LANGUAGE IN THE PROXIMITY OF DEATH: AN APPRAISAL ANALYSIS OF DEATH ROW STATEMENTS

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Language in the Proximity of Death: An Appraisal Analysis of Death Row Statements** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Language in the Proximity of Death: An Appraisal Analysis of Death Row Statements

Death row utterances or death row remarks are the final words a person utters before being executed. Usually, these emotive and succinct remarks occur in a correctional setting. They are used to express love, express regret, express forgiveness, declare one's innocence, and express one's opinions. Since it is the person's last chance to speak and is influenced by their approaching death, this kind of speech is special. These words can be addressed to the victim's own family, their own family, the public, or even God. They are very individualized, but they are also impacted by the rules and atmosphere of the jail.

The majority of this study is qualitative, interpretative, and exploratory. The purpose of this study is to look into how death row inmates express their emotions, beliefs, and psychological responses to their impending death in their farewell speeches. By examining the language used in 102 final comments (out of which the ones which say nothing are excluded), the study hopes to reveal underlying coping mechanisms, cultural and personal influences, and the mental processes people go through when faced with death. The study also seeks to connect these data to psychological theories such as the Terror Management Theory developed by Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski in 1986, Appraisal Theory formalized by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White in 2005 and Death Coping Model introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969 in order to better understand how people handle stressful situations.

This goal connects the five objectives since they are all related to understanding, analyzing, and assessing the language used by death row convicts as a coping strategy. This study makes important theoretical and applied contributions. Theoretically, it broadens the use of Appraisal Theory in the emotionally charged discourse surrounding the death penalty by providing a linguistic framework for examining stories about death. Additionally, it illustrates the ways in which TMT and Death Coping Models engage with evaluative discourse, offering a more sophisticated comprehension of how people use language to cope with mortality.

Each of the research goals directly supports the study's primary objective, which is to find out how death row inmates use language to cope with their upcoming execution. The initial purpose is on how convicts express their feelings through language in order to gain a better understanding of this process. By linking psychological reactions to theoretical models such as the Terror Management Theory, Appraisal Theory, and Death Coping Model, the second objective aids in providing an organized psychological framework for understanding the inmates' conduct. The third purpose examines the cultural, religious, and individual impacts on these final assertions to investigate the belief systems and values that inform coping strategies. The fourth objective draws attention to the relationship between psychological processes and language use, highlighting the ways in which spoken language reflects more profound emotional and mental coping mechanisms. The fifth goal looks at how prisoners make meaning of their final moments to provide insight into how individuals create existential meaning in the face of death. Together, these objectives offer a comprehensive understanding of death row utterances as a unique expression of people's responses to death.

The findings of the study show how effective language is for psychological coping, meaning- making, and emotional expression when faced with death. This suggests that by serving as a mirror and a coping strategy for extreme existential stress, language might provide information about human fragility and resilience. Future research should examine how male and female inmates differ in their final statements' issue substance, coping strategies, and emotional expressiveness. This might draw attention to gendered patterns in the ways that people construct meaning and cope with death.

Several important considerations pertaining to accessibility, consistency, and the scope of the study led to the choice to use data from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice instead of death row statements from Pakistani people. First off, Pakistan doesn't have a centralized, openly accessible database of final statements like the Texas Department of Criminal Justice does. Second, because the study had to be done in English, it was difficult to use Pakistani death row statements because of language barriers, inconsistent translations, or a lack of original English transcripts. The majority of death row statements in Pakistan, if they are available at all, are probably in regional languages or Urdu, which makes it difficult to guarantee the veracity and correctness of translated material for linguistic or discourse analysis.

Keywords:

Death row statements, final words, discourse analysis, language and emotion, linguistic coping strategies, end-of-life communication, expressive language, narrative identity, meaning- making, linguistic construction of self..

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DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this thesis to the most important people in my life.

To my dearest mother, your love, care, and endless prayers have been the strongest support in my life. You believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. Your sacrifices and patience gave me the strength to continue, even when things were difficult. Without your guidance and encouragement, this journey would not have been possible.

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Finally, I dedicate this work to all those whose stories and final words became a part of my research. This thesis is for the many unheard voices who spoke their last words with pain, truth, and emotion. I hope this work brings understanding and respect to their experience.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Language plays a vital role in our daily lives as a medium of communication and a carrier of ideas. Since language is the primary tool used to convey, interpret, and regulate emotions, the two are tightly related. People use words to convey the breadth of their emotional experiences, including joy, sorrow, anger, and more. The choice of words, tone, and linguistic nuances allow for a rich portrayal of emotions Furthermore, language plays a crucial role in emotional regulation since people employ internal dialogue and self-talk to manage and regulate their emotional states.

1.1. Introduction and Background of the Study

Death row comments, sometimes referred to as last or last words, are statements made by inmates just prior to their execution. These quotes provide special insight into the morals, psychology, and emotional state of those who are about to die. They are now a significant field of interdisciplinary study as a result. These last remarks, which were said in a very restricted environment, are frequently seen as both socially performative and intensely personal. Remorseful statements, claims of innocence, religious affirmations, messages to loved ones, and even opposition to the system are a few examples. These remarks are found on the website of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Users can view information about death row convicts, including their last words.

The "Offender Information Search" online database on the TDCJ's official website provides interested parties with information about criminals, including those on death row. In the United States, data from the official website of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice is used for research purposes. The TDCJ oversees the largest prison system in the United States. The accessibility and size of the Texas data make it an excellent choice. Texas has made its most recent statement data available to the public on the TDCJ website more than any other state.

The idea that people create coping strategies to deal with their dread of dying was proposed in the seminal work The Denial of Death (Becker, 1973). This hypothesis has influenced subsequent research on the emotional content of final remarks. Building on this, Baumeister highlighted the importance of meaning-making as a coping mechanism when death approaches, as seen by the fact that many inmates

utilize their last words to provide closure or coherence. According to more recent research, final remarks frequently exhibit indications of emotional regulation, acceptance, and attempts at atonement (Bultmann & Kroll, 2003), which is consistent with Kübler-Ross's phases of grief and death coping.

According to (Schuck & Ward, 2018), Texas death row remarks, many inmates used their final words to express forgiveness or to regain their sense of dignity. In several instances, their remarks served as a last public performance, speaking to the witnesses as well as the general public. (Garland, 2010) made the case in the seminal work Peculiar Institution that the customs surrounding execution, such as the final words, reflect societal perspectives on crime, punishment, and death. These viewpoints highlight the ways in which death row inmates may use language to forge identities, fend off dehumanization, and leave a moral legacy.

Sarat has been a trailblazing voice in legal studies, examining the function of last remarks within the larger framework of the death penalty (Sarat, 2001). He examines how these last words fit within the "ritual of execution," in which the condemned talks while the state takes action, in When the State Kills. According to (Sarat, 2001), these statements frequently indicate opposition, remorse, or submission and act as counter-narratives to the court ruling. His subsequent work with Martinez yielded a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative examination of hundreds of final statements, examining topics like assertions of innocence, prayers to God, and condolences for the relatives of the victims.

The study of death row comments from a language standpoint is continually expanding. Discourse analysis has been used by (Serisier, 2017; Johnson, 2019) to investigate how inmates use language to position themselves in relation to others, negotiate blame, and show sorrow. (Johnson, 2019) specifically emphasizes the use of modal verbs, repetition, and politeness techniques to convey uncertainty or soften claims. (Fitzgerald & Rymes) constructed a small corpus of death row statements for corpus linguistics and discovered recurrent themes of self- presentation, religious allusions, and thankfulness.

Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) has been used in recent research to analyze how presenters convey judgment, admiration, and emotion (affect) in closing remarks. For example, when (González & Arenas, 2020) examined emotive expressions in last comments, they found that, even under dire circumstances, people

tended to utilize more good feelings (love, peace, and thanks) than negative ones. This points to a psychological shift toward social interaction and emotional healing. These results are consistent with the Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1986), which contends that when confronted with mortality, people cope with existential fear by reaffirming their cultural values and sense of self-worth.

All things considered, the study of death row statements crosses several academic fields, such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, and law, and each one is offering important new perspectives on how people use language when faced with the possibility of death. In order to better understand how language serves as a tool for emotional and existential management in the face of certain death, the current study adds to that discussion by using Appraisal Theory to examine evaluative language in final statements and connecting it with death coping models and Terror Management Theory.

1.2. Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The present study adopts Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), the Death Coping Model (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Greer & Watson, 1987), and Terror Management Theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski & Solomon, 1986) as its core theoretical and analytical frameworks. Each of these frameworks offers distinct but complementary insights into how individuals use language when confronted with the certainty of death. Their collective application allows for a multidimensional analysis of death row statements, capturing both linguistic choices and the psychological dynamics behind them.

1.2.1. Rationale for Employing Appraisal Theory

The study's foundation is Appraisal Theory, which offers a methodical approach to examining evaluative language and enables researchers to investigate how people communicate their feelings, opinions about behavior, and aesthetic or sensory assessments. Death row remarks frequently include strong emotional pleas, moral justifications, and references to human connection because they are made in the immediate vicinity of death. By providing a fine- grained language framework that reflects how speakers place themselves, build relationships with others, and convey values, appraisal theory makes it possible to dissect these components. This is particularly crucial in the context of death row, where communication stakes are existential and every word might have a variety of interpersonal and introspective purposes, such as expressing forgiveness, claiming innocence, promoting peace, or

reaffirming spiritual convictions. Therefore, the goal of this study to investigate the evaluative patterns and emotional positioning within final statements made under intense psychological and moral pressure is ideally aligned with appraisal theory.

1.2.2. Justification for Employing the Death Coping Model

The Death Coping Model helps us understand why people express their feelings in particular ways, while Appraisal Theory explains how emotions and assessments are represented verbally. The paradigm, which has its roots in psychological study on dying and terminal illness, describes a range of cognitive and emotional coping mechanisms people employ to deal with death, from acceptance and transcendence to denial and wrath (Kubler-Ross, 1969; Corr, 1992; Greer & Watson, 1987).

By using this paradigm, the study can read evaluative statements as reflections of deeper psychological processes associated to death rather than merely words on a page, and correlate language choices with coping techniques. Expressions of perplexity, protest, or blame, for example, may be associated with wrath or denial, whereas frequent usage of thankfulness, spiritual affirmation, or words of love may indicate a step toward acceptance or transcendence. Thus, by placing evaluation patterns inside existential psychology, the Death Coping Model enhances their understanding.

1.2.3. Justification for Employing Terror Management Theory

By elucidating how people cope with the existential fear brought on by the realization of mortality, Terror Management Theory (TMT) offers a more comprehensive theoretical framework. TMT holds that people use techniques that restore a feeling of purpose and symbolic immortality, such as self-esteem, cultural worldviews, and personal relationships, to deal with the fear of dying (Greenberg et al., 1986; Pyszczynski et al., 1997).

This theory provides a useful perspective through which to understand death row utterances regarding expressions of faith, moral identity, legacy-building, and social connection. Many inmates use comments that support these coping mechanisms, such as expressing their religious convictions, reaffirming their worth as human beings, or communicating with loved ones. This study reveals a deeper level of meaning in what might otherwise appear to be straightforward expressions by using TMT in conjunction with Appraisal Theory to analyze how evaluative language functions as a defense mechanism against the psychological danger of death.

1.3. The Combined Value of the Integrated Framework

Each theory offers important insights on its own: the Death Coping Model describes the psychological coping mechanisms for death; the Appraisal Theory reveals the linguistic expression of evaluation and stance; and the Terror Management Theory reveals the existential functions of meaning-making in response to mortality. Nevertheless, when applied in tandem, they produce a strong, multidisciplinary analytical framework that encompasses the existential, psychological, and linguistic aspects of death row utterances.

In addition to being based on language data, this integrated approach makes sure that the analysis is interpreted in light of human coping mechanisms and death anxiety. It enables the research to investigate not just what is expressed but also the underlying processes that those statements represent. Additionally, it provides a more comprehensive knowledge of how people use language to confront mortality, express meaning, and control emotion at the limit of life by bridging the gap between psychology and language.

By combining these three frameworks, the study develops a thorough framework for examining speech about death that has implications for psychology, death studies, and the humanities in general, in addition to linguistic theory.

1.4. Summary of Theoratical Framework

This study uses a combination of appraisal theory, the Death Coping Model, and Terror Management Theory to look at death row comments from a linguistic and psychological point of view.

Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005) is the main analytical tool. It gives a whole way to look at how people use language to express their feelings, thoughts, and judgments. It allows researchers to look at the social and emotional components of last statements made in very stressful and final situations.

The Death Coping Model (Ross, 1969) adds to this language analysis by showing how people deal with their emotions and thoughts when they know they are going to die. It helps to understand how some language choices show psychological states like denial, acceptance, transcendence, or making sense of things.

Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1986) looks at things from a bigger existential point of view and talks about how knowing that death is coming makes people hold on to their cultural values, protect their sense of self-worth, and

look for symbolic immortality. It helps people comprehend the deeper reasons why people on death row use certain words.

These three frameworks work together to provide a complete and interdisciplinary way to look at the language, coping techniques, and existential reasons behind final declarations. Combining them not only makes the analysis deeper, but it also helps us grasp more fully how language works when someone is close to death.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

There is a lot of academic work that looks at language, emotion, and identity in different high- stakes conversations, but the last words of those on death row are still an under-explored but very important area of language. These words, which are commonly said just before someone is put to death, capture the raw core of human emotion, moral contemplation, and facing death. But not much study has looked at how language helps people deal with death or makes sense of their lives at the edge of death in a systematic way. Most research so far have either looked at the psychological or legal aspects of these statements, missing the interpersonal and evaluative aspects that are also present.

The goal of this study is to find out how people use language to show how they feel, deal with relationships, and deal with their own death. The research does more than just help us understand language better in extreme situations. It also connects with bigger ideas about how to deal with fear and death, which haven't been fully explored in linguistic studies of this kind of speech.

1.6. Research Objectives

i. To analyze how linguistic choices in death row statements reflect the emotional and psychological states of prisoners facing imminent execution.

ii. To explore the use of evaluative language (Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation) in conveying coping mechanisms through Appraisal Theory.

iii. To examine how psychological coping strategies are linguistically realized in final statements using the frameworks of the Death Coping Model and Terror Management Theory.

iv. To investigate how the language of death row prisoners serves as a means of managing death anxiety and constructing meaning in their final moments.

1.6.1. Alignment of Theoratical Frameworks with Research

Objectives

Each framework has a different job to do when it comes to reaching the research goals and creating the overall analytical approach.

The study is based on Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), which is a linguistic theory. By giving us tools to look at how emotional and psychological states (like fear, regret, peace, or defiance) are expressed in death row statements and by giving us a structured lens (Affect, Judgment, Appreciation) to look at how prisoners use language to talk about their coping strategies, moral stances, or relational positioning, it directly supports objectives 1 and 2. It lets you find particular lexical and grammatical choices that make up evaluation, which shows how speakers use language to frame their inner emotional and mental reality.

The Death Coping Model (Ross, 1969) fits with objective number 3 because it gives us a way to think about how people deal with death through denial, anger, acceptance, emotional control, or transcendence. When you use this model on linguistic data, it helps you figure out how these coping mechanisms are shown in language or made through language. For instance, saying thank you, being calm, or talking about spirituality over and over again may be signs that you are moving toward acceptance or transcendence. On the other hand, using defensive or confrontational words may be a sign that you are in denial or still angry.

Terror Management Theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, and Solomon, 1986) further supports objective number 4 by showing how people deal with death anxiety by affirming their own values, religious beliefs, and social relationships, which are common in death row speech. TMT makes the analytical method further by connecting language to existential functions. It helps us understand why a lot of convicts turn to religion, legacy, or moral self-justification in their last hours. TMT, when applied with Appraisal Theory, helps the researcher figure out how language is utilized to show emotion, deal with fear, and make sense of things.

1.7. Research Questions

i. How do death row prisoners use language to express their emotional and psychological states in their final statements?

ii. How are psychological coping mechanisms linguistically constructed in death row statements?

iii. In what ways does the language of death row prisoners reflect strategies of

emotional regulation and existential meaning-making in relation to death anxiety?

1.8. Significance of the Study

By looking into death row remarks, which are a rare and emotionally charged type of speech, through a combination of linguistic evaluation and psychological coping, this study has a lot of theoretical, methodological, and social value. It makes a unique contribution to both linguistics and death studies by connecting how language is used when someone is about to die with how it shows how people deal with deep-seated problems.

From a linguistic point of view, the study makes progress in applying appraisal theory to a type of language that hasn't been studied much: final comments made before execution. The study shows how language may be used to communicate emotions, make moral decisions, and find meaning at the end of life by looking at how convicts say their last words. This helps us learn more about evaluative conversation in high-stakes and emotionally charged situations. The Death Coping Model and Terror Management Theory together help us understand how people deal with the fear of death through language. The study looks at how convicts use their last words to deny, accept, build a legacy, and reaffirm their convictions. This is useful evidence for how language reflects how people deal with their emotions. This approach from many fields improves the link between linguistics and psychology by showing that language is a place where people negotiate emotional survival and symbolic immortality.

The research lends a voice to a minority that is typically ignored or criticized in society. The study looks at the last things that people on execution row said and did, which makes them more human and gives us a more nuanced picture of their last attempts to connect, confess, protest, or make peace. This adds to larger conversations about morality and culture, as well as death and the human condition.

This study adds to the expanding body of studies on language and mortality and provides a strong model for looking at emotionally complicated speech. It is important not just for what it adds to the academic world, but also for how it could help people, the law, and scholars better comprehend how people deal with death in terms of language, emotions, and existence.

1.9. Delimitations

The limit of the research is that some prisoners choose not to say anything at all or simply a few words, therefore those statements out of the selected statements

are excluded. There are still a lot of death announcements on the website, even after taking out the ones indicated above. For the purposes of this study, 102 statements from the year 1982 till 2000 are plenty.

1.10. Definitions of Key Terms

1.10.1. Death Row Statements

Final utterances made by prisoners immediately before execution are called death row statements. These statements often contain expressions of emotion, identity, remorse, resistance, or reconciliation, and are considered significant linguistic and psychological artifacts.

