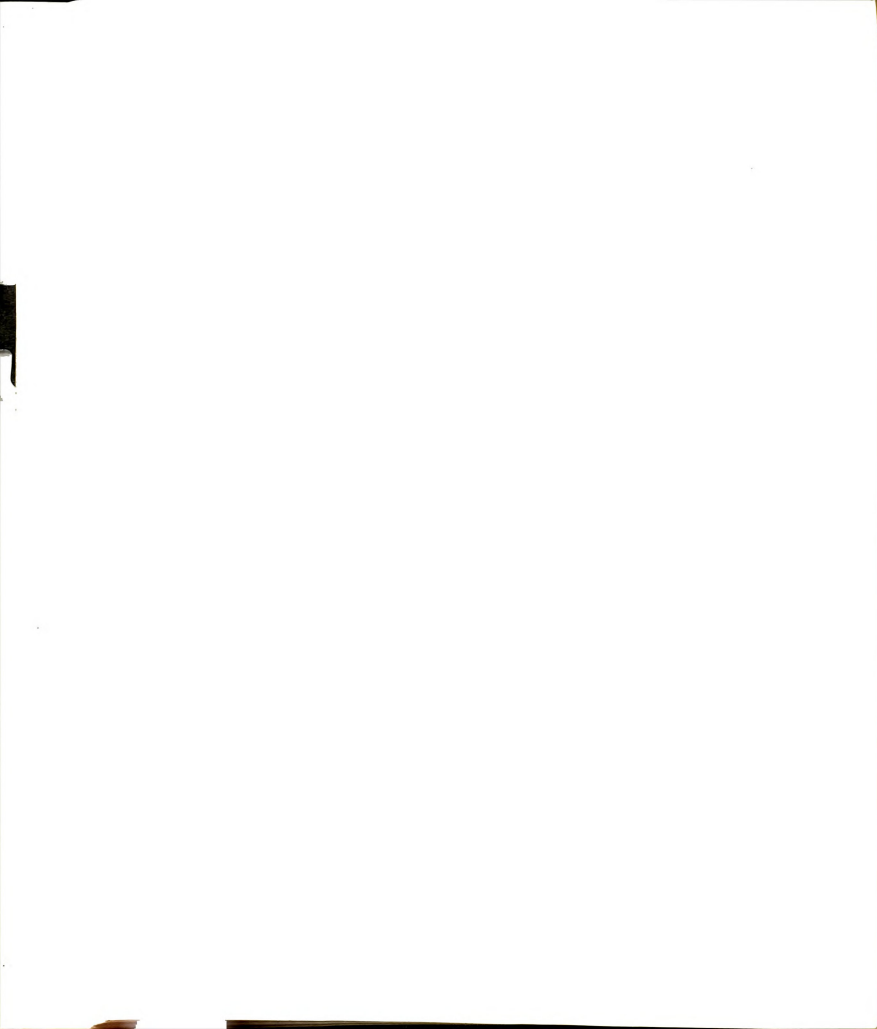
Examiner: "After awakening, Bill began to think about his future. In general, his plans involved. . ."

Subject: "Going on some job interviews." 2 days.

AGED MALEStory 1

Examiner: "At 3 o'clock one bright sunny afternoon in May, two men were out walking near the edge of town."

Subject: "These two men, as they were walking along the edge of town, came upon a small pond. On the edge of the pond they found a boat. They stepped into the boat and rode across to the other side of the pond. When they reached the other side of the pond, they discovered a small forest. And as they walked into the forest, they heard a number of different birds singing. One asked the other, 'do you know anything about bird songs or can you recognize birds by their color?' The other man said, 'no.' So they sat in the woods for an hour listening to these bird songs until the birds finally flew away. They got back in the boat and rode across to the other side and returned to the village." 2 hours 30 mins.



Story 2

Examiner: "10 o'clock one morning, Sue met her friend Ann near the center of town."

Subject: "And after passing the time of day, Sue asked her friend Ann if she'd like to go with her for the rest of the afternoon and visit several homes. Ann agreed to go with Sue and visit these homes. These were the homes of children in her class. So they spent the next three hours visiting several homes and talking with the parents, discussing with the parents the children's progress and problems and asking if they could be helpful in any way with any problems the parents might see that the children were having. 3 hrs.

Story 3

Examiner: "Edna is having a cup of tea in a restaurant. She is thinking of the time to come when. . ."

Subject: "When she will be finished with her college course. Presently, she is working on her doctorate as a clinical psychologist and she is hoping that by June she will have completed her work and that she will have produced a resume and will have made several contacts with institutions and mental health facilities in hopes that she will be able to land a job." 3 months

Story 4

Examiner: "After awakening, Bill began to think about his future. In general, his plans involved. . ."

Subject: "Completing high school and completing his Army life which he had signed up for a period of three years. And wondering at that time would he be interested in college or what might be his future after his three years in the Army." 3 years 6 months.

YOUNG FEMALEStory 1

Examiner: "At 3 o'clock one bright sunny afternoon in May, two men were out walking near the edge of town."

Subject: "Two men were out walking around on a Sunday afternoon on the edge of town and one says to the other 'would you like to come over to my house?' The other one says 'sure why not.' So the other man invites his friend over for dinner in about one week." 7 days.

Story 2

Examiner: "10 o'clock one morning, Sue met her friend Ann near the center of town."

Subject: "Sue met her friend Ann and asked her to go to the beach with her and they went to the beach and met a couple of guys and had a good time all day." 1 day

Story 3

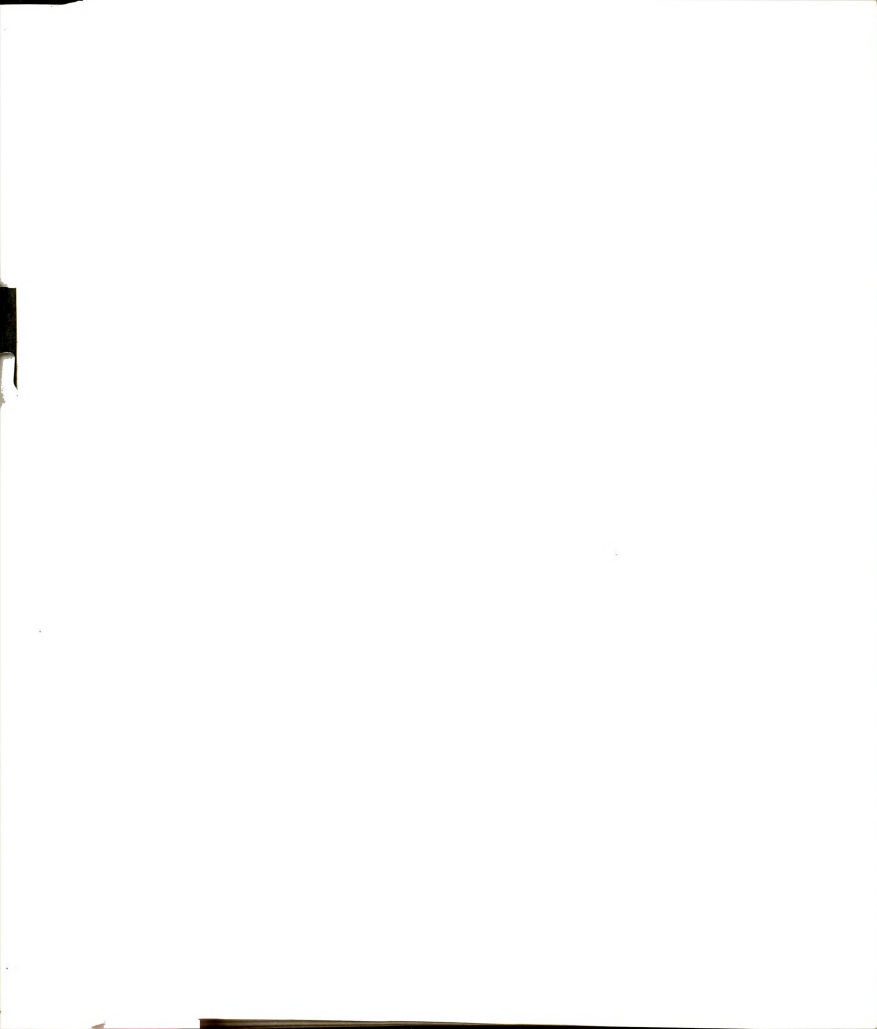
Examiner: "Edna is having a cup of tea in a restaurant. She is thinking of the time to come when. . ."

Subject: "When she will no longer be able to take care of herself and she will be older. The time will come when the cup of tea will be the main point in her life and the big point in her day."

50 yearsStory 4

Examiner: "After awakening, Bill began to think about his future. In general, his plans involved. . ."

Subject: "He first thought about going out and he decided to take a really good look at himself and the world around him and see where he fits into the world and his job and his plans for a career."



He concluded that for the next 20 years he would get married, raise a family and try to be happy." 20 years.

YOUNG MALE

Story 1

Examiner: "10 o'clock one morning, Sue met her friend Ann near the center of town."

Subject: "They were walking and they kept walking and they came across many weird happenings in the town. While they were in the town, a lot of people were looking at them because they weren't sure who they were. The people were looking at them with funny eyes and a lot of hatred in their eyes and everything. Later the next day, one of the men got shot. What happened was one of the men was God and God was just testing the people to see what would happen." 2 days.

Story 2

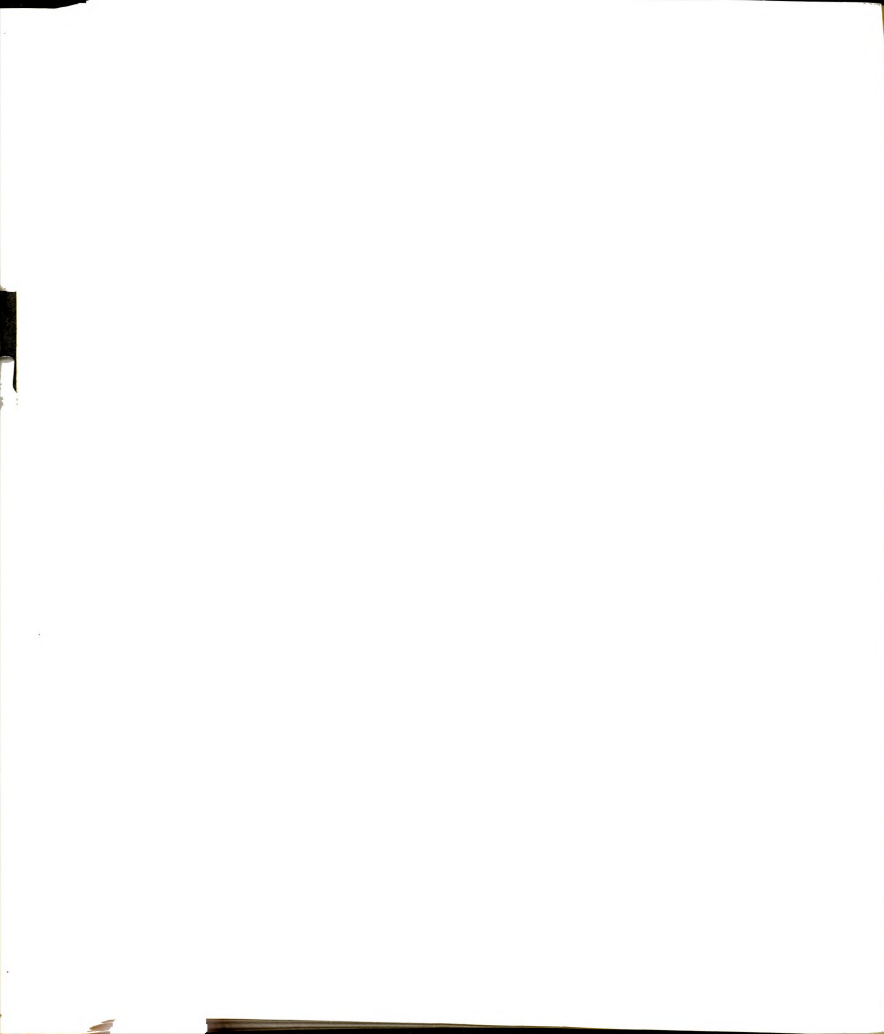
Examiner: "10 o'clock one morning, She met her friend Ann near the center of town."

Subject: "They had some clothes in their hands, like the clothes were swimming suits so like Sue and Ann liked to show off for the gentlemen. So they went to the beach and put on their swimming suits. You know they were out showing off for the gentlemen." 3 hrs.

Story 3

Examiner: "Edna is having a cup of tea in a restaurant. She is thinking of the time to come when. . ."

Subject: "See Edna is an old lady and she is thinking that everybody has to leave the world at one time and like she is thinking that her husband is dead and he has left her and she is waiting and thinking



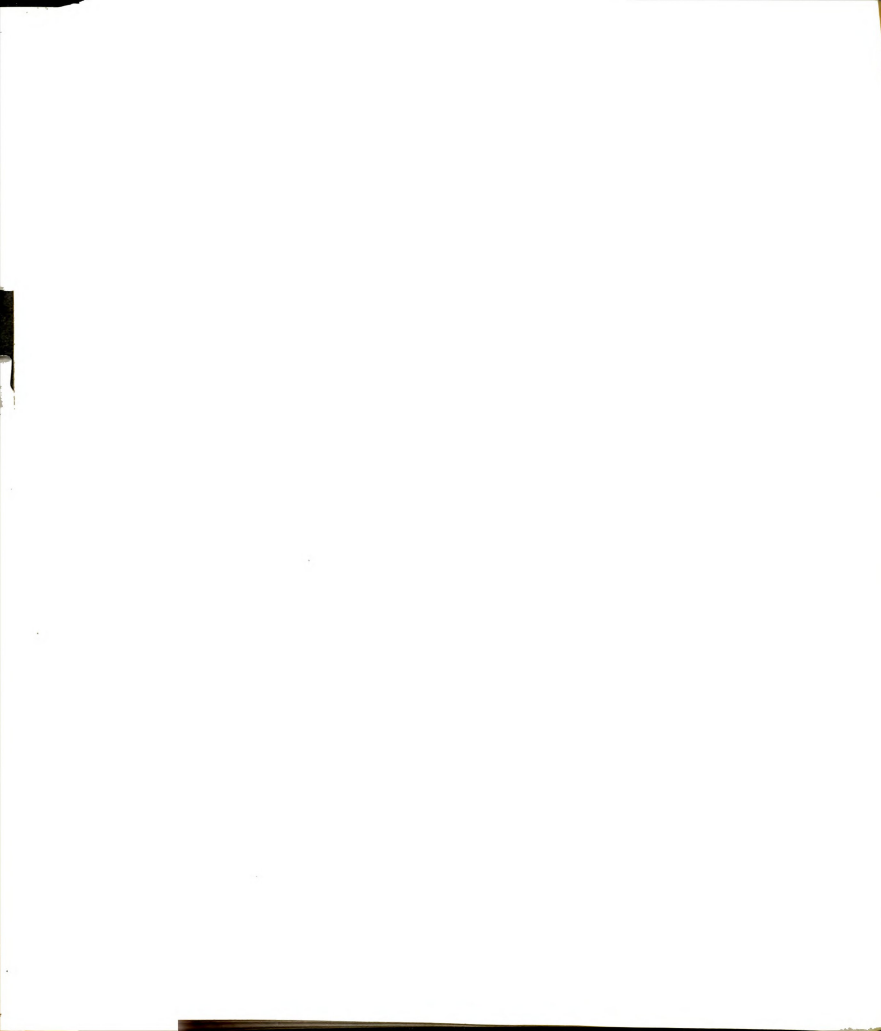
of the time when she will go to him (like when she dies)." 6 years.

Story 4

Examiner: "After awakening, Bill began to think about his future. In general, his plans involved. . ."

Subject: "Finishing college, getting his degree, finding a job in his chosen field, getting married, having children, having financial security, laying back receiving benefits, spending time with his grandchildren and just waiting to die." 34 years





APPENDIX I  
CORRELATION MATRIX FOR THE THREE  
MEASURES OF DEATH ATTITUDES

## APPENDIX I

### CORRELATION MATRIX FOR THE THREE MEASURES OF DEATH ATTITUDES

	D1	D2	D3
D1	1.000	0.42248***	0.34780***
D2	---	1.000	0.32193***
D3	---	---	1.000

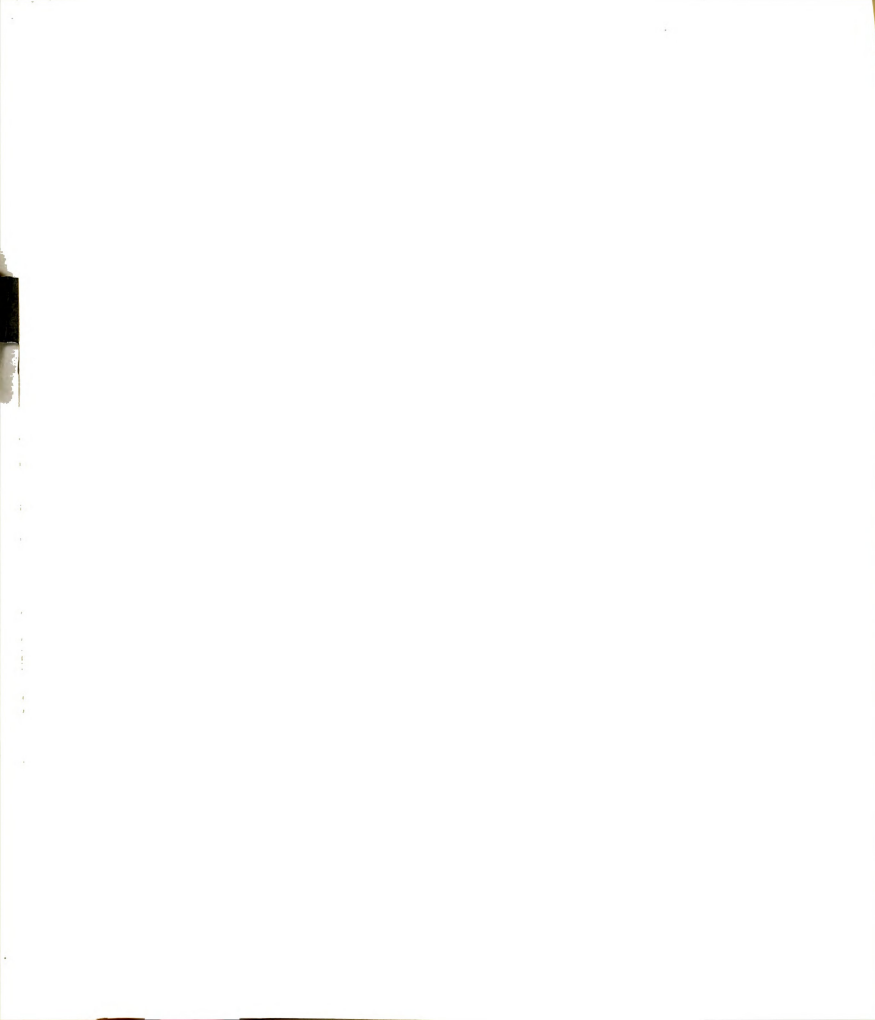
\*p < .05  
\*\*p < .01  
\*\*\*p < .001

Because the author devised one of the death attitude measures (D1), she was interested in how well D1 measure correlated with D2 and D3 measures. The correlations yielded a significant positive relationship between D1 and D3 ( $p < .001$ ) and D1 and D3 ( $p < .001$ ) (see above table).



APPENDIX J

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND RESULTS



## APPENDIX J

### SPECIFIC QUESTIONS, ADDITIONAL FINDINGS AND RESULTS

#### Specific Questions Which Were Considered

1. Is there a sex difference in aged adults' attitudes toward death? future time perspective? attitudes toward the future?
2. Is there a sex difference in young adults' attitudes toward death? future time perspective? attitudes toward the future?
3. Is there a significant difference between the mean future time perspective scores for aged and young females? attitudes toward the future?
4. Is there a significant difference between the mean future time perspective scores for aged and young males? attitudes toward the future?
5. Is there a significant relationship between health status and attitudes toward death in aged adults? future time perspective? attitudes toward the future?
6. Is there a significant relationship between health status and attitudes toward death in young adults? future time perspective? attitudes toward the future?
7. Is there a significant relationship between level of education and attitudes toward death in aged adults? future time perspective? attitudes toward the future?
8. Is there a significant relationship between level of education and attitudes toward death in young adults? future time perspective? attitudes toward the future?

#### Additional Specific Questions which are Considered

##### Sex Differences

Q1. The univariate analysis of variance and relevant means reveal that there is a statistically significant sex effect on D1 ( $p < .001$ ) and D3 ( $p < .001$ ) measures of attitudes toward death (Table J1). On these





two measures, males have more positive attitudes toward death than females.

There is a trend toward aged males having a significantly lower mean death score than aged women on D3 measure ( $p < .10$ ). This finding indicates that there is a trend toward aged men having more positive attitudes toward death than aged women.

There is not a significant difference between the mean scores for aged women and men on the future time perspective measures or attitudes toward death measure (Table J2).

Q2. There is a significant difference between attitudes toward death for young women and men on D1 ( $p < .05$ ) measure and D3 ( $p < .01$ ) measure. Young men have higher mean scores on D1 measure and lower mean scores on D3 measure. These findings indicate that young men have more positive attitudes toward death than young women.

As Table J2 indicates, there is not a significant difference between the mean scores for young adults on the future time perspective measures and the attitudes toward the future measure.

Q3. As Table J2 shows, the mean scores for young and aged women are significantly different on FTP1 ( $p < .001$ ) with young women having a higher mean score. This finding is indicative of young women having a longer future time perspective than aged women. In addition, there is a trend ( $p < .01$ ) toward young women having a significantly higher mean score on FTP3 which indicates that young women have a longer future time perspective than aged women on this measure as well.

Q4. Young and aged men's mean future time perspective scores differ significantly on FTP1 ( $p < .001$ ) with young men having a higher mean

TABLE J1

Summary of Univariate Analyses<sup>a</sup> of Variance  
and Relevant Means for the Main Effect of Sex  
on Measures of Death Attitude (N=200)

Variable	Mean Score		MS <sup>a</sup>	F
	Females	Males		
Death 1	71.70	74.31	340.6050	4.51***
Death 2	30.76	28.71	210.1250	2.04
Death 3	9.380	7.190	239.8050	13.15***

<sup>a</sup>df for each comparison 1/196

\*p < .05

\*\*p < .01

\*\*\*p < .001

TABLE J2

Means and Standard Deviations for Aged and Young Adults on  
the Three Measures of Future Time

Subjects	FTP1		FTA2		FTP3	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Aged Women	0.1866	0.381	17.48	9.33	4.5746	14.440
Aged Men	0.5026	1.494	15.90	9.60	11.7840	35.515
Young Women	5.2520	4.073	20.26	8.171	28.8966	98.346
Young Men	6.5776	4.688	18.52	7.028	10.6813	17.387
Young Women	5.2520	4.073	20.26	8.171	28.8966	98.346
Aged Women	0.1866	0.381	17.48	9.331	4.5746	14.440
Young Men	6.5776	4.688	18.52	7.028	10.6813	17.387
Aged Men	0.5026	1.494	15.90	9.603	11.7840	35.515

\*p .05

\*\*p .01

\*\*\*p .001

score (Table J2). This finding indicates that young men have a longer future time perspective than aged men.

### Health Status

Q5. There is a significant positive correlation between health status and the D1 ( $p < .05$ ) measure for aged adults (Table J3). For aged adults, positive attitudes toward death are associated with a high physical health rating.

A significant positive relationship is present for health status and FTP1 ( $p < .05$ ) (Table J3) for aged adults. This indicates that as health rating increases, future time perspective lengthens.

Q6. As Table J3 indicates, there is not a significant relationship between health status and attitudes toward death for young adults.

There is a significant negative correlation ( $p < .01$ ) between health status and FTA2 (Table J3) for young adults. This finding indicates that a high health rating is associated with negative attitudes toward the future.

TABLE J3

Correlations Between Health Status and Measures of Death Attitude and Future Time Measures for Aged and Young Adults

Health	Death 1	Death 2	Death 3	FTP1	FTA2	FTP3
Aged	0.2017*	-0.08976	-0.04473	0.23454*	-0.13216	0.13264
Young	0.08897	0.07978	-0.01520	-0.05529	-0.37793**	0.04197

\* $p < .05$

\*\* $p < .01$

\*\*\* $p < .001$

### Level of Education

Q7. When attitudes toward death are correlated with level of education for aged adults, there is a trend toward significance ( $p < .10$ ) on the D1 measure (Table J4). This trend indicates that a high level of education is concomitant with positive attitudes toward death.

There is not a significant relationship between future time perspective; attitudes toward the future and level of education for aged adults (Table J4).

Q8. As Table J4 shows, there is a trend toward significance for young adults when level of education is correlated with D3 measure ( $p < .10$ ). This trend indicates that a high level of education is associated with positive attitudes toward death.

There is not a significant relationship between future time perspective measures; and attitudes toward the future measure and level of education for young adults (Table J4).

### Additional Findings

Table J5 gives a summary of multivariate analysis of variance for the three future time measures. There is a significant age effect ( $p < .0001$ ) and a trend toward a significant sex effect ( $p < .10$ ). The univariate analyses of variance and relevant means indicate that there is a statistically significant age effect on FTP1 ( $p < .0001$ ) with young adults having a longer future time perspective than aged adults (Table J6) as might be expected. There is also a statistically significant age effect on FTA2 ( $p < .0001$ ) (Table J6). Surprisingly, this finding indicates that aged adults have more positive attitudes toward the future than young adults. There is a trend toward a sex effect on FTP1

TABLE J4

### Correlations Between Level of Education and Measures of Death Attitude and Future Time Measures for Aged and Young Adults

Level of Education	Death 1	Death 2	Death 3	FTP1	FTA2	FTP3
Aged	0.17681	0.05759	-0.04590	-0.05109	0.09629	0.04498
Young	0.01957	0.05382	-0.16918	-0.06143	-0.00176	-0.02479

TABLE J5

### Summary of Multivariate Analyses of Variance for the Three Measures of Future Time (N=200)

Source	df	F	P
Age	3	50.93	<.0001***
Sex	3	2.18	<.0994
Age Sex	3	1.44	<.2335

\*p < .05  
\*\*p < .01  
\*\*\*p < .001

TABLE J6

Summary of Univariate Analyses<sup>a</sup> of Variance and Relevant Means for The Main Effect of Age on the Measures of Future Time

Variable	Mean Score		MS <sup>a</sup>	F
	Aged	Young		
FTP1	0.3446	5.915	1,551.3564	151.5739***
FTA2	16.69	19.39	364.5000	4.9348****
FTP3	8.179	19.79	6,739.2335	2.3555

<sup>a</sup>df for each comparison = 1/196.

( $p < .10$ ) with males having a longer future time perspective than females (Table J7).

TABLE J7

Summary of Univariate Analyses<sup>a</sup> of Variance and Relevant Means for the Main Effect of Sex on the Measures of Future Time

Variable	Mean Score		MS <sup>a</sup>	F
	Females	Males		
FTP1	2.719	3.540	33.6856	3.2912
FTA2	18.87	17.21	137.7800	1.8654
FTP3	16.74	11.23	1,514.1394	0.5292

<sup>a</sup>df for each comparison = 1/196

### Discussion of Results of the Specific Questions and Additional Findings

#### Specific Questions

Sex is a contributing factor in the difference in death attitudes. The results indicate that there is a trend toward aged men having more positive attitudes toward death than aged women. Young men have significantly more positive attitudes toward death than young women. Overall, males have significantly more positive attitudes toward death than women. This finding could be the end result of socialization. Society disapproves of expression of fears by men whereas for women this expression is sanctioned. Therefore, women tend to be more open about their fears and anxieties than do men.

A high rating of health is associated with positive attitudes



toward death and a long future time perspective for aged adults. This positive relationship could be attributed to the fact that good health enables them to plan and anticipate participation in numerous activities of their own choosing. Despite their proximity to death (in chronological age), they are physically able to lead an active life; therefore they are more likely to make future plans and therefore have a more extended future time perspective. Also, many of them lead an active, successful past life and they don't look with despair toward the future.

There was not a significant relationship between level of education, attitudes toward death, future time perspective and attitudes toward the future for aged and young adults. This nonsignificant finding could be due to the restricted level of education which was a minimum of 12 years.

#### Additional Findings

That young adults have a longer future time perspective than aged adults can be explained by the reality of longevity. Aged adults do not expect a life of longevity whereas young adults do. Aged adults have made contributions to society, they have fulfilled various roles as well as certain dreams. However, young adults are yet to embark upon their future; therefore their contributions to society, anticipated roles and unfulfilled dreams are still in the embryonic stage of development.





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