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AN EXPLORATION INTO
THE MEANING OF
DEATH

Dissertation

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For Louise,
who gave us Mathew

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PREFACE

The present study attempts to explore, both theoretically and empirically, some implications that a personal consideration of death may have for the way we live our lives.

Existential-Phenomenology has concerned itself with the description of the dimensions of human existence. It is in this enquiry that Death, and through it, human finitude, emerges as an important dimension of existence. It is not the fact of death itself, but the MEANING it has for our lives which may be of important consequence. It is to this area that this research addresses itself.

The methodology employed arises out of a concern to contribute to the establishment of Psychology as a Human Science. To this end, a chapter focusing on the philosophical bases of methodology is included.

It is hoped that this study may, however little, contribute both to the field of Thanatology as well as to the more theoretical issue of what Psychology is, and where it is going.

"Who am I,
this person to die?
Where and when was he,
who asked it?"

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Human Finitude:

A DEFINING DIMENSION OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.

1.1 The Meaning of Death in Western Technological Society.

In a complex culture like western technological society, death appears within a context of ambivalent meanings. As Merton has pointed out, "items of culture must be recognised to have multiple consequences." (Merton in Donaldson, 1971, p. 289). This section attempts to show that arising out of this ambivalent context of meanings, is a social structure which encourages individual death-denial as a strategy of living while allowing an impersonal 'death-as-an-event' to be acknowledged.

It has been noted by various writers (Fulton, 1965; Feifel, 1963; Becker, 1973) that death has become a tabooed subject in modern society. This viewpoint may be summarised as follows:

"In the twentieth century death seems to have usurped the role that sex held during the Victorian era as a fundamental, powerful, universal experience, about which little is said. In our culture death just as the Victorian Sex seems to be deliberately and consistently shunted to the periphery of our conscious awareness."
(Guthrie, 1971, p. 299)

This viewpoint notes the euphemism with which we talk about death as 'passing on', or as 'having joined the

departed'. It notes the common linguistic phrase: 'if I die' rather than 'when I die' as pointing to an avoidance of the inevitability of death. This viewpoint also cites the contrast between western technological society and the more 'primitive' societies by which children in modern society are spared the acknowledgement of the dead at funerals and how, in primitive societies, dying occurs within the home context of the entire family and lineage. It is further noted how western technology attempts to prolong life at all costs even to the dignity-denying degree of keeping people technically alive although any possibility of living in a human sense is negated. The placement of the aged in old age homes indicates a distance of those near death from the everyday concern of the living. What we see around us, is the permanence of concrete buildings and progressive industrial growth. We stress tradition, the management hierarchy, the sports club--being part of something larger which persists beyond us, to the ironic degree of dying for our country so that 'we' may live. All these things and many more, it is said, indicate a society where death has become a tabooed subject in order that its reality may be denied as far as possible.

On the other hand, other writers (Schneiderman, 1969; Parsons and Lidz, 1967) put forward the thesis that an awareness of death is prevalent in a modern technological society such as the United States of America. In this

view, man lives with the possibility of global annihilation. The reporting of the occurrence of death and dangerous activities take up a considerable amount of space in the mass media. Parsons, in his concern to show social structures as tending towards organic order, emphasises the ability of society to accommodate the occurrence of death.

"American society has institutionalised a broadly stable, though flexible and changing orientation to death, that is fundamentally not a 'denial' but a mode of acceptance appropriate to our primary cultural patterns of activism."

(Parsons and Lidz in Donaldson, 1972, p. 288)

In a study comparing American attitudes toward death in 1970 and thirty-five years previous to this, Lester (1970) found that students in 1970 appear to be more preoccupied with thoughts of death than students in 1935, although the affective reaction appeared to have changed little.

It is postulated that this apparent disparity of viewpoints is not contradictory but rather reflects the ambivalent meanings that the word 'death' has come to have in a complex society. These meanings must be explicitly clarified before meaningful empirical research may be done on the issue of death-denial.

Death as a 'generalised event in the collective lives of men' is very different from death as relevant to one's personal life in terms of the 'annihilation of self'. The meaning of death in the former case occurs within a social context

which, as 'social organism' has a coherent life of its own within which death occurs as part of the flow of its life. Here, taking a sociological and collective perspective Man may be highly aware of 'death-as-an-event' as a general category unrelated to his personal death.

Death as 'annihilation of self', however, occurs within a very personal context which emphasises a unique life-history. The structure of the meaning of death as a general event may paradoxically decrease emphasis on death as personal destiny because of the shift of focus in the meaning of death. That is, as a person is encouraged to view death in non-personal contexts, more personal contexts of death recede into the background. Thus western, technological society may encourage individual death-denial by emphasising death-as-an-event in collective life and by de-emphasising death as personal destiny. This difference in meaning has been noted in the Existential Literature as the distinction between 'death of myself' and 'death of another':

"By means of the semantic and linguistic confusion between the death of myself and the death of another, we protect ourselves from the tremendous and dangerous amount of anxiety that is released when we are confronted with the phenomenologically accurate recognition of the meaning of our own death.... We hopefully maintain that death of another is the only kind of death there is. In fact, we think of the death of myself as nothing worse than the death of another. We believe that the death of another is characteristic of all forms of death, even our own. Through this device, we hide from ourselves the true and demolishing nature of our own anxiety about and tragedy of our own death."

(Koestenbaum, 1971, p. 118)

Thus western technological society may be seen as a structure which allows us as individuals to escape from the imminence of 'death of myself' into the impersonal dimensions of 'death of another'. Given these meanings of death, an explicit clarification of the ambivalent dialogue between the individual and society in relation to the meaning of death may now be attempted.

Much of what we are doing in western technological society is given meaning by an ethic of all-consuming proportions: progress. This ethic of progress puts us as individuals in a strange and anxiety-filled position. If we are to acknowledge 'progress' as an important ethic, then by some means or other, we must reconcile this ethic with the fact that, as individuals, we die. That is, 'progress' as an ethic only applies conditionally to our individual lives. But 'progress' to the world, mankind, technology and any other conceptual groupings of trans-personal pursuits remains meaningful. In order to make our individual lives meaningful within this context, the importance of individual death must be diminished or denied in favour of the importance of 'progress'. It would even be better if the meaning of death becomes subsumed under the progressive ethic. Thus death-as-an-event becomes part of the progressive march of things. In the mass media, we read of death as having a purpose: assassinations of politicians and martyrs for the sake of their cause; buddhist monks burning themselves to death; the threat of an atomic bomb as the sanction for the progress

of political ideals; the businessman 'working himself to death' for the financial progress of his family. In this way, western society indeed acknowledges death, but in such a way as to transform it into the life of progress. Thus, in western technological society, death-as-an-event is acknowledged and may serve as a substitute for 'death of myself' as the meaning of death in the lives of men.

1.2 The Importance of Defining the Phenomenon of Study in Thanatology.

A deeper enquiry into the distinction between 'death of myself' and 'death of another' may expose another confusion in the study of death and dying. That is, because of the lack of acknowledgement in the distinction of these two different meanings that death has come to have, it is very difficult to assess whether researchers in Thanatology are studying attitudes towards death as authentically encountered ('death of myself') or as vicariously encountered ('death of myself as death of another').

Peter Koestenbaum has noticed the essential characteristic of 'death of another' as being part of the flow of one's life:

"The death of others is, first of all, an occurrence within the world. We conceive of the world as going on. We may think of funeral arrangements, tearful scenes, maybe a funeral oration, the settling of the estate, and the like. The death of another means the cessation of heartbeats, the cessation of respiration; in general, it means the termination

of all bodily processes.... What is characteristic about the meaning of the death of another is that it involves the elimination of an object within the world, and not of the observing ego or subject.

In other words, if a man examines closely--that is, phenomenologically--what he means by the death of another person, he recognises that he himself is still in the picture: he is the observer contemplating the scene, even if the scene is only in his imagination. Death is an event within the world, while the life-world--the world of human experience--perdures."

(Koestenbaum, 1971, p. 254)

In an authentic encounter with the meaning of death, 'death of myself' may be thought of in terms of the meanings of 'death of another'. Thus when encountering one's own death, one may not face the impact of annihilation or possible nothingness, the dissolution of all relationships which go to make up the 'self' as it is experienced, but rather one may take the stance of an external observer watching one's own death in the world. Here, one may imagine one's own funeral, the reactions of loved ones, and the stillness of one's dead body. In this way 'death of myself' becomes 'death of another' and the gravity of authentic 'death of myself' is lost.

In an authentic encounter with the 'death of myself', with death, death comes, rather than life. This is not to be seen as a stance on a 'life-after-death' issue, but rather an analysis of the different ways in which people encounter the event of death in their lives. In 'death of myself', one is the actor rather than the audience; for the first and only time, the actor. The aloneness of this condition is very different from the shared condition in which we all experience the 'death of another'. Only the unique person

may experience the 'death of myself'--no-one else can do it for one. 'Death of myself' thus shows itself in a very different meaning-context than 'death-of-myself-as-death-of another'. Thus, to confuse the two meanings, as though one were studying a single discrete phenomenon, is to be mistaken.

Many studies have been carried out to observe the attitudes people have towards death (Lester, 1970; Kahana, 1971; Krieger et al, 1974, amongst others). However, few have any procedure which may elicit whether the people are responding in terms of an authentic meaning of personal death ('death of myself') or an inauthentic one ('death of myself as another'). Thus Ray and Najman (1974), postulate the importance of a death denial scale as part of death attitude studies. For example, so called 'death anxiety' can only be evaluated in terms of whether the person is facing 'death of myself' or not. A person not experiencing 'death anxiety' may not necessarily have 'accepted' death as it is often theorised but rather be confronting a death which is 'not really there' for him. Thus the phenomenon to be studied in terms of its meaning-context must be clearly defined rather than an assumption of the meaning of death, as encountered by different people, as being the same basic phenomenon.

1.3 Death Confrontation as Awareness of Finitude.

Death itself, as an event, must be differentiated from its sense of anticipation which constitutes an awareness of finitude. Awareness of finitude most lucidly defines the

meaning that death has for our everyday lives. Death itself is not finitude but rather gives us our finitude and the possible awareness of it. Here we are concerned with the meaning of life as dialogued with death. Death is a future event in our lives which we can only anticipate, but its meaning in terms of our everyday lives is potentially present. Meaning is the way in which future and past events relate themselves to the present. Thus Hooper and Spilka (1970) found evidence to support the notion that one's present beliefs and behaviours are a function of perspectives on time and death.

In revealing our finitude to us, death as an empirical event becomes a metaphor for the ontological experience of 'giving up what we have embodied' and an acknowledgement of change. It is in this spirit that Keleman (1974) focuses on the meaning that death has for our lives and thus exposes finitude as a dimension of human existence. 'Dying' in this sense is then not just an empirical event but a 'language' which allows us to understand the boundaries within which we live. Death, in being the final limit, makes the meaning of lesser limits clear.

It is the postulation of this thesis that an awareness of finitude as given by a confrontation with 'death of myself' is an important field of study independent of the study of attitudes toward death-as-an-event and the study of terminally ill people. Awareness of finitude is concerned with the

meaning of life and the way we live our lives rather than the narrower subject of our attitudes toward death, which is nevertheless related, but different in focus. Awareness of finitude through confrontation of death is equally applicable to those both near and far from actual death. It is thus concerned with the quality of our lives rather than an explicit consideration of the dying. The following analysis suggests a relationship between the confrontation of death and terminally ill people.

1.4 Death Confrontation and the Terminally Ill.

It has been noted that a person's style of dying is similar to his style of living (Pattison, 1977; Weisman, 1972). Thus someone whose strategy towards life involved lack of responsibility in regard to what happened to him (i.e. to blame others or the environment) would also adopt this strategy in his dying to a marked degree.

Koenig (1973) criticises Kübler-Ross' five-stage theory, in which terminally ill patients pass through phases of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. He notes that Kübler-Ross assumes that all the patients are responding to an active confrontation with death. However, Koenig (1973) found that terminally ill people most often encounter the loss of their life as a function of the progression of their disease. They cannot be said to be actively 'confronting death' but rather 'receding from life'.

Thus people's style of dying may or may not be concerned with an explicit confrontation of death. In fact, Koenig (1973) suggests that the concerns of the terminally ill are fundamentally related to existing possible levels of well-being rather than death confrontation.

"death is not always the main concern of the dying person. Dependency, isolation, pain, physical disfiguration, and fear of abandonment are among the issues that are sometimes as threatening, if not more so, than impending death."
(Koenig, 1973, p. 181)

Given this, and given the relationship between styles of living and styles of dying, it follows that if people have not come to terms with human finitude earlier in life, it is made difficult in terminal phases of illness where more immediate concerns are often confronted. In such cases, most benefit would occur by working on family communication patterns, body image, sharing of feelings of loneliness and isolation, and only then, if the individual is ready, should a discussion facilitating the confrontation of death be embarked upon. It may be noted in passing, that only those people who have confronted their own finitude may adequately deal with terminally ill people in an empathic and human manner. Much of the depersonalised treatment of terminally ill people, in discouraging human contact and in keeping patients uninformed as to their condition, may be seen to have arisen out of the threat medical personnel experience about death. It is thus timely of the Thanatology movement to have questioned the bounds of medical relevance. In this

view, there comes a stage in which a person's dying is no longer a medical matter with possible medical solutions but a spiritual or psychological matter in which a person's human context becomes important as a meaningful completion to life.

It has thus been seen how the study of the dying is not necessarily the study of awareness of finitude. Indeed, awareness of finitude is most lucidly experienced through a direct confrontation with 'death of myself'; but such a confrontation emerges as part of the structure of human existence and may arise in many different contexts.

Victor Frankl has noted the importance of finding meaning in life as constituting a prime motivating potential in the lives of men. In questioning the meaningfulness of our lives, many of us are confronted by death as a comment on our lives, which is independent from the imminence of actual death.

It is this encounter (in the previous and other possible contexts) that may be shown to be of great import for the way we live our lives. Far from being a 'morbid subject', it may be shown that an awareness of finitude through confrontation with death may hold an important key to improving the quality and authenticity of our existence.

1.5 Awareness of Finitude and Human Existence.

Whereas Freud and other intrapsychic psychologists see man's life as being structured largely by the past, Existential-Phenomenologists acknowledge the meaning which the future

gives to the structure of Man's life as well. That is, in giving meaning to our lives, we include a future which may make our present action, feelings, and viewpoints intelligible. In relating himself to the future, Man faces death and thus the finitude of his existence. Freud (1960), however, essentially saw a relatedness to death as originating not in a confrontation with the futurity of death itself but in the universality of castration, or separation, anxiety. Thus death, in this view, does not confront one directly but rather arises out of early childhood experience. But...

"to interpret thanatophobia as castration or separation anxiety, or the need for an idealised union with a symbolic "other", is to substitute historicity when contemporaneity or futurity is indicated." (Burton, 1971 p. 294)

Even when Freud later postulated a death-instinct in man's psyche, this impulse was rooted in a yearning for the individual to return to the primordial unity of the mother's womb. Thus the meaning of death is not treated directly as a phenomenon in its own right in Freudian literature but rather as a reminder of past experience. Erikson (1959) has noted that the final crisis in the developmental psychology of the individual is the acceptance of one's life as a whole as facilitated by the imminence of death, but he confines this stage largely to old age. It is thus left to Existential-Phenomenology to clarify the nature of finitude as a defining dimension of human existence. Following, is

the outline of a thesis inspired by Existential writers which suggests the relationship between human existence and awareness of finitude:

Animals and plants come into being, and after a while, die. It would be mere speculation, however, to claim that they experienced themselves clearly as finite beings; that is, as beings who anticipated a personal death. Man, however, is unique in that he is not contained by the moment-to-moment vicissitudes of being; he embodies a future and a past in each successive moment which may be transformed according to his present relatedness to the world. Man thus does not just 'live when he lives and dies when he dies' but is related to death as being the boundary on the horizon of his life. Heidegger has characterised Man's existence as a being-toward-death. This viewpoint asserts that Man must actively acknowledge his finitude if an authentic existence is to be achieved. In this view, to regard death as a morbid subject to be avoided is to rob life of its supreme value: intensity. It is with this understanding that Koestenbaum (1971) characterises the sense of confronting the 'death-of-myself' as having vitality. In being confronted with the inevitability and inescapability of the 'death-of-myself' one immediately experiences anguish or dread from the threat of non-being. Such anguish is the price one pays for confronting the existential realities of life. It is not the final response to awareness of finitude but rather the immediate

pain of moving from the protection of unknowingness and unawareness to an acknowledgement of the existential boundary of one's life. With such acknowledgement comes a new awareness of the intensity of life in relation to its possible non-being.

"authentic success and happiness in human existence demand uncompromising realism; we must understand and acknowledge the facts of life. Paradoxically, the most vitalising fact of life is the utter inevitability of death! Man must constantly keep before his eyes the reality, the nature and the inevitability of that fact. He must make every effort to understand exactly what his own death means to him. He must see the consequences of the knowledge that he is mortal. He must never let go of this insight." (Koestenbaum, 1971, p. 26)

Such confrontation with 'death-of-myself' is just as relevant to religious people who believe in an immortal soul, because death confrontation is not concerned with what speculatively happens at death but rather with the experience of feeling human and the definitive horizon of such humanity. Both religious and irreligious people confront death within an existing incarnate, interpersonal, temporal context and the boundary of this context appears existentially, as death, to both. It is thus interesting to note that Krieger et al, (1974) found no significant difference in the amount of threat shown by believers and non-believers in an afterlife, towards death.

It is also postulated that there is a subtle difference between a death-oriented existence and an existence which has embodied

an awareness of finitude. In a death-oriented existence, one has confronted 'death of myself' but then becomes preoccupied with death as an event in one's life. One thus continues to experience anguish because one is 'with' death all the time. Here, a consideration of death does not free one to live a meaningful life but rather inhibits such possibility. One's life is thus oriented towards death-as-an-event and such orientation highlights death rather than life. Awareness of finitude, on the other hand, although given by death-confrontation is a focus on life as finitely lived, rather than a preoccupation with death as an absurd end. One is no longer then 'with' death as a negation of life but rather 'with' the meaning of life as dialogued with death. In the immediate confrontation of death one experiences anguish. This may either lead to a death-oriented existence or an awareness of finitude which is not preoccupied with death as such. With the latter, one moves beyond the anguish of death confrontation to being freed to the quality of a finite existence; in the former 'death-of-myself' becomes an anguished preoccupation in which life is negated as absurd. This is the essential difference between Sartre's and Heidegger's approach to the phenomenon of death. In his writings Sartre (1956) focuses on death as breeding a death-oriented existence:

"Death, in so far as it can be revealed to me, is not only the always possible annihilation of my possibles.... It is also the triumph of the point of view of the Other.... The unique characteristic

of a dead life is that it is a life of which the Other makes himself the guardian.... To be dead is to be a prey for the living. This means therefore that the one who tries to grasp the meaning of his future death must discover himself as the future prey of others. We have here, therefore, a case of alienation." (Sartre, 1956, p. 546)

Heidegger, although he does not explicitly acknowledge this difference, focuses on awareness of finitude as given by 'death-of-myself' which moves beyond the anguish of death-confrontation in order to reveal the authentic mode of Dasein or human existence. It is largely Heidegger's insights which pave the way to an understanding of the relationship between awareness of finitude and authentic existence. In confronting 'death-of-myself', says Heidegger, personal individuality is achieved. I realise that I must face death alone and thus truly experience the sense of my own individuality. Death, in being the one thing no-one else can do for me, shows itself as the phenomenon which differentiates myself most lucidly from the destiny of 'das man' or people in general. Such a sense of individuality and aloneness in turn constitutes an awareness of personal responsibility in terms of my acts and choices.

"Prior to Existential thought death did not have essentially individual significance; its significance was cosmic. Death had a function for which history or the cosmos had final responsibility. Death did not belong to the person, it was cosmic property."
(Harris, 1971, p. 227)

In confronting the 'death-of-myself' as a very personal experience, the significance of the uniqueness of my life also emerges. That which shows itself does not show itself in the very same manner to anyone else. Death will terminate this unique existence. I thus become aware of the moment-to-moment, unique significance of my life-history. This gives meaning to personal existence in a way that science cannot. Science is supposedly concerned with the pursuit of knowledge. However, in viewing death in empirical terms, it excludes the possible meaning that 'death-of-myself' may have for personal life. It is thus only with 'death-of-myself' as a personally encountered phenomenon that personal life emerges in its unique and individual sense.

The sense of individuality as given by awareness of finitude carries with it implications for a realisation of personal freedom and responsibility. In standing alone in the face of my own death, I face a radical perspective concerning the 'ownness' of my life: If I, and only I, face my death, then my death gives to me my life as uniquely my own as well--no-one else can answer for it just as no-one else can answer to my death. Thus in finding death as 'my own' I also find life as 'my own'. This makes me aware of the responsibility that I have for making choices; awareness of finitude shows me that only I can take ultimate responsibility for my life and this frees me from the perspective of 'the other' or 'das man'. In this encounter with

finitude, I then belong to myself and thus cannot simply act as 'another' would without acknowledging the 'ownness' of being an experiencer. Every act or choice must then be acknowledged as an act or choice of personal responsibility i.e. the act or choice of 'myself'. Indeed whether explicitly acknowledged or not, a 'myself' is in fact the doer of my acts and the maker of my choices. It is, however, only in an authentic existence, according to Heidegger, that such an acknowledgement is explicitly recognised. That is, we are free to recognise the dimensions of our existence or not. Thus Victor Frankl (1971) has noted that today our neurosis is an attempt to obscure existential facts. We may live as though we are not finite beings or as though we are not personally the referent for our actions. Such modes of living carry with them the necessity of structuring a world which will support the unwillingness to acknowledge the dimensions of human existence. Such people must create modes of denial which constitute the anxiety of a potential invalidation of present life-style which arises out of the tension between the act of denial and that which must be denied.

A further meaning of awareness of finitude concerns one's relationship to time. Here a sense of the urgency to act in the uniqueness of the personal flow of my life emerges:

"If man were immortal, he would be justified in delaying everything; there would be no need to do anything right now. Only under the urge and pressure of life's transience does it make sense to use the passing of time." (Frankl, 1971, p. 307)

With awareness of finitude, the present takes on an urgent imperative. Again if I were to live inauthentically as though death was not a personal reality, the flow of time would assume an insignificance in terms of the awareness of change. In fact, an awareness of change is inhibited because this would announce the inevitable imminence of death.

I may then become obsessed with routine as if to de-emphasise the flow of time as change. Much obsessive behaviour can be seen to be concerned with an attempt to stop the flow of time and change.

Awareness of finitude also heightens the quality of the present moment of being, in contrast to the possibility of non-being. In terms of the possible 'nothingness' of non-being, the present, as being immediately and undeniably 'there' becomes appreciated as a quality of existence which is normally taken for granted. Its very obviousness, however, is not that obvious in the light of death.

Death in this relationship emerges as the 'ground' by which the 'figure' of present-being is heightened. In an existence which is 'always there' on the other hand, the present moment becomes less significant as the locus of experience.

So too, things in the world as well as the body take on their finitudinal characteristics with an authentic encounter with 'death-of-myself'. The substantiality of things and my body becomes more 'there' as figure in terms of the ground of possible non-being. Thus a dialectic between life and death emerges.

In such a dialectic the totality of my life may be realised and thus a sense of resolution and completeness achieved. In confronting death I am in a sense, at the end of my life, where it is finished. In constituting my life in terms of the possibility of its completion, I am regarding my life as a totality. Such a perspective allows me to radically review what I am doing in terms of my life as a totality. Awareness of finitude thus gives a total context within which I may make goals, hold values, and find meaning. It is this total context that will act as the intelligible justification for my life. Grounded in these insights Heidegger thus calls for an active living of our 'being-unto-death' (Sein-zum-Tode). It is only out of the conscious dialectic between life and death that Man may emerge as a totality and thus achieve an intelligible life.

The previous implications of awareness of finitude for man's life should not be seen in terms of a causal chain which sets into motion one thing after another; rather the descriptions must be viewed in terms of their dialectical

mutuality: they all arise as a unitary mode of being-in-the-world. The relationship between awareness of finitude and human existence may thus be summarised in terms of the cohesive holism of a finite-embodied existence:

In a finite existence I emerge as a unique individual who is alone in my freedom to make choices regarding my life as a totality. I am also aware of the personal responsibility for my thoughts and actions yet I act courageously because of the urgency and intensity of my life as given by my death. I am aware of my strength of personal integrity because of my willingness to confront the existential facts of life. My goals, values and decisions are experienced as intelligible in the light of the total project of my life as dialogued with my death. In taking charge of my life, I do not unquestioningly replicate the lives, values and actions of others (das man), but assume personal responsibility for my values and actions.

It is hoped that I have now delineated the focus of study, i.e. awareness of finitude through death-confrontation. I may now proceed to a description of an empirical study which sought to clarify the phenomenon in a non-theoretical context from the actor-perspective.

2 Philosophical Basis of Methodology

This chapter addresses itself to a number of contentious issues in Psychology, the resolution of which is crucial if Psychology as a scientific discipline is to progress beyond its present lack of clarity as to what it is doing. These issues may be best stated in the form of questions:

1. What is the relationship between Philosophy and Psychology?
2. What should Psychology study?
3. What methodological approaches are adequate to that which Psychology studies?

These questions are obviously interrelated and any possible answer to one of these questions will have implications for the other two whether explicitly acknowledged as such or not. The following discussion will attempt to throw some light on these questions and their possible answers in order to expose the rationale for this study's choice of approach, i.e. Existential-Phenomenology.

2.1 The Natural-Scientific Approach to Psychology.

The Natural-Scientific approach to Psychology may be seen essentially as a movement which claims to be fundamentally methodological in its aims. That is, like other natural sciences such as Physics, Chemistry, etc., Psychology is

considered to be 'self-contained', having no roots or foundations outside itself, as in Galileo's claim for Euclidean Geometry. It wishes to say, together with other natural sciences, that, given its scientific basis and scientific modes of reasoning (induction, deduction, etc.) the relationship between Philosophy and the enterprise of Psychology is exhausted once the 'object' of study has been isolated.

It is this last phrase which exposes the basic assumption of Natural Science and its import for Psychology. The viewpoint encouraged by this attitude is to study man or some part of man as one would study an object. An object is something which stands out as a discrete thing and which can be studied 'in itself' as defined by the spatio-temporal boundaries of Physics. Thus, if we wish to adapt this model to Psychology, we must find 'an object' to study.

The response to this quest has been answered in various ways, all which will be shown to have started from the basic philosophical premise inherent in Natural Scientific methodology: i.e. to study objects.

2.1.1 Descartes and the Dualistic Solution.

Descartes' 'indubitable certainty of the cogito' as the answer to the quest for an absolute foundation of knowledge, offered to Psychology the 'thing' which Psychology should study--the mind. In this world view, matter occupies space

as extension and this includes the body. The thinker, on the other hand does not occupy space and thus is of the mind. The body is a machine, the object of mechanics and obeys all the laws pertaining thereto, whereas the mind is not subject to physical laws. Here a split emerges between the physical and the mental, the healing of which has been a central quest for philosophers and psychologists ever since. Descartes himself was aware of the difficult situation of "attempting to answer the question of how two substances which are essentially not a unity can constitute an essential unity." (Luijpen, 1969, p. 52)

Nevertheless, Psychology (Psyche-Logos) became the study of the mind or soul. Intrapsychic Psychologists with varying degrees of philosophical contradiction attempted to study 'the mind' as its object having its own laws and internal coherence.

Apart from its Philosophical problems, Cartesian Dualism left Natural Scientists in a difficult position. That is, although Descartes had isolated an 'object' for study by Psychology, as Natural Science would wish, the question of employing adequate scientific methodology was dubiously raised. Cartesian Dualism either encouraged introspectionism as the method of choice or the postulation of assumed, non-observable, inner structures inferred from people's behaviour, verbal reports and dreams. A physical scientist would prefer an 'object' which is directly observable.

2.1.2 The Solution of Central State Materialism.

Central State Materialism reacts to Cartesian Dualism by offering the hypothesis that mental events and physical events in the brain are identical. Thus, in principle, Psychology can be studied by the methods of neurophysiology, molecular biology and other approaches which may inform us of brain structures. The mind is no longer an invisible mind occupying no space but visibly observable and a mere scalpel's cut away. Here, Psychology, now subsumed under Biology has both an 'object' to study and a natural scientific methodology by which to do so. Central State Materialism reduces mental phenomena to physical phenomena, thus eliminating one side of Descartes' problem (mental events) and achieving a monism of a physical universe, amenable to natural science, and adequate to a study of Man.

In putting Man in his brain, however, Central State Materialism maintains a dualism on another level--it isolates a world within from a world without. The world is represented inside one's head in varying degrees of clarity, one's contact with the world being dependent on these representations. Thus Man does not see the world but an image of the world in his brain. But who sees the image?; for to see an image another image of the image would have to be created. Apart from starting an infinite regress by which we never get back to the world, we find a dualistic split between Man and the world on an ontological level.

In this approach to Psychology, the implicit Philosophical assumption would be that phenomena such as anger, anxiety, etc., are not what they appear to be but actually certain neurons firing in the brain in certain ways. Thus we would not look at anger in an interpersonal, historical context but in a brain context and this, it is claimed, would be logically adequate to understand what anger is. Central State Materialism, in finding an 'object' for Psychology to study, offers an explanation for phenomena, rather than the phenomena themselves as having coherent intelligibility.

2.1.3 The Solution of Behaviourism.

Behaviourism may or may not seek recourse to Central State Materialism for its ultimate rationale. It, however, moves away from a radical materialism by refusing to view the 'mind' as a 'thing' but asserts that the 'mind' is a noun used to represent that which really is behaviour viewed from a mentalistic perspective. Merleau-Ponty acknowledges Watson, the founder of Behaviourism, for escaping the trap of Central State Materialism which confuses phenomena with brain-codified representations of phenomena.

"It was said that behaviour was not localised in the central nervous system..., that it resides between the individual and the environment... and finally that it is concerned with a stream of activity which the living projects around itself." (Merleau-Ponty, 1963, in La Pointe, p. 238)

Merleau-Ponty does note, however, that although Behaviourism takes man out of his skull and puts him 'back into the world', it still represents psychological phenomena in terms of a purely behavioural expression of such phenomena. Thus the phenomenon of anger is replaced by the necessary and sufficient environmental conditions for anger and/or by a description of anger as operationally defined in behavioural terms, e.g. shouting, baring of teeth, fist-shaking, etc. We thus will know what a person getting angry looks like or what environmental conditions are likely to provoke anger (given a belief of determinism), but we still do not know what anger actually is.

It is hoped that I have now exposed the dialectic between the Natural Scientific 'zeitgeist' and its philosophical visions of man. In Behaviourism, the results of behavioural studies will be understood in terms of its view of man; so too with intrapsychic and physiological studies. Thus:

"... the possibility of an empirical human science is indissolubly connected with a certain philosophical vision of man." (Strasser, 1963, p. 42)

It should be noted, however, that some trends of thought (e.g. Gestalt Psychology) have developed without clear philosophical premises and have not been explicit in outlining their implicit view of man. Intrapsychic Psychologists (Freud, Jung, etc.) also fall into this category and will be

found to oscillate between dualism and monism when explicitly examined.

Up till now, the focus has been on that aspect of Natural-Science which calls for the delineation of an 'object' as 'thing-in-itself' and its implications for understanding man. What will now be more closely examined is the way in which natural science studies its 'object' once it has been postulated.

2.2 The Construction of Questions in the Natural Sciences.

"Man questions the world and the world responds according to the nature of the question."
(Strasser, 1963, p. 114)

In noting that a scientific question must already have been raised before the scientist can observe facts, Strasser exposes an original conceptual manipulation of the data by the scientist. That is, the data is viewed according to categories imposed by the scientist, and which have been originated according to the criterion of utility. Such categories from which the scientist views his data are causal relations, determined responses, and quantitative measurement of space and time. Thus, questions proposed within a natural scientific framework will be those which start: What causes..., How long..., How much..., What law will X conform to, etc. There is nothing wrong with these questions as long as we acknowledge that the answers

to them constitute only those profiles of the phenomenon manipulated to fit the question's mode. Physicists have recently become aware of this obvious fact in regard to the nature of matter. When addressing questions and experiments to matter in terms of the idea of 'light waves', matter shows itself in 'light waves' terms; when addressing questions and experiments to the same 'matter' in terms of the idea of 'particles', matter shows itself in 'particle' terms. Here the nature of the phenomenon is showing us that the nature of the question is obsolete. Thus, in a very real sense, the Natural Sciences do not find facts but construct them according to their utilitarian appropriateness.

Steiner Kvale (1977), in an article entitled "The Technological Paradigm of Psychological Research" goes even further to say that at the root of Positivism and the Natural Scientific approach to psychological research, lies a technological ethic. The ethic of technological planning requires "control over objectified processes and strict prediction of future behaviour" (Kvale, 1973, p. 147), and as such, wishes to fit the behaviour of individuals and groups into this framework.

Although it is difficult to see this as the primary motive of Natural-Scientific research in Psychology, it is possible to see how the Natural Scientific 'zeitgeist' reifies such technological objectives.

It may prove insightful to examine the utilitarian world-view upon which Scientific questions are based. If we are interested in phenomena as being usable, in what context should they appear? Essentially, something which we have no explanation for becomes useful when we relate it in some way to things already explained. Thus we will focus on that profile of the phenomenon which may be reduced to terms which address themselves to our existing needs. However, it would be naive to propose that the profile elicited in this way is an adequate description of the phenomenon itself. The importance of this may seem trivial when considering Natural Sciences such as Physics and Chemistry where the 'object' of study has been clearly defined. But in Psychology where it has been shown that the 'object' is far from clear, one must be very careful what questions one puts to human phenomena. If the kind of questions asked are borrowed from the natural sciences (viz. calculability, causal relations), we have precluded the possibility that the nature of man may show qualities which are different from natural scientific objects right from the start.

Within the Natural-Scientific framework a self-constituted cycle has been generated which does not have recourse to anything outside itself. The methodological findings will be constituted according to the vision of man which again is reified by its methodology. It pats itself on the back. Given this relationship, the importance of philosophical

assumptions emerge as the prime focus of concern, as we both begin and end with the philosophical view of Man. Thus the question which emerges is: What constitutes an adequate view of Man? Any possible answer to this question will have to begin with a valid approach to the question which does justice to its magnitude.

2.3 'Understanding' as the Path to an Adequate View of Man.

If we are not to begin with questions borrowed from the natural sciences, it becomes important that we begin our approach to the study of Man with a 'willingness to understand' rather than a 'concern to explain'. That is, we will not approach the phenomenon of Man with original preconceptions such as the hypothesis of a 'mind', or according to primarily methodological considerations of observability, testability, etc.

Rather we would, as much as possible, be concerned to allow the phenomenon to 'speak for itself'. It is to this concern that Husserl originally addressed himself in his dictum 'back to the things themselves'. As early as 1894, Dilthey, in calling for a humanistic psychology, proclaimed 'understanding' in contrast to 'explanation' as the preferred approach of inquiry. He did not, however, develop his theme, and the resultant worldview, as thoroughly as Husserl, who outlined the beginnings of a phenomenology which he claimed would result in a more rigorous foundation for knowledge.

Jacob Needleman has adequately expressed this attitude of understanding demanded by Phenomenology:

"To understand an entity, phenomenon, idea, or experience, is to approach the object to be understood on its terms, to see in it structures that emerge from its side and not from ours."
(Needleman, 1963, p. 38)

Here the important requirement of faithful description may be noted:

"The decisive factor lies before all in the absolutely faithful description of that which really lies before one in phenomenological purity, and in keeping at a distance all interpretations that transcend the given." (Husserl in Needleman, 1963, p. 38)

It is only with this attitude that the possibility of a view of Man may emerge which adequately conforms to the magnitude of what Man is beyond the boundaries of the limiting questions asked by Natural Science.

'Explanation', the method of inquiry of Natural Science, on the other hand, involves a transformation of the phenomenon which is often based (especially in the case of Psychology) on a partial understanding of the phenomenon. This is not as important in Natural Sciences such as Physics and Chemistry where we are only interested in something to the degree it can be explained; thus 'understanding' is not crucial for Natural Scientific endeavour.

"In explanation, the phenomena as they appear are transformed in the sense that they are either subsumed under laws that relate them to other, different phenomena, or they are broken down into parts that somehow are taken as more real than the configuration of those parts that are taken to make up the phenomenon in question. Both senses of explanation may be called reduction in that the phenomena no longer retain intactness, independence or inviolable wholeness." (Needleman, 1963, p. 39)

We thus understand the explained phenomenon "only insofar as it is related, reduced, transformed into that which we have previously understood...." (Needleman, 1963, p. 39)

In employing the phenomenological attitude of inquiry in Psychology, we open ourselves up to dimensions which may emerge as uniquely human. It is in the pursuance of this philosophical inquiry that we may find answers to the question: What should Psychology study?

2.4 A Philosophical Basis for Psychology as a Human Science.

The great contribution of Edmund Husserl to Psychology as a Human Science is that he exposed the originality of the Lebenswelt (Life-World) as the intelligible domain of human life. It will be shown how the 'Lebenswelt' directly arises out of an understanding of intentionality as the definitive characteristic of consciousness. A consideration of Existential-Phenomenology as an adequate philosophical foundation for Human Scientific Psychology will then be outlined.

2.4.1 'Intentionality' as the Dialectical Unity of Consciousness and World.

It was Husserl's predecessor, Brentano, who first noted the intentional nature of consciousness. Not having the phenomenological attitude of suspending judgement concerning an external, objective world separate from its human constitution, Brentano distinguished between psychical phenomena and physical phenomena. He wished to know how the object of psychological empiricism differed from other objects of scientific experience. His answer was that psychological phenomena are characterised by 'intentionality', i.e. consciousness refers to something beyond itself which is not consciousness itself.

"In the idea something is conceived, in the judgement something is recognised or discovered, in loving loved, in hating hated, in desiring desired and so on."

(Brentano in Lawrence & O'Connor, 1967, p. 334)

Thus consciousness is not a thing which inhabits the body or world like other 'objects' but the very means which cast light on, and constitutes its objects, including the body.

"The variation of a light pattern does not of itself point to, refer to, intend of itself something beyond itself--whereas an act of consciousness is essentially intentional, essentially refers beyond itself."

(Needleman, 1963, p. 44)

Husserl's approach was more radical. Starting from the attitude of suspending all pre-conceptions regarding an objective world independent of our constitutive acts of

consciousness, he allowed 'what originally shows itself' to appear. In this attitude he noticed that what was, was phenomena appearing in consciousness. Affirming Brentano's discovery of 'intentionality' as the characteristic of consciousness, he went further to undercut the very world-view upon which the distinction between 'mental' and 'physical' rests. Due to the nature of intentionality the so-called 'mental' and 'physical' cannot be separated as 'things in themselves'. They dialectically constitute one another and thus arise mutually.

"One is no longer dealing with a material reality nor, moreover, with a mental reality, but with a significant whole or a structure which properly belongs neither to the external world nor to internal life."
 (Merleau-Ponty in La Pointe, 1972, p. 250)

This perspective must be clearly distinguished from that of 'Idealism' on the one hand and 'Realism' on the other. It is not being said, as in the case of Idealism, that all we can ever really know is the content of our own ideas and the structure of our minds. This does not solve the problem of dualism as it leaves Man isolated from the world. Intentionality, however, acknowledges that the world may be really known, as consciousness reaches out into the world. The 'realism' of natural-science, on the other hand, wishes to propose that the world may be known independent of the knower. Intentionality shows that the

world is always 'for' man and cannot be viewed apart from him. It is a world of sights seen, sounds heard, and things touched. Thus whatever the world is, it includes ourselves and it would be an untruth to imagine otherwise.

As this discussion is orientated towards a consideration of the study of Psychology, the more general quest of Husserlian Phenomenology, i.e. to find a philosophically rigorous foundation for knowledge, will not be pursued. His 'pure phenomenology' claims to offer "insight into the general and necessary conditions required to make cognisance of objects existing de facto." (Husserl in Lawrence, 1967, p. 337). Suffice it to say that the phenomenological world-view exposes the fallacy of viewing man as a self-contained object existing in a world foreign to his constitution. It was with this dualistic assumption that the quest of trying to vicariously re-relate man back to his world began. A phenomenological inquiry thus denies the starting-point of the Natural Scientific approach to Psychology; rather, Man as an 'object' is nowhere to be found.

2.4.2 The 'Lebenswelt' as the Domain of Human Scientific Psychology.

From the consideration of intentionality, it follows that Man's everyday experience in the context of its interpersonal, embodied, historical matrix, becomes meaningful as being the irreducible and coherently intelligible 'place'

where we find man. This 'place' is however, a relationship, and thus not a thing but a dialogue.

"When I naively reflect upon my experience of the world, as opposed merely to "having" such experience, I immediately discover that I live in a world which is peopled with things and with persons and that I am always in more or less intimate contact with the one or the other or both." (Kracklauer, 1972, p. 223)

"the life-world is the world as we encounter it in everyday experience, the world in which we pursue our goals and our objectives, the world as the scene of all our human activities."
(Giorgi, 1970, p. 123)

The 'Lebenswelt' has a horizontal character in that primary, everyday experience, shows things to be invariably appearing within the context of other things. It thus has a holistic internal coherence by which anything happening can only be understood within its life-world context.

Hence:

"... a properly psychological question can be put to a phenomenon only when this phenomenon is described or understood in the most basic way possible, viz. in terms of the life-world."
(Giorgi, 1970, p. 154)

"Physics, biölogy, geography, send us back to everyday experience to understand what rivers are, what green is and what it means to see."
(La Pointe, 1972, p. 253)

Contrary to the Natural Scientific claim that it is concerned with 'objective reality' we find that what it deals with are abstractions from reality and that the life-world is the ground for scientific reflection. Natural Sciences's

approach to Psychology, however, has been to turn this on its head. From the abstractions of Euclidian Geometry Natural Science arrives at the concepts of space, time and causality as quantified, and then applies this back to experience as though the former contained the latter instead of the other way around. In this way Natural Science completes a self-fulfilling circle, which once made, constitutes a jump by which we are barred from approaching original experience as it is lived. This is not a criticism of Natural Science in itself as, by necessity, scientific reflection depends on an abstraction from the life-world. Rather, it is to make explicit the philosophical foundations of Natural Science and thus remind us of the problems inherent in viewing Natural Science as an absolute approach to reality. More specifically, such consideration will warn us of accepting a Natural Scientific world-view as unquestionably applied to Psychology.

It is hoped that the Lebenswelt has now been exposed as the characteristic quality of life as humanly lived.

"The world in which we exist cannot be reduced to the objective variables and functional relationships which physical science reveals. The life-world has a meaningful structure of its own, which must be approached in a very different way if it is not to be radically reduced and distorted."
(La Pointe, 1972, p. 245)

The vision of Man revealed by 'intentionality' and the 'Lebenswelt' has been the focus area of Existential-Phenomenology. Martin Heidegger's ontology will be presented as a coherent description of the basic dimensions of human existence. It will be shown that such a view of Man is not conclusive regarding psychological questions, but rather points to the area of study, the premise being that if we are to study Man we must at least know what he is and where to find him.

2.4.3 An Existential-Phenomenological View of Man.

Heidegger focuses on the ontological question: 'How does being appear' and in so doing, pursues a phenomenological line of inquiry which does not even begin with the a priori existence of consciousness. It is noted that Husserl's phenomenology does not adequately expose Man as presence to the world as radically as Heidegger's because of Husserl's concern of exposing transcendental consciousness as the foundation of knowledge.

"It is man who gives the various beings their sense of being and not an impersonal transcendental consciousness." (Strasser, 1967, p. 350)

Heidegger shows us that, "the totality of being (Seinde) is always showing itself (to man) in some or other of its manifold forms or particularities e.g. plant, animals, rivers, buildings, other people, etc." (Kruger, 1977, p. 9). Man is thus constituted in such a way that his

essence may be described as an original presence to the world:
Man is the being by which being comes to light.

Heidegger expresses this original relatedness of Man and the world in the term 'Dasein' which has been roughly translated as Being-in-the-world. In this relationship Man is not an isolated 'self' which relates itself to an outside world, but is already 'out there' in the world, and the world shows itself according to his possible modes of being. Man may be seen as ek-sistence in the sense of 'standing out' toward things and participating in bringing them to light in various ways.

"Part of the definition of Dasein or human being is that it is already-in-the-world: Dasein does not emerge as Dasein unless it has already constituted its world." (Needleman, 1963, p. 17)

Man and the world thus form a cohesive unity; one cannot be strictly described without the other. It is clear that this view of an embodies both the concept of intentionality and the 'Lebenswelt'. It more clearly describes the relationship between Man and the 'Lebenswelt' and in so doing offers a philosophical basis for the study of Psychology as a Human Science.

From Heidegger's description of Dasein as Being-in-the-world, it follows that we cannot describe an without describing the world as clarified by him. To attempt to describe Man

without this, is to attempt to describe a void: there is nothing to be found. Heidegger's phenomenological analysis of Dasein is thus not an analysis of the human subject but of the possible modes of Being-in-the-world.

The world shows itself to man as the dimensions and relationships by which he lives. In this original sense, space is not a quantified extension but rather the qualitative spatialising of Being-in-the-world as a characteristic dimension of the 'Lebenswelt':

"The generally accepted view of space is that of Descartes, according to which space is simply extension and there is no qualitative difference between various places or points in space. In other words, everything is made fully equal within this space.... However, this geometric conception of space is not the spatialisation in which man lives. Our nearness or farness to other human beings, our feelings of warmth, closeness and intimacy is not measured by this sort of physical distance.... From a human perspective the world is not in limitless space, our space is in the world."
(Kruger, 1977, p. 22)

Thus Man's existence is spatialised in ways that are qualitatively experienced in our everyday lives. Similarly, Man's relationship to time, his body, fellowman, and a life-project all mutually interact to define his existence. Man as constitutive and revealing act may be truthfully studied by describing his everyday experience as lived in the various relationships of being-in-the-world. Such descriptions will have a holistic cohesion which will intelligibly inform us of Man in his irreducible relatedness.

For Psychology it emerges, as Merleau-Ponty noted, that behaviour is neither a thing nor an idea. Behaviour takes place within a context of meaning which is given intelligibility by a man's holistic Being-in-the-world. Human action can only be partially understood without reference to this greater context. The human body is not in space and time but of space and time: it is the situated context of being-in-the-world and is meaning-giving by its very constitution. Its place in the context of Being-in-the-world is the substantial bringing to light of things. 'Hardness' arises out of the knocking of hand on table; 'hardness' is neither projected onto the table by 'the mind' nor in the table itself--the meaning comes into being in the interaction of body and world. Man also relates himself to the past and future through the meaning it has for the overall context of Being-in-the-world. The depressed mode is a world in which the future appears as inaccessible amongst other things. Depression does not cause an inaccessible future: they cannot be viewed as separate phenomena; rather, depression is a context in which the relationship to the future emerges in this way. We do not understand depression by looking at a man's brain but through an understanding of his Being-in-the-world as the context of his life. If I have laboured the point, it is because of the elusiveness of the obvious which has taken Psychology down paths of philosophical vagueness in its attempts to localise Man. If nothing else, it is hoped that what has been shown is that Man cannot be localised as apart from his world and therefore should not be approached as such.

2.5 Principles for Psychology conceived as a Human Science.

Existential Phenomenology has obvious implications for Psychology in that it has elucidated both a philosophical view of Man and a methodological attitude for our approach to phenomena. This section concretely outlines the issues that Existential-Phenomenology may address.

"when one is interested in studying man at his highest level of functioning, at the level of unequivocally human, then facts obtained at a lower level of functioning are not necessarily relevant as such." (Giorgi, 1970, p. 168)

In going 'back to the thing itself' we find Man as Being-in-the-world; of 'being shaped and giving shape' (Von Eckartsberg in Giorgi et al, 1971, p. 67). It follows that psychological questions must address themselves to the 'Lebenswelt'. This is the context in which Man lives. In this perspective experience as it is lived becomes the irreducible phenomenon of study in its own right. Thus:

"the task that confronts a phenomenological psychology is the work of revealing and making explicit the unwritten constitution of everyday life."
(Strauss in Fischer, 1974, p. 405)

Here the importance of 'understanding' rather than 'explanation' becomes important. Experience is not viewed as an epiphenomenon to be explained in terms of something else such as brain state or behavioural disposition.

Rather, its intelligibility is approached within the context of the Lebenswelt. In our theorising we will not impose constructs on the phenomenon which may displace it, but will rather employ a method which will allow it to emerge as much as possible in its contextual givenness.

"The comprehensive psychologist will build his theory on anthropological constructs to be sure, but the constructs themselves should never be rooted in theory but in the firm ground of actual experience."
(Van Kaam, 1969, p. 232)

If questionnaires are to be used in psychological research, the questions asked must not be phrased in terms of the constructs of the psychologist but must have arisen from the perspective of the persons studied. Rigorous phenomenological research would be open-ended in facilitating the phenomenon to emerge in terms of the perspectives and importance of the people concerned and thus avoid standardised questions to which the experience must be fitted.

In our quest of understanding Man's lived experience, the importance of meaning rather than measurement emerges as a focus of concern.

"If behaviour partakes of intentional relations, and if the route to understanding intentionality comes through the phenomenon of meaning, then it is clear that the relevant question for understanding behaviour is to inquire about its meaning--not its measurement."
(Giorgi, 1970, p. 161)

It has been noted that the spatiality, temporality and body of the Lebenswelt are not the space, time and body of natural physics. In Psychology as a Human Science, we are interested in the quality of human existence in the meaningful context of the 'Lebenswelt' rather than the reduction of human phenomena to the quantified world, of natural science. Thus 'faithful description' emerges as the method of choice. Such description will faithfully reflect the phenomena of human existence in their holistic context.

Given the quest for faithful description, we will acknowledge the historical and unique context of Man's lived-world by not insisting on identical repetition as the criterion of validity in our research, but rather that its essential theme be identified through its varying manifestations.

This essential theme is described in such a way that it may be intersubjectively understood. Given the nature of our shared-world, we can expect to have similar experiences, e.g. anger, joy, etc. We cannot, however, expect the context of these experiences to be identical in every case (or even in more than one case).

The meaningful context of the 'Lebenswelt' also exposes the fallacy of viewing behaviour as a determined reaction to environmental conditions. We have noted how the world of meaning is constituted by Man's clarifying presence and thus not a world acting on man or vice versa. We see that Man constitutes a future and a past with goals, expectations,

and regrets and that he makes choices regarding his actions within this context of relationships. We thus must view him as an intentional subject who acts within such context. We cannot just view his behaviour from the outside as though it was not a function of meaning but as a result of environmental causes independent of his constitutive acts. We must enquire into the meaning acts have for him as a human subject rather than inferring such meaning or experience from a preconceived theoretical orientation.

This leads us on to the nature of psychological research itself.

The Natural Scientific approach to Psychology has always stressed the importance of the researcher being the 'independent observer' in order to achieve 'objective' results. Inherent in this perspective are far-reaching assumptions concerning the nature of objectivity, the nature of an experiment and the nature of man.

The term 'objective' has come to mean, in Natural Science, the independence of the observer and the observed. In this way it was thought that the nature of the object could be observed 'in itself'. When this approach was applied to Man, it was assumed that he too could be studied as a 'thing in itself' as apart from the researcher. Here it was assumed as in the case of Natural Scientific objects that the "observed constituted a world independent

of the observer." (Romanyshyn, 1971, p. 95). However, we have seen in our consideration of the nature of Man, that he is not an 'object' but a participant in a world of meaning shared by the researcher himself. Thus the researcher is part of that which he is studying; the investigator is also the investigated. Boelen (1968), has noted that to be 'objective' in the sense of looking at things as they really are, we must acknowledge the intersubjective nature of man in our research. We thus acknowledge the presence of the researcher in psychological research and the fact that what emerges in the research situation is a function of the interpersonal dialogue which may be explicitly described.

"Any research situation in Psychology is always a place where the engaged projects of two different attitudes intersect, even if it is only one subject responding to a stimulus."
(Giorgi, 1970, p. 190)

"The human way in which the researcher is de facto present can be described both by himself and by the subjects, and the meanings that emerge from these descriptions represent the control, or set the limits for understanding other data that may have been obtained."
(Giorgi, 1970, p. 131)

The idea of 'objective experimentation' also carries with it the assumption that the results obtained from experimentation arise from the nature of the phenomenon as 'thing in itself'. However, because of the contextuality of the Lebenswelt, the nature of the phenomenon will be a function of the context in which it appears and thus be distorted from its everyday lived-context. We should thus acknowledge

that the experimental context changes a phenomenon to be described and explicate the meaning of the situation as part of the methodological procedure. Because of the uniqueness and historical nature of human existence, both researcher and researched are being changed by the research method and the phenomena to be researched must thus reflect this movement. This is not to say that the essential structures of the phenomenon may not be elicited, but rather that acknowledgement of psychological phenomena in terms of their qualitative flow and historical context must be reflected in a comprehensive description.

Psychology as a Human Science cannot propose a methodology as though it was independent of the phenomenon to be investigated. We can not reduce a phenomenon so that it may fit into a pre-existing method. The primacy of method in the Natural Scientific approach to Psychology has led to so-called 'operational definitions' in which the phenomenon is defined in terms of the experimental parameters. It must be remembered that methodology is concerned with exposing the nature of the phenomenon and not reducing it to something else (i.e. in terms of methodological procedure) where it will be missed.

"It is phenomenologically unsound to establish a method that must be used that is prior to and independent of the phenomenon to be investigated. The problems of methodology cannot be considered in isolation, but only within the context of the phenomenon to be investigated and the problem aspect of that phenomenon."
(Giorgi, 1971, p. 11)

Thus methodology in Human Scientific Psychology will be concerned with the rigorous way in which a phenomenon is described while remaining faithful to its context in the 'Lebenswelt'. The rigour of the method must be made publicly explicit so that the research may be carried out step by step by another researcher. The validity of the research will not depend on replicability of results but rather on whether the research has led to a deeper inter-subjective understanding of the phenomenon concerned in both its unique and shared aspects. There are thus different possible methods in the phenomenological enterprise which are to be evaluated according to the above principles. A criticism of specific methods, however, do not constitute a criticism of the Existential-Phenomenological approach to Psychology. Much development in concrete methodology is needed. Methods of postural observation, more sophisticated methods of eliciting meaning in its full contextuality, and refinement of articulated description of essential structures all need to be developed and improved upon. The Existential-Phenomenological view of Man is offered as a comprehensive framework within which such development can take place. Its relevance lies in the fact that it can show us how man lives his life and thus lead to an increased understanding of ourselves. Its validity as a view of man cannot be questioned in terms of rightness or wrongness but in terms of comprehensiveness. In such an enquiry it philosophically emerges as the most primary and irreducible level of understanding Man in his

relatedness. It is possible to suspend this relatedness for utilitarian purposes (as in the case of behavioural and physiological studies) but Man as Man must always emerge if a comprehensive understanding is to be achieved.

3 Method

3.1 Goal and Approach of Study.

In the theoretical section, I outlined the important role that an awareness of human finitude may have for our lives. Following on from such theorising, an empirical study suggested itself. Such a study has as its general goal the understanding and description of the experience of confronting human finitude through a consideration of death. This broad goal may be seen as conforming to a phenomenological approach which does not wish to begin with a preconceived hypothesis and thus reduce the phenomenon from the start; but rather wishes to describe the emergent phenomenon as well as its research context within which it is to be viewed. Thus, although the researcher has preconceptions about the experience of confronting one's finitude, such questions will be put to the data only after a full description by the subjects has been explicated. Based on this description, any questions of the data may then be asked--not only by the researcher concerned but by others who may have different questions. Thus phenomenological description necessarily suggests more research, but research which is based on the phenomenon as fully described rather than its theory or explanation.

"It is axiomatic that all good research generates more research. It should be obvious that this is true of qualitative research as well. More questions are raised by the research than are answered." (Giorgi, 1975, p. 97)

Phenomenological Psychology has as its quest the intersubjective understanding of human experience and action in its holistic, contextual givenness. Any research must thus lead to an increased personal and interpersonal understanding of the phenomenon studied. Here is the relevance of its approach as well as its validity: relevance, in that it allows a growth in the understanding of the relatedness of human existence by striving for coherence; validity, in that it calls for the comment of all people who have shared the experience studied.

In a dialogue of the phenomenological approach and general goal of this study with the method, it becomes clear that the method to be used must have as its concern the release of data according to the subjects' perspective and intentional meanings. Method in Phenomenological Psychology cannot be rigidly standardised in its specific details, but must, according to its principle, be appropriate to the phenomenon it is attempting to describe. Thus, in agreement with Giorgi (1975), the method to be used ... "is neither exclusive nor exhaustive and it should not be considered paradigmatic for all phenomenologically based research" (Giorgi, 1975, p. 83). The method to be described emerged from a concern to reveal the experience of confronting human finitude in its contextual givenness as closely as possible. Such methodology, although applicable primarily to this particular study, nevertheless follows rigorous procedural steps which will be explicitly described.

Any researcher wishing to replicate the study may thus do so. The specific steps to be followed constitute specifically applicable procedures which are examples of general principles in phenomenological research. Such general principles embody procedures which allow the revelation of an essential description of the phenomenon studied without distorting the essential meaning of the original data. It does not thus employ intrapsychic structures or any terms not relevant to the subjects' experience (e.g. stimulus/response). Rather, it requires a description which directly reveals the subjects' experience as experience, and to this end, uses intentional language.

This leads us on to another principle which governs the approach of phenomenological research: the relationship between uniqueness and essentiality in human experience.

"It is absolutely within the nature of human existence that no two subjects can ever be completely the same. No two situations can ever be completely the same for any one subject, however much we may be able to duplicate the physical facilities.... However, by asking the same question of different people, or to the same person at different times, we can see common themes emerge."
(Kruger, 1977, p. 15)

If one is thus to remain true to the existential realities of living, psychological research must be able to elucidate human existence in both its unique and shared contexts.

If Psychology had no means by which to move beyond the unique characteristics of experience and action, it would become a sterile enterprise. On the other hand, if it ignored the unique life-history and projects of people, it would by-pass important insights, qualifications and rationale to the data collected.

It is with this understanding that the present study attempts to arrive at a description of the essential or invariant meanings of the experience of confronting human finitude whilst maintaining a sense of uniqueness in the flow of individual life. The phenomenological procedure will thus not only arrive at an essential description, but yield observations concerning the context of the phenomenon studied in individual cases. Such observations will be pursued in the 'discussion' section and will reveal the confrontation of human finitude within the unique historical context of the person as well as within the context of the research situation.

The approach of this research thus conforms to the following characteristics of Phenomenological Psychology:

1. The concern to describe the phenomenon in such a way that it remains true to the meaning and experience of the subjects studied in irreducible, 'lived-world' terms.
2. The concern to devise a method that is not primary, but is appropriate to the revelation of an adequate description of the phenomenon studied.

3. The concern to expose the essential or invariant structure of the phenomenon whilst maintaining a sense of the unique historical flow of personal life.

3.2 Rationale for Experiential Procedures.

In reviewing previous psychological research with a phenomenological orientation, a difficulty in getting to the experience-as-it-is-lived in contrast to a reminiscent reflection of a past experience was noticed. For example, in a study into the experience of anger, Stevick (1971), gave her subjects the following instruction: "Try to remember the last time you were angry and tell me anything you can about the situation, about what you felt, did, or said." (Stevick, 1971, p. 135). It was through the reflections of the subjects in a non-angry situation that Stevick attempted to arrive at the lived-experience of anger. Although this method did yield an insightful description of anger, it is not as adequate as a more immediate description of the subjects' thoughts, feelings and situation while being angry. This requirement would raise many problems for phenomenological methodology but would constitute the most rigorous approach to studying the 'phenomenon itself'.

It was with this concern in mind that I wished to get beyond a mere description of the subjects' reflections on death in a context where they may be distanced from the required experience of confronting human finitude through a

consideration of death. Such reflections on death would be more authentic if they arose out of concrete situations in which the subjects may consider their life in the face of death. A confrontation with human finitude was thus made available through a series of procedures which presented the opportunity for subjects to consider their life in the face of their death in an interpersonal, temporal and bodily context. In this way it was felt that the subjects may come closer to an experience of confronting their finitude than by reflection alone. The emergent experience as described by the subjects are thus a function of the procedures and must be seen within this context. Whether these procedures allow the subjects to approximate an experience of confronting their finitude more than reflection on the meaning of death alone will be evaluated in the 'discussion' section. It must be noted that the procedures did not have as their primary goal to change the subjects' perspectives towards life or death. If such change takes place as a result of a confrontation with human finitude, it must be remembered that all relational situations in life, including research situations, happen within a historical context.

"Both the person researched as well as the research-person are thus being changed through the existential research method-- they change each other."
(Von Eckartsberg, in Giorgi et al, 1971, -. 76)

Two things may thus be happening in this particular research situation:

1. The experience of confronting one's finitude.
2. Change of the person, however slight, in confronting one's finitude.

The present research focuses on the former; a consideration of the latter may be interesting but is beyond the scope of this study although such possibilities will be reviewed when considering individual variations in the 'discussion' section.

The procedures may be seen as the situation within which the experience of confronting human finitude emerges as the phenomenon to be studied. Other situations in which the experience may emerge will be discussed in a later section. The procedures were suggested by an understanding of the intentional nature of experience as well as by the inspiration of an article by James F.T. Bugental (1973) entitled "Confronting the Existential Meaning of 'my Death' through Group Exercises."

Bugental used four procedures which aided participants in a group situation to "confront meaningfully the concept, 'my death'." (Bugental, 1973, p. 148). These procedures were described under the headings: (1) drawing a life line; (2) confronting contingency; (3) the Orpheus experience, and (4) writing obituaries. For a full description of these procedures, the reader is referred to the original article. Procedures (2) and (4) were adapted to the requirements of

the present research (see procedures F and H). Whereas Bugental was verbally explicit in the kind of insights to be facilitated through the procedures, I wished to verbally structure each procedure as little as possible. For example, in the 'Contingency Encounter', Bugental expresses the following as part of his instructions:

"Now we want to try to explore one aspect of this relentless fact of "my death" in the hope that we may gain a more authentic and vital sense of our lives. The aspect on which we will focus is the fact that we cannot know when death will come upon us."
(Bugental, 1973, p. 153)

It was felt that procedures (1) and (3) required too much explicit direction from the group leader and would thus be inappropriate to this particular research, where the subjects' own words in describing his/her experience is important.

The basic ingredient of the 'Contingency Encounter', that is, to randomly select a subject's name who, on being called, must immediately stop what he/she is doing, was used in this research (Procedure F) and adapted to suit a less time-consuming context, (i.e. during a period of singing rather than over the period of the entire programme).

The basic idea of 'Writing Obituaries' was to write about 'myself' from another's point of view after 'I' have died. This idea was adapted for this research (Procedure H), but within a more informal context of writing a letter from a

close friend's point of view to a mutual friend of the deceased.

The procedures which were not used in the present research ((1) drawing a life line; (2) the Orpheus experience), constituted guided meditations which focused on the temporal flow of one's life as a totality and a consideration of the importance of one's various identities and roles. These procedures were not used because of their highly structured directions.

The present research wished to facilitate the opportunity for subjects to confront the meaning of death in terms of its intentional context of interpersonal, bodily and temporal relationships. Arising out of the Existential-Phenomenological insight of experience being intentional, I felt that if an authentic experience is to be facilitated, then it would arise out of these intentional contexts.

3.3 The Subjects.

Six subjects (two females and four males) were chosen according to the fulfillment of certain conditions for experiential research as outlined by Van Kaam (1969):

- (a) the ability to express themselves with relative ease in the English language;
- (b) the ability to sense and to express inner feelings and emotions without shame and inhibition;

- (c) the ability to sense and to express the organic experiences that accompany these feelings;
- (d) a spontaneous interest in his experience on the part of the subject.

Added to these conditions was the criterion that the subjects express interest in enquiring into the dimensions of their own existence and a commitment to self-understanding.

They were thus not 'naive' subjects and all admitted that they had reflected on the nature of death in the past.

The concern is to clarify the phenomenon of confronting one's own finitude and such past reflecting by the subjects may assist the task of the procedures to bring such experience more into focus. It will be shown that the design of the procedures were such as to expose the relationship between reflections based on actual lived experience and reflections which may be said to have been adopted from secondary sources that have not been fully integrated into the subjects' world e.g. books or the ideals of others. Should such ambivalence occur, it would in itself clarify the nature of the phenomenon.

It is a limitation of the present stage of phenomenological research that we cannot use as subjects those who cannot adequately articulate their experience. Thus, it remains a challenge for Phenomenological Psychology to move beyond the astute descriptions of the lived-world by such articulate writers as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Strasser, etc.

The six subjects were unmarried post-graduate university students of the Arts and Human Sciences between the ages of 21 and 26 years and were evaluated as adequate in terms of the aforementioned criteria. Further, they all expressed a trust in the researcher which contributed to the establishment of a rapport between researcher and researched which is so necessary for the phenomenological enterprise.

The number of subjects was considered sufficient for the present nomothetic phenomenological study to demonstrate essentiality as well as uniqueness. The concern is not, as in the Natural Scientific approach, to achieve a representative sample of the population. Rather, it is to explicate an essential description of the experience of confronting one's finitude within the unique flow of one's life; and thus qualitative experience rather than quantitative enumeration is emphasised. We are concerned not with the question of who or how many people achieved such an experience, but rather with the description of the experience in its qualitative dimensions. An idiographic study may have achieved such description but would not have shown the unique contexts which highlight and define the experience as essential and shared.

3.4 Description of the Research Situation.

On asking the six subjects to participate in the research, I said that the research would involve them participating in

certain procedures which were designed to give them an opportunity to confront the meaning of death and that they would be asked to articulate their experience. We met on a pre-arranged date in a room within which we were unlikely to be disturbed.

On arriving I told the subjects that I was interested in enquiring into the meaning of death and that they were to participate in such enquiry. I told them that certain procedures had been designed to assist in such enquiry and that such enquiry may, therefore, expose them to possible change in their orientation towards life and death.

I asked them whether they were willing to enter into this enquiry process, to which they agreed. They were also asked to respond to the procedures in terms of their immediate thoughts and experiences. This was asked in order to ensure response in terms of immediate lived experience.

The subjects were issued with paper and pens and were asked to begin by reflecting on, and writing, a short essay (about one page) entitled: 'What my own death means to me', followed by a comma, and their own name, in order to bring home the impact of the situation. This procedure was designed to elicit their immediate reflections and pre-conceptions in order to evaluate the manner in which the essential description of confronting one's own finitude related to such initial reflections. The subjects were

asked not to communicate their responses in any way to one another, so that unique responses relating to each particular subject could be facilitated.

In the first procedure, the subjects were paired off and asked to sit directly opposite their partner, knees almost touching. They were asked to hold their partner's hands and look directly at each other. One of the partners in each case was instructed in the following way: "When you feel ready and able, address your partner by his/her name, followed by the words 'I see you as dying'." Thus, in this situation one partner is attempting to constitute the other 'as dying' in whatever way he/she is able and he/she communicates this to his/her partner. The procedure took varying periods in each of the three cases (1-3 minutes). The subjects were asked to write down their experience of the procedure immediately after they had completed the procedure. Thus three subjects wrote down the experience of being told that they were being seen 'as dying', and three subjects wrote down the experience of having to constitute and tell the other that he was being seen 'as dying'. The situations were then reversed so that those who had previously been constituted 'as dying' by their partner were now the ones to constitute the other 'as dying'. We thus emerge with a description by each person of both experiences. It is to be noted that this procedure, by its nature, emphasises the meaning of death in an inter-personal context in which the eradication of death-denial

between people is facilitated. Whether such opportunity is realised remains to be seen in a consideration of the results. Here, then, an experience of confronting death rather than a denial of death is facilitated as is the aim of the research.

In asking the subjects to write down their experiences immediately, access to their immediate lived-experience of the situation was achieved. Written protocols have been criticised (Sardello in Giorgi et al, 1971) as being removed from the lived-experience of a verbal researched-researcher dialogue, but it is felt that, in this particular research, the immediacy of the written protocol mitigates such criticism. Such written protocols may also be more certainly described as the subject's own experience in his own terms without any possible interference in expression. To this end, it was made clear in the beginning that the subjects were not to share their experiences with anyone else until the research situation had been fulfilled. The protocols were thus obtained by means of the self-report method as outlined by Von Eckartsberg (1971).

"In self report, the person studied gives an account of his activities and experiences in the situations either verbally or in writing. In either case we obtain a protocol focused on the experience of a situation. The focus on a situation gives us a meaningful and comprehensive unit to work with."
(Von Eckartsberg in Giorgi et al, 1971, p.76)

The previous procedure was then repeated, but this time with the instructions: "When you feel ready and able, address

your partner by his/her name, followed by the words, 'I see you as living'." Each subject was on the receiving end as well as the giving end of the above communication. As before, in each case the subjects wrote down their experience of the procedure immediately afterwards. This procedure was designed to provide the opportunity for subjects to experience a relationship, if any, between being confronted with the constitution of oneself and fellowman 'as dying' and the constitution of oneself and fellowman 'as living'.

In the next procedure, the subjects were given the following instructions: "Think about a song or songs which may depict or symbolise in any way your everyday living and interacting. This song may be either made up as you go along or it may be already known to you. When I say "begin", walk around, stopping to sing your own personal song to another or stopping to listen to another's and thus interact with the singing and moving. Make of this whatever you will. I will stand on this chair in the corner representing death. At random intervals I will call out someone's name. That person is called to death. On being called, you are to immediately leave whatever you are doing and walk to the nearest corner where you will stay with your back to the living until the end of the procedure. Are there any questions? Ready? Begin."

After everyone had been called at random intervals (five seconds to three minutes) in a formal way, stating their full names, the subjects were asked to sit down and, without talking to anybody, to write down their experience of that situation. It will be noticed that this procedure emphasises an interactional context for the meaning of death.

The unknownness of time of death as well as its certainty is suggested by this procedure. This is in keeping with the attempt to present death as an existential reality in our lives. It will also be noticed that 'Death' as being represented by me was present during the entire procedure. The subjects were given an opportunity through this procedure to reflect on (1) the death of another whom they are interacting with when he or she is called, (2) the imminence of his or her own death, (3) the experience of actually being called and having to constitute oneself towards one's death. These things were not explicitly suggested to the subjects but may be seen to be implicit in both the procedure and in the existential reality of death.

The next procedure simulated the physical situation of death and dying. Subjects were given the following instructions: "For the next five minutes or so I would like you all to think about the postural movements of your own body in dying and death. Do not communicate your reflections to anybody. When you are ready, each of you will in turn physically dramatise and attempt to be experientially open to your dying

posture or movements. Are there any questions? Spend five minutes reflecting on your dying posture." After approximately five minutes, subjects expressed their readiness to dramatise their dying posture. Each did so in turn while the rest looked on. The subjects were then asked to describe in writing what they had done and how they experienced this procedure. It will be noted that this procedure projects the subjects to the moments before their death and the physical dramatisation of this. This is in keeping with the attempt to facilitate a confrontation with death in a personal context which stresses its 'ownness'. This is implicit in the structure of one's own death but was not suggested explicitly to the subjects concerned.

The final procedure suggested a consideration and reflection of the subjects' lives in the light of their deaths.

The following instructions were given: "You have just died--and a perceptive friend is writing a personal letter to a good friend of his, telling him of your death and reflecting on you and your life. Write this letter as though you were your friend, speaking of yourself in the third person and past tense. Spend a couple of minutes reflecting on yourself as dead from the viewpoint of your friend and begin writing when you are ready. Any questions?" The subjects then spent varying amounts of time putting themselves into this situation and then wrote the letter referring to themselves as having died. This procedure implicitly suggests death as being the end to one's life-

projects, goals, relationships, etc. It is left to the subject as to whether he/she will experience such end as a completion to life or as an interruption or any other possible meaning. Speaking about him-/herself in the past tense from a friend's perspective also facilitates a confrontation with the reality of oneself and one's life as ending.

When all had finished writing, the research situation was completed by asking the subjects to again write an essay entitled 'What my own death means to me,' followed by a comma and their own name. They were asked to write the essay as they felt 'now' and not to refer to their previous essay. Apart from further clarifying the meaning that death has for each of them, this essay also allowed a consideration of whether confrontation with death through the procedures facilitated a more immediate experience of finitude than their initial reflection on 'what my own death means to me' by a comparison of the two essays.

For the sake of brevity and convenience each written response to the procedures will be depicted in each of the six protocols according to the following lettered ascriptions:

A : Initial reflection on 'what my own death means to me'

B : The experience of constituting and telling the other:
'I see you as dying'

C : The experience of constituting oneself and being told
by the other, 'I see you as dying'

- D : The experience of constituting and telling the other:
'I see you as living'
- E : The experience of constituting oneself and being told
by the other: 'I see you as living'
- F : The experience of the procedure in which subjects are
called to death from their interaction of singing
- G : The description and experience of their postural move-
ments of death and dying
- H : The letter which describes him-/herself as dead
- I : Terminal reflection on 'what my own death means to me'

It will be noted that all the procedures were open-ended, both in terms of their possible experiential responses as well as their possible written form. The specific implicit emphases of the procedures wished to reveal death as an authentic dimension of existence but did not suggest the specific ways in which subjects would respond to being confronted with such potential realities. All procedures suggested real implications of death: i.e. that death is certain; that death occurs in an interpersonal context; that one dies one's own death; that death occurs within an embodied context; that death may come at any time. These are all part of the phenomenon and, in facilitating confrontation with such phenomenon, were implicitly 'there' for confrontation. The protocols are not mere reflections on the word 'death' or 'finitude' but describe the experience of confronting one's finitude in meaningfully contextual modes. Thus we attempt to elicit reflections

on lived-experience rather than reflections which are not real to the personal lives of the subjects involved. Confrontation with death was put into the context of their personal lives rather than leaving it as a vague term which either may or may not be considered within such context. The initial reflections on 'what my own death means to me' may or may not be based on the lived-experience of their own lives. Their later reflections after considering death within such context may clarify what this initial reflection constituted--whether a reflection based on lived experience or not, or a change in such lived experience in one's orientation towards death. Whatever emerges here, the entire research situation may be analysed to essentially yield the experience of confronting one's finitude through a consideration of death.

3.5 Method of Explication.

The protocols were analysed according to five stages which yielded an essential description of the experience of finitude through a confrontation of death as well as data concerning the unique personal context of such experience.

Stage 1 : Achieving a Sense of the Wholeness and Relatedness of each Protocol by a Reading from the Actor Perspective.

Phenomenological research is engaged research. It involves the researcher in an interpersonal situation, in which he is attempting to understand fellow human beings. In acknowledging

this, his mode of involvement in the enquiry process becomes important and he therefore prepares himself for such understanding. In an initial reading of the protocols, the researcher attempts to assume the actor perspective of personal meaning as it shows itself. The researcher is thus 'there for' the data and to this degree brackets his own preconceptions and judgements. He wishes to understand the subjects' experience from the subjects' point of view. After achieving a holistic sense of the subjects' experience, the protocols are then read again, this time in a more reflective attitude in order to prepare oneself for the articulation of what is expressed in the protocols according to its own meanings.

"... the researcher outside of the experimental situation reads the transcribed protocols first with the attitude of re-living the experimental situation and then with the attitude of reflecting on the lived situation to understand what happened"
(Sardello in Giorgi et al, 1971, p. 63)

Such readings of the protocols also prepares one for retaining a sense of their integral wholeness throughout the further stages, where a more particular analysis is required.

Stage 2 : The Delineation of 'Natural Meaning Units'.

The data was broken down into segments each of which expressed a discrete and separate meaning. Here the protocols remained in their original state of expression. However,

each statement or series of statements which addressed itself to a central theme was numbered as a separate 'natural meaning unit'. 'Natural meaning units' convey a single intentional meaning and occur implicitly as the subject describes different aspects of his/her experience.

In delineating the 'natural meaning units', the criterion adhered to was that the descriptive statement or statements of the person express a different quality or meaning than the statements before or after it. Because of the contextual nature of meaning, meanings may often overlap. The criterion for delineating a 'natural meaning unit' in such a case is whether the statement highlights any new quality or aspect of the experience not previously expressed.

If this is so, a discretely separate 'natural meaning unit is delineated'. In this way the richness of the data was exposed for further analysis in the following stages.

Intersubjective validity for the delineation of naturally occurring meaning units was obtained through consultation with a colleague also involved in phenomenological research. Here the criterion was that both of us delineate the same 'natural meaning units' in five pages of the protocol descriptions. The concern was not to statistically isolate a random sample of the 'natural meaning units' but rather to enquire intersubjectively whether the 'natural meaning units' may be seen to arise independent of the reflections of my own personal experience. To this end I asked the colleague to read through five pages of the protocol to see

whether he differed with the delineation of 'natural meaning units'. In this way it may be said that such delineation occurred naturally as a movement of meaning in the protocols and not just in my own experience.

Stage 3 : Description of 'Natural Meaning Units' in Terms of their Central Themes.

In this stage redundancies of expression are eliminated in each natural meaning unit in order to yield the central theme of that unit in terms of its own categories. Wherever possible, the subjects' own words were adhered to in order to 'let the data speak for itself'. However, the intersubjective nature of the lived-world suggests that we can understand each other's meanings and as such may articulate the central theme in other words which may essentially express the intended meaning. Here the task involves an "articulation of the central themes that characterised the respective unfolding scenes of each protocol."

(Fischer, 1974, p. 414). The criterion for validity in this stage is not whether another researcher would use exactly the same words in expressing the central theme, but whether such differences in wording may be intersubjectively understood to reflect a unity and adequacy of the 'natural meaning unit' as expressed by the subject. Such validation (five pages of a protocol) was again achieved through consultation with the colleague used in the previous stage. The reader, adopting the outlines of this stage should also be able to see how the central themes reflect the intentional meaning of the subject.

Stage 4 : Essential Themes of Each Procedure obtained through a Relating and Clustering of Central Themes between Subjects within Identical Procedures.

In this stage, all central themes were accounted for in order to obtain a reflection of both essentiality and uniqueness. Every central theme in every protocol was 'related to and clustered with' (Eppel, 1976) other central themes of the same procedure, both within the same subject and between the different subjects. The essential themes thus reflect statements that were constituted from common themes between and within subjects. Those central themes which were only reflected once or reflected a number of times but by the same subject only, were nevertheless noted as such. Thus next to the essential themes within each procedure, we have a column in which is depicted how many different subjects contributed to the relating and clustering of that particular essential theme. Next to each statement is depicted the person as well as the central theme number from which the essential theme was constructed. Thus next to each essential theme, is the central theme number prefixed by the initials of the person referred to, e.g. R.B.6. If the essential theme is of the procedure relating to the posture of death (G), the reader may refer to R.B.'s protocol, procedure G, central theme 6 and find one of the sources which contributed to an essential theme of that procedure. The concern was to clarify the experience of each procedure and in so doing, both essential and unique themes emerged. The unique themes are themes expressed by only one person, although possibly

more than once by him, and will thus have the number 1 in the column after the essential theme as well as the referred-to central themes as described above. No central theme was thus ignored in the constitution of this stage and all may be traced via the above method as arriving in the essential theme phase. By keeping the essential themes of each procedure separate, discussion may be pursued on the nature of the procedures and their relative contribution to the essential description of the experience of confronting one's finitude through a consideration of death.

Stage 5 : Arrival at the Essential Description of the Experience of Confronting One's Finitude through a Consideration of Death.

A radical reflection on both the sense of the protocols as a whole as well as on the essential themes yielded an essential description of the experience of confronting one's finitude through a consideration of death. Such essential description embodied at least all essential themes which referred to three or more people.

Statements of the essential description are thus backed up by referents to the essential themes in brackets. For example, the referent I1, as one essential theme, was constituted by central themes from all six subjects and thus contributes to the essential description. Other essential themes which refer to less than three subjects but which made the essential description more explicit,

were also used to contribute to the essential structure of the phenomenon. It will be noted that the essential description embodies a description relating to the subjects' own experiences and reflections and does not make use of inferred intrapsychic or environmental structures which may explain such experience. Thus, true to the phenomenological enterprise, the essential description maintained an actor perspective within his/her context of the lived world.

Through the above methodological description, the reader may judge for himself the 'line of descent' through the stages.

A consideration of the unique context of the experience of confronting one's finitude is attempted in the 'discussion' section and may more clearly place the phenomenon studied in its lived-world context. The results will also be interrogated in terms of questions which may further elucidate the nature of human finitude and our relatedness to death.

4 Analysis of Results

4.1 Analysis into Natural Meaning Units and Central Theme.

Pro-
ce-
dure
No.:

Natural Meaning Units

Central Themes

R.B.

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | It means something between fulfillment and defeat. I should die, and I try to live towards that dying but I'm also rather too proud to die, especially if that death is untimely. | 1 | ambivalence between defeat of death due to pride of living and untimely death, and fulfillment of death as something to live towards. |
| | 2 | In terms of death as an end or as a new beginning, I'm not sure, but find these metaphysical questions unimportant. | 2 | metaphysical questions about death as a beginning or end unimportant. |
| | 3 | Instead if I can live my life fully, then death will be part of the course of things. Death is essentially a return to origins, to | 3 | death as a 'course of things' if he lives life fully - a return to origins. |

the primal matter (and mother) out of which I was born.

- B 1 She was sitting, shoulders slightly slouched, and when I said the above she seemed to be much older and slouch even more, as though she had sat in that chair for fifty years.
- 1 slouching of other's body as aging fifty years.
- 2 The time before I spent talking to her was to realise that someone so young can die, for when I finally said "June, I see you as dying", I really meant it.
- 2 realisation of 'someone so young can die'.
- C 1 I felt my dying immediately; and it started in my stomach, a slight knot then almost a sort of disintegration, still in my stomach.
- 1 immediate bodily response in stomach as 'knot' and 'disintegration'.

- 2 There was movement up my back, not as strong as a shudder or anything, and much slower.
- 2 movement up back, slower than shudder.
- J3 Then I felt my neck muscles tighten slightly and my head began to ache.
- 3 tightening of neck muscles and aching of head.
- 4 My breathing was constant throughout though I was concentrating on it as such but I've still got a slight headache.
- 4 aware of breathing as constant.
- D 1 Her greyness left her and she seemed to glow golden.
- 1 other moving from 'greyness' to glowing golden.
- 2 She also moved away from me, out into life.
- 2 other moving away from self into life.
- 3 And I loved to see her go--so full of energy and power.
- 3 enjoyment of seeing other as 'full of energy and power'.
- E 1 I didn't feel anything; what R said came across
- 1 lack of impact of procedure through already

- a little flat. I felt far too much alive for it to be meaningful, and that aliveness came from when I willed R life just now.
- 2 But I definitely feel stronger than before we started this series--"I see you as dying" and "I see you as living."
- F 1 Didn't seem very meaningful, yet the tautness in my body says it was so.
- 2 Mostly it was enjoyable; I so like singing and hearing others sing too.
- 3 When I was killed I still wanted to sing and didn't like having to keep quiet.
- 4 I was surprised that some of the others in the group
- feeling 'aliveness' by granting other life in previous procedure.
- 2 feels stronger now than before starting the procedures.
- 1 tautness of body contradicts structuring of meaninglessness of procedure.
- 2 enjoyed participation in singing.
- 3 on being 'killed' aware of wish to continue singing with others.
- 4 surprise at embarrassment of other singing especially

felt so embarrassed at
having to sing, especially
in the moment after some-
body had just died.

in 'moment after some-
body had just died'.

G 1 While thinking about it,
I thought of dying
violently, in a hail of
machine-gun bullets, but
then that disappeared.

1 Initial thought of a
violent death which
then disappeared.

2 How I died I don't know
but I didn't want to die.
My shoulders and back
heaved and arched, still
strong and fighting
against the return to
stillness.

2 resistance to death as
'arching of back' as
'strong' and 'fighting
against stillness'.

3 Then I subsided and
stretched out for the
Mother to take me again,
but just before I died,
my finger again half
closed, completely spon-
taneously, and that is
how I died, somewhere
between acceptance and
fight.

3 acceptance of death as
'stretching out for
mother' contradicted by
final bodily resis-
tance--'died between
acceptance and fight'.

4 It was not so much a fear
of death that made for
 this anger of mine but a
 simple and profound will
 to live.

4 'profound will to live'
 as anger at death rather
 than fear.

H 1 He (R) was so young in
 years, young and strong
 and growing, and he was
 cut down, brushed aside
 by the fates, just like
 that. His will was too
 young to die.

1 death as being 'cut
 down' of one so 'young'.

2 Yet there was another side
 to him; he was an "old
 soul" as his father had
 always said. He was one
 of those people who seemed
 to have been born old, and
 even when he was very young
 the dark bruises under his
 eyes showed. This side of
 him was beyond the ener-
 getic counting of years,
 and it was this side which
 he sought to realise fully
 in his own life.

2 also sees the other side
 to self--as 'old' in non-
 chronological sense--
 validated by his father
 and his appearance.

3 So I think it would be wrong to curse God for removing someone so young, or with so much life ahead of him. To be true to his spirit I shall not count the years or the possibilities that might have been.

4 But I shall try to take his youth and strength, and his agelessness, and keep the work of wedding them. For that is one thing he taught me, that wisdom and the striving of youth are not the opposites some take them to be.

5 Finally it was always his belief that the end of life and the beginning of life are inseparable. True, he did not fully live that belief (that was his "youthfulness").

3 in considering life, does not use chronological age or possible future as 'wrongfulness' of death.

4 Youth and agelessness as two sides of him.

5 belief that 'end and 'beginning' of life are inseparable.

6 but still it would be so
 wrong, I think, to mourn
 him; rather we should
 give thanks to the powers
 that gave him, and then
 let him be.

6 let things be rather
 than mourn his death.

I 1 It is very difficult to
 say, more difficult than
 earlier on.

1 meaning of death has
 become more difficult
 to verbalise than
 earlier.

2 In a sense it means
 nothing to me, but that
 might be misinterpreted
 as meaning unimportant.
 Death is not really the
 problem, life is.

2 death means nothing in
 terms of the problem of
 life.

3 My death is a realisation
 of the joy, importance
 and wonder of living now,
 and in the times before I
 die. I don't mean I must
 pour all my energies into
 life, manically trying to
 do as much as possible--
 not that at all.

3 Death as a realisation of
 'joy, importance and
 wonder of living now.'

4 I'm not aware of dying or death, but only of life. 4 'not aware of dying or death, but only of life'.

D.R.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| A | <p>1 I conceive of my death as the end of a physical cycle of my existence.</p> <p>2 It holds, at this stage, no great fear for me, though at times when I was closer to it than others, my conceptions changed.</p> <p>3 I have no ambitions to have achieved something great by the time it arrives, but wish to feel I have grown.</p> <p>4 My death plays no role in my conscious waking life, neither when I am in a receptive state for wider cosmological processes.</p> | <p>1 death as death of bodily existence.</p> <p>2 fear of death when close to it.</p> <p>3 no great ambitions to achieve 'something great' by arrival of death, but feeling of growth is wished in course of life.</p> <p>4 death plays no role in conscious waking life.</p> |
|---|---|---|

5 However, I apperceive that it will herald the onset of a significant new phase, one which I cannot properly conceive of.

5 death as onset of new significant phase which cannot be conceived of.

6 I too recognise that living consciously in the face of my death allows me greater flexibility of action and serves to qualitatively improve my now.

6 living consciously in face of death allows greater flexibility of action and qualitative improvement of the present.

7 Intellectually I can conceive of it as a great link of beings and as such welcome.

7 Intellectually, welcomes death as 'great link of beings'.

B 1 Not as strong a link. I did not think I could see him as dying.

1 Initial inability to see 'other' as dying.

2 But when I fixed my look at a certain point he faded and fell. I felt very distanced for some of the time especially at his death.

2 felt distanced from other 'at his death'.

- 3 It was not very difficult to know when the time was right for me to see him as dying--it was quite clear.
- 3 able to see other as dying after a while as 'quite clear'.
- C 1 I felt that he may not say it. I appreciated it greatly when he did.
- 1 appreciation of other's dilemma of having to see self-as-dying.
- 2 I felt a very strong bond of friendship. He became terribly real, terribly alive. I was not really aware of myself--my focus was on him and his beingness.
- 2 aware of other as friend, 'real' and alive without focus on self.
- 3 My arm and hand stiffened markedly at and after he told me that he saw me as dying.
- 3 stiffening of arm and hand as response to statement.
- 4 somehow I felt a remarkable truthfulness not in the actual statement but in the interaction.
- 4 felt truthfulness in the interaction.

- D 1 It was difficult to focus on what was alive. S. was alive but I knew him to be more real and alive than I was seeing him at that moment.
- 2 But as I looked longer and I became more tuned in to his being alive it became clearer and definite that he was alive--his eyes were alive and strong--that's where his life emerged from--also his forehead.
- E 1 It was good that S. saw me as living relatively soon.
- 2 I could see him really looking for the life in me. His eyes are honest.
- F 1 Surprised when I was called. Sorry to leave the living.
- 1 Initial inability to see 'other' as alive and real as he had known him.
- 2 with looking longer 'aliveness' of other more clear and definite as communicated by other's eyes and forehead.
- 1 appreciation of being seen 'as living' relatively soon.
- 2 other seen as life-validating and honest as communicated by eyes.
- 1 surprise and regret at being called and leaving the living.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 2 | Big shock when S. was called. | 2 | Shock when other was called. |
| 3 | Could have carried on singing for a long time. | 3 | elaboration on meaning of (1) - surprise and regret at being called. |
| 4 | Once I had died, I quite enjoyed standing and watching. Felt entirely self-possessed--living and dead. Was not terribly aware of the others around me. | 4 | enjoyed distance from others at death. |
| 5 | Would have liked to have been the last alive, while I was still alive. But this feeling evaporated once I had actually died. | 5 | wish to have been last alive but surrendered this wish after death. |
| 6 | I was basically only aware of myself during the whole procedure. | 6 | only aware of self during procedure. |
| G 1 | To be crouched foetus-like on your side. | 1 | body in foetus position in process of dying. |

2 - to recoil briefly as
life escapes you.

2 bodily resistance to
death as 'to recoil
briefly'.

3 - then to relax, stretch
slightly and finally come
to a position of rest, on
your side, straighter
than the closed foetus,
but foetus-like, but
slightly open i.e. more
of your back touching the
ground than completely
side-on, with your face
slightly upward.

3 final acceptance of death
as body in position of
rest, 'foetus-like, but
slightly open'.

H 1 Dear J, Before I start
telling you about other
experiences and thoughts
I wish to communicate to
you, I'd like to write
briefly about a friend of
mine who has just died.
I write this for a number
of reasons, one of the
principle ones being that
you are a woman, and I
think he would have liked

1 wish to be remembered by
feminine person.

to have been reconstructed by another, of the few truly feminine persons around.

2 Dick died at 26. In some ways he was much older than this, part of that age in which clock time has no place; in other respects he was far younger - but mainly he was twenty-six.

2 felt both older and younger than chronological age in different respects.

3 He had a depth of passion few recognised and at the time of his death was beginning to develop a sort of jaggedness, a sort of hardness, foreign to his entire past. In some senses he was more woman than man.

3 at time of death development of a 'hardness' foreign to his past self as passionate, feminine and self-exposing.

He always told me about his earlier life, as a child and as a young boy-- about how he would expose himself in loving so openly

so completely, to those
who penetrated him.

4 He told me especially
about one woman who
embodied womanhood for
him, and talked tire-
lessly of the femininity
of the Alexandria
Quartet. I mention
this one woman, J, with
Durrell's books because
in his mind they were
oftimes synonamous.

4 sharing of value of
'womanhood'.

5 At times he would be at
peace with the world in
such a complete way,
truly experiencing the
unity of the cosmos,
realising his total in-
significance and at once
his supreme importance
in the working of things.

5 times of peace and
fulfilment in relation-
ship to the world.

6 If I write too passion-
ately of him, it is
because I loved this

6 this side valued highly
but 'put aside while
new growth emerged'.

side--this side which was
to lead him into much
pains and joy--but also
was to be put aside while
a new growth emerged.

7 At the time of his death I 7 meaning in (3) seen as
mentioned the emergent 'inevitable and necessary
jaggedness of his being, for his "balance"'.
a sharpness, an intolerance,
a more closed privacy, at
times an impenetrability,
which he claimed was in-
evitable and necessary for
his "balance". He often
used the analogy of a
musical instrument when
talking of his life--and
spoke of the tunedness of
his being. He had a
peculiar objectiveness
about his self, living
side by side with a total
subjectivity.

8 But I labour his assets. 8 self-judgements also as
He claimed to be weak on weak, untruthful, doubt-
occasions, insincere, even ing inner validity.

untruthful. He spent long hours depressed, doubting his inner validity--reality. I sometimes used to think these vicious self-judgements valid--sometimes not.

9 But mainly I think he was frightened like you and I, of taking full responsibility for his emergent being--that which he knew had to be. In this sense he died too soon, or perhaps God knew...

10 We'll talk of him again sometime. Let me now describe the beauty of the pastel beach awaiting me beyond this window.

I 1 It appears to be weirdly impersonal.

9 died too soon, before he could take full responsibility for his emergent being.

10 move onto a description of beach beyond the window.

I death as 'weirdly impersonal'.

2 It is much more real as being very valuable to my life. I see more clearly, the function of a limit--even the function of our limited consciousness--it circumscribes our understanding potentialities, as death does our life's potentialities. We move in spirals, each turn of which is necessary as a limit for our dimensional climb. Death demarcates one light-dark turn of the spiral--we function within limits

3 until such time as those limits recede into limitlessness.

2 death valuable to life as limit which defines life's potential and within which life moves.

3 time when limits 'recede into limitlessness'.

R.J.

- A 1 My death means the end and fulfilment of my life. 1 death as end and fulfilment of her life.
- 2 I think of it as part of a natural process towards which I am always moving. 2 death as part of natural process.
- 3 Something which gives meaning to the time I am living now. 3 gives meaning to living now.
- 4 My death is not something I think about often - there have been certain times and events that have brought its reality home, and have led me to accept it as the end of my physical being. 4 closer to death at certain times during life.
- 5 I am not afraid of the fact of my dying, but am scared of the way of dying. 5 more afraid of pain in dying than fact of death.

- dying in pain, for instance. It's the pain that frightens me, not the dying.

6 I feel I would betray my life if I denied the reality of my death.

6 denial of death as betrayal of her life.

B 1 My first thought was to see R as old and dying and falling to pieces, but that didn't work.

1 Initial failure at attempt to see other as 'old and dying and falling to pieces'.

2 So then I let myself become aware of his dying every second I was looking at him, dying a little each moment and then I could say: "R, I see you as dying," and mean it.

2 able to see other as 'dying a little each moment' as meaningful.

3 I didn't find it easy to say, though; my voice and my breathing was a bit jerky.

3 difficulty in verbalising statement - as jerkiness of voice and breathing.

- C 1 When R looked straight at me, and said he saw me as dying, I got an almost physical shock, though "shock" is a bit too strong. I felt my muscles slightly tense and shiver, and my hands jerked. So I was very much aware of a physical, emotional reaction rather than an intellectual one.
- 1 bodily reaction to statement as tensing and shivering of muscles, rather than intellectual response.
- D 1 I didn't find this difficult to say, because I just had to look at R to see him as vibrant with life and energy and love of life.
- 1 Easily able to see other as 'vibrant with life and energy and love of life.'
- 2 and wanted to say it to tell him so.
- 2 wish to tell other this.
- E 1 R didn't take as long to say he saw me as living, and I was wondering before he said it, how he would see me as living.
- 1 questioning of how other would see self as living.

- 2 My reaction was one of joy and wonder, even, and happiness, almost as if I had been given a lovely present.
- F 1 I didn't really enjoy the singing at first, but got to enjoy myself pretty fast. I didn't sing to a lot of people, but I liked having the sound of their singing with mine, and also to having them singing with me.
- 2 When L died, the first one, I noticed how we all stopped for a moment, and sang together in a small tight-knit group for a little while.
- 3 then we started moving about more and the other people's deaths weren't such a shock for me.
- 2 reaction of self to statement of 'joy', 'wonder', 'happiness', of being 'given a lovely present'.
- 1 Enjoyed participation of singing to and with others after initial reluctance.
- 2 after first death noticed hesitancy and increase of physical proximity of group before continuing.
- 3 other's deaths were less of shock.

- 4 R's was because he was singing to me when he died and I felt a little lost for a while having to go and join up with the others again.
- 4 felt lost when other was singing to 'died' and had to rejoin group.
- 5 I was almost relieved at my own death, because I can't sing and was very self-conscious on my own. I feel that if the exercise had been made of some other activity (e.g. playing a flute), I would have been less disturbed about carrying on on my own. I would have WANTED to have gone on living, but in this exercise I was too self-conscious about the singing part.
- 5 felt self-conscious on being last one alive due to self-consciousness in singing.
- 6 But that hang-up wasn't the only thing I suppose. I was also very conscious
- 6 felt alone and certain of death.

of being totally alone,
and certain that I was
going to die soon.

7 I think my dying was a
little different from
the others because I
knew when I was going
to die and didn't have
the same apprehension
and doubt as them.

My death wasn't such a
shock to me, it didn't
cut into the middle of
something, but came at
the end. Everyone had
gone and now it was my
turn.

G 1 I imagine the movement
of dying as a tension,
a sudden drawing in
and closing in on my-
self.

2 and then gradually
moving and opening,
outwards and upwards.

7 less apprehension because
of certainty of death
after everyone else had
gone.

1 movement of dying as
tension, closing in.

2 then a movement opening
outwards and upwards.

3 The French word for dying is 'agonie' (which doesn't mean our 'agony) but it describes, for me, that last violent jerking inwards which precedes the gentle relaxation, and opening into the rested dying posture, which is how I picture my dying posture, and noticed in D's and G's as well. It is a final holding on, and then, letting go.

3 a violent jerking inwards as holding on
b followed by 'gentle' relaxation' as 'letting go'.

H 1 It is Friday afternoon, and R has just died. We have been very close friends for 10 years, and done a lot of growing together, and it's going to be very hard getting used to not having her around anymore. But, I'm so happy for her that she was at where she was at when she died.

1 happiness at having grown to 'where she was at when she died'.

2 R was a lonely, shy, very quiet little girl when I first knew her, and for a long time after that, but she has let herself open out and be more and more so over the past few years.

3 In a way her career at University helped that. There were lots of ideas and influences and seeds planted which she chewed over, and could then really assimilate and use in herself.

4 But I also feel that Varsity stultified and stifled her at times-- she couldn't get out of her head, and was frightened and trapped, and afraid that the other things she was capable of being were being atrophied.

2 growth from a lonely, shy, quiet girl to a more 'open' person.

3 University as helping growth through assimilation of ideas.

4 University also as stifling phase.

5 But, you know, that
strangled phase, she
managed to pull herself
out of, and has let
herself go in all sorts
of other directions,
that were, I felt,
always there, but only
showed to her family
and friends she grew
very close to.

6 So R died when she had
grown a lot in many
ways--she was centred
in herself, though the
peripheries were often
shaky.

7 she had a gentleness
and capacity for loving,
and giving which made
her too vulnerable at
times. She knew that
though, and accepted her
vulnerability, and any
suffering that came to
her. From a time when

5 managed to let herself to
in other directions which
she had only previously
shared with her family
and friends.

6 death at time of having
defeated many restrictions
to personal growth.

7 growth to a point where
she could accept her
vulnerability and accept
suffering.

she used to try and block pain, when she was much younger, she reached a point where she could accept and suffer suffering and grow through it.

8 But that doesn't mean she'd reached a high point and couldn't have gone anywhere further, hadn't she died today. There were still a lot of confusions in R, a lot of places in herself she hadn't found and was trying to find. I'd have liked her to get there before she died.

9 but that's a futile kind of thought. She died when it was time; all the unfinished bits and pieces in her are finished now, in her dying.

8 wish to develop further and sort out confusions before she died.

9 futility of regret of unfinished bits and pieces which are finished in her dying.

- | | |
|--|---|
| I 1 My own death is something that I have become very conscious of now. | 1 become very conscious of own death. |
| 2 I conceive it as a part of my life, I am dying all the time really, and when I finally die, it will be the conclusion and fulfilment of my life. | 2 death as part of life, as conclusion and fulfilment of life. |
| 3 My death, I see as giving meaning to my life. | 3 gives meaning to life. |
| 4 it is part of the natural cycle of my being, and I can accept it as such. | 4 accepts death as part of natural cycle. |
| 5 I feel to deny it would be to deny my life, so I cannot live fully unless I accept the fact of my death. Unless I live my dying, | 5 acceptance of 'fact of my death' leads to a fullness in living. |

which these exercises
have helped me to do.

6 I have also realised that
to fear the pain of death
is also a denial of life;
it means I am not living
my time, so I feel that
I don't fear the pain of
death now. It is also
part of the cycle.

6 does not fear even pain
of death as this would be
a denial of life in the
face of death.

G.I.

A 1 It is the cessation of
everything I particularly
am aware of.

1 death as 'cessation of
everything I am particu-
larly aware of'.

2 It is the ultimate rule
of my games.

2 death as 'ultimate rule'
of living.

3 It is the crowning riddle
to existence in the
Universe.

3 death as a riddle of
existence.

4 Thought of it, remem-
brance of it at odd
moments, streamlines
my being. It shows me
I am part of a continuum,

4 death gives both a sense
of importance in existing
and a sense of replace-
ability as part of the
cycle of nature.

very important, because I exist, but replaceable (because that is how it is) being that I am also part of the birth-growth-reproduce-death cycle I see in plants, animals, etc., but stunningly so, because it includes me, I join in at the centre.

5 I am compelled to be with and utilise this time in between birth-death. The dark edge of death makes this by contrast a sparkling jewel.

5 importance of life given by contrast of death which 'compels' G to utilise his time.

B 1 Imagining death of partner led to feelings of anxiety because I had to picture the actual death of L.

1 anxiety at picturing actual death of other.

2 As I said it I was aware of impact and gravity of it on L. It was a scary thing to say.

2 felt impact and gravity of statement on other.

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | 1 | Was aware of the effort L had to put into perceiving me as dying. | 1 | effort of other experienced in perceiving self as dying. |
| | 2 | I felt as if I was being judged, not by L in particular but by the reality of death as communicated by L. | 2 | felt 'judged' by the reality of death. |
| | 3 | felt a heaviness in the chest just before the statement. I appreciated my breathing because I was dying. I'll breathe deeply so as to show I'm alive. | 3 | bodily response as 'heaviness in chest' and focus on breathing as an affirmation of life. |
| | 4 | The impact of the statement itself was not as strong as impact of silent period before. | 4 | felt impact at silence before the statement. |
| D | 1 | It is good to see Lisa as living. I saw her as being strongly alive. | 1 | seeing other as 'strongly alive' experienced as 'good'. |

- 2 It was like telling her good news, which seemed to make her more alive.
- 2 communicating this to other experienced as making other 'more alive'.
- 3 Again thinking of the statement seemed to have more effect than the statement itself.
- 3 thinking of statement as having more impact than statement itself.
- E 1 It seemed like L enjoyed seeing me as living.
- 1 other as enjoying 'seeing me as living'.
- 2 It was a good thing to hear, and it reinforced my well-being.
- 2 validation of life from other as 'reinforcing my well-being'.
- F 1 I saw the importance of my song when other people died. When they were gone I had to keep going. When they disappeared I saw how it was.
- 1 felt importance of 'keeping going' in light of other's death.
- 2 We do our own songs and hear others, but must do our own songs well.
- 2 felt importance of doing 'own songs well'.

- G 1 A last convulsion of the muscles in a body spasm. Hands clench then release. Same for muscles, spine, neck. Release of lungs--air flows out. Sharp moan. Convulsed body. Writhing. Oh God! Release of muscles and breathing.
- 1 a. bodily resistance as spasm of muscles, sharp moan, convulsed body
b. followed by release of of breath and muscles.
- H 1 Dear P, He was a good person.
- 1 evaluation of self as 'good person'.
- 2 It is not worth mourning too long for him. He wouldn't have wanted it that way. He would like us to move on and live fully and wholeheartedly.
- 2 wish for others to live 'fully and wholeheartedly' rather than mourn his death.
- 3 It was a good death. He had a natural wisdom with which he lived his life. He knew what life was and therefore he faced his death and understood its significance.
- 3 evaluation of self as 'having natural wisdom' and 'facing death with understanding'.

4 He didn't believe he
would still be alive
now as an ethereal G,
but he was there in
everything he did so
that he is life. He is
the landscapes he loved
and the flowers he rose
up with.

5 The image of his voice
and presence will live on
in the memories of those
who knew him. Soon that
will also fade. Only his
creations will still speak
to those who are
interested.

6 He has gone like we must
all go, like many have
gone before us.

7 Let us move ever on,
boldly to our highest
purpose.

4 belongingness of self in
the world as identifica-
tion with life.

5 survival in memories of
those who knew him which
will later fade.

6 death as going as 'all
must go'.

7 identification with group
purpose.

- I 1 My death is a strange,
almost funny twist in my
life. I know it is
absolutely real and un-
deniable but it is not
here, so I do not always
appreciate the fact.
But sometimes it is as
real as objects around me,
as my hands and skin, it
permeates them.
- 2 It sometimes seems that
my death exists within my
life, so that the keener
my life is, the sharper
the reality of my death.
- 3 I like my own death, at
least the appreciation
of it. It gives me
more life. But the
actual termination I will
avoid as far as possible.
- 1 sometimes 'death' is as
'real as objects around me'
but when 'it is not here'
do not appreciate its
reality.
- 2 death exists within life--
as keenness of life
sharpens death's reality.
- 3 a.appreciation of aware-
ness of death as life-
enhancing.
b.but death as an event
will be avoided.

S.C.

- A 1 The idea of my death seems 1 death as intellectually
to be at least intellectu- meaningful.
ally very meaningful.

- 2 Life seems to me to have no intrinsic meaning or value. That value is gleaned from a strong awareness of death.
- 2 death gives life no intrinsic meaning.
- 3 From the typified existential vacuum, death looms out as my only hope. Death is the reason for my continued struggle for an acceptance of life.
- 3 death offers hope in struggle to accept life.
- 4 Death will be the one journey in which personal choice is meaningless.
- 4 in death personal choice is meaningless.
- 5 Like life, death will have its own force-- neither an end nor a beginning but a journey of powerful knowledge. The idea for me is that death, with its content or annihilation, is the final answer, whether it be an answer or not.
- 5 death is potentially instructive.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 6 | I face dying--the potential pain and degradation of becoming physically incapacitated. But death itself is pleasurable. At last there will be a certainty which hopefully will be that God-given feeling of something of value. | 6 | dying as potentially painful and degrading but death is welcomed as offering certainty and value. |
| 7 | The purpose and meaning of my life will hopefully be sorted out at death. | 7 | Hope of purpose and meaning of life being sorted out at death. |
| 8 | Early death or suicide are not considerations. This life is too meaningful merely because it will not be everlasting. | 8 | Lack of everlasting life gives life meaning and negates possibility of suicide and early death as considerations. |
| B 1 | Difficult to feel what I was saying. I just could be holding D's hand and be looking at his eyes and, say, knowing that it was the end, Dick I see you as dying. | 1 | Initial difficulty in seeing other as dying. |

- 2 Twice I tried but found my attention wavering and a compulsion to swallow. When I did say it, something kept forcing me to switch off.
- 3 When I said it, there was a feeling of acceptance. Almost a suppression of emotion. Emotion which I truly couldn't feel.
- 4 Yet a physical feeling in my heart and throat which made the act difficult.
- 5 I kept thinking, D, I love you, yet you are going to die. Saying "I see you as dying" made me objectify him even though I was right into his eyes.
- 2 wavering attention and compulsion to swallow.
- 3 with statement came 'feeling of acceptance' as 'suppression of emotion'.
- 4 difficulty in saying statement as physical feeling in heart and throat.
- 5 other as dying as loving contact (interpersonal closeness) but 'objectifying' of other.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>6 The emotive feeling between our eyes (our experiential sharing) was lost in saying the words.</p> | <p>6 distance from contact in 'saying the words'.</p> |
| <p>C 1 Almost a hypnogogic blanking out. It was very difficult to concentrate on the concepts. My attention didn't waver. It merely blanked out at times.</p> | <p>1 blanking out of attention.</p> |
| <p>2 At the beginning I didn't think of my death until I realised that D was going to say S, I see you as dying.</p> | <p>2 anticipation of other's statement as making self aware of his death.</p> |
| <p>3 At times I felt a pang which dissolved the instant I tried to dwell on it.</p> | <p>3 at times a 'pang' arose which dissolved on focus on it.</p> |
| <p>4 When he said it, I felt a lack of emotion. "S,</p> | <p>4 with statement, initial lack of emotion and</p> |

I see you as dying" came
as an unbelief of his
certainty.

and unbelief of other's
certainty.

5 Then seeing his emotion,
I felt curious. Something
is eluding me. I feel
that I should feel more
but I don't. What I don't
know is that there seems
to be something denied in
my emotional experience.
Yet something feels,
physically in my heart,
ready to burst. I feel
confused yet not certain
or unknowing.

5 confused at seeing
'other's emotion'--
physically as heart ready
to burst yet feeling of
lack in emotional
experience.

D 1 I felt a sense of
responsibility.

1 felt a sense of
responsibility.

2 I had the thought of
delaying saying it so
as to let Dick experi-
ence what I've
mentioned above.
However, I couldn't

2 initial impulse to delay
statement.

do it, simply because
that wasn't a good
enough reason.

3 D was living. And it
came out spontaneously
as I realised it.

3 'D was living' as
spontaneous realisation
and verbalisation.

E 1 "Easy" I thought. But
then D took a long time
in saying that he saw
me as living. I had a
moment of interesting
curiosity.. Maybe D
couldn't say it. Almost
an anxious feeling for a
second

1 initial anxiety in
hesitancy of other.

2 and then a feeling of
balance again as I knew
I was living regardless
of his hesitancy.

2 feeling of balance at
conviction of living
'regardless of his
hesitancy'.

F 1 A sense of dissociation
from what was happening.
Difficult to concentrate
on a song and the others.

1 sense of dissociation.

- Constantly a feeling of
just wanting to stand
there and wait.
- 2 When my name was called 2 relief at being called.
I had a sense of relief.
- 3 As the numbers diminished 3 sympathy for loneliness
I had a wave of sympathy of those left.
for the seeming lonely
solitude of those left.
When only one was left
(R) I felt sad that she
no longer had company.
- 4 She was all alone in the 4 aloneness of other as
world yet that very possible strength.
feeling in myself feels,
at times, one of strength.
I felt that it was in-
conceivable that she could
have the same strength.
But who knows?
- 5 That feeling of random 5 experience of 'randomness'
possibility. I was of being called.
surprised to be called
out so soon. Maybe I wont
have to wait for death as

long as I like to think.

6	Now writing this, I have a feeling of joy. Hell, its nice just to sit here knowing that I'm alive. I feel immortal, almost non-vulnerable--an intrinsic joy of life that shines through every now and again.	6	in writing, life experienced as real and joyful, and self as immortal.
---	--	---	--

7	But death is irrelevant. It involves both an accepting and a forgetting. But first the acceptance must be made tangible. I want to know that my acceptance is fuller.	7	death as irrelevant if accept it tangibly.
---	---	---	--

8	There must be more joy in this moment than I can even conceive of.	8	joy in the moment with irrelevancy of death.
---	--	---	--

G	1	Relaxation. A giving in to the pull of death. Releasing from life, lessening of muscular tension.	1	relaxation and lessening of muscular tension in 'release' from life.
---	---	---	---	--

- 2 The posture of death: Supreme comfort following from the release of the above.
- 2 posture of death as 'supreme comfort'.
- H 1 Dear Friend, So S has had it. I hope he has found finally the answers he was seeking.
- 1 hope of finding answers by time of death.
- 2 Nothing much to say, he's dead and that's it. It's a relief that he's not suffering in any kind of physical bondage.
- 2 finality of death as relief of not suffering 'physical bondage'.
- 3 Death somehow doesn't make me emotional. I could indulge in self pitying ideas of lost friendship. But that's bullshit. It doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. Dead or alive. Black or white. But neither good nor bad. He is just dead. I feel the loss of his friend-
- 3 event of death unimportant in itself but loss of friendship to one still living.

ship but that's only my loss, and nothing to do with him. I'm sure that he's not hassling about it. From what I knew of him I'm sure he feels no sense of regret.

4 He always admired and talked about Don Juan and the friendship of a death sitting on his shoulder.

4 admiration of one able to have death 'as a friend.'

I 1 Death means nothing to me if there is nothing I can do about it.

1 meaninglessness of death as an event because of lack of choice regarding its eventuality.

2 It is only an exciting and novel prospect.

2 death as an 'exciting and novel prospect'.

3 In the life situation death is meaningful in the sense that I feel the struggle to be alive.

3 death as meaningful to life as 'struggle to be alive'.

4 I will fight death at all costs. I will not allow myself to be killed, by my own whim or others' whims but confronted with death with no avenues of escape, my resignation would be a joyful one.

4 will fight death until it becomes certainty, then a 'joyful resignation'.

5 In terms of a Gestalt death means a finding out, and thus desirable

5 death desirable as a 'finding out' as a completion.

6 But until that time life is more meaningful and only because one day I will die. The certainty of my death is the only thing that prevents me from committing suicide. In other words, when I die, I die and that's cool.

life as meaningful because of certainty of death which prevents self from committing suicide.

L.S.

A 1 My own death means to me that I can realise only

1 death as limit to realising all her potentials.

some of my potentials
in my life. In this
sense it means that I
can never realise all
my potentials.

2 It faces me from
moment to moment...
It means to me that
he who hesitates is
lost. Lost in the
sense that he is not
at that time
realising...

3 Been faced with the
immense possibilities
as also intense futi-
lity. My own death
means to me that I
face annihilation and
fulfilment from moment
to moment.

B 1 I watched G's eyeballs
and thought that there
is life there, there is

2 death as revealing
urgency to act--
(moment to moment,
hesitation).

3 death as both possibility
of 'fulfilment' and
'intense futility' in
annihilation.

1 a. initially other
appeared as living
through bodily movement.

- motion and I watched the rest of the body out of the corner of my eye and thought that at the same time that life is plentiful, we hang on a thin thread to life--it was especially the almost weightlessness of our hands that made me think this.
- 2 I also thought that at times we were very close to an experience which was very close--
- 3 I felt, just before saying, "G, I see you as dying", that how could I say this he was still here and that in life one does not experience unto-death You just live.
- 4 Then I thought... face up to it...you are in the process of dying
- b. followed by precariousness of life noticed through 'weightlessness of our hands'.
- 2 interpersonal closeness experienced.
- 3 immediacy of other-as-living inhibited statement.
- 4 acceptance of other in 'process of dying'.

- 5 and then I thought: "I wonder if G thinks he is in the process of dying-- what exactly does he feel about it?"
- 5 questioning of other's feelings.
- 6 Then on saying it I thought that that's it... we die... we die...
- 6 with statement, death shared as 'we die'.
- 7 and then just watched it... the possibility of death. It just seemed that it was so.
- 7 possibility of death as reality.
- C 1 In the beginning I had a flash of what death would be like. It was as though my body was not there but at times,
- 1 distancing of self from body.
- 2 as I thought of death in the sense of the end, I had a slight twitch in the left of my back at the top.
- 2 bodily reaction as 'twitch' in back.

- 3 I became acutely aware, towards the middle of the exercise of G sitting opposite me as someone sharing the same fate as me and thinking that he has so many different aspects to him but that we still both share the commonality of death.
- D 1 I became very aware of G as a human being.
- 2 There was a good flow between us which remained with us throughout.
- 3 I became aware of a slight tremor in his left and right hand when I said "G, I see you as living" and then the tremor disappeared.
- 4 I felt that when I said it, he received it.
- 3 other experienced as sharing 'commonality of death' although different in many ways.
- 1 aware of other as 'human being'.
- 2 interpersonal contact.
- 3 other's bodily reaction of 'slight tremor' in hands with statement.
- 4 experience of shared understanding.

E 1 I thought at the beginning 1 reflection of 'difference'
 that it is subtly different between present and latter
 saying 'I see you as living' procedure.
 rather than 'I see you as
 dying'.

2 I felt before G said 'I 2 immediacy of living as
 see you as living' that we shared by self and other.
 are both living and then I
 thought of the possibilities
 of living.

3 When he said "I see you 3 act of other as life-
 as living", I felt like giving to self led to
 giving more life to him desire of 'giving more
 which I initiated from life to other' through
 inside my being through body as imaginary act.
 my fingertips and also
 through my eyes in an
 imaginary type of way:

4 and subsequently felt 4 experienced life 'flow-
 life from him in the form ing' from other 'through
 of awareness of life our hands like energy'.
 flowing through our
 hands like energy.

5 I felt that when he
 said 'I see you as
 living' that there was
 more life in his face.

5 other as having 'more
 life in his face' when
 he made statement.

F 1 When we were all sing-
 ing together I went up
 to three people, the
 first one being S. He
 was singing 'Mellow
 Yellow', and was lifting
 his eyebrows, smiling
 inwardly. He would
 cock his head at inter-
 vals and then wait for
 me to sing a bit of my
 song. I found that
 although I was trying
 to communicate to him
 to stop at times, as I
 wanted to sing to him a
 song, I didn't get it
 through to him. He
 stayed there and I moved
 off to R who was singing
 'Where have all the
 flowers gone'. I thought
 that seeing that R in the

1 description of social
 interaction and
 communication problem

past has not been
receiving other
person's communications,
I would sing to him,
which I did until he
stopped and even though
I carried on and made
my intention clear
(that I wanted to sing
to him) he moved off.

2 I was also thinking of,
while I was singing to
R, what the others were
doing. It seemed that
even though here we were,
all alive we were group-
ing together for long
periods and not
utilising the time we
had to share with each
member in the group.
This made me realise
that 'here I was thinking
this while I was not doing
what I thought would have
been the best way of
utilising that time.

2 urgency of inter-
personal interaction
experienced.

- 3 Death seemed to come quickly,
- 3 death as coming quickly.
- 4 but at the announcement it was quite easy to leave all regrets, thoughts of the different songs and who were singing them behind to enter into death which did not come too suddenly.
- 4 at announcement 'easy to leave all regrets' and enter death.
- 5 At times after that I did find myself down into the group in specific areas such as attention being on the song but then would find it quite easy to withdraw from this space and just listen.
- 5 after death oscillation between participation and withdrawal.
- G 1 I at first thought: how would one want to position oneself at death and then what would be the best position to facilitate the spirit leaving the body.
- 1 reflection on best bodily position for 'spirit' to leave.

- 2 I decided that if I could be in the position to choose a death posture, I would like to lie face upwards so that the spirit would leave from my feet, upwards through my body, and then out of my nostrils.
- 2 lying face upwards with release of 'spirit' from feet upwards through nostrils.
- 3 Thinking about the motion before death, I thought about the birth of a baby--thinking that it is a jerk as she comes into the world. However, it seemed to me that possibly one would leave one's body without a jerk if one was with one's breath towards the end.
- 3 with reference to birth, death as leaving one's body without a jerk if focus on breath.
- 4 This is a bit puzzling to me as possibly there are levels of motions before death (just before the spirit leaves the body) ranging from definite
- 4 a.reflection on possible different levels of motions before death as 'physical jerks', 'slight tremors
b.and finally an 'even

physical jerks, to slight tremors to a slight movement and ultimately to a completely even-flow exit.

flow exit'.

5 It was interesting to see others' death motions and death postures. R depicted in his death posture to me what his attitude in life is. It symbolised spirit returning to the earth (his body towards the ground rather than away from it). It was interesting to see the symmetry of D's position and R's open type of position. I would be interested to know the reasons for the choices made.

5 interest in others' death postures as reflecting their attitudes towards life.

H 1 Dear Angelo, Death is the theme that is part

1 aware of death as part of everyday waking world.

of our waking world.
It's always with us.

2 Fortunately I had realised this some time ago else I would have been terror struck or something like that with the recent death of my friend L. I knew her so well and as we were very close in a different sort of way, I would like to relate some profound meditations of mine concerning her death and life. Actually what I am writing about even though profound is not so profound at all. Well, let me begin at the beginning. She died... that is one way which speaks of our friendship.

2 closeness of friend to self.

- 3 She just slipped away with not much fuss or bother--just a quiet mergence into the ocean of infinitude.
- 3 a quiet death without 'fuss or bother'.
- 4 as though death and life were to her like day and night--like the seasons--they follow the pattern of the cosmic clock. We move from one to the other.
- 4 death as part of a natural pattern 'like the seasons'.
- 5 We don't know where to bury her. She had left no message. They contacted me (the family) as I was close to her heart yet I do not know what decision to make. You see, although I knew her, I knew her not...so it may well please her soul to be buried here or there.
- 5 indecision about place of burial as indicating self as ultimate mystery-- 'I knew her not'.
- 6 How does one describe L in completeness?
- 6 concern of describing self in 'completeness'.

- 7 ...the one I knew and the one I did not know and never will. We climbed hills, swam in seas, caught snails and put them on roses and yet there seems to be no substance to our experience. She had the devil in her, I would have sworn at times, yet at other times she was like an angel. Both were sometimes revealed yet other times were mild.
- 7 description of self as having two sides, 'devil' and 'angel'.
- 8 And she knew me...oh, she knew me...I could be at home or in the fields and she was with me...how can I explain...it's hardly explainable.
- 8 had understanding of friend.
- 9 I could not love this woman as there was one sharp blade in her which lacked humanity. I knew that even had I sat at her table, slept in her
- 9 possessed an unloveable and unknowable side to self.

bed, kissed her lips or
 run through the fields
 with her, Goddamit, I
 would never have known
 her... and would have
 not been able to love
 her. Let not this
 sound dramatic to you
 my friend for as this
 was so subtle a force
 that moved in her
 breast, it was real and
 it was for that subtle
 reality that I mention
 it.

10 How could I tell you
 more, yet on the other
 hand would rather not
 speak for a person who
 was but yet was not.

10 experience of inadequacy
 of self-description.

I 1 It means that I have
 plenty to realise now
 rather than postponing
 into the future...

1 death as call to stop
 postponement into the
 future.

2 that I have potentials
which when realised can
be of help to others in
building a better
planet.

2 realisation of potentials
which can be of help to
others.

3 I now feel more equipped
to face life for in the
face of death one can
only but do the best you
can by doing what you
are doing (but as
responsibly as possible).

3 feels more equipped to
face life by doing her
'best' in the face of
death.

4.2 Analysis into Essential Themes.

4.2.1 Essential Themes of Subjects' Initial Reflections on 'What My Own Death Means to Me' before encountering the Procedures.

(From central themes within 'A')

Essential Theme.	Number of different subjects:
A 1 meaning of death gives importance to acting and living now (DR6, RJ3, GI4a, (SC1, SC8) LS2).	5
2a death as fulfilment of life (RB1, LS3, (RJ1, RJ6))	3
b death as defeat and futility of life (RB1, LS3)--ambivalence between a and b in two cases.	2
3 choicelessness of death as 'limit' or 'rule' of life (GI2, LS1, SC4).	3
4 death as part of natural process (RB3, RJ2, GI4b).	3
5 more afraid of pain of dying than the fact of death (RJ5, SC6).	2
6 by the time death arrives, a feeling of having grown or having sorted out meaningful issues is wished (DR3, SC7).	2
7 death as the death of bodily existence and the beginning of a new phase (great link of beings) plays no role in conscious waking life (DR1, DR4, DR5, DR7).	1

Essential Theme	Number of different subjects:
8 In a life which is intrinsically meaningless, death may offer hope in teaching self to accept life as meaningful for the very reason that it is not endless (SC2, SC3, SC5).	1
9 death as a riddle of existence (GI3).	1
10 metaphysical questions about death as a beginning or end unimportant (RB2).	1
11 death as 'cessation of everything I am particularly aware of' (GI1).	1
12 feels closer to death at certain times during life (revealed as fear in one case) (RJ4, DR2).	2

4.2.2 Essential Themes of Subjects' Reflections on 'What My Own Death Means to Me' after Encountering the Procedures.

(From central themes within 'I')

Essential Theme	Number of different subjects:
I 1 Death gives meaning to life in terms of encouraging an awareness of the quality of living in the present arising out of death as a certain limit ((RB3, RB4), (LS1, LS2, LS3) (RJ5, RJ3, RJ6) (GI2, GI3a), SC6, DR2).	6
2 Achieved increased awareness of own death (RJ1, RB1, GI1).	3
3 Death as an event is meaningless; rather the problem of life emerges as important (RB2, (SC1, SC3)).	2
4 Death as an event will be avoided as far as possible (SC4, GI3b).	2
5 Death is welcomed as offering a possible answer to life (SC2, SC5).	1
6 Life and death are part of the natural flow of things (RJ2, RJ4).	1
7 Death is weirdly impersonal (DR1).	1
8 There comes a time when the limits of life as given by death recede into limitlessness (DR3).	1

4.2.3 Essential Themes of Subject's Experience of Each Procedure.

Pro- ce- dure	Essential Theme	Number of different subjects:
	(From central themes 'B' through 'H')	
B	1 Initial inability to see 'other' as dying (DR1, RJ1, (SC1, SC2)(LS1a, LS3))	4
	2 Imminence of death or dying of 'other' became a real possibility (DR3, RJ2, (LS16, LS4, LS7) RB1, SC3).	5
	3 Resistance to actively constituting 'other' as dying (GI1, RJ3, SC4).	3
	4 Felt distanced from other at his 'death' (DR2).	1
	5 Experienced interpersonal closeness to 'other' with death as a shared destiny (LS2, LS6).	1
	6 Felt ambivalence between distance and love towards other (SC5, SC6).	1
	7 Questioning of 'other's feelings (LS5).	1
	8 Felt impact and gravity of statement on 'other' (GI2).	1
C	1 Immediate bodily reaction to 'self as dying', showing itself as a tense bodily mode ((RB1, RB2, RB3, RB4) DR3, RJ1, GI3, LS2, SC3) (focus on breathing as affirmation of life in two cases).	6

Pro- ce- dure	Essential Theme	Number of different subjects:
C	2 Awareness of other's dilemma in having to constitute self as dying (DR1, GI1)	2
	3 Achieved as escape from the immediate situation of 'self as dying' by withdrawal or focus on other or interaction (LS1, (SC1, SC4, SC5)(DR2, DR4)).	3
	4 Felt impact of awareness of death ((GI2, GI4) SC2).	2
	5 Other experienced as sharing death in common which tempers their differences (LS3).	1
<hr/>		
D	1 Clarity of other being alive is experienced (explicit enjoyment of this in two cases) ((RB1, RB3) DR2, RJ1 (GI3, GI1) SC3).	5
	2 Experienced responsibility of constituting other as living and importance of communicating this affirmation ((SC1, SC2) GI2, RJ2).	3
	3 Experience of close interpersonal contact and shared understanding (LS1, LS2, LS3, LS4)	1
	4 'Other as living' experienced as distanced from self (RB2).	1
	5 Initial inability too see 'other' as alive and real as he had previously known him in everyday movement (DR1).	1

Pro- ce- dure	Essential Themes	Number of different subjects:
E	1 Appreciation and well-being experienced at being validated 'as living' by the 'other' ((DR1, DR2) RB2, GI2, RJ2, LS3)	5
	2 Experienced dependence on being validated 'as living' by the 'other' (RJ1, SC1)	2
	3 Mutuality of life-enhancement is experienced in both the giving and receiving of the affirmation of life (RB1, (LS2, LS3, LS4, LS5) GI1)	3
	4 Conviction of self 'as living' independent of other's hesitancy in communicating this to self (SC2) (experienced after initial sense of dependence on other--see SC1)	1
F	1 Enjoyment of participation in singing (RB2, RJ1)	2
	2 Regret at being called, experienced (RB3 (DR1, DR3))	2
	3 Aware of group hesitancy before continuing after someone's 'death' (RB4, RJ2)	2
	4 At being 'called' to death, a distance of self from fellowman and a surrendering of aspirations is experienced in which self becomes re-oriented by death ((DR4, DR5)(LS4, LS5)	2

Pro- ce- dure	Essential Themes	Number of different subjects:
F 5	Felt self-conscious during procedure (DR6, RJ5)	2
6	Emphasis on fact and quality of living as important in iteself ((G11, G12) (SC6, SC7, SC8)	2
7	Experienced a 'randomness' and 'sudden- ness' in being called to death (SC5, LS3)	2
8	Experienced shock when significant other was called (DR2, RJ4)	2
9	Structuring of procedure as 'meaningless' is contradicted by awareness of tautness of body (RB1)	1
10	Fellowmen's 'deaths' experienced as less of a shock after the initial impact of the first 'death' (RJ3)	1
11	Felt alone and certain of death in absence of any others living (RJ6, RJ7). (Loneliness perceived by other (SC3, SC4))	2
12	Awareness of importance of interpersonal interaction experienced (LS1, LS2)	1
13	Sense of uninvovement in procedure (SC1, SC2)	1
<hr/>		
G 1	Posture of dying as initial violent bodily resistance ((RB1, RB2) DR2, (RJ1, RJ3a) G11a, LS4a)	5

Pro- ce- dure	Essential Themes	Number of different subjects:
G 2	Posture of dying as an acceptance of death by bodily 'stretching out' (this follows previous posture in five cases) (RB3 (DR1, DR3)(RJ2, RJ3b) GI1b (SC2, SC1)(LS2, LS3, LS4b)	6
3	Experienced 'profound will to live' as anger towards death rather than fear of death (RB4)	1
4	Reflection on best bodily position for 'spirit' to leave (LS1)	1
5	Interest in fellowman's death posture as reflecting their attitude towards life (LS5)	1
<hr/>		
H 1	Evaluation of self and flow of life in positive terms (RB4 (DR5, DR3, DR6, DR7) (RJ2, RJ3, RJ5, RJ7)(GI1, GI3))(within this, evaluation of difficult phases of life and undesirable aspects to self in two cases--(DR8, RJ4))	4
2	Felt death came prematurely in relation to some potentials (RB1, RJ8, DR9)-- although time of death may also be viewed as appropriate end in two cases (RB3, (RJ1, RJ6, RJ9))	3

Pro- ce- dure	Essential Themes	Number of different subjects:
H 3	Chronological age as inadequate description of quality of lived time (RB2, DR2)	2
4	Death is viewed as part of the natural flow of things (RB5, DR10, GI6 (LS4, LS3, LS1))	4
5	Evaluation of self and flow of life in ambivalent terms ((LS5, LS7, LS8, LS9) (SC1, SC4))	2
6	Wish that others should not mourn death of self and thus validate life as being complete and meaningful (RB6, GI2)	2
7	Experience of self-validation by being remembered by a significant other after death ((DR1, DR4) GI5, SC3, LS2)	4
8	View that life is given completion by death (RJ9)	1
9	Survival of death is achieved through identification with the life-process and group purpose (GI4, GI7)	1
10	Wish of finality of death as an end to any suffering (SC2)	1
11	A concern of describing self in 'completèness' is experienced (LS6, LS10)	1

4.3 Radical Reflection : An Essential Description of the Experience of Personal Finitude through a Confrontation with Death.

(from Essential Themes)

The experience of confronting death essentially emerged as two related concerns:

- (a) an orientation or approach to death-as-an-event;
- (b) an experience and sense of the meaning of 'my life' in the face of 'my death', i.e. an experience of finitude.

(a) Subjects' orientation towards death-as-an-event: This emerged as ambivalent in the following ways:

On the one hand resistance to death-as-an-event was experienced (I4, G3). Immediate bodily resistance to the 'self-as-dying' was experienced (C1, C4, F9, G1); the promotion of resistance to death by participating in a shared dialectic with fellowman which mutually emphasised life and de-emphasised death (B1, B3-8, C2, C3, C5, D, E, F1-3, F8, F10-12); the structuring of death-as-an-event in euphemistic meaning-contexts which lessens its impact, e.g. death as 'part of a natural process' (A4, A7, Ig, I5, I8, H4, H9).

On the other hand, an awareness of the necessity and possibility of re-constituting oneself and fellowman in terms of the imminence of death-as-an-event emerged (B2);

the constitution of oneself and one's life as being meaningfully complete by the time of death (A6, H1, H2, H6, H7, H8, H12); the final acceptance of death through the postural release of the body (G2); the constitution of the temporal flow of one's life as being appropriate irrespective of time as quantitatively measured (H3).

(b) Death as giving meaning to life in terms of its finitude emerged as the most unequivocal structure of death-confrontation. Death gives meaning to life in terms of encouraging an awareness of the quality of living in the present arising out of death as a certain limit (I1, A1, A3, F6, A10, I3). Life as a finite existence emerges as a uniform experience irrespective of individual viewpoints towards death-as-an-event.

5 Discussion of Results and Conclusion

5.1 Interrogation of the Essential Themes of the Procedures.

In a comparison of the essential themes of the initial reflection on 'what my own death means to me' (A) with the terminal reflection after the procedures (I), we notice a similarity in emphasis (death gives meaning to life) yet find more uniformity and improved articulation in the terminal reflection. Also the responses of three people in the terminal reflection (I2) suggest an increased awareness of the meaning of death.

This comparison suggests three things:

- a) that the initial reflection on the meaning of death as giving meaning to life was reified and heightened through the procedures;
- b) that subjects changed in their degree of awareness concerning the meaning of death, although not in basic direction;
- c) that the procedures were such as to assist the subjects in their articulation of what death meant to them and that the initial reflection may be viewed as a reflection based primarily on an experiential, lived-world context.

The essential description thus reflects the initial and terminal reflections as being consistent with each other.

Looking at the procedures themselves, we see that definite experiential responses to the procedures took place. Here, organic experiences of resistance to death (C1), the experiential movement from the inability of constituting fellowman 'as dying' to seeing this as a real possibility (B1, B2), appreciation at being validated 'as living' by fellowman (E1) etc., all suggest an experiential response to confronting one's finitude. The terminal reflection on 'what my own death means to me' thus arises out of this experience. Such experience had to be integrated with the subjects' initial reflections and this may possibly also have contributed towards the consistency of the initial reflections and later reflections. Here we see Man as operating within a historical lived-context where he integrates every new experience into his life.

The answer to the question: 'Was an experience of confronting finitude described or was a reflection on the meaning of death described', is that one cannot really separate them in this particular case. We find that one's lived experience is reflected upon and that one's reflections are also part of one's lived experience. The task of this phenomenological research was then to elicit reflections and descriptions which were accurate descriptions of the subjects' experience. This was done by facilitating a means by which the subjects could get into contact with their experience in order to achieve as accurate an articulation as possible.

Von Echartsberg (1971) has gone so far as to suggest 'an

elaboration of meaning through joint enquiry' in which the researcher may assist the subject in articulating his experience.

Throughout the protocols we find expression of experiences and reflections that are both shared and unique.

A description of the shared experience as reflecting its essentiality has already been presented. However, by looking at the 'essential themes' section we notice a number of single-case themes which are reflected throughout the protocol of a particular individual.

In D.R.'s protocol, a consideration in both his initial and terminal reflections on 'what my own death means to me' is the theme that death is a beginning of a new phase of life. This did not change through the experience of the procedures, although an increased appreciation of the role that a confrontation of death may play in life, was realised. Thus there was a movement of focus through the procedures from considering the event of death as such, to a consideration of the meaning of life in the face of death (read initial and terminal reflections of D.R. in their original form). His initial statement concerning death as the beginning of a new phase, was reintegrated into the terminal reflection, although with a new emphasis.

In S.C.'s protocol we find a person who considers life to be essentially meaningless. In both his initial and

terminal reflections, he views death as offering hope and a possible answer as an end to a meaningless life (A8, I5). Death-as-an-event will also be avoided as far as possible (A5). A reading of S.C.'s protocol shows that he is a complex person to understand. This difficulty is reflected in his ambivalence throughout the procedures (see essential themes (B6, E4, F13, H5). S.C. nevertheless reflected the essential shared experience of the meaning of death and contributed to its essential description.

R.J. emerges as a person who accepts life and death as 'part of the course of things' (I6, H8). Given this broad perspective, her concerns are practical ones, i.e. the pain of dying rather than the fact of death (A5). She focuses on the interpersonal dimensions of death (F8, F10, F2) and her fellowman may be seen to play an important part in her life for self-validation (E2). R.J.'s protocol was fairly representative of the shared experience described in the essential description.

G.I. was unique in that he achieved a sense of continued life after death through identification with the life-process and group purpose (H9) although death for him was a "cessation of everything I am particularly aware of" (A11). He shared with others the emphasis on the quality of living as important in the face of death and therefore did not wish others to mourn his death (H6) as this would be a denial of the quality of his life.

L.S. showed great concern for the interpersonal dimensions of the procedures (B1, C5, D3, E5, F12, G5). She also exhibited an ambivalent attitude towards herself (H5) and a concern to describe herself in 'completeness' (H12). Although having a dualistic conception of herself as body and spirit (G4) she did, in common with others, focus on death as a limit which gives life an urgent imperative (A3, I1).

R.B.'s protocol showed an essential ambivalent in attitude towards death-as-an-event (A2). He was aware of a 'profound will to live' and a deep-seated resistance to death (G3, C1) yet also wished to come to terms with his death in a more acceptant mode (H2, H4). For him, the 'metaphysical questions about death as a beginning or an end' are unimportant (A10), and, in a confrontation with death, life emerges as the important consideration rather than death (I3).

Through this brief analysis of each subject's own unique responses and experiences, the shared and essential nature of death-confrontation is contextualised within the historical flow of individual life. We therefore notice that any new experience is re-integrated into one's total 'gestalt' and that the subjects' emphasis in articulating their experience, is related to this 'gestalt'. It is therefore postulated that phenomenological research should in accordance with the context of the 'lebenswelt' acknowledge and expose the experience and orientation that a subject brings to the research situation.

Having outlined the unique contexts of the experience, the essential description itself will now be discussed.

The most immediate thing which strikes one is that the research situation yielded a description of the subjects' orientation, attitudes and decisions about death in itself as well as a description of the sense and meaning of their lives when confronting death. The research thus yielded more than a study on attitudes toward death. Its focus was more on the experience and sense of human finitude.

It was not, however, anticipated that so much data on the subjects' orientation towards death as an event would be elicited. This may have happened because of the open-ended nature of the research situation, which allowed subjects to respond to the procedures without imposition on how they should respond. It is interesting to note that the experience of the sense of one's finitude was shared by all subjects although not necessarily called by this name. The essential description, because of its two related foci, i.e. an approach or orientation towards death as an event and an experience and sense of the meaning of 'my life' in the face of 'my death', is essentially a description of what happens in a confrontation of death: both of the above happen.

The primary situation was the situation of death-confrontation, and awareness of finitude emerged as the most uniform experience; but, as only one of its two aspects.

An orientation towards death-as-an-event in itself also emerged as part of the experience. Thus the original goal

of the research, i.e. the understanding and description of the experience of confronting human finitude through a consideration of death, was achieved and understood in a way that was not fully expected, i.e. as only one part of the general experience of death-confrontation (the other part being an orientation towards death-as-an-event).

5.2 Evaluation of Procedures.

The procedures which elicited the widest variety of responses were the procedure in which a letter from the viewpoint of a close friend was written after the subject had died (H), and the procedure in which the subjects were 'called' to death from their participation in singing (F). In the former case the responses were of a highly reflective nature and involved, in most cases, the consideration of one's life as a whole. In contrast to this, those procedures which were more concretely experience-based (B, C, D, E, G) produced more uniform responses. In the case of procedure F, where the subjects were 'called' to death, a number of things could be seen to be happening: i.e. the death of 'another', the death of 'myself', the experience of the social interaction, self-consciousness in singing, and the randomness of being called. Thus a variety of responses are to be expected. Both, procedures which encourage concretely experience-based responses and procedures which provide opportunities to reflect on one's life in the face of one's death, thus proved to be contributory to the description of the total phenomenon of death confrontation.

The essential description of the subjects' experience of confronting death-as-an-event ('a' in the essential description) was mostly derived from the experiential procedures rather than from the initial and terminal reflections on 'what my own death means to me'.

Here the immediate focus was 'death' as such.

The essential description of the meaning of death for the subjects' lives was derived mainly from the terminal reflection on 'what my own death means to me'. Thus the meaning of death was to a large extent implicitly evoked by the procedures and explicitly recognised in the terminal reflections. This suggests that both the description of immediate experience as well as reflection by the subject on the experience in terms of his/her total life-context must be done in phenomenological research in order to arrive at a complete and contextual description of the phenomenon.

Although the nature of the procedures were such as to encourage the subjects to extricate themselves from a general social structure of death-denial e.g. 'I see you as dying', the essential description shows that there seems to be a deep-seated bodily resistance to acknowledging 'death-of-myself'. Death-denial was also encouraged through a mutual dialectic with fellowman which emphasised life and de-emphasised death. Procedure B, in which the subject had to constitute the 'other as dying'

shows that it is possible to do this although it is not by any means the natural or preferred perception of fellowman. On the receiving end (procedure C), the most uniform experience was that of an immediate bodily reaction to the statement. In only two cases was an explicit awareness of the impact of death acknowledged. This suggests that the response was largely pre-reflective and, in some cases, too threatening to consider seriously.

The essential description also shows, however, that an awareness of the necessity and possibility of re-constituting oneself and fellowman in terms of the imminence of death-as-an-event emerged. To this extent death was not denied and this resulted in the final and most uniform aspect of death-confrontation, i.e. an experience and sense of the meaning of 'my life' in the face of 'my death'.

The research situation, that is, the experiential procedures as well as the reflections on 'what my own death means to me' resulted in a description and insight which would not have been yielded by a description of subjects' reflections on death alone. It was due to the procedures that the subjects focused on death within the context of lived-situations; thus the 'phenomenon itself' was more closely approached. The research situation was only one possible situational context for the experience. Confrontation of death may also be invoked in a mode of

existence where one is questioning the meaningfulness of one's life. Here, one may feel that much of what one is doing has little sense to one and, in such an experience, death as the final limit and comment of one's life may confront one. More closer to home, the South African situation is one in which many people who have experienced a relatively stable and unthreatening existence are being threatened by radical demands of change both from within and without the country. Such insecurity may more likely provoke a confrontation with death as the greatest threat to one's existence than a previously stable existence, where all threats to one's life were pushed to the furthest periphery of one's awareness.

The experience of death-confrontation may emerge in many different and unique contexts. Its essential nature, however, is postulated to be expressed by the essential description as outlined in this research. Further research in different contexts, for example, with those people who actually have death imminently on their horizon, that is, terminal patients, may test this description. In this particular case one must remember, however, to differentiate between experiences arising out of physical symptomology and the 'recession of life' as outlined in the theoretical section and an active confrontation with death. Such research would therefore most profitably be done on those terminal subjects who are not experiencing marked disabilities due to their illness.

5.3 Evaluation of Fulfilment of Phenomenological Criteria.

The present research involved a qualitative description of the experience of death-confrontation. A questionnaire-based study would not have been adequate in reflecting the qualitative relationships, from the actor-perspective, in their context. It would have allowed quantitative comparisons of the responses to the given questions between the subjects, but this was not the goal of the research. Questionnaires are most appropriate to a hypothesis-based study, where the questions are geared to proving or disproving the particular hypothesis. Whereas a hypothesis-based study may be done on this particular subject (death-confrontation), the kind of hypotheses to be tested would only emerge from an original phenomenological understanding of the phenomenon in question. An example of an hypothesis which may be suggested by the phenomenological description of death-confrontation is: People who have confronted death are more present-centred than people who have not. This line of research does not lead to a holistic understanding of the experience of confronting one's death but rather, attempts to affirm one of its insights only after it has been understood. Thus hypothesis-based research may lead to statements of 'facts' and the proof of proposed relationships, but this in itself does not lead to an understanding of these 'facts' and relationships, i.e. the meaning of these 'facts' and relationships must still be understood.

Thus, in the present phenomenological research, the meaning of what the subjects expressed was focused upon rather than its measurement according to preconceived criteria. If measurement in Psychology is attempted, then Phenomenological Psychology would here be concerned with the meaning of the measurement, not according to theories but according to the experience of the subjects as a function of the internal coherence of the lived-world. Thus a qualitative phenomenologically-based study on the experience of death-confrontation may suggest many hypotheses arising out of the essential description, but would itself be the rationale of such hypotheses rather than the theoretical orientation and inferential skills of the researcher concerned.

A limitation of phenomenological research at its present stage is suggested by the status of the subjects in this research. The subjects were chosen because of their ability and preparedness to articulate their experience. In a strict sense, the first phase of phenomenological analysis is the translation of the flow of lived-experience into a linguistic stream for communication purposes. In a research project relying on written protocols, one perhaps needs to rely more on the articulation of the subjects that in a dialogued situation in which the researcher and researched are involved in a 'joint enquiry' into the experience concerned. Here one would

then have to rely on the artistry and skill of the researcher to allow the meanings of the subject to emerge without too much imposition from the researcher's side in terms of his own experience and meanings.

A possible problem with the procedures in this research is that the subjects were receptive to them in various degrees. The fact that all expressed the essential description of 'what my own death means to me', however, suggests that the procedures, though variably responded to, were adequate for their purpose (i.e. to provide an opportunity for subjects to confront their own finitude in a lived-context).

An improvement on this research would be to find people who are becoming acutely aware of their finitude as a natural outcome of their being-in-the-world and to describe their experience within the subjects' historical context. More light may be thrown, not only on the phenomenon itself, but on the life-situation which constituted the experience. It is believed, however, that the present research did describe important profiles of the phenomenon of death-confrontation and as such will be in dialogue with other research of this nature.

In summary, the following criteria of research in an existential-phenomenological mode were fulfilled.

1. The research situation was a qualitative description of experience in a lived-world context.
2. Essential themes were identified through their varying manifestations, i.e. both essentiality and uniqueness were acknowledged.
3. Analysis of the protocols was concerned with meaning from the actor-perspective.
4. The dialectic between approach, method and content was fulfilled, i.e. the method and content of the existential-phenomenological approach reflected and maintained its understanding of human existence.

5.4 Conclusion.

The empirical nature of this research was suggested by existential-phenomenological perspectives on the nature of human existence as outlined in the theoretical section.

Such perspective suggested that existence in its totality includes a 'death of myself' which may be owned in order to achieve an authentic existence (Heidegger) and thus by so doing, 'allow one's existence to speak to one'.

The essential description of death-confrontation empirically validated this perspective i.e. death gives meaning to life as constituting a finite existence which may be lived in terms of such existential boundary. The essential description also showed, however, that the meaning of death as 'death of myself' and 'death of another' is in practice not always clearly differentiated. Oscillation between

death-denial and death-confrontation frequently occurred and Man may be seen to live largely on the interface between these two structures. To the degree that the subjects' authentically confronted death, did they realise the possibility and necessity of reconstituting their life in the face of their death. They thus understood the value that death-confrontation may have for life and, to this extent, the research situation may be seen as an initiation for them. The most natural and socially validated approach to death seems to be 'death-of-another' and it may be postulated that such a meaning-structure is necessary for Man's present mode of living. Any radical change to this meaning-structure would have far-reaching effects throughout society. Politics, religion, and economics would all be affected, but this is a subject for another thesis.

If there is a message to this research, then it could be, that in fairness to individual life, a personal confrontation with death and the realisation of personal finitude is just as relevant in one's twenties and thirties as it is in old age and in terminal phases of illness. Indeed if such confrontation were achieved in earlier life, our aged would not be as alone as they are now, so that we may maintain the myth of death-denial. Further when the young become the old, the crisis and feeling of ontological betrayal at having to face death may not be as great because 'we were in on it' all the time. Thus, death

is not only for the imminent dying; death is for us all.

Finally, some clinical implications of death-confrontation may be briefly outlined. It has been suggested (Angyal, 1965; Laing, 1969) that chronic anxiety and neurotic and psychotic living arise out of a fundamental threat to the core of one's 'self'. Koestenbaum (1971) has suggested that such threat is a confrontation with 'symbolic death'. Such people are thus resistant to change of any sort and cling to any stable referent which they may find.

Van den Berg (1972) has noted that a neurotic experiences an inaccessible future and an unintelligible past.

Confrontation of 'death of myself' is an acknowledgement of ultimate and inevitable change and constitutes an access to the most distant future that one may have. It also encourages a perspective of one's life as a totality. Its structural mode of being is thus contradictory to the neurotic and psychotic mode of being as outlined by Angyal and Laing respectively. This is not to suggest that such people be directly exposed to a confrontation of 'my death', but that an understanding of human finitude as an existential reality may throw some light on all modes of being human. Existential-based psychotherapy is concerned with the facilitation of personal responsibility (to take on that life which is yours) and as such cannot ignore the finitudinal dimension of life as given by death.

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