1.10.2. Appraisal Theory

A framework developed by (Martin & White, 2005) within Systemic Functional Linguistics. It focuses on how language is used to evaluate people, things, and experiences through three main systems: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation.

1.10.3. Affect

A subcategory of appraisal theory referring to the linguistic expression of emotions such as happiness, sadness, fear, or anger.

1.10.4. Judgment

An appraisal sub-system used to evaluate the behaviors of in terms of ethics, morality, or social norms (e.g., honesty, courage, cruelty).

1.10.5. Appreciation

A sub-system in appraisal theory dealing with evaluations of things, events, or phenomena in terms of quality, impact, or value.

1.10.6. Death Coping Model

A psychological model explaining how individuals emotionally respond to and process the awareness of imminent death. Stages typically include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance (Ross, 1969).

1.10.7. Terror Management Theory (TMT)

A psychological theory by Greenberg, Pyszczynski, and Solomon which posits that humans manage death anxiety by reinforcing cultural beliefs, personal significance, and close relationships to maintain psychological stability.

1.10.8. Evaluative Language

Language that conveys a speaker's attitudes, emotions, judgments, or

assessments. In this study, it refers to the expression of value, emotion, and stance in death row statements.

1.10.9. Coping Mechanisms

Cognitive and emotional strategies used by individuals to manage stress or trauma, particularly related to death or existential threat.

1.10.10. Existential Communication

Communication that addresses themes of mortality, purpose, identity, and transcendence often arising in contexts involving death, dying, or loss.

1.10.11. Language in the Proximity of Death

A phrase referring to the unique characteristics, structures, and functions of language produced by individuals who are at or near the moment of death.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter gives a full overview of the research that serves as the theoretical and conceptual basis for this investigation. There are three main parts to it. The first part introduces Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), focusing on its interpersonal meta function and the Appraisal Theory that was created within this framework. The second part looks at research that has already been done on language and death, focusing on how final statements show emotional, psychological, and social aspects. The third part talks about psychological theories that are important to death discourse, such as Terror Management Theory and death coping models. At the end of the chapter, the author points out gaps in current research and places the current study within these overlapping areas.

When life is coming to an end, language becomes very important. People typically use words to think, make peace, resist, or reach out when they are under a lot of emotional stress, like when they are about to be executed. Scholars from many fields have been interested in the connection between language, emotion, and death, but there hasn't been much linguistic research on the last words of death row convicts. These last words, which are typically public and can't be changed, are not just psychological outpourings; they are also rich places for positioning, value judgments, and building the identity.

This study uses Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics' Appraisal framework to look at how death row inmates think about their reality, communicate their sentiments, and place themselves in relation to others in their last moments. Also, by adding psychological theories like Terror Management Theory and death coping models, the study goes beyond just looking at the language used in end-of-life conversations and looks at how they make people feel and how they deal with death. By doing this, it meets the requirement for an interdisciplinary approach that brings together language, emotion, and death.

2.1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.1.1. Overview of Appraisal Theory

James R. Martin and Peter R. R. White, two linguists, came up with appraisal analysis, a way of looking at how language is used to express and judge feelings,

attitudes, and judgments. Appraisal theory gives us a systematic way to look at the language people use to judge or rate things based on their worth or significance. It looks at how people see themselves and others in connection to events and experiences, not just how they feel. You can judge death row comments by looking at the words people use to express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions about the death penalty. This paradigm gives us a systematic way to understand how people think about their own situations, talk about their sentiments about a possible execution, and deal with their identities when they are facing death. Using appraisal theory, this is how you can look at death row statements. Some of the most important parts of appraisal theory include:

2.1.1.1.Affect in Death Row Statements

Use appraisal theory to locate and look at the emotional expressions in death row comments. This means looking at how those who are facing the death penalty feel, such as how they show acceptance, fear, anger, or sadness. Take note of the words, tone, and other expressive qualities that show how you feel.

2.1.1.2.Judgments and Evaluations

Look at what death row prisoners think about society, the legal system, or their own lives. Appraisal theory can be used to look at good and bad judgments and evaluations of guilt, innocence, justice, and the morality of the death penalty. Look at the words used to make these points and what they mean for understanding the point of view of speaker.

2.1.1.3.Appreciation Oo Life and Values

Use the Appraisal Theory to look at how people show thanks for their relationships, their lives, or their personal beliefs. This means looking at how death row inmates talk about how valuable their own lives or the lives of others are. Look at the moral and artistic sides of their expressions while also thinking about their own and their culture's ideals.

2.1.1.4.Graduation of Intensity

Using appraisal theory, look at the death row statements' intensity gradient. Think about how people change how strongly they feel, think, and act. This close look can bring out subtle differences in the way the speaker talks and help us understand how complicated their emotional reactions are.

Using Appraisal Theory to look examine death row remarks, researchers can go beyond a quick look at language and look at the deeper evaluative meanings

behind what people say when they are awaiting execution. It helps us look at their communicative activities in a more complicated way by giving us a structured way to think about the moral, emotional, and judging parts of the words they choose.

2.1.1.5.Halliday's Three Meta Functions of Language

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) talks about meta functions, which are the three main ways that language makes meaning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). These meta functions are always at work in every act of communication, and they provide the theoretical basis for the linguistic analysis in this study.

The ideational meta function lets people talk about their experiences, such as acts, events, thoughts, and the things that were going on at the time. Language shows how people see and organize their reality through systems like transitivity. This function helps make sense of what people are saying in death row statements, whether they be confessions, farewells, or apologies.

The interpersonal meta function, which is the most important for this study, looks at how language plays social roles, shows feelings, and judges circumstances. It shows how people talk to each other, work out their connections, and put themselves in a certain way. Martin and White took this idea and turned it into Appraisal Theory, which looks at how speakers show their attitude, position, and intensity in speech in a systematic way.

The textual meta function makes sure that the meanings of ideas and relationships are put together in a way that makes sense. It talks about how to structure communications so that they are clear and relevant in context, which makes communication clear and effective in that context.

The Appraisal framework builds on the interpersonal meta function; thus, it is important to comprehend Halliday's meta functional model in order to put the linguistic study of death row comments into a bigger theoretical context. (Martin & White, 2005) say that Appraisal Theory relies on the interpersonal meta function to give us systematic ways to look at attitude, engagement, and graduation in evaluative language. So, this study is based on the meta functional paradigm, with an emphasis on how interpersonal meanings are made in the emotionally charged language of last utterances.

2.1.2. Terror Management Theory (TMT)

2.1.2.1.Overview of TMT

Terror Management Theory (TMT) is a psychological theory that tries to explain how humans manage with the fear of death that comes from realizing they will die. Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski came up with TMT in the late 1980s. It is based on the ideas of cultural anthropologist Ernest Becker, especially his 1973 book The Denial of Death (Becker, 1973). The basic idea behind the notion is that the uniquely human awareness of mortality makes it possible for horror to be too much to handle. To deal with this existential horror, people employ cultural worldviews and self-esteem as psychological shields that make them feel like they have a purpose and are worth something in life.

Cultural worldviews are sets of beliefs that help people understand the world around them. They include standards, values, symbols, and notions about the afterlife that make people feel that they are part of something bigger and more lasting than themselves. These worldviews help people feel like their lives have meaning and that they are making a difference in something that will survive when they die. In this case, self-esteem is very important since it reveals how well people think they are following the rules set by their cultural worldview. When people feel valued and accepted in their community, they feel safer and less anxious about their existence.

The Terror Management Theory is a helpful way to think about how the need to regulate existential anxieties could affect people's attitudes, actions, or identity creation in this study. The purpose of the study is to look at the psychological reasons behind how people act when they are faced with existential threats or death-related stimuli. To do this, it will use TMT as part of its theoretical framework.

2.1.2.2.Emotions in TMT

TMT knows that realizing that you are going to die can make you feel a lot of different things. TMT talks on a lot of key feelings, like:

Fear of Death: The biggest emotional part of TMT is the fear of death. The idea is that people feel dread and worry about their own death when they are reminded of it.

Anxiety: The idea of their own mortality and the uncertainties surrounding death might make people more anxious.

Sadness: When people think about the people they have lost, their own life, and the things that make them happy, they often experience regret and grief.

Anger: People may get angry when they are worried about death or their own existence, especially when they think someone else is to blame for their problems or

their own death.

Denial: Some people use denial as a way to deal with death by making it seem less real and keeping themselves away from the sorrow it brings.

Hope: When faced with death, hope may come up as a way to deal with it. People can find solace in the idea of a hereafter, a sense of purpose, or the prospect of leaving a positive legacy.

2.1.3. Death Coping Model

One theoretical framework that explains the psychological phases people experience when confronted with the possibility of death is the death coping model. It is a framework that describes the steps or procedures people usually take to cope with the loss of a loved one or their own approaching death. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, a Swiss-American psychiatrist and pioneer in the study of death and dying, or thanatology, created the concept. After publishing her book On Death and Dying in 1969, she rose to fame. Kübler-Ross created her model to explain those who are facing their own mortality due to a terminal disease. Inmates facing the possibility of their own execution may go through the same stages of the death coping model as those facing death from a terminal illness. She believes that "depression has elements that can be helpful in grief, despite how difficult it is to endure." It forces us to start over from scratch (Ross, 1969). The final statements in this study will highlight the five stages of death coping found in the death row statements, which include:

i. Denial: At first, people might find it hard to realize that they would soon die. They can be unwilling to accept the gravity of their illness or the fact that they will eventually die.
ii. Anger: People may become angry with themselves, the situation, or even a greater force in reaction to their impending death. This rage may be a normal reaction to feelings of injustice and loss.
iii. Bargaining: Some people might try to modify their destiny or reverse the progression of their illness by negotiating or making deals. They can make an appeal to higher authorities, ask for clemency, or negotiate spiritually.
iv. Depression: People may feel intense sadness, grief, and despair when the reality of dying becomes clearer. They can lament the death of their own loved ones and the approaching separation from them.
v. Acceptance: During the last phase, people start to come to terms with the fact

that they will soon die. They might accept their mortality, make amends with others, and arrange for their end of life.

It is crucial to remember that not all inmates may go through every stage of the death coping model, and that the stages are not always sequential or predictable. How individuals handle the possibility of dying may depend on a number of factors, including the length of their incarceration, the specifics of their crime, and their support network.

2.2. Review of Relevant Studies

2.2.1. Appraisal Theory

Research in the real world has shown that the assessment framework can be used in many languages and genres. Early studies focused largely on English, but later studies have used the method in comparative linguistic studies, showing that evaluative categories may work differently in different languages (Iedema, Feez, & White, 1993). The paradigm has been useful in studying literary texts, media stories, political discourse, and educational exchanges because it shows how evaluative meanings affect ideological stances and how audiences react to them.

The methodical way of looking at evaluative language is very helpful for pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. Because it can map the "valeur" relationships between attitudinal and dialogistic meaning-making, it helps us understand better how texts persuade, how language shapes social identities, and how speakers deal with power and solidarity in communication (Martin & White, 2005). This theoretical model is a useful tool for researchers who want to learn more about how assessment works in speech in different social, cultural, and communicative settings.

The book Beyond Exchange: Appraisal Systems in English laid the groundwork for appraisal theory (Martin, 2000). The appraisal theory has been used to look at a lot of different types of discourse, such as academic discourse, narratives, historical discourse, news discourse, legal discourse, argumentative writing, newborn language, and more. Recently, the prominent study has become more popular in political speeches and the news. J.R. was in charge of Martin, Rick Iedema, Peter White, and Suan Feez all looked into news discourse and evaluation theory. They looked at the "objectivity" and "subjectivity" of news discourse, as well as the different "voices" and sub-registers, employing appraisal values (Martin, Iedema, White, & Feez, 1997). Another important study was done by (Han, 2006), who looked at engagement

resources in political speeches to find out how a speaker can effectively communicate his or her point of view and build a cooperative relationship with the audience from the point of view of engagement resources. Based on these widespread uses in many domains, it makes sense to say that the appraisal theory is now widely employed in discourse analysis.

(Heflick, 2005) found six commonalities in the last statements of death row inmates in his 2005 book "Sentenced to Die: Last Statements and Dying on Death Row." These include advocacy, love and gratitude, forgiveness, claiming innocence, believing in the afterlife, and being quiet. Many comments had more than one theme, even though some of them were only about one theme (Heflick, 2005). (Eaton & Theuer, 2009) showed another study that looked at remorse-related material in the final statements of death row inmates in Texas from December 7, 1982, to August 31, 2007. According to their journal, Apology and Remorse in the Last Statements of Death Row Prisoners, around a third of the criminals said they were sorry, and much of what they said was directed at the families of the victims. These apologies were also linked to other signals of honesty and sorrow, such as asking for forgiveness and showing empathy (Eaton & Theuer, 2009). Logistic regression study showed that these remorse-related characteristics were good in predicting an apology, whereas demographic and crime-related factors were not. The authors talk about what future study should look into and what it means (Eaton & Theuer, 2009). He looked at some of the things that death row inmates' thought were important to say in their last words for this study. Even while other themes have been brought up in prior statements (Heflick, 2005), one focused on the concepts of apology and remorse (Eaton & Theuer, 2009).

In the book Dealing with the Unavoidable: Strategies of Self-presentation and Meaning Construction in the Final Statements of convicts on Texas Death Row, (Schuck & Ward, 2008) explain how death row inmates in Texas use their last words to make sense of their situations. Between December 1982 and November 2006, 379 convicts were put to death on Texas death row. It was seen how people promote themselves by looking at the 283 most recent comments on the Texas Department of Criminal Justice website. At first, they build a linguistic framework that shows how these folks chose to organize their ideas in a sequence.

The second step uses this framework to look at each text on a small scale. They can see major trends in how convicts make sense of their situations and what they choose to say based on what the statements suggest (Schuck & Wardid, 2008).

The researcher looks at Death Row Statements from the point of view of ludic language in the context of ritual in Death Row Statements: A discourse of play. The researcher says that execution is a form of community rite that gets rid of those who are a threat to society, in addition to being a deterrent, a punishment, or a show of state power. Execution has a lot of ritual-like qualities, from the way it takes place in a liminal space and time to the order in which things happen. The concept of "play" includes serious things like trade, war, and litigation; thus, it may also be seen as a fun activity (Huizinga).

The researcher says that the way the condemned person said in their last words shows how silly execution is (Rizza, 2014). (Uysal, 2016) showed a second study on these death row comments. In the article "A Review on Time Perception of Death Row Inmates' Denials in their Last Statements in the Context of Forensic Linguistics: The Sample of Texas Huntsville Unit," it looked at the final statements of seventy death row inmates who were executed in Texas Huntsville Unit between 1982 and 2016. He did this by specifying the tenses in their final sentences and showing how they were spread out over a horizontal timeline (Uysal, 2016). Document analysis was the method of gathering data, which is one of the qualitative research methods. When you look at the age range, the distribution of simple tenses and the distribution of compound tenses are very similar. People between the ages of 20 and 30 use the simple tense the most, whereas people between the ages of 60 and 70 use it the least (Uysal, 2016). The paper "Forgiveness, Spirituality, and Love: A Thematic Analysis of Last Comments from Death Row, Texas (2002–17)," which came out in June 2018, did a second thematic analysis of the death row utterances.

The researcher in the article came to the following conclusions: The median time spent on death row increased from 108.5 months to 149.5; the median age at execution increased from 38 years to 40.5; the percentage of offenses involving multiple victims increased from 28.4% to 47.1%; and the execution rate in Texas dropped from 25 per year to 12 between April 2002 and May 2017 (279 executions; 240 last statements). Apology (35%), regret (35%), love (78%), and spirituality (58%) were the most prominent topics in the last words.

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between April 2002 and May 2017 (279 executions; 240 last statements). humbly. The most common things people said in their last words were sorry (35%), sorry (35%), love (78%), and spirituality (58%).

Death row inmates' last words often show themes of love, spirituality, and sadness. Indirect expressions, identification-egression, rejection hostility, and excruciating psychological distress are the most common psychological causes. These results stay the same throughout time. There may be a convergence of concerns at the end of life, regardless of the circumstances of death, as demonstrated by the similarities between the psychological structures and themes most frequently found in suicide notes and last statements from death row. This field needs additional research, but it could have an effect on mental health care toward the end of life.

It is hard for psychiatrists to work with death row inmates because, even though ethical rules say they can't be involved in executions, many of them have mental illnesses, psychological problems, and terrible mental suffering. Even though mental health care can help people get their lives back on track and speed up their execution, it still feels wrong to deny them treatment. There is a lot of evidence that being on death row is associated to bad mental health, suicide, not being able to talk to others directly, and extreme psychological pain (Kelly & Folley, 2013).

The book "Rhetorical Emancipation: Apologia and Transcendence on Death Row" looked at the last words of condemned prisoners and showed how the intentional use of transcendence might be a way to free oneself from rhetorical constraints through terminological control. Transcendence lets rhetors avoid talking about the details of the charges against them and instead connect their own knowledge of the issue to a bigger group value (Milford, 2019). Last Meals and Final Comments: Social Science Research on America's Death Row, looks at the social science research on the last meals and last words of convicted criminals in the modern United States. There isn't much research on last meals, but what they do know is that prisoners tend to choose foods that make them feel better, either because they are high in calories and calories or because they are a brand they associate with good things. Also, a lot of folks might prefer fancy food or just foods, flavors, and textures that they couldn't have while they were in jail (Walliss, 2019).

Also, those who don't feel guilty are significantly more likely to refuse a last meal. This could be because refusing a last meal means they agree to the execution process on some level. There is a lot of research on the final statements. It looks at the

psychological ideas and themes they contain, why some prisoners apologize in their statements but others don't, the fact that the statements tend to use positive, emotional language, and the overall meaning of the statements (Walliss, 2022).

Who Will Live and Who Will Die? is a study of the piece. The study, "An Analysis of Prisoners on Death Row in the United States," takes into account the personal traits and criminal histories of death row inmates, as well as some state-specific factors, such as variables that measure how much the political process affects the outcome of a death penalty case. The results show that the race and gender of the inmate, the governor's race and political party, and whether the governor is a lame duck all affect who lives and who dies on death row (Argys & Mocan, 2004).

The last remarks were mostly about pain, sorrow, remorse, and guilt, which showed that crime mostly happened to those who were poor. The phenomenological construct showed minor indicators of personal change while in solitary confinement on death row. This rendering misses important chances to interrupt the detainees' reform process and provide them a chance to avoid execution (Rafi & Amjad). Apologizing is becoming a more popular technique to settle disagreements in many areas of social life. But there haven't been many systematic studies on the dependent variable of apology.

When they look at the last words of Texas death row inmates, they find that talking about God is the best sign of an apology. In Western culture, God is often thought of as a very powerful actor. they believe that death row inmates who invoke God as a third party in their argument are doing so to make themselves look better, according to the theory of pure sociology (Cooneyv& Phillips, 2013).

When a prisoner talks about how hard, pointless, and miserable jail life is, it fits with people's desire for punishment. It shouldn't be a surprise that the convicts use of those things in his story may convince a judge, especially a state court judge who was elected by the people. Stories that show how bad prison is keep people from wanting to get back at people who hurt them, which would happen less if they were executed voluntarily. At the same time, courts could see petitions from volunteers as a chance to show that they value the rights of the individuals and autonomy because these prisoners are using their legal rights and autonomy. It is a little surprising to admit that the condemned person has some basic freedom while officially denying him the right to live, given larger hegemonic ideas of the criminal and the attempts in capital trials to dehumanize the defendant and make him seem

monstrous and fundamentally different (Rountree, 2012). However, this is in line with important cultural and legal imperatives.

There is always a social and psychological environment for every death. This setting has a big effect on the dying process. When it comes to death row inmates, most people don't know about this way of thinking. So, it helps to look at older research of death row convicts. This gives these last sentences some context, which makes it easier to understand what they mean. According to (Cunningham & Vigen, 2002) review of the literature on death row convicts, thirteen studies have looked at how death row inmates' minds work.

It is important to remember that every study they looked at showed high rates of psychiatric problems, even though they say that several of these studies had problems with their methods. Some of them are severe mood disorders (Lewis et al., 1986), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression (Cunnigham & Vigen, 1999; Freedman & Hemenway, 2000; Johnson, 1979). "Parental abandonment, foster care and institutionalization, neglect, and/or parental substance abuse" are something that almost all death row inmates have been through (Cunningham & Vigen, 2002). The analysis says that most offenders have low to medium IQs and don't have a high school education. Also, very few of them are violent while in prison. This context has a big effect on how someone dies. When it comes to death row inmates, most people don't know about this way of thinking. So, it helps to look at older research of death row convicts. This gives these last sentences a context that will assist you understand what they say. According to an assessment of the literature on death row inmates by (Cunningham
& Vigen, 2002), there have been thirteen studies that looked at how death affects people's mental health.

Because they are a low-status minority with less control over their own life, inmates are likely to internalize their stigma (Donovan & Light, 1997). Even while AIDS patients experience a lot of social stigmas, it is clear that death row inmates have the most. A community can inflict the death sentence as the most severe form of social rejection (Radelet, Vandiver & Brando, 1983). The worst thing that can happen to you is to be thought of as unfit to live. According to (Silverman, 1994), there are four things that make it hard for persons who have a lot of death stigma to deal with death. They are being blamed, shunned, discredited, and stigmatized.

She said that these things make it hard for those who experience a "stigmatized

death" since society expects them to assume full responsibility for their death. Not only can labeling lead to rejection, blame, and discrediting, it also makes it harder to follow social norms. This makes the inmates even less human and more stigmatized because their names are turned into prison numbers. This probably plays a big role in their deaths, whether it is right or wrong. According to (Witzel, 1975), most people can keep having social and conscious interactions until they die. It showed that patients who were close to death had certain traits, such as being peaceful and accepting, not being afraid, and not wanting to learn. Some specialists, however, say that the current domains of death research are not enough. The most important part of this claim is that they need to do more research on the causes of death other than the usual ones, like illnesses, and on dying in prison conditions because the death of this population is a ritual and their views on death are important for future studies (Witzel, 1975). (Kelly & Foley, 2013) uses statistics to show the main themes in death row remarks. They do this by putting them in a table where Love (78%), spirituality (58%), regret (35%), and an apology to the victim's family (35%) were the most prominent themes.

In another work called "Rhetorical Emancipation: Apologia and Transcendence on Death Row," the examination of the last words of condemned inmates has shown how the intentional act of transcendence can be used as a tool for rhetorical freedom through terminological control. Transcendence lets rhetors avoid going into detail about the charges against them and instead connect their understanding of the issue to a wider value that everyone shares (Milford, 2019). Last Meals and Final Comments: Social Science Research on America's Death Row, looks at the social science research on the last meals and comments of condemned inmates in the modern United States (Walliss, 2019).

There isn't much research on last meals, but what they do know so far is that when given the choice, prisoners tend to choose foods that make them feel better, either because they are high in calories and calories or because they are a brand they have associated with good things in the past. Also, a lot of folks might prefer fancy foods or just foods, flavors, and textures that they couldn't have when they were in jail. Also, persons who don't feel guilty are far more likely to turn down a last meal. This might be because doing so means they agree with the way the execution will happen in some way.

There is a lot of research on final statements that looks at the psychological ideas and themes they contain, why some prisoners apologize in their statements and others

don't, how they tend to use positive, emotional language, and what the statements mean as a whole (Walliss, 2022). Who will live and who will die? is a look at the article. The study "An Analysis of Prisoners on Death Row in the United States" takes into account the personal traits and past criminal records of death row inmates, as well as some state-specific factors, such as variables that measure how much the political process affects the decision to carry out a death sentence. The results show that the race and gender of the convict, the governor's race and political party, and whether the governor is a lame duck all have an effect on who lives and who dies on death row (Argys & Mocan, 2004).

The last comments mostly showed pain, sadness, regret, and remorse, which showed that crime mostly affected people who were poor. During the time spent in solitary confinement on death row, the phenomenological construct showed minor symptoms of changing as a person. This rendering loses important chances to stop the inmates' rehabilitation process and provide them a chance to avoid execution (Rafi & Amjad).

Saying sorry is becoming a more popular technique to settle disagreements in many areas of social life. There haven't been many systematic studies on the dependent variable of apology, though. When they look at the last words of Texas death row inmates, they find that talking about God is the best sign of an apology. In Western culture, God is often thought of as a very powerful actor. According to the theory of pure sociology (Cooney & Phillips, 2013), they say that death row inmates who invoke God as a third party in their arguments are raising their own status.

(Scharping, 2017) looks at the last remarks made by the inmates to see how they were feeling and what was going on in their minds by looking at the themes and language used in their statements. These declarations also make clear the messages that were sent to family members or loved ones in the last remarks. His research focuses on what people go through when they are executed. Also, this article talks about how they love their family and friends and how they find strength from being spiritual and thinking about their afterlife. These are some of the ways they deal with their constantly scary predicament. Most of the time, their spirituality helps them deal with that scenario. Some statements, on the other hand, bring attention to the unfairness. They show that they were wrongfully convicted of a crime they didn't do, and they don't seem to be content or embracing their destiny. This part of the study fits in with larger conversations about how the judicial system can make mistakes and how people

can be wrongfully executed. His study adds to the field of forensic linguistics and gives subsequent scholars a chance to build on what he has done. His study looks at how important these remarks are to the inmates and how important they are in the legal and judicial system. The article is mostly on the existential and emotional crisis they go through in their dying days. It is a valuable resource for researchers studying the link between language and the death penalty because the results will help in the domains of forensic linguistics, psycholinguistics, and criminology.

In Life in Death's Waiting Room: An Existential Analysis of Death Row Prisoners, Maskell looks at the lived experiences of death row convicts from an existential point of view. Her piece talks about how the convicts have changed and accepted the execution (Maskell, 2020). It also looks at the period when they are alone and how they try to deal with their recurring problems. Her qualitative study looks at how the prisoners try to find meaning and comfort during that period, whether it is spiritually or emotionally. Her research mostly focuses on the time before the execution. While she was analyzing, she came up with two types of situations that she talks about in her essay. The first is when the prisoners embrace their fate and see it as a way to make up for their mistakes on a spiritual level. On the other hand, the other kind of people has problems and it looks like it will be hard for them to accept the execution till the last day.

One of the main things (Maskell, 2020) writes about is how time and loneliness affect death row convicts. The study indicated that being alone and waiting for a long time can make inmates feel more frightened and cut off from the outside world. A lot of people feel like they have less control over their life, which could make them think deeply about their lives or feel absolutely helpless. (Maskell, 2020) says that these feelings are similar to those of the philosophers Sartre and Camus, who wrote about how people look for meaning when they know they are going to die. Her research also shows that people who are sentenced to death are often treated cruelly and with a lack of respect. This puts more strain on their bodies and is one of the biggest problems they have to deal with in their environment. She goes on to argue that this part is often overlooked by the legal system and the courts.

Life in Death's Waiting Room gives us a valuable look at how psychology, existential philosophy, and the criminal justice system are all connected. (Maskell, 2020) makes a strong case against the judicial system by focusing on the real-life experiences of death row inmates. He also helps us grasp what it means to be human in

the face of death.

The study "A Phenomenological Analysis of Death Row Inmates' Last Words" looks at the last words of executed convicts through the perspective of phenomenology, which is a way of studying how people comprehend their experiences. The articles demonstrate how the inmates feel and how they keep their spiritual and religious convictions strong even when they are about to be killed. The most essential thing this article found is the link between loved ones, friends, and family members. It reveals that most of the time, the prisoners spend their dying moments talking about how much they love and appreciate their family and friends instead than anything else in the world. The study also showed that being spiritual is the most common and crucial thing that helps people deal with their death and the execution. Another important point made in this article is how the court system is not working well. It makes people more worried about erroneous convictions and how the justice system isn't always right. A Phenomenological Analysis of Death Row Inmates' Last Words adds to the body of work on forensic linguistics, psychology, and criminal justice. It questions conventional stories about the death penalty and gives a more human portrayal of persons who have been sentenced to death. It also gives interesting information about the emotional and existential realities of death row inmates.

The above-mentioned scholars have looked at the last utterances of prisoners to learn about how they felt and what they were going through in their last minutes on Earth. This article has also talked about the main ideas in their statements. Most of the time, people say they love and care about their family, and "I love you all" is one of the most common things these convicts say. You can see this phrase a lot in the statements of different inmates as you read through them. This shows that people are more worried about their family in the last moments of their lives. Then, majority of the convicts also talk about spirituality in their statements. It seems that their relationship with God is getting stronger because of their illness, and they seem quite happy about the amazing afterlife they will have. Some of them also feel very bad about what they did wrong and use this platform to show how sorry they are before they die. They ask God, the victim, or the family of the victim for forgiveness and say they're sorry to convey that they regret what they did. It shows that they fully accept the blame for what they did and think their punishment is fair. People think this might be a method for them to achieve peace before they die. Another topic that comes up a lot is acceptance. Some convicts show signals that they have accepted their fate and are ready to die. (Málaga &

Delgado) investigation found that many convicts accepted their death as their last moment and tried to stay calm. This is similar to what (Hood & Hoyle, 2008) found in their study, which showed that some detainees thought execution was a necessary penalty. (Málaga & Delgado) used phenomenological analysis in their study, which helped them grasp the statements on a deeper level. There is also thematic analysis, which Kelly and Foley used to group the statements into groups based on themes including love, regret, and faith. Some scholars also look at last statements from different times to determine whether anything has changed. They discovered that more and more people are talking about religion in their last words.

Looking at the last utterances of death row inmates could provide us more information about their mental state. A lot of prisoners use their last words to let out their feelings and find peace. Some prisoners think about love and family, while others think about religion or remorse. Studies have also shown that being on death row for a long time can have a big effect on a person's mental health. This is why final remarks are so important for inmates to make before they die. The research of (Málaga & Delgado) backs up these ideas and gives us more information on last words on death row. They learned that prisoners often talked about love, faith, regret, and acceptance before they were put to death.

2.2.2. Death Coping Model

The study "Coping Strategies and Considering the Possibility of Death in Those Bereaved by Sudden and Violent Deaths: Grief Severity, Depression, and Posttraumatic Growth" looks at how different coping strategies affect posttraumatic growth, depression, and the severity of grief after violent and unexpected deaths. Avoidant coping (ignoring or avoiding the grief), supportive coping (asking for help from others), and active coping (actively dealing with the loss) were the three main coping strategies that the researchers looked at. Researchers observed that each method had a different effect on the outcomes of sadness and depression (Fisher, Zhou, Zuleta, Fullerton, Ursano, & Cozza, 2020).

Thinking about death before it happens might also change how people grieve and grow after losing someone. This study shows how important it is to understand and choose appropriate ways to deal with grief in order to help those who are grieving sudden and violent losses. In her chapter "Coping with Death and Dying," Wortman looks at how people deal with the mental and emotional impacts of death, whether they

are facing their own death or the death of a loved one. She criticizes common ways of dealing with grief because they often don't do a good job of showing how different, complicated, and personal loss may be. The five phases of mourning by Kübler-Ross are one such concept. Even though they are well-known, these traditional frameworks may make the grieving process too simple and not take into account the many emotions that each individual goes through (Wortman, 2016).

Wortman says that a person's cultural background, personal values, and the specifics of the loss can all affect how they deal with it. Instead of conventional stage-based frameworks, she encourages a more flexible and personalized way of understanding how people deal with death and dying. This personalized approach helps create support networks that are more understanding and knowledgeable of different cultures by taking into account each person's unique emotional and situational needs (Wortman, 2016).

In the book Current Models of Death and Dying, researchers take a close look at the ways they talk about how people deal with death and loss. They stress how important task-based models are, which focus on specific things people may do to deal with dying and grieving (Corr & Doka, 1994).

These theories emphasize an active approach, encouraging people to do things that give them back control and a sense of purpose when things are hard. This point of view focuses on how people can actively use their own coping mechanisms instead of seeing them as helpless victims of their circumstances. The authors say that these task-based methods provide nurses and families with structured strategies to aid patients and families during the end of life, which is especially helpful for nurses who work in critical care settings.

(Temiz, 2024) says that existential social work can help people deal with death and loss. He begins by talking about important topics like death and sorrow, and then he goes into further detail about how people think about death and the beliefs that surround it. He stresses the need of existentialism, a philosophy that focuses on finding the purpose of life, in order to understand and deal with loss and death. He talks about how social workers may utilize existentialist principles to help people who are coping with these concerns and to figure out how to help them. Existentialism helps people deal with death and discover their own purpose. There is also a case study in the essay that shows how these ideas could be implemented in real life (Temiz, 2024).

The book Models of Coping with Bereavement: An Updated Overview looks

at how models of dealing with grief have changed over the past 100 years, starting with Sigmund Freud's article Mourning and Melancholia. They talk about how "grief work," or acknowledging and coping with the pain of loss, is an important part of grieving. The authors talk about how avariety of models have changed over time to either support or go against this idea. One example is the Dual Process Model, which Stroebe and Schut initially published (Stroebe, Schut, & Boerner, 2017).

The idea is based on a dynamic process in which people go back and forth between dealing with their loss and doing things that help them recover and adjust to life without the person who died. The essay talks about how important it is to have coping techniques that can change and how grief is a very personal and cultural experience that is affected by many things.

2.2.3. Terror Management Theory

The study "Applying Terror Management Theory to Patients with Life-Threatening Illness: A Theoretical Review" looks at how people dealt with the mental impacts of knowing they were going to die after getting a diagnosis of a life-threatening illness. The authors say that people strive to deal with their fear of death by keeping a positive sense of self-worth and strengthening their cultural beliefs (Zana et al., 2019). This is based on the notions of Terror Management Theory (TMT). TMT says that persons with terminal illnesses might find meaning and mental stability by leveraging cultural worldviews and self-esteem as shields against existential anguish (Pyszczynski et al., 2015; Solomon et al., 2004). This kind of thinking helps us understand why patients are emotionally strong and why culturally relevant support networks are important in end-of-life care. The review contributes to the broader use of TMT by showing how existential worries affect the mental and emotional health of people with life- threatening diseases. This makes it relevant to health psychology and palliative care (Zana et al., 2019).

One crucial finding is that talking about end-of-life care openly may help patients feel better, whereas not talking about death can make them more scared. The authors say that doctors and nurses should learn how to talk to patients about dying in a way that makes them feel better and helps their mental health.

The evaluation also says that more research is needed to fully understand how TMT might be used in palliative care settings. Future studies may help create better support networks for people who are seriously ill.

Terror Management Theory (TMT), which explains how people deal with their fear of death. The premise behind the theory is that people employ cultural notions and their own self-esteem to deal with their fear of death. The writers explain that TMT was inspired by Ernest Becker's work on how views and actions of people are affected by their knowledge of death. Studies have shown that these kinds of reminders can make religious beliefs stronger, make people feel more connected to their country or community, and in some cases, make them more hostile toward those who are different from them or who disagree with them (Arrowood & Pope, 2014; Greenberg et al., 1990).

The article talks about how research on mortality salience, or reminders of death, has shown these effects in many different situations. The authors say that future research should look at how TMT relates to other psychological theories and how it may be used in education, mental health, and resolving disagreements. They decide that TMT is a good way to understand how people manage with their strong dread of death and how it influences their daily lives, decisions, and even their social lives.

In their in-depth study, Thirty Years of Terror Management Theory: From Genesis to Revelation, they look at thirty years of research on Terror Management Theory (TMT). The theory says that people want to find self-worth and cling on to beliefs that are acceptable by their culture because they make them feel safe, give them meaning, and give them a reason to live (Pyszczynski et al., 2015). The authors include a lot of real-world evidence to support the main ideas of TMT, especially the idea that being reminded of death can have a huge effect on people's views, values, and behaviors. For example, they talk about studies that indicate how being aware of death can change moral judgments and social preferences, make people more defensive about their worldview, and make people more likely to support their own group. In addition to giving a summary of supporting evidence, the authors also address a variety of objections and counterarguments that have been made over time. They discuss about how the theory has developed in response to these criticisms, showing how adaptable and theoretically sound it is for explaining different social and psychological phenomena (Pyszczynski et al., 2015).

The review talks a lot about how Terror Management Theory (TMT) can be used in many fields, such politics, mental health, violence, discrimination, and conflict between groups. The writers say that TMT gives us significant information about how knowing about mortality impacts both social behavior and individual psychology.

They give a brief overview of the empirical evidence that is now available and offer several areas for further research. These include looking into how death awareness affects behavior and how these processes change over time (Pyszczynski et al., 2015). The paper shows how important TMT is to our understanding of how existential dilemmas affect how people think, feel, and act.

In their work "Existential Meaning and Terror Management," they look at the psychological effects of being aware of death in a similar study. They repeat the main points of Terror Management Theory, which says that people deal with their fear of death by following cultural norms and trying to see oneself in a positive light. They discovered that self-esteem and cultural worldviews work together to give people stability, meaning, and symbolic immortality, which helps them deal with existential discomfort (Solomon & Greenberg, 2017). This study shows that TMT is still useful for understanding how people find and keep meaning in life even when they know they are about to die. It builds on decades of research.

By giving answers to big questions like what happens after death and the meaning of life, these cultural worldviews help people feel like their lives matter. The authors also point to research that show that when people are reminded of death, they are more prone to defend their cultural beliefs and try to feel better about themselves. This behavior helps keep the mind balanced and lowers anxiety.

In their groundbreaking study, (Rosenblatt et al., 1989), they looked at the idea of mortality salience, which is how being aware of death changes how people see other people. The study found that when people are reminded of their own death, they are more likely to like people who follow cultural norms and less likely to like people who break them. These results confirm the Terror Management Theory (TMT), which says that people defend their cultural worldviews as a way to deal with the fear of death that comes from knowing it will happen (Greenberg et al., 1986; Rosenblatt et al., 1989). This suggests that memories of death can make people more likely to want to punish people who break cultural norms. For example, people who were reminded of death suggested more harsher punishments for a prostitute who was suspected of breaking the law.

On the other hand, persons who embodied and supported cultural norms were judged more highly in instances where death was a big deal. When death is on people's minds, they are more likely to support their cultural worldview and favor those who

share it (Pyszczynski et al., 1999; Solomon et al., 2004). These results back with the main idea of TMT, which says that cultural belief systems give people stability, meaning, and a sense of belonging, which keeps them from being afraid of death.

In short, the above reviewed studies have looked at language and emotion in different types of traumatic or high-stakes communication, but the last words of those on death row are still not very well studied from a linguistic point of view. Most of the studies that have been done thus far have looked at themes, substance, or psychological motives without going into detail about how language is used to make meaning, shape identity, and communicate appraisal in the face of death. Also, Systemic Functional Linguistics and the Appraisal framework in particular have not been used enough to help understand these language patterns. There isn't much work that combines linguistic analysis with psychological models like Terror Management Theory and frameworks for dealing with death. This study fills in these gaps by providing a linguistically and psychologically informed analysis of death row remarks. This adds to our understanding of how people use language to deal with their last moments.

. CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section explains the research design, sample and its size and data collection

3.1. Research Design

This study uses an interpretivist approach, which focuses on how people's experiences and meanings are shaped by society and the situation they are in. An interpretivist approach is best for understanding the depth and complexity of these emotionally charged comments since they are about how death row inmates make and share evaluative meanings in their final statements.

The study uses a qualitative method because it wants to look at the emotional and interpersonal connotations that language has instead of measuring them statistically. Qualitative research is very good at finding out how people use language in subtle ways to position themselves, convey their feelings, and build their social reality when they are close to death.

He used a purposive sampling technique to choose death row statements that were complete, publicly available, and rich in language. The corpus includes a sample of last words from executed inmates that were taken from official state prison websites in the US. Texas is a main source because its records are easy to find and consistent. The researcher chose this sample to make sure that the messages were real, relevant, and a good representation of the communicative event the researcher were studying.

As part of the data collection process, these final statements were put together into a text corpus. To keep the statements true to their original form and to help with proper language analysis, care was taken to keep the original wording, punctuation, and structure. Researcher didn't change the statements in any way other than formatting them to make them easier to read.

The main tool for analysis in this study is the Appraisal framework that Martin and White created and that Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics is based on. This approach lets us group language into systems of attitude (emotion, judgment, appreciation), engagement (dialogic positioning), and graduation (intensity and amplification). The researcher utilizes these categories to look at how prisoners deal with their emotions and morals, make sense of their relationships with others, and deal with their identities in their last moments. The analysis is directly related to the study's

research questions, which look at how evaluative language shows how people cope and make sense of things when they are close to death.

This way of doing things makes sure that the study's philosophical attitude, data kind, analytical approach, and research goals are all in line with each other. The research gives us a deep, layered understanding of how language works when someone is about to die by combining linguistic and psychological insights in a qualitative framework.

3.1.1. Sample and its Size

The sample for this study comes from the official website of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and includes 102 final comments made by inmates before they were put to death. This website has a full and always-up-to-date record of the last comments made by death row convicts, going back to 1982. The most recent entry was added on March 9, 2023, which shows that the data source is still accurate and up to date.

Texas was chosen as the main place to collect data since it has a lot of executions and final statements are easy for the public to find in a consistent way. The intentional sampling of 150 statements was based on the need to create a corpus that is both large and full of evaluative language. This number makes it possible to provide in-depth qualitative analysis while yet keeping the study manageable.

The number of people in the sample was based on the goals of qualitative research, which values depth over breadth. The 102 statements chosen are enough to find patterns in how various speakers use evaluation strategies and how they use language to signify different things, while also meeting the analytical needs of Appraisal Theory.

3.1.2. Data Collection

The researcher got the information for this study from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) official website's public archives. This source has a large collection of final comments made by inmates before their executions, starting in 1982 and going up to the present. The website has not only the exact transcripts of the latest statements, but also important biographical information about each inmate, such as their name, age, race, level of education, job, and date and place of birth. To collect the data, the researcher had to download and put together final statements that passed the standards for linguistic richness, completeness, and relevancy. The only

statements that were included were those that were made in person or in writing and were officially posted on the TDCJ website. Statements that were marked as "no final statement" or "declined to speak" were not included in the sample.

The researcher duplicated each statement into a document file so that the original structure, spelling, and punctuation would stay the same and made little changes to the formatting to make sure the dataset was consistent, but didn't change any of the language. The utterances were then given demographic identities that matched them up with the context. This could assist find patterns across age, race, or education where it is appropriate.

The researcher chose this way of collecting data since the TDCJ source is reliable, real, and easy to get to. This makes sure that all of the statements came from the same legitimate repository. The study uses a qualitative discourse analysis; hence it was decided that publicly available text-based data would be adequate and ethical. There was no need to talk to anyone in person, and all the data was public, so there was no need for special ethical approval for research on people.

3.1.3. Data Selection Criteria

The data for this research consisted of final statements made by death row prisoners before execution. The statements were selected based on the following criteria:

Authenticity: Only officially recorded and publicly available last statements were included to ensure reliability.

Completeness: Statements that were full and coherent, rather than incomplete or interrupted, were chosen for meaningful linguistic and psychological analysis.

Relevance: Statements that reflected emotional, moral, or existential expressions were prioritized, as they aligned with the study's focus on coping, emotion, and meaning-making.

Language: Only statements originally in English were selected to avoid translation bias in linguistic and appraisal analysis.

3.1.4. Data Analysis

The researcher used a qualitative technique to analyze the data. This was based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, notably Appraisal Theory, as well as psychological models like Terror Management Theory (TMT) and the Death Coping Model. The analysis followed a series of steps to make sure it was in line with the

research objectives and that it was clear and consistent.

3.2. Method Of Analyzing The Statements

3.2.1. Analysis For Research Question 1

To answer question number 1, the researcher looked at the statements using Appraisal Theory, especially the three main systems of Attitude (Affect, Judgment, Appreciation), Engagement, and Graduation that Martin and White came up with. The researcher read each statement carefully and tagged it by hand for evaluative language. Words that make you feel something, manifestations of feeling, and moral judgments were found and put into the Appraisal categories. looked at a lot of different statements to see how often and in what ways evaluative phrases were used to find common emotional themes like love, regret, hope, and resistance. This stage helped figure out how inmates showed their inner emotional and mental states, especially right before they were executed.

3.2.2 Analysis for Research Question 2

In the second phase of analysis, the Death Coping Model was used on the data that had already been coded. The researcher looked at the statements again to find ways to deal with them. There were certain language patterns that went along with each coping method. For example, the use of modal verbs like "I hope," "I forgive," or "I'm ready." Then, based on Kübler-Ross and other coping models, these tactics were put into groups depending on the stages of coping: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. The researcher utilized a spreadsheet to write down these trends and look at how they compared. This step showed how language reflected how people dealt with problems, and it let researchers put prisoners into different coping stages depending on how they spoke.

3.2.3 Analysis for Research Question 3

The study used Terror Management Theory (TMT) to look into question number 3. The researcher looked at the same phrases again to see if there were any indicators of existential meaning-making. As TMT expected, this level was about figuring out how speakers used language to maintain their self-esteem and deal with their fear of mortality. The researcher put together and underlined statements that indicated resistance to fear, spiritual growth, or symbolic immortality. This study used both Appraisal Theory and TMT to show that language was used not only to communicate feelings, but also to control fear and reassert meaning in the last moments

of life.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted with careful attention to ethical standards, despite the fact that it did not involve direct interaction with human participants. The data consisted of publicly available final statements retrieved from the official website of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). All statements were already in the public domain and accessible for academic use, thereby posing no risk to privacy, confidentiality, or personal safety. No identifying details beyond those already publicly provided by the TDCJ were added or modified. However, the research was conducted in accordance with standard ethical guidelines for textual and discourse analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter examines death row inmates' final statements in detail using the Death Coping Model, Appraisal Theory, and Terror Management Theory. This chapter aims to examine the ways in which these individuals express their mental and emotional reactions to death through language. Three primary research themes serve as the framework for the study, each of which examines a different aspect of psychological and evaluative expression. The findings are divided into three categories: (1) how mental and emotional states are described by evaluative language; (2) how people use language to cope with their problems; and (3) how people find purpose in life and manage their feelings when they are about to die. Each subchapter contains lexico-grammatical components and pertinent conceptual categories from the theoretical frameworks, along with citations from the corpus of recent scholarly research, to ensure that the interpretations are accurate. This meticulous planning enables us to examine the data comprehensively and rationally, highlighting significant trends in the language used by death row inmates to cope with death.

4.1. Findings

Statement No. 1

Statement to the Media: *"I, at this very moment, have absolutely no fear of what may happen to this body. My fear is for Allah, God only, who has at this moment the only power to determine if I should live or die... As a devout Muslim, I am taught and believe that this material life is only for the express purpose of preparing oneself for the real life that is to come... Since becoming Muslim, I have tried to live as Allah wanted me to live. Spoken: Yes, I do. I love you. Asdadu an la ilah illa Allah, Asdadu an la ilah illa Allah, Asdadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah, Asdadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Inna li-Allah wa-inna ilayhi rajiun. Verily unto Allah do we belong, verily unto him do we return. Be strong."*

Analysis

Using the combined lenses of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), Death Coping Model (Kübler-Ross, 1969), and Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski et al., 1999), it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of the prisoner's final statement, which reveals a complex interplay of emotional regulation, moral self-

evaluation, and spiritual meaning-making. Affect: Security is obviously expressed by the speaker's statement, "I, at this very moment, have absolutely no fear of what may happen to this body," which stands for psychological composure in the face of death. The verbal force that "absolutely" adds acts as Graduation: Force, conveying inner strength and enhancing emotional conviction. According to Kübler- Ross's concept, this comment represents the Acceptance stage, where a person comes to a calm realization of their death (Kübler-Ross, 1969). The Terror Management Theory, which holds that belief in a meaningful worldview, like religion, mitigates the fear of death by providing symbolic or literal immortality, also aligns with this calmness (Greenberg et al., 1997; Pyszczynski et al., 1999). One example of Judgment: Propriety is the statement, "Since becoming Muslim, I have tried to live as Allah wanted me to live," in which the speaker ethically assesses their conduct in light of Islamic principles. (Mahoney et al. ,2005) claim that this kind of moral framing is a typical spiritual coping strategy used by people to make sense of their activities in light of heavenly expectations near the end of their lives. According to Kübler-Ross's model and current grieving studies (Neimeyer, 2001), this also serves as a means of creating meaning, as individuals who are facing death create a sense of coherence between their life story and their imminent demise. Graduation is exemplified by the repeated Shahada ("Asdadu a la ilah illa Allah"), which strengthens religious identification and deepens spiritual commitment. Empirical research has demonstrated that ritual repetition such as these helps preserve psychological continuity and offer existential structure at terminal times (O'Connor & Arizmendi, 2014). According to TMT, this serves as a safeguard against death anxiety: Reaffirming one's religious beliefs confirms one's position within a death-defying symbolic system (Vail et al., 2010). A similar example of monoglossic engagement is found in the statement "Verily unto Allah do we belong, and verily unto Him do we return," which denotes theological certainty devoid of any space for opposing viewpoints. This is in line with the surrender reaction outlined in Kübler-Ross's acceptance stage and supports the empirical observation that people who believe in God are frequently able to accept death (Wong et al., 2006). Lastly, by employing Judgment: Capacity, the admonition "Be strong" presents the speaker as an emotionally strong someone who continues to mentor others even as they approach death. What TMT calls symbolic immortality the desire to live on via one's moral impact and the recollections of loved ones is fulfilled by this appeal to strength and legacy (Becker, 1973). The analysis goes

beyond a cursory description to provide a theoretically supported interpretation of how language serves as a coping mechanism and a tool of moral- spiritual closure by combining these three theoretical frameworks and firmly establishing each linguistic observation in pertinent literature. This triangulated method places the speaker's farewell within a larger scholarly understanding of how people react to death and strengthens the legitimacy of the interpretation.

Statement No. 3

"What is about to transpire in a few moments is wrong!

However, we as human beings do make mistakes and errors. This execution is one of those wrongs yet doesn't mean our whole system of justice is wrong. Therefore, I would forgive all who have taken part in any way in my death. Also, to anyone I have offended in any way during my 39 years, I pray and ask your forgiveness, just as I forgive anyone who offended me in any way. And I pray and ask God's forgiveness for all of us respectively as human beings. To my loved ones, I extend my undying love. To those close to me, known in your hearts I love you one and all. God bless you all and may God's best blessings be always yours. Ronald C. O'Bryan P.S. During my time here, I have been treated well by all T.D.C. personnel."

Analysis

Ronald C. O'Bryan's final statement contains rich language evidence of self-control and emotional reflection in the face of death. His first words, "What is going to happen in a few moments is wrong!" convey Affect: Dissatisfaction and demonstrate his moral disapproval of the act of execution. The declarative exclamative additional emotional impact draws attention to his emotional and cognitive opposition. With the concessive line, "However, we as human beings do make mistakes and errors," he immediately moves from a personal protest to a more deliberate and forgiving attitude toward systemic imperfection, signaling Judgment: Capacity and Propriety. This contrast is in line with Kübler-Ross's Acceptance stage, where the dying individual acknowledges death and expresses their unique ideals. The statement "I would forgive all who have taken part in any way in my death," which portrays the speaker as morally giving and emotionally composed, qualities that are particularly crucial in end-of-life conversations, best exemplifies virtue. (Mahoney et al. ,2005) claim that these types of acts of forgiveness are a part of religiously mediated emotional processing, where individuals find emotional peace through spiritual reconciliation.

The numerous pleas for forgiveness, like "I pray and ask your forgiveness, just as I forgive anyone who offended me," highlight affect. He transformed insecurity into harmony and established a morally advantageous relationship with both his criminals and his victims. This helps to negotiate interpersonal alignment with the objective of reaching closure in terms of appraisal. From the perspective of Terror Management Theory (TMT), such reciprocal forgiveness serves to affirm one's worldview by preserving moral and spiritual consistency, which lessens existential anxiety (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). His heartfelt final words, "To my loved ones, I extend my undying love" and "known in your hearts I love you one and all," exemplify both security and affection. This language establishes an emotionally intimate space at the moment of parting, in addition to strengthening his social identity, a critical component of symbolic immortality as outlined in (Becker, 1973) and TMT's concept of legacy and relational continuity. The complex interplay of relationship attachment, emotional regulation, and moral judgment, which are all backed by psychological theories of death coping and realized through various appraisal resources, is how O'Bryan's mental and emotional processes are thus expressed.

O'Bryan's statement also demonstrates powerful psychological coping mechanisms, specifically meaning-making, spiritual surrender, and legacy affirmation. His entire strategy appears to be consistent with Kübler-Ross's Acceptance stage, which is the point at which existential accommodation takes the place of cognitive opposition. His statement, "This execution is one of those wrongs yet doesn't mean our whole system of justice is wrong," demonstrates heteroglossic attribution. It suggests that the speaker is weighing his own destiny against a broader sense of social order. This illustrates a cognitive reframing strategy, a psychologically adaptive approach found in existential resilience research, where the perceived injustice of his execution is offset by a validation of the broader integrity of the legal system (Wong et al., 2006).

Additionally, the extensive use of religious terminology, such as "May God's best blessings be always yours" and "I pray and ask God's forgiveness for all of us respectively as human beings," reflects the speaker's use of religious coping, a crucial element of both TMT and Kübler-Ross's model. Allusions to divine forgiveness and blessing support the speaker's faith-based worldview, which reduces the fear of death by promising divine order and spiritual continuity (Vail et al., 2010). Furthering the

tone of spiritual transcendence is the postscript's closing, "During my time here, I have been treated well by all T.D.C. personnel," which functions as an Appreciation: Reaction and reflects appreciation and closure. This is in line with what (Wong,2008) calls mature death acceptance, which is characterized by emotional integration and social reconciliation.

A legacy message is also conveyed by the speaker's closing remarks. Through his expressions of forgiveness, compassion, and even institutional gratitude, O'Bryan positions himself as morally complete and emotionally balanced. This strategy is consistent with symbolic immortality (Becker, 1973; Lifton, 1979), which holds that one's values and influence endure in the hearts and thoughts of others. He is therefore able to assert moral significance and agency in spite of his irrevocable fate because his message acts as a conduit for psychological continuity. By combining resources for appraisal, death acceptance, and worldview defense, With the support of a large body of scholarly research on how people cope with death both linguistically and psychologically, O'Bryan transforms his final words into a monument to human reconciliation, spiritual closure, and dignity.

Statement No. 4

"Yes, I do. "I hope that one day we can look back on the evil that we're doing right now like the witches we burned at the stake. I want everybody to know that I hold nothing against them. I forgive them all. I hope everybody I've done anything to will forgive me. I've been praying all day for Carl Levin's wife to drive the bitterness from her heart because that bitterness that's in her heart will send her to Hell just as surely as any other sin. I'm sorry for everything I've ever done to anybody. I hope they'll forgive me. "Sharon, tell all my friends goodbye. You know who they are: Charles Bass, David Powell..."

Analysis

The speaker's final remark is chock-full of judgmental language that mostly conveys guilt, forgiveness, and moral reflection. "Yes, I do," the statement reads. The speaker evaluates the execution as a moral transgression in the first line, "I hope that one day we can look back on the evil that we're doing right now like the witches we burned at the stake." The historical parallel enhances the evaluative charge through Graduation: Focus, lending the statement greater emotional and moral weight. This assessment pattern is in line with what Martin and White (2005) call monoglossic posture, which asserts values as facts in order to minimize dialogic possibilities.

According to (Pyszczynski et al., 1999), this contrast protects the speaker's sense of justice in the face of death by acting as a moral worldview defense from the perspective of Terror Management Theory (TMT).

The text says, "I want everyone to know that I hold nothing against them." By demonstrating emotional stability and moral fortitude, "I forgive them all" is a perfect example of virtue and judgment. This type of declarative absolution is an example of what (Ross, 1969) calls a key component of the Acceptance stage, which is the transition from hostility and denial to peace and closure. Affect is also demonstrated by the frequent use of requests for forgiveness, such as "I hope everyone I've done anything for will forgive me." "I hope" and other hopeful expressions serve to mitigate the severity of insecurity. This lexico-grammatical softness reflects the Interpersonal Metafunction of language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), where emotions are regulated for social connection.

The speaker notably personalizes spiritual concern in the sentence, "I've been praying all day for Carl Levin's wife to drive the bitterness from her heart because that bitterness… will send her to Hell." There are multiple levels of judgment as the speaker evaluates the woman's emotional state and makes suggestions about spiritual consequences: propriety and affect: dissatisfaction. Although this could be interpreted as accusatory, it also exemplifies projective coping, which is the redirection of one's own inner worries onto other people. This is consistent with the emotional response models that (Neimeyer, 2001) looked at in his research on mourning and existential meaning. Affect's parting act, "Sharon, tell all my friends goodbye," conveys the final emotional resolution: Sadness, but also condemnation: The speaker's ability to maintain relationships until the very end exemplifies tenacity, is a feature of the continuous bonds framework (Klass, Silverman & Nickman, 1996).

The speaker's psychological coping strategies align with all three frameworks: legacy communication, meaning-making, and spiritual surrender. (Wong, 2008) and (Pargament et al., 2000) claim that the religious coping strategy "I forgive them all" facilitates existential serenity and emotional release and functions as a ritualized act of moral reconciliation. According to the Kübler-Ross theory, acceptance is the final coping stage and is typified by forbearance and poise. This comment reflects acceptance. Furthermore, this rhetorical device serves a symbolic immortality function by projecting the speaker's eternal moral self into the memories of others (Becker, 1973).

In addition to externalizing moral concern, its elaboration, "for Carl Levin's wife to drive the bitterness from her heart…," demonstrates a TMT worldview reaffirmation: that religious values define moral order and determine eternal consequences. The statement "I've been praying all day" denotes a coping strategy of consistent religious participation. By bringing up the concept of Hell, the speaker reduces the existential fear of personal destruction by situating death within a theologically regulated cosmology (Greenberg et al., 1997; Vail et al., 2010). In this case, prayer acts as a ritual defense, a psychological stabilizer, and an anchor for identity and purpose.

Furthermore, the statement "I'm sorry for everything I did in the past... "I hope they'll forgive me" is an example of a coping mechanism based on self-purification and remorse techniques connected to spiritual cleansing and deathbed repentance, according to cross-cultural research on death rites (Rosenblatt, 2008). The statement's optimistic tone ("I hope…") functions as a Graduation to help readers/listeners relate to it more gently while expressing unresolved longing or vulnerability.

The direct address to Sharon and the list of friends in "Sharon, tell all my friends goodbye…" function as coping mechanisms for relational continuity while maintaining emotional integrity. This is in line with the theory of continuous bonds, which maintains that people prepare for death by strengthening emotional ties that psychologically endure (Klass et al., 1996). Through these words, the speaker establishes a strong connection with the loved ones, promoting identification and emotional stability in the final moments.

Statement No. 5

"I pray that my family will rejoice and will forgive, thank you."

Analysis

The speaker's final statement demonstrates a variety of mental and emotional reactions, primarily expressed through linguistic choices that show moral reflection, prayer, regret, and forgiveness. Appraisal Theory can be used to identify important elements of Affect and Judgement that disclose the speaker's inner state (Martin & White, 2005). The statement, "I pray that my family will rejoice and will forgive, thank you," conveys both hope and insecurity as the speaker expresses a desire for spiritual peace and reconciliation. Graduation: The modal "will," which introduces force, intensifies the emotional impact of his appeal. The Judgement: The speaker is

shown to be emotionally and morally responsible by the appropriateness of the request for forgiveness.

The figurative statement, "I hope that one day we can look back on the evil that we're doing right now like the witches we burned at the stake," contains strong judgement. Engagement and Propriety: Monogloss, expressing his conviction that execution is an unquestionable moral wrong. This metaphor introduces Graduation: Focus and intensifies the moral critique. Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Pyszczynski et al., 1999) describes this as a worldview defense, where the speaker positions himself on the morally superior side of history to control his own fear of dying by questioning the legitimacy of his punishment. By equating his execution with past injustice, the speaker preserves a meaningful identity in the face of death.

The repeated appeals for pardon Judgement: The phrases "I forgive them all" and "I hope everybody I've done anything to will forgive me" show virtue by portraying the speaker as emotionally resilient and morally upright. These linguistic choices reveal a wish to be perceived as an emotionally mature man rather than a criminal, in line with Kübler-Ross's Acceptance stage of the death coping model, where one seeks peace with oneself and others. Additionally, statements like "I'm sorry for everything I've ever done to anybody," which exhibit Affect: Sadness and Remorse, two crucial markers of end-of-life self-evaluation, deepen this affective pattern (Neimeyer, 2001).

Finally, "Sharon, tell all my friends goodbye…" symbolizes Affect: closure and affection, which fortify relationships. According to the continuous bonds theory (Klass et al., 1996), maintaining emotional ties after death enhances psychological integrity, and this act of naming friends obviously personalizes the farewell. Consequently, the speaker's emotional process involves a transition from protest and critique to acceptance and relationship closure; this progression is substantiated by established theory and is demonstrated through evaluative lexico-grammatical choices.

The statement "I've been praying all day for Carl Levin's wife" exemplifies the active use of religious coping, which (Pargament et al., 2000) identified as a crucial tool for emotional regulation at the end of life. Prayer is used here as a spiritual and psychological strategy. The speaker demonstrates judgement by evaluating another person's emotional state from a moral- religious perspective. His comment that

"bitterness… will send her to Hell" is appropriate. According to TMT, this assertion confirms that one's spiritual conduct dictates their eternal destiny and validates the speaker's personal belief in the moral ramifications of death (Vail et al., 2010). This protects his ego and existential stability by enclosing his death in a cosmological narrative.

Additionally, the frequent use of "I hope," as in "I hope everybody I've done anything to will forgive me," exemplifies Graduation: Focus (softening), which Martin and White note is a strategy for promoting solidarity rather than conflict. With these words of hope, the speaker lowers the emotional intensity while expressing deep sadness. These remarks function as a verbal reconciliation mechanism that supports the speaker in cognitively processing guilt and requesting forgiveness as part of mature meaning-centered coping (Wong, 2008).

The personal naming of acquaintances ("Charles Bass, David Powell…") illustrates a key concept of TMT, symbolic immortality (Becker, 1973). By getting in touch with loved one and reinforcing social ties, the speaker ensures that a part of his identity and relationships will survive after death. This behaviour is in line with Rosenblatt's research and Kübler-Ross's Acceptance phase, which demonstrate that relational outreach and legacy expression are common components of terminal narratives.

The ultimate use of engagement: Statements that are monogloss throughout, like "I forgive them all" and "I hold nothing against them," demonstrate epistemic certainty and portray the speaker as emotionally and ideologically stable. According to TMT, this kind of confidence acts as a cognitive barrier against the unknown (Pyszczynski et al., 1999), allowing people to die with dignity and inner peace.

Statement No. 6

"Heavenly Father, I give thanks for this time, for the time that we have been together, the fellowship in your world, the Christian family presented to me (He called the names of the personal witnesses.). Allow your holy spirit to flow as I know your love as been showered upon me. Forgive them for they know not what they do, as I know that you have forgiven me, as I have forgiven them. Lord Jesus, I commit my soul to you, I praise you, and I thank you."

Analysis

The speaker's final remarks reveal a strong presence of inner emotional stability and spiritual submission through lexico-grammatical choices that convey a calm,

reverent tone. According to the Appraisal Theory, the phrase "Heavenly Father, I give thanks for this time" conveys an Affect: Appreciation, expressing an internal emotional state of thankfulness despite the impending execution (Martin & White, 2005). The speaker's calm mental state and positive emotional attitude towards life and the present are highlighted by this kind of evaluative language. The statement "fellowship in your world, the Christian family presented to me" reinforces this sense of interpersonal harmony through Appreciation: Reaction by acknowledging the emotional fulfilment found in faith and community.

Judgement: The speaker's statement, "Forgive them for they know not what they do," exemplifies virtue and a strong moral capacity for forgiveness. This also echoes what Christ said while hanging on the cross in the Bible, demonstrating that the speaker agrees with spiritual authorities and thereby elevating his moral status. This act of forgiveness is characteristic of the Acceptance stage, when emotional calm and transcendence replace resentment, according to Kübler-Ross's Death Coping Model. The phrase "as I know that you have forgiven me, as I have forgiven them" echoes this reciprocal moral reconciliation and implies a self-evaluation of ethical integrity, which is a common form of introspection in terminal moments (Neimeyer, 2001).

In contrast to any avoidance or uncertainty, the frequent use of present tense verbs such as "I give," "I know," "I commit," and "I thank" demonstrates full mental presence and lexical immediacy. The repeated anaphora of "as I..." emphasizes the speaker's sincerity and spiritual conviction and contributes to Graduation: Force. A resolved and emotionally integrated mental state in which the speaker finds emotional stability in their spiritual connections to God and others is reflected in these linguistic patterns, according to the ongoing bonds theory (Klass et al., 1996).

Since the speaker's comment heavily relies on meaning-making coping strategies, religious surrender, and forgiveness, all of which have been thoroughly examined in empirical research on accepting death, it is a perfect illustration of advanced psychological coping. "Lord Jesus, I commit my soul to you" is a direct act of spiritual submission that reflects what (Wong, 2008) calls mature death acceptance, where people declare their faith in a higher power to control existential anxiety and give up control. According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), this act guards against death fear by situating the ego inside a transcendent cosmological system that promises continuity after death (Pyszczynski et al., 1999).

"Allow your holy spirit to flow as I know your love has been showered upon me" is an example of judgement. Tenacity and Appreciation: Valuation, which shows the speaker's belief that divine love endures despite death. According to (Mahoney et al. ,2005), this type of spiritual coping, which is commonly employed in the final stages of life to manage fear and validate one's value, confirms a direct relationship with God. According to paradigm, this pattern of language represents the final stage of acceptance, where death is not only accepted but also seen as an essential part of a divine plan.

As a moral legacy and psychological safeguard, TMT's concept of symbolic immortality, the desire to be regarded as morally pure, forgiving, and spiritually whole, resonates with the speaker's quote, "Forgive them…" (Becker, 1973; Vail et al., 2010). The speaker elevates Christ's final words into a moral testimony with spiritual resonance by aligning his identity with timeless religious myths that ensure posthumous meaning.

Finally, the structure of the utterance, which begins with gratitude, moves through acknowledging community ties, extends forgiveness, and ends with praise, reflects a ritualized coping script similar to those found in terminal prayer traditions. According to O'Connor and Arizmendi (2014), these organised verbal rituals assist individuals in expressing coherence at the time of death, reducing cognitive dissonance and enhancing spiritual purpose.

Statement No. 8

"There's no God but Allah, and unto thy I belong and unto thy I return. I want to continue to tell my brothers and sisters to be strong."

Analysis

"There is no God but Allah, and I belong to you and I return to you," is the statement on the death row declaration. This farewell is emotionally strong and spiritually centred, with a strong foundation in Islamic theology and language techniques of encouragement and persuasion. The speaker states, "I want to continue telling my brothers and sisters to be strong." From the perspective of Appraisal Theory, the statement "There's no God but Allah" is a perfect illustration of Judgement: Tenacity and Propriety (Martin & White, 2005), as it affirms the speaker's unwavering religious faith and moral steadfastness at the moment of death. The absolute tone of this phrase, which comes from the deontic "no" and the

contraction "there's," is in line with Engagement: Monogloss, which reflects epistemic certainty and affirms the statement's truth value without providing dialogic alternatives. This type of assertiveness typically indicates strong emotional resolve and conviction, which in this case reflects a steady mental and emotional process consistent with calm and clarity (Martin and White, 2005).

The phrase "and unto Thy I belong and unto Thy I return," which is a paraphrase of Quranic verse 2:156, represents Graduation: Force and reinforces the speaker's belief in divine submission and return. Since the speaker finds existential comfort in spiritual destiny, the use of Affect: Security in this phrase supports what (Wong,2008) calls meaning-centered coping. By enshrining oneself in an eternal religious framework, this language helps to support one's worldview and reduces fear of dying, according to Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). According to TMT, believing in an eternal and just universe can help people cope with their fear of dying. In this instance, the speaker accomplishes this by making reference to divine belonging and revisiting significant concepts in Islamic eschatology.

In terms of psychology, this statement aligns with Kübler-Ross's Death Coping Model's Acceptance stage. There is no indication of bargaining, anger, or denial; instead, the speaker uses religious language to convey a sense of calm and devotion. The last sentence, "I want to keep telling my brothers and sisters to be strong," shifts the emphasis from the individual to the group. According to linguistic theory, the directive phrase "be strong" serves as a judgement of one's capacity and tenacity, giving others a sense of strength and emotional support. The social need for resilience is heightened by this point of interpersonal alignment, which also coincides with Graduation: Focus. According to (Becker, 1973), speaking to loved ones becomes a kind of symbolic immortality from a TMT perspective, where the speaker's moral legacy endures through the fortitude of others.

As a result, the speaker uses spiritual metaphors that affirm meaning in the face of death, affective security, and monoglossic, declarative grammar to construct his mental and emotional state. His psychological coping mechanism, which is based on Islamic theology, is articulated in imperative and evaluative language that uplifts others and readies oneself for eternal return. This analysis highlights the speaker's use of language as an act of spiritual closure and existential transcendence, in addition to communication, and is backed by Appraisal Theory, death coping models, and terror

management scholarship.

Statement No. 9

"I want to thank Father Walsh for his spiritual help. I want to thank Bob Ray (Sanders) and Steve Blow for their friendship. What I want people to know is that they call me a cold-blooded killer when I shot a man that shot me first. The only thing that convicted me was that I am a Mexican and that he was a police officer. People hollered for my life, and they are to have my life tonight. The people never hollered for the life of the policeman that killed a thirteen-year-old boy who was handcuffed in the back seat of a police car. The people never hollered for the life of a Houston police officer who beat up and drowned Jose Campo Torres and threw his body in the river. You call that equal justice. This is your equal justice. This is America's equal justice. A Mexican's life is worth nothing. When a policeman kills someone he gets a suspended sentence or probation. When a Mexican kills a police officer this is what you get. From there you call me a cold-blooded murderer. I didn't tie anyone to a stretcher. I didn't pump any poison into anybody's veins from behind a locked door. You call this justice. I call this and your society a bunch of cold-blooded murderers. I don't say this with any bitterness or anger. I just say this with truthfulness. I hope God forgives me for all my sins. I hope that God will be as merciful to society as he has been to me. I'm ready, Warden."

Analysis

The speaker's psychological state is revealed through evaluative and rhetorical structures in this final statement, which is a powerful fusion of emotional expression, identity assertion, and moral confrontation. The speaker employs judgement: propriety and affect: appreciation to convey composure and respect for others by starting with an expression of gratitude, "I want to thank Father Walsh for his spiritual help..." The emotionally and morally charged middle portion of the statement contrasts sharply with this tonal opening, indicating a change in emotional intensity through Graduation: Force (Martin & White, 2005).

By stating, "They call me a cold-blooded killer when I shot a man that shot me first," the speaker adopts an Engagement: Monoglossic stance and provides a factual counter-narrative to the state's designation. By accusing the legal system of racial bias, his assertion that "the only thing that convicted me was that I am a Mexican and that he was a police officer" uses Judgement: Propriety. These statements, which express long-standing emotional grievances against institutional injustice, reflect two affects: indignation and frustration. According to Terror

Management Theory, this critique serves as a worldview defense (Greenberg et al., 1997), enabling the speaker to regain dignity and assert moral clarity in the face of death. This tactic aids in the management of existential fear by securing identity in perceived justice and truth.

The speaker then uses generalizations to expand his criticism: "This is your equal justice." This is equal justice in America. The life of a Mexican is worthless. Here, the use of parallelism and repetition heightens his emotional impact (Graduation: Force) and presents a dismal image of institutionalized racial inequality. These characteristics are indicative of judgement: social esteem and sanction, in which the speaker assesses the moral shortcomings of both people and organizations. According to Kübler-Ross, such statements could represent progress through the stages of anger or even depression, especially the emotionally charged statement, "You call me a cold-blooded murderer... I call this and your society a bunch of cold-blooded murderers." Instead of being emotional instability that suggests psychological lucidity, this reversal of moral labeling, delivered with lexical inversion rather than shouted emphasis, reflects cognitive processing of injustice.

The speaker softens his tone in spite of the intensity: "I don't say this with any bitterness or anger." I simply say this honestly. This supports his earlier claims by demonstrating Graduation: Focus: Soften and purposefully switching from Affect to Judgement in order to come across as emotionally stable and morally logical. This type of meta discursive self- evaluation is also consistent with Appraisal's Engagement resources, in which the speaker attempts to manage counter-reactions in advance. On an emotional level, it marks a shift towards the death coping model's Acceptance stage, where the speaker strikes a balance between speaking the truth and maintaining their own peace.

The statement also demonstrates sophisticated coping mechanisms based on spiritual surrender, ethical clarity, and self-narrativization. By using a technique known as meaning-centered coping, which enables people facing death to situate their suffering within a broader moral or existential framework, the speaker actively reclaims his story through retroactive reframing (Wong, 2008). Using Appraisal's Judgement: Propriety and Capacity, the line "I didn't tie anyone to a stretcher... I didn't pump any poison into anybody's veins" contrasts the speaker's offence with the acts of the executioners. Here, he defends his behaviour and criticizes the system morally, strengthening his belief that he is a victim of injustice rather than an evildoer.

In order to maintain dignity and lessen emotional distress, this rhetorical contrast is a type of cognitive reappraisal (Gross, 2002). According to TMT, this serves as a mechanism for reinforcing the speaker's worldview once more, enabling him to deal with death by enshrouding his identity in a morally sound narrative that challenges injustice and upholds his value. Religious coping, which is a potent defense against death anxiety, is also demonstrated by his appeal to divine mercy in the lines "I hope God forgives me... I hope that God will be as merciful to society as he has been to me" (Pargament et al., 2000). In accordance with Kübler- Ross's Acceptance stage and typical of spiritual preparations for death, it reflects Judgement: Humility and Affect: Hope, where the speaker acknowledges his own sinfulness but asks for divine forgiveness (O'Connor & Arizmendi, 2014).

"I'm ready, Warden" brings the statement to a close with the Affects of closure and serenity. In keeping with Graduation: Focus (intensification of resolve) and signifying complete psychological resolution, the declarative, first-person simple present tense ("I'm ready") conveys readiness rather than fear. Such serenity, according to (Klass et al., 1996), indicates an ongoing connection to the divine, where death is viewed as a transition rather than a break. The speaker presents a final identity that incorporates injustice, regret, and spiritual hope in this statement, achieving what (Neimeyer, 2001) refers to as "narrative integrity".

Statement No. 10

"D.J., Laurie, Dr. Wheat, about all I can say is goodbye, and for all the rest of you, although you don't forgive me for my transgressions, I forgive yours against me. I am ready to begin my journey and that's all I have to say."

Analysis

The speaker ends by saying, "D.J., Laurie, Dr. Wheat, I can only say goodbye, and for all the rest of you, even though you don't forgive me for my sins, I forgive yours against me." "I am ready to begin my journey and that's all I have to say" is a succinct but poignant farewell that signifies both spiritual preparedness and emotional reconciliation. The use of direct address ("D.J., Laurie, Dr. Wheat") indicates Affect: Affiliation, according to Appraisal Theory (Martin

& White, 2005), since the speaker upholds relational ties even in his last moments. Engagement is used in the sentence "about all I can say is goodbye": Monogloss, claiming that there is no more space for discussion, and reflecting Affect: Dejection

and resignation, conveying a sense of emotional closure. The speaker invokes Judgement: Propriety when he says, "although you don't forgive me for my transgressions, I forgive yours against me." This is because he accepts moral responsibility for his actions while employing a lexico-grammatical strategy that presents him as emotionally resolved and ethically superior.

This act of one-sided forgiveness, which is especially highlighted by the concessive clause "although… I forgive…," exemplifies Graduation: Focus because it strengthens his moral position and gives the statement more emotional weight. Since the speaker is providing closure even in the absence of outside forgiveness rather than begging, negotiating, or expressing denial, such language psychologically reflects aspects of Kübler-Ross's Acceptance stage. In addition, the phrase "I am ready to begin my journey" denotes Affect: Security and Judgement: Tenacity, implying a brave and composed approach to dying. A popular rhetorical device in end-of-life discourse, the metaphor of "journey" turns death from an end into a transition, bolstering the speaker's emotional closure and narrative integrity (Neimeyer, 2001).

According to the Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski et al., 1999), this statement exemplifies a coping strategy that affirms one's worldview. In order to defend one's self-worth in the face of death, the speaker builds a morally cohesive identity that is consistent with transcendent values by forgiving others without expecting anything in return. The TMT idea of symbolic immortality (Becker, 1973), in which the self-endures via moral clarity, spiritual metaphors, and dignified closure, is reflected in his willingness to "begin [his] journey." All things considered, the speaker's use of brief declaratives, concessive constructions, and metaphorical framing conveys a calm mind, a freed heart, and a self that is psychologically strengthened against death. Even though it is succinct, this last statement demonstrates how condemned people use language to make amends with others, assert moral agency, and frame their mortality within a narrative that has spiritual and social significance, thereby meeting the research's emotional and psychological coping objectives.

Statement No. 11

"I deserve this. Tell everyone I said goodbye."

Analysis

The phrase "I deserve this." "Tell everyone I said goodbye" may seem succinct, but it captures a nuanced blend of moral acceptance, spiritual closure, and emotional

resignation. Given that the speaker assesses his own moral position in light of the punishment he received, the declarative statement "I deserve this" is a potent example of judgement: propriety within appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005). A type of internalized justice is indicated by the use of the deontic verb "deserve," a lexical cue that implies the speaker holds himself accountable, exhibiting ethical self-awareness and emotional clarity. This adds to the speaker's final moments' mental and emotional dimension by showing a cognitive acceptance of the consequences rather than resistance or confusion. According to linguistic theory, the speaker's sense of finality and conviction is reinforced by the utterance's monoglossic mode, which eliminates dialogic space (Engagement: Monogloss).

According to Kübler-Ross's model, the statement represents the Acceptance stage, which is characterized by a state of emotional readiness after denial, anger, or bargaining have been resolved. In addition to accepting responsibility, the speaker comes to terms with his fate by admitting that the punishment was justified. This coping mechanism is consistent with emotionally mature people who are approaching death (Kastenbaum, 2001). In relation to Affect, the second clause, "Tell everyone I said goodbye," functions as a social closure as well as an effort at interpersonal reconciliation. Affiliation and Graduation: Concentrate, since the farewell's scope ("everyone") intensifies it. It emphasizes the speaker's need to continue to be present in other people's lives even when he is not there, which is consistent with the continuing bonds theory (Klass et al., 1996), which holds that people who are dying want to connect with others rather than be alone.

The statement “I deserve this” serves as a worldview-consistent narrative that counteracts death anxiety by placing the self in a morally significant context, according to the framework of Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). TMT states that people maintain their belief in a just world or divine order in order to deal with their fear of dying (Solomon et al., 2015). Accepting punishment as "deserved" in this case reduces existential fear by restoring ontological coherence. Similar to this, saying goodbye in public, even if indirectly, helps create symbolic immortality because the speaker's moral clarity and words are meant to stick in other people's minds (Becker, 1973). The utterance's lexico-grammatical brevity, which is organised around two straightforward declaratives, demonstrates a coping mechanism based on succinct moral closure and supports emotional stability and linguistic control.

In summary, despite its simplicity, this statement demonstrates how self-evaluation and evaluative language serve as effective instruments for psychological coping and emotional control. According to Appraisal Theory, death coping models, and TMT, the speaker's last remarks, which are organized using precise, unambiguous grammar and emotionally charged vocabulary, affirm a profound acceptance of guilt, a moral separation from society, and a readiness to face death. According to these assertions, language can convey identity, responsibility, and legacy even when it is extremely brief.

Statement No. 13

“"Be strong for me," Pinkerton told his father, Gene Pinkerton, as witnesses entered the execution chamber. "I want you to know I'm at peace with myself and with my God," Pinkerton said. He recited a prayer to Allah, the supreme being of Islam. "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah. With your praise I ask for forgiveness and I return unto you," Pinkerton said. "I love you, Dad.""

Analysis

Directly addressed to the speaker's father, the phrase "Be strong for me" instantly conjures up Affect: Security and Encouragement within Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). The speaker's concern for his loved one rather than himself is reflected in this reversal, which implies emotional control and an empathetic approach. It serves as both a directive and an act of emotional support. This interpersonal display of strength demonstrates a stable mental state, supporting what (Wong, 2008) calls meaning-centered coping, in which people who are close to death place a higher value on interpersonal closure and group meaning-making. In order to convey a clear and unambiguous position that conveys Judgement: Tenacity and Propriety, that is, that the speaker has accepted both moral responsibility and spiritual preparedness, the phrase "I want you to know I'm at peace with myself and with my God" uses Engagement: Monogloss.

This clear expression of internal harmony, supported by the present tense phrase "I am at peace," is consistent with the Death Coping Model's Acceptance stage, demonstrating that the speaker is accepting death with calm rather than engaging in bargaining or denial. Linguistically, the use of words like "peace," "myself," and "my God" in particular conveys self-assurance, and the speaker's emotional finality and psychological readiness are reinforced by the lack of modal verbs or conditional clauses. Additionally, the prayer "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah" is

included. The religious performative act "With your praise I ask for forgiveness and I return unto you" places the speaker inside the framework of Islamic eschatology. This testimony demonstrates spiritual submission and commitment through Graduation: Force (which amplifies faith) and Judgement: Sanctity. This aligns the speaker's identity with divine will and invokes the central idea of Terror Management Theory, which holds that symbolic immortality and worldview affirmation reduce the salience of mortality (Greenberg et al., 1997).

The speaker affirms a theologically grounded identity by mentioning Allah and the divine return, which (Becker, 1973) suggests gives people existential continuity even in the face of physical extinction. With lexical items like "witness," "forgiveness," and "return," the prayer's structure conveys Affect: Hope and Reverence. The final line, "I love you, Dad," powerfully expresses Affect: Affiliation, providing familial closure and passing down a legacy. This final statement, which was given in the form of a direct, intimate speech, reflects the idea of continuing bonds, the idea that emotional ties endure after death and help the bereaved and the dying adjust psychologically (Klass et al., 1996).

In summary, this statement frames death as a transition handled by faith, familial love, and moral composure rather than as annihilation through the use of monoglossic assertions, emotionally charged verbs, and religious performatives. The speaker presents an image of someone who is emotionally ready, spiritually rooted, and psychologically resilient through her composed tone, word choice, and well-structured farewell. The speaker's use of language as a potent tool to confront mortality, transmit values, and create enduring meaning is confirmed by this rich integration of appraisal resources, death coping models, and TMT mechanisms.

Statement No. 14

"Goodbye to all my friends; be cool. Thank you for being my friends. Give my love to everybody."

Analysis

Despite being succinct and conversational in tone, this statement offers a wealth of information about the speaker's emotional state and coping mechanisms as they approach death. The phrase "Goodbye to all my friends" begins the statement with the explicit Effects of Sadness and Affiliation, indicating the speaker's awareness of the moment's finality and emotional connection to others (Martin & White, 2005).

Lexico-grammatically, the inclusive address and the use of the plural collective noun "friends" extend affiliation beyond close friends and family, strengthening the Graduation: Force resource to strengthen emotional ties. The following phrase, "be cool," serves as an idiomatic command that reflects Affect: Encouragement and Judgement: Tenacity. It suggests emotional self-regulation and resilience on the part of the speaker and those being addressed, rather than detachment. According to (Neimeyer, 2001), maintaining narrative coherence in the face of death requires the speaker to maintain identity continuity through familiar social language, which may be indicated by this casual, colloquial tone.

The phrase "Thank you for being my friends" highlights the emotional importance of interpersonal relationships and is a powerful expression of appreciation. A coping strategy frequently seen in closing messages, the simple present perfect tense ("for being") is used to express gratitude and convey a sense of ongoing relational impact that is not restricted to the past (O'Connor & Arizmendi, 2014). Such recognition and introspection, in accordance with the model, indicate that the speaker has attained the Acceptance stage, which is characterized by serenity and the need for emotional closure. As the speaker expresses gratitude and love to ease unresolved emotional bonds, it is psychologically a moment of relational reconciliation. The words "Give my love to everybody" become even more intense. The inclusive pronoun "everybody" serves as a Graduation: Focus, extending the speaker's emotional legacy to a larger community and reaffirming the notion of enduring bonds as outlined in (Klass et al., 1996).

By reaffirming his relational worth and emotional legacy, the speaker attempts to symbolically transcend death, according to the Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). The speaker's reaffirmation of friendships is a worldview-affirming act, which is consistent with TMT's assertion that people manage death anxiety through social belonging and cultural ties. The casual tone ("be cool") does not trivialize death; rather, it reflects meaning-centered coping, which is defined by (Wong,2008) as the use of even casual expressions to affirm emotional continuity, group identity, and the speaker's moral position within it. Since the speaker affirms a lingering presence through affection and memory, the act of showing others "love" even when they are not present supports Becker's theory of symbolic immortality.

Finally, this succinct but emotionally impactful statement illustrates how closing

phrases serve as instruments for psychological fortitude and emotional resolution. The speaker conveys emotional stability, gratitude, and affiliation through the prism of appraisal theory. The observe indications of acceptance, thankfulness, and farewell using Kübler-Ross's model. By immersing himself in a social environment that holds emotional significance, the speaker uses TMT to protect himself from mortality salience. The statement demonstrates that even informal expressions in death row discourse reveal significant attempts at coping, closure, and legacy- making, and it is supported by lexico-grammatical strategies like inclusive pronouns, modality absence, and evaluative verbs.

Statement No. 15

"I have no last words. I am ready."

Analysis

"I have no last words," the speaker said succinctly. With its tightly structured lexico- grammatical choices, "I am ready" is a potent example of psychological readiness, emotional poise, and self-directed closure. The statement "I have no last words" is classified under Judgement: Propriety because the speaker chooses not to provide an explanation, apology, or remorse. It also reflects Affect: Disengagement, which indicates emotional detachment or restraint, according to Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). The statement uses a rhetorical choice that reflects autonomy and resolve by adopting a monoglossic engagement, asserting finality without allowance for opposing viewpoints. By avoiding modal verbs and mitigating expressions, this deliberate brevity serves as Graduation: Force, increasing the psychological impact of the utterance through its stark directness. As the speaker acknowledges a state of inner peace and control, "I am ready" also reflects Affect: Security and Satisfaction. Personal agency and existential preparedness are reinforced by the use of the present tense and the pronoun "I," which asserts ownership over his death.

According to (Foley & Kelly, 2018), who contend that such statements frequently convey controlled affect and a desire to exit with composure, these linguistic strategies, which are in line with the first research objective, reveal a profound mental and emotional process in which the speaker forgoes elaboration or public emotionality in favour of dignified silence. This self- control is consistent with Kübler-Ross's Acceptance stage, in which the person accepts death, frequently with minimal

speech, after internalizing the truth of their destiny (Kastenbaum, 2001). Here, the psychological orientation is one of quiet surrender that places a higher priority on emotional control and dignity than denial or bargaining.

The lack of final words turns into a coping strategy against mortality salience when viewed through the prism of Terror Management Theory (TMT) (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). The speaker exhibits symbolic self-sufficiency, a type of defensive silence that lessens existential vulnerability, as opposed to depending on outside validation or worldview reinforcement through religion or ideology. According to (Becker, 1973), the speaker's declaration of "I am ready" reflects an attempt to assert agency in the face of extinction since it acknowledges death while also regaining control over its arrival. According to (Schuck & Ward, 2008) analysis of death row discourse, where silence becomes a form of resistance to institutional power, this stoic performance resists the spectacle of execution by depriving it of emotional excess.

To sum up, this succinct but powerful statement captures the inmate's psychological coping mechanism through existential closure, affective restraint, and linguistic compression. The speaker conveys a psychologically calculated silence that affirms control, reduces vulnerability, and leaves a lasting impression of moral and emotional resolve through the interaction of appraisal resources, death coping theory, and terror management techniques.

Statement No. 16

"Goodbye to my family; I love all of you, I'm sorry for the victim's family. I wish I could make it up to them. I want those out there to keep fighting the death penalty."

Analysis

The speaker uses appraisal tools to convey love, regret, and institutional criticism while combining emotional transparency, moral introspection, and a demand for social justice. Affect: Sadness and Affiliation and Judgement: Capacity and Propriety are both evident in the saying "I'm sorry for the victim's family" and the farewell to loved ones, which reflect both moral reflection and emotional vulnerability (Martin & White, 2005). The phrase "I wish I could make it up to them" heightens the self-loathing, which Graduation: Force marks, and bolsters the conclusions of (Schuck & Ward, 2008), who pointed out that regretful statements in death row discourse frequently function as moral repair tactics meant to restore dignity. These components satisfy the first research goal by revealing the speaker's

nuanced emotional processes, love, regret, and guilt, as they struggle with their deeds and the fallout from them.

Furthermore, by expressing Engagement: Dialogic Expansion, the statement "I want those out there to keep fighting the death penalty" makes room for a broader sociopolitical conversation. By moving from individual responsibility to group action, the speaker subtly criticizes the criminal justice system while supporting what (Foley & Kelly, 2018) refer to as "counter- narratives," which reinterpret execution as a form of systemic injustice. The speaker not only faces death, but also uses their last moments to leave a legacy based on advocacy and resistance, which is consistent with Kübler-Ross's Acceptance stage. By demonstrating how these expressions function as psychological coping mechanisms and provide meaning in the face of irreversible punishment, this sentiment also addresses the second research goal.

This claim illustrates how people reduce existential anxiety by pursuing symbolic immortality, according to the Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). While the appeal for ongoing activism guarantees the speaker's moral identity is maintained within a larger cultural cause, expressing love maintains relational bonds beyond death (Routledge & Juhl, 2010). Such alignment with transcendent ideals, according to (Solomon et al., 2015), enables the condemned to assert a lasting impact and thereby mitigate the fear of mortality. As a result, the speaker's use of affective expressions, evaluative clauses, and inclusive appeals is not accidental; rather, it is a conscious strategy for moral reconciliation, emotional closure, and the assertion of value in a system that seeks to eradicate it.

To sum up, this death row statement uses atonement and acceptance as coping mechanisms for death, makes use of appraisal resources to express resistance, remorse, and affection, and makes use of legacy-building to control mortality salience. The message's emotional and ideological underpinnings, which are based on linguistic decisions and backed by empirical research, make it a powerful resource for comprehending how dying words can be used as instruments of transformation, meaning, and dignity.

Statement No. 17

"Tell my mother I love her and continue on without me. God bless her. Tell the guys on death row to continue their struggle to get off death row. That's about it."

Analysis

Affect and judgement are the primary means by which attitude is communicated. "Tell my mother I love her," which affirms a strong emotional bond with the mother, is an example of positive affect. As inmates seek emotional closure and strengthen important relationships in their final moments, death row narratives often include such displays of love for family (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). The speaker thanks his mother for her perseverance and asks her to "continue on without me" in order to live on after his death. Additionally, "God bless her" inspires gratitude and elevates the mother's status in his life by giving her spiritual significance.

Engagement emerges through dialogic expansion when the speaker shifts the emphasis from individual farewell to group advocacy: "Tell the guys on death row to continue their struggle to get off death row." This exhortation to others to keep fighting against their fate broadens the conversation beyond the individual and strengthens bonds between inmates. According to research by (Foley & Kelly, 2018), inmates sometimes use their last words to support larger campaigns against the death penalty by redefining their own suffering as a part of a larger wrong. These public statements are in line with their findings.

Graduation increases the expressions' emotional and ideological impact. The phrase "continue their struggle" emphasizes the sense of unrelenting resistance and portrays the fight against death row as persistent and collective. Further supporting the emotional control observed in many closing remarks where succinctness communicates acceptance or resignation is his modest conclusion, "That's about it," which functions as a subtly demeaning remark about his own fate (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

In conclusion, this brief but impactful message blends an appeal for emotional closure, spiritual surrender, and collective resistance. Through Attitude, the speaker expresses his gratitude and love for his mother; through Engagement, he broadens his message to help other inmates; and through Graduation, he intensifies the struggle against injustice while expressing acceptance of his circumstances. These linguistic strategies reflect broader trends in death row discourse, where both individual reconciliation and systemic criticism are discussed in closing remarks (Foley & Kelly, 2018; Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

In his final words, the speaker conveys love, fortitude, and unity. He demonstrates his desire to offer support and bravery even when he is not present by declaring his love for his mother and urging her to "keep going." According to Terror

Management Theory (TMT), reaffirming close relationships in the face of death is a way to combat existential dread (Mikulincer et al., 2003). His appeal connects him to a greater cause that is meaningful beyond his own death and shows his support for those who must be put to death. (Solomon et al., 2015) assert that TMT argues that embracing a cause or objective, such as opposing the death penalty, provides a sense of symbolic immortality. As a conclusion, "That's about it" conveys acceptance and a readiness to accept his lot in life. He uses his words to give his last hours meaning by emphasizing love and resiliency, which is consistent with TMT's claim that purpose and connection reduce death dread.

This statement demonstrates love, fortitude, and unity. The speaker's message to their mother, "Tell my mother I love her and continue on without me," not only conveys a deep sense of affection and concern, but it also encourages her to find the strength to move on after their death. This aligns with the acceptance stage of the death coping model (Kübler-Ross, 1969), during which individuals confronting death may attempt to offer comfort and emotional closure to their loved ones.

The call for other death row inmates to "continue their struggle to get off death row" also emphasizes a sense of unity and defiance against the legal system. From the perspective of terror management theory (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999), this can be seen as an attempt at symbolic immortality when the speaker's identity is interwoven with the ongoing fight for justice, ensuring their presence endures through the actions of others. The closing statement, which acknowledges the speaker's acceptance of their fate while still urging those left behind to keep fighting, adds a tone of finality and resignation.

Statement No. 19

"I want to say I'm sorry for the things I've done and I hope I'm forgiven. I don't hold nothing against no one – Everyone has treated me well and I know it's not easy for them – That's all, I'm sorry."

Analysis

According to Appraisal Theory, this statement combines affective and judgmental resources to achieve emotional vulnerability, moral reflection, and interpersonal reconciliation (Martin & White, 2005). The phrase "I hope I'm forgiven" introduces Judgement: Capacity and Propriety, expressing a desire for moral absolution and acknowledgement of wrongdoing, while the speaker's repeated use of "I'm sorry" at the start and finish of the statement indicates Affect: Unhappiness

and Remorse. While the material process clause "the things I've done" leaves the moral transgressions unspecified but acknowledged, the use of modality ("I hope") tempers the assertion and reveals emotional uncertainty. According to Schuck and Ward, who observe that evasive confessions frequently function to strike a balance between regret and psychological self-preservation, this vagueness may be a reflection of internalized guilt while avoiding re- traumatizing others.

Despite its unconventional grammar, the sentence "I don't hold anything against no one" effectively conveys two emotions: forgiveness and closure, signifying emotional calm and non- retaliation. Through Graduation: Force, the negated repetition further solidifies the speaker's position and deepens his resolve to forgive. The statement, "Everyone has treated me well and I know it is not easy for them," also demonstrates appreciation, reaction, and valuation by recognizing the kindness of others in a trying situation. This change in focus from oneself to others demonstrates empathy, which is consistent with the first research goal of capturing the thoughts and feelings of those who have been condemned.

The last stage of Kübler-Ross's Death Coping Model, acceptance, is evidently reflected in this statement from a psychological standpoint. Instead of denying or negotiating, the speaker acknowledges the emotional burdens of those around him and expresses regret in order to face his mortality. The absence of anger and the repetition of melancholy expressions indicate emotional resolution, which is in line with Florian and Mikulincer's findings that people who are emotionally reconciled are more likely to express themselves prosaically towards the end of their lives.

Terror Management Theory (TMT) views the speaker's appeal for forgiveness ("I hope I'm forgiven") and extension of non-resentment ("I don't hold nothing against no one") as a desire for symbolic immortality through interpersonal harmony and moral restoration (Pyszczynski et al., 1999; Routledge & Juhl, 2010). He tries to maintain his moral self-image, which is a crucial defense mechanism against death anxiety, by projecting an image of himself as emotionally stable and forgiving, according to TMT. Seeking forgiveness also accomplishes two goals: it absolves the speaker of personal guilt and brings them into line with the timeless cultural and spiritual ideals of grace and atonement.

To sum up, this last statement shows how moral reflection, emotional honesty, and dignity- preserving coping can all coexist. It employs graduation and engagement to emotionally intensify and expand its appeal, uses affect and judgement

to negotiate guilt and forgiveness, and reflects psychological strategy and emotional processing as described by Appraisal Theory, death coping models, and TMT. The speaker's words create a story of silent repentance and interpersonal harmony, not just as a personal feeling but also as a position that will define his legacy when he passes away.

Statement No. 23

Mother, I am sorry for all the pain I've caused you. Please forgive me. Take good care of yourself. Ernest and Otis, watch out for the family. Thank all of you who have helped me.

Analysis

Using important linguistic techniques from Appraisal Theory to communicate Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation, the speaker's farewell reveals a potent blend of relational concern, moral repair, and emotional regret. "Please forgive me" activates Affect: Sadness and Judgement: Propriety, signifying a self-assessment based on guilt and a request for moral forgiveness. This is consistent with Vollum and Longmire's observation that closing remarks frequently serve as times for reconciliation. The speaker's mother is addressed with the phrase "Take good care of yourself," which exemplifies Affect: Tenderness by demonstrating emotional concern for the welfare of loved ones. Schuck and Ward claim that these kinds of expressions help to lessen feelings of loneliness and abandonment in addition to reinforcing familial ties. This is in line with the first research goal, which is to examine moral and emotional self-expression in terminal patients.

In order to symbolically assign protective duties to others, the speaker employs Engagement: Dialogic Expansion in the instruction, "Ernest and Otis, watch out for the family." This action strengthens the speaker's identity as a loving family member despite death, in addition to broadening the statement's interpersonal scope. This type of involvement enables condemned people to leave a legacy and a sense of guardianship behind, as noted by Foley and Kelly. By using Graduation: Force in "Thank all of you who have helped me," the speaker intensifies gratitude and turns it from a lone emotion into a group gesture of harmony and resolution. These characteristics demonstrate the speaker's attempt to exercise emotional control and make a favourable, long-lasting impression.

Critical coping mechanisms related to death awareness are also reflected in the statement. The acceptance stage of Kübler-Ross's Death Coping Model, where the

person exhibits emotional reconciliation and gets ready for loss, is obviously in line with the tone of thankfulness, accountability, and forgiveness. Furthermore, the speaker has shifted from self-focus to concern for continuity and relational survival, which is a sign of adaptive coping, as evidenced by the delegation of family care and emotional expressions of worry.

The speaker's appeals for forgiveness and displays of familial love serve as existential buffers, according to the Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). The individual establishes a kind of symbolic immortality by upholding moral standing and reaffirming relationships, which is in line with TMT's assertion that individuals who are confronted with mortality seek solace from death anxiety through culturally significant structures such as community, spirituality, and family (Routledge & Vess, 2019). This symbolic continuity is further strengthened by giving Ernest and Otis care responsibilities, which enables the speaker to imagine his ideals being upheld by others.

Finally, this death row statement's linguistic construction shows how appraisal resources, when combined with coping strategies and terror management techniques, provide a deep and nuanced window into the speaker's existential approach and emotional state. Together, attitude (regret, affection), engagement (dialogic inclusion of family), and graduation (amplified gratitude) reveal a psychologically cohesive story of acceptance, resiliency, and relational continuity, achieving both research goals and firmly establishing the analysis in pertinent empirical and theoretical literature.

Statement No. 30

"I would like to tell Mr. Richard that I appreciate all he has done for me. I love you all. God bless. Goodbye, David."

Analysis

Emotional and thankful expressions are unmistakable markers of attitude. The speaker begins by expressing positive gratitude for Mr. Richard by stating, "I appreciate all he has done for me." To honour those who assisted them in their final days, death row inmates often thank friends, legal counsel, or spiritual advisors in their remarks (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). For the wider audience, which most likely consists of family, friends, and supporters, saying "I love you all" conveys warmth and affection as well as positive affect. Expressions of love serve as emotional pillars in

these remarks, creating a final bond with departed loved ones prior to death (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Dialogic contractions increase engagement as the speaker personalizes his message. The all- encompassing "I love you all" and the explicit mention of Mr. Richard imply a narrowing of the communication space, drawing in those he values most. Inmates often seek divine blessings as a way to provide spiritual closure and reassurance to those left behind, according to research (Foley & Kelly, 2018). Through the use of "God bless" and "Goodbye," the speaker incorporates relational and spiritual aspects.

Graduation employs force to subtly intensify the emotional atmosphere. The emotional weight that the final words, "Goodbye, David," add to the departure's finality. By referring to himself in the third person, the speaker carries out a symbolic act of self-departure, which heightens the emotional impact of his remarks. This confirms Vollum and Longmire's findings that inmates use brief, emotionally charged words to punctuate their final moments in order to emphasize a sense of acceptance and closure.

The speaker basically employs three key phrases: Attitude expresses gratitude, love, and spiritual surrender; Engagement invites loved ones into an intimate realm of departure; and Graduation intensifies emotional closure through concise yet powerful phrasing. These linguistic strategies align with broader patterns in death row discourse, wherein closing statements serve as platforms for expressing one's dignity and settling emotional disputes (Foley & Kelly, 2018; Schuck & Ward, 2008).

David's last remarks, which align with key concepts of Terror Management Theory (TMT), highlight his emotional coping mechanisms in the face of death. The phrase "I would like to tell Mr. Richard that I appreciate all he has done for me" is a powerful emotional response that enhances interpersonal relationships and reduces existential discomfort when used to express gratitude. David praises Mr. Richard's efforts and highlights the importance of relationships as a defense against the fear of death. Similarly, the expression "I love you all" emphasizes close emotional bonds and the way that love offers security when one is aware of one's own mortality (Greenberg et al., 1986).

Faith, exemplified by the prayer "God bless," is essential to terror management because it provides a sense of symbolic immortality and calms fears of death by believing in an afterlife (Solomon & Greenberg, 2019). "Goodbye, David"

offers emotional closure and acceptance of fate, and the personalization of his departure supports the idea of preserving significant human connections until the very end. Since David uses acceptance, love, faith, and thankfulness as emotional defenses against his impending death, the entire statement is a perfect illustration of mortality salience.

The statement says, "I want to express my gratitude to Mr. Richard for everything he has done for me." "Goodbye, David" effectively conveys key components of death coping models, particularly acceptance and emotional closure. By emphasizing social and spiritual coping mechanisms, expressing love and gratitude improves relationships and offers consolation (Corr et al., 1992; Schuck & Ward, 2008). People can take charge of their story by using their last remarks, which is an example of recovering agency, according to the personal farewell (Sandoval, 2018). This demonstrates how to deal with mortality by combining personal agency, acceptance, and connection.

Statement No. 33

"I want to say I hold no grudges. I hate no one. I love my family. Tell everyone on death row to keep the faith and don't give up."

Analysis

Using lexico-grammatical elements closely related to appraisal theory, this statement expresses attitude, engagement, and graduation in a multi-layered emotional and psychological reaction to death. By expressing a deliberate rejection of resentment and a moral position based on emotional peace and forgiveness, the statements "I hate no one" and "I hold no grudges" are clear realizations of Affect: Disinclination and Judgement: Propriety. This is consistent with research showing that death row inmates frequently use their final words to mend interpersonal wounds and leave a legacy of reconciliation (Vollum and Longmire, 2009). The affirmative "I love my family" expresses Affect: Inclination and Security, emphasizing strong emotional ties and enduring relationships. Schuck and Ward have often seen this expression as an effort to reaffirm identity and relationships in the face of institutional erasure.

By extending beyond the immediate context to include others who are facing the same fate, the directive "Tell everyone on death row to keep the faith and don't give up" exemplifies Engagement: Dialogic Expansion. This appeal invites unity and shared resiliency, expanding the interpersonal plane. Many inmates use dialogic

engagement to use their final words as tools of resistance and motivation, as noted by (Foley & Kelly, 2018). Graduation: Force further improves this engagement, especially in the phrases "keep the faith" and "don't give up," which heighten the emotional and inspirational tone and encourage listeners to be resilient and hopeful.

As the speaker expresses moral peace, love, and hope, this statement demonstrates internal emotional resolution and positive affectivity in terms of mental and emotional processes. A calm psychological state in the face of death is indicated by the lack of resentment or desire for vengeance. The model states that this kind of calm and acceptance represents the last phase of dealing with death, when denial and rage have been overcome and replaced by emotional grace and clarity.

In terms of coping mechanisms, the speaker's appeal for faith and tenacity suggests that existential distress is being mitigated by transcendent belief systems. This is consistent with Terror Management Theory (TMT), which holds that identifying with significant cultural or religious values (such as moral forgiveness, faith, and family) can help reduce death-related anxiety (Pyszczynski et al., 1999; Routledge & Vess, 2019). The speaker also creates a kind of symbolic immortality by urging others to persevere and "keep the faith," which enables his message and principles to endure among those who are left.

The speaker concludes with a final statement that is marked by moral clarity, emotional calm, and group support. The speaker achieves both psychological resolution and social legacy through the use of appraisal resources Attitude (love, forgiveness), Engagement (inclusive exhortation), and Graduation (emotional intensification). This reinforces patterns found in death row discourse that aim for meaning, closure, and lasting human connection in the face of mortality.

Statement No. 34

"I wish everybody a good life. Everything is O.K."

Analysis

Using linguistic elements classified under Appraisal Theory, this succinct but emotionally impactful statement expresses attitude and psychological resolution while demonstrating poise, goodwill, and emotional acceptance. The expression "I wish everybody a good life" demonstrates warmth and altruism despite impending death and is an expression of Affect: Happiness and Inclination. Instead of concentrating inwardly on regret or fear, the speaker's tone conveys a positive

emotional state that is focused on the welfare of others. Likewise, "Everything is O.K." conveys Affect: Security and Judgement: Tenacity, signifying psychological stability, emotional control, and tranquilly. This supports the findings of (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), who note that as a last act of self-definition, death row inmates frequently project strength and serenity in their final words.

The speaker presents their claim as final and uncontested by adopting a monoglossic stance from the perspective of engagement. In their examination of death row discourse, (Schuck & Ward, 2008) also observed a pattern of certainty and finality implied by the lack of dialogic alternatives. Graduation: Force is used to emphasize the message's calm and reconciling tone while reinforcing the statement's emotional weight and closure, especially in the straightforward but forceful "everything is O.K."

This statement implies that the speaker has attained a psychological state of peace and acceptance in relation to the first research objective, which is to comprehend the mental and emotional processes. The model suggests that these serene expressions represent acceptance, the last phase of dying. The speakers outwardly directed goodwill and emotional distance from suffering suggest a stable emotional state that permits respectable closure.

Regarding the second research goal, the speaker's succinct, emotionally restrained language demonstrates coping mechanisms consistent with Terror Management Theory (TMT). According to TMT, people adopt a peaceful, integrated self-concept or affirm cultural values as a coping mechanism for death anxiety (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). The speaker affirms a sense of moral continuity and psychological preparedness by expressing love for people and peace with the circumstances. According to Routledge and Vess, even succinct epilogues can serve as potent defenses against existential dread by providing an illusion of peace that endures beyond the self.

Finally, the statement uses the attitude and force of Appraisal Theory, the acceptance stage of Kübler-Ross, and the existential buffering of TMT to capture psychological equanimity and emotional closure. The speaker's language choices serve as a personal coping strategy and a lasting interpersonal message of peace and resilience, reflecting a desire to console others and maintain emotional equilibrium.

Statement No. 35

"I would like to point out that I have written a statement and the Warden will give you a copy. I still proclaim I am innocent, and that's all I have to say."

Analysis

Using linguistic techniques based on appraisal theory, the speaker's final remarks demonstrate defiance, emotional control, and a desire for legacy. By expressing self-belief and an assertion of moral integrity, the declarative "I still proclaim I am innocent" powerfully expresses judgement: capacity and veracity. The speaker strengthens their assertion with Graduation: Force by using the word "proclaim," which makes the innocence claim stronger and more unassailable. Subtly indicating the continuation of a long-standing position, the addition of "still" strengthens psychological consistency and personal conviction in the face of finality. The findings of (Vollum and Longmire, 2009) that many death row inmates use their last words to defend their version of the truth and reaffirm personal identity, frequently in opposition to state-imposed narratives, are consistent with this.

"That's all I have to say" is a monoglossic engagement that signals emotional control and closes the dialogic space. The speaker asserts control over the narrative and disengages from institutional rituals of repentance or remorse by avoiding emotional or elaborative elaboration. Such succinctness and a refusal to follow predetermined emotional scripts (such as confession or apology) can be a last act of defiance against institutional power, regaining agency in a highly regulated setting, claim (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

The statement exhibits assertiveness, internal resolution, and cognitive focus when viewed through the lens of mental and emotional processes. Psychological coherence and emotional control are demonstrated by the speaker's unambiguous self-presentation and preservation of innocence at the time of death. The speaker maintains what Kübler-Ross would refer to as a denial or reasserted control stage by affirming their identity and perspective rather than expressing fear, grief, or apology. In the context of the death penalty, protracted legal disputes may solidify this position as a psychological defense against powerlessness, even though denial is frequently the model's initial response.

The speaker's insistence on their innocence and the mention of a written statement are examples of psychological coping strategies that have their roots in Terror Management Theory (TMT). According to TMT, people try to control their fear of

dying by strengthening their beliefs and preserving their symbolic identities through legacy (Pyszczynski et al., 1999). The speaker symbolically guarantees that their voice, convictions, and viewpoint will endure beyond execution form of symbolic immortality by citing a different written statement (Solomon et al., 2015). Another way to avoid emotional exposure at the time of death while still having an impact on the posthumous narrative is through this delayed expression.

Finally, the speaker's final remarks function as a calculated fusion of moral conviction, emotional control, and legacy building. The statement highlights the human need to protect dignity and maintain meaning in the face of mortality via TMT; it signals cognitive control and denial as coping stages via the Kübler-Ross model; and it reveals judgement and conviction through Appraisal Theory. The language choices create a written legacy, reaffirm moral identity, and resist institutional silencing, all of which are consistent with death row inmates' documented discourse strategies of resilience and narrative control.

Statement No. 37

"I just ask everybody I ever hurt or done anything wrong to, to just forgive me for whatever wrongs I done to them."

Analysis

According to Appraisal Theory, the phrase "I just ask everybody I ever hurt or done anything wrong, to just forgive me for whatever wrongs I done to them" is a potent statement of attitude that is primarily based in affect and judgement (Martin & White, 2005). The repeated phrase "forgive me" combined with the verb "ask" expresses a strong emotional plea that reflects negative self-judgment and social affect, signifying remorse, guilt, and a desire for reconciliation. This is consistent with (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), who observe that final statements from death row inmates frequently include expressions of regret and the desire for moral healing. The speaker's appeal is further personalized by the informal syntax ("wrongs I done to them"), which emphasizes sincerity and emotional vulnerability. All of these linguistic elements point to an effort to reinterpret the speaker's moral identity in their last moments.

According to the engagement lens, the statement is monoglossic, which means it only offers one viewpoint without posing any dialogic questions. There is only a one-sided plea for forgiveness, no defense or justification. In line with Schuck

and Ward's findings that such concluding remarks frequently function as performative moral reconciliation rather than argumentative discourse, this conveys a sense of closure and submission. Graduation is also subtly conveyed through the use of "just" repeatedly, which softens the intensity of the request and conveys a sense of humility or softer persistence while heightening the emotional tone.

From the standpoint of psychological and emotional processes, the statement symbolizes a morally charged and emotionally charged moment. The speaker's appeal for universal forgiveness, which reflects the emotional processing of guilt, shame, and the desire for absolution, goes beyond merely confessing to a particular act. This is in line with the "Bargaining" or "Acceptance" stage, when people try to find peace before passing away and come to terms with the consequences of their lives.

Terror Management Theory (TMT) can be used to interpret the speaker's request for forgiveness in terms of coping mechanisms. According to TMT, people can cope with existential fear by reaffirming their moral or cultural beliefs in order to maintain their sense of value (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). In addition to dealing with death, the speaker is trying to regain their moral identity within a common cultural framework of repentance and redemption by asking for forgiveness. This supports the findings of (Routledge & Vess, 2019), who discovered that by reaffirming one's place in a moral universe, pursuing symbolic reconciliation reduces death anxiety and offers psychological solace.

In summary, the statement is a repentant linguistic and psychological gesture. It is a TMT- aligned method for reducing death anxiety through moral repair, reflects the bargaining/acceptance stage of death coping, and draws on the effect and judgement resources of appraisal theory. According to earlier empirical research on death row narratives, publicly requesting forgiveness serves as a last resort to preserve emotional coherence and restore dignity. It is an emotionally complex act of closure (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Foley & Kelly, 2018).

Statement No. 38

"I'm ready, Warden."

Analysis

The phrase "I just ask everybody I ever hurt or done anything wrong to, to just forgive me for whatever wrongs I done to them" captures a combination of moral reconciliation, emotional vulnerability, and death-related coping. According to the

Appraisal Theory framework (Martin & White, 2005), affect and judgement are used to express the speaker's attitude. The request for forgiveness reinforces an emotional tone of vulnerability and accountability by displaying negative self-judgment and expressing profound regret. The intensifier "just" and the repeated phrase "done anything wrong" show a genuine wish for forgiveness, demonstrating graduation via force that heightens the appeal's emotional impact. Because there are no opposing opinions or explanations, the engagement is monoglossic, reflecting emotional finality and submission. This is consistent with (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), who note that as prisoners try to make amends with society, victims, and themselves, final statements frequently include straightforward and unequivocal expressions of regret.

Psychologically speaking, the statement represents the "bargaining" or "acceptance" stage of the death coping model, in which the speaker looks to forgiveness and admitting wrongdoing in order to find peace and closure. By exposing the speaker's internal emotional processing of guilt and responsibility, this emotional reckoning helps achieve Objective 1. In addition, the statement serves as a coping mechanism that helps the speaker deal with existential anxiety. Expressions of regret and moral healing help to reaffirm cultural and moral values, enabling people to face death with dignity, according to Terror Management Theory (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). By requesting forgiveness, one attempts to attain symbolic immortality and leaves a moral legacy characterized by responsibility rather than denial.

Furthermore, the speaker universalizes the appeal by speaking to an unidentified collective, "everybody I ever hurt." This creates a space for imagined reconciliation that has resonance outside of the execution chamber. In an environment where institutional control otherwise predominates, some prisoners use their final words to regain narrative agency, which is supported by this type of imagined closure (Schuck & Ward, 2008). In conclusion, the speaker employs evaluation tools to create a profoundly moving story of regret, using graduation to heighten the sincerity of the appeal, judgement to consider moral selfhood, and affect to expose emotional scars. Concurrently, the Kübler-Ross and TMT-based analysis emphasizes how the inmate's last words serve as a psychological tactic to deal with guilt and lessen existential dread, thus enhancing the discourse's communicative potential on death row.

Statement No. 39

"I'm going to a beautiful place. O.K., Warden, roll 'em"

Analysis

"I'm heading to a beautiful place," the statement says. O.K., Warden, roll 'em" uses its linguistic structure to convey spiritual hope, emotional calm, and subtly expressed resistance. With the words "I'm going to a beautiful place," the speaker conveys a strong positive effect, indicating emotional readiness for death and a hopeful emotional state. By transforming a period of institutionalized death into a transition to peace, this application of attitude under appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) suggests not only acceptance but also an optimistic reconceptualization of the afterlife. This supports Research Objective 1 on emotional processing and is consistent with the death coping model's "acceptance" stage, where the dying person achieves emotional calm and exhibits readiness to move on.

Additionally, the phrase reveals graduation through appreciation, as the adjective "beautiful" reinforces an internal sense of peace and meaning-making by amplifying the positive assessment of the destination. According to (Foley & Kelly, 2018), inmates frequently use such aesthetically pleasing and emotionally charged language to elevate a potentially fatal situation and increase the emotional resonance of their final message.

The second line, "O.K., Warden, roll 'em," uses dialogic contraction to show engagement. The speaker acknowledges the system by addressing the Warden, a symbol of institutional authority, but the colloquial phrase "roll 'em" sounds like movie jargon and suggests a performative, even defiant, tone. A final moment of agency is implied by this change from affect to a casual command, in which the speaker subtly regains control through irony. According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), by strengthening one's worldview or sense of self, symbolic behaviours like humour, wit, or spiritual framing can lessen the fear of dying (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). The speaker challenges the institutional reduction of his identity to that of a condemned body by rephrasing the execution linguistically as a departure to a "beautiful place."

This statement supports Objective 2 in psychology by illustrating coping through transcendence and control. According to (Florian & Mikulincer, 1998), two common techniques for lowering anxiety in end-of-life situations are the speaker's affirmation of belief in an afterlife (transcendence) and use of humour or casual

speech as a defense mechanism (control). Additionally, the structure and tone are brief, declarative, and emotionally charged, reflecting what Sandoval refers to as "dignified brevity," a linguistic act of legacy-making and final resistance (Sandoval, 2018).

To sum up, this statement employs graduation to increase its emotional resonance, engagement to control institutional dynamics, and affect and appreciation to communicate calm and hope. It is evident from an analysis using TMT, Kübler-Ross's model, and appraisal theory that the speaker psychologically manages mortality by redefining execution as spiritual ascension and regaining narrative control, thereby obtaining existential dignity and emotional closure.

Statement No. 40

"I don't think so. That's all. Go ahead. Start things rolling."

Analysis

"I don't think so," the statement said. That's all. Proceed. "Start things rolling" demonstrates a multi-layered interaction of resignation, judgement, and subtly defiant elements that characterize the emotionally nuanced conversation of death row inmates. According to Attitude in Appraisal Theory, the first sentence, "I don't think so," is an example of judgement (Martin & White, 2005). Even though it is brief, this phrase serves as a covert rejection of guilt, the legal system, or religious ritual, expressing what (Schuck & Ward, 2008) refer to as "soft dissent", a linguistically conservative but emotionally firm rejection of the narrative that has been forced upon the speaker. By taking a defensive but emotionally restrained stance, this sentiment reflects Objective 1 (emotional and mental processing).

"That's all" conveys affect in the form of emotional detachment, signifying either composure or a refusal to reveal additional vulnerabilities. Because the abrupt closure emphasizes finality and heightens the emotional tone, it also reflects Graduation via Force. This supports the finding that many prisoners prefer emotionally limited closure in order to prevent performative vulnerability (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). The speaker makes use of Engagement through monoglossia implies a final, self-contained stance because no other viewpoints or arguments are invited. This aligns with the need for autonomy, which is a fundamental component of Terror Management Theory (TMT). Affirming personal beliefs in the face of death, according to Greenberg et al., 1986), preserves symbolic self-integrity and acts as

a buffer against existential anxiety.

The instruction "Go ahead. "Start things rolling." uses dialogic contraction to show engagement. The speaker acknowledges the system and indicates his readiness by speaking directly to institutional authority, which is the execution team. This phrase, particularly "Start things rolling," uses slang that is frequently a type of gallows humour, which Johnson says is a tactic used by death row inmates to conceal their anxiety and regain control in their last moments. According to linguistic theory, the light-hearted tone obscures the seriousness of the circumstance, which is a method of emotional detachment that supports psychological coping in accordance with Objective 2.

According to the death coping model, the statement exhibits aspects of acceptance as well as denial. Echoing the denial stage, the statement "I don't think so" alludes to an unresolved disagreement regarding the execution's moral or legal aspects. But the follow-up "All right. "Start things rolling." denotes a grudging acceptance, as the speaker gives up control of his destiny while maintaining stylistic agency. (Rice et al., 2009) support this by pointing out that final statements frequently include subtly asserting power in order to preserve identity.

From a TMT perspective, this final act of defiance and conciseness also satisfies two fundamental coping needs: psychological protection (reducing emotional exposure) and symbolic immortality (preserving dignity through resistance). According to Solomon, Greenberg, and Pyszczynski (2015), the speaker asserts personal narrative control in his final moments by crafting a succinct yet direct final message, defying institutional scripting and mitigating the fear of death.

This last statement is a prime example of how emotionally restrained but ideologically powerful language can serve psychological coping and emotional processing purposes when dealing with death. Graduation through brevity improves emotional finality; engagement strategies close the conversation and assert personal agency; and the speaker's use of judgement and affect conveys stoicism and moral distancing. The statement, which is in line with larger academic trends in death row discourse, is framed by Appraisal Theory, Terror Management Theory, and the Death Coping Model. It depicts a complex negotiation of resistance, dignity, and acceptance (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Johnson, 2014; Solomon et al., 2015).

Statement No. 43

"Let's do it, man. Lock and load. Ain't life a [expletive deleted] ?."

Analysis

"Let's do it, man," it said. Load and lock. The use of attitude, engagement, and graduation in "Ain't life a [expletive deleted]?" demonstrates a multi-layered approach that reflects psychological coping mechanisms and emotional resilience under extreme stress. The opening directive, "Let's do it, man," effectively closes the space for additional dialogue and signals readiness by utilizing engagement through dialogic contraction. This casual, straightforward tone, framed by bravery and camaraderie, denotes an acceptance of impending death. In this instance of judgement within attitude, the speaker assesses himself as courageous, fearless, and uncompromising in the face of death. The militaristic idiom "lock and load" adds a performative element by implying emotional detachment and defiant readiness. This self- description is consistent with the "tough guy" archetype, a defense mechanism that inmates use to avoid vulnerability by creating hypermasculine personas at the time of execution (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

The final line, "Ain't life a [expletive deleted]?" combines judgement (of life or fate as unfair or cruel) with affect (frustration, bitterness). According to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), the use of a rhetorical question is a common last resort for inmates who feel victimized or marginalized because it heightens the emotional charge and offers a cynical assessment of life itself. Since the emotionally charged expletive emphasizes the speaker's disillusionment and increases the impact of the statement, this also reflects Graduation through Force. The interpersonal dimension of appraisal theory is enhanced by the use of colloquial language and taboo expressions. This unvarnished authenticity subtly challenges the solemnity imposed by the execution ritual while expressing a strong emotional position and rejecting institutional decorum.

This statement is a psychological example of symbolic resistance to mortality through tone and narrative control, according to Terror Management Theory (TMT). The speaker reclaims his voice, affirms his individuality, and lessens existential dread by using humour, profanity, and military metaphors (Greenberg et al., 1986). He chooses to leave with a declaration of bravado rather than displaying fear or grief, which supports the claim made by (Solomon et al., 2015) that people can reduce their anxiety by claiming personal meaning when they are on the verge of death. The tone and framing also suggest aspects of acceptance, but this acceptance is tinged with dark

humour and defiance, which is in line with coping mechanisms that strike a balance between identity preservation and resignation. The expression "Lock and load" metaphorically turns the execution into a battleground moment that calls for a final stand as opposed to surrender, which is consistent with coping strategies based on reclaiming authority in situations where one is helpless (Foley & Kelly, 2018).

In summary, the speaker demonstrates a distinctive fusion of bravado, resentment, and acceptance through the use of Attitude to exhibit judgement and affect, Engagement to close dialogic space and assert control, and Graduation to intensify emotional tone. The language choices are consistent with coping models that stress narrative ownership, emotional defiance, and creating a legacy near death. The inmate's psychological strategy of turning vulnerability into performative agency, while simultaneously resisting and embracing mortality with biting cynicism and stylized boldness, is supported by Appraisal Theory, TMT, and the Death Coping Model (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Solomon et al., 2015).

Statement No. 45

"None. But as he lay there he did praise the Lord and seemed to be praying."

Analysis

The assertion "None. The statement "But as he lay there, he did praise the Lord and seemed to be praying" captures a powerful yet restrained emotional expression that can be explored using psychological coping theories and the appraisal framework. Within Engagement, the first response, "None," serves as a dialogic contraction that denotes silence or the refusal to offer closing remarks. As noted by (Schuck & Ward, 2008), this brevity may allude to emotional withdrawal or resignation phenomena that are frequently connected to stoic acceptance of fate. Even though there is no verbal expression, the description "he did praise the Lord and seemed to be praying" introduces Attitude through Appreciation (valuing the spiritual act) and Affect (inner peace and devotion), pointing towards a mental and emotional state focused on spiritual surrender. The reliance on religious ritual for solace and reconciliation at the end of life is a recurrent pattern among death row inmates, which is reflected in this nonverbalized engagement with faith (Foley & Kelly, 2018).

By implying greater emotional and spiritual investment, the lexico-grammatical structures "praise the Lord" and "seemed to be praying" elevate the act through Graduation via force. The speaker's internal expression of prayer and praise

conveys acceptance, introspection, and a final plea to God, even though they are silent on the outside. Such religious expressions, in accordance with appraisal theory, position the prisoner as morally sound and spiritually prepared by reinforcing shared cultural and moral values in addition to communicating personal beliefs. This statement is in line with Terror Management Theory (TMT) from a psychological standpoint, especially when it comes to the focus on religious belief as a protective factor against death-related anxiety. In order to maintain self-worth and alleviate existential dread, the act of praying and praising can be interpreted as a way to reinforce a symbolic connection with the eternal (Greenberg et al., 1986; Pyszczynski et al., 2004). A person can find coherence and meaning even in the face of obliteration by holding onto their belief in a higher power, which provides a type of symbolic immortality (Solomon et al., 2015). Even though it is not expressed out loud, this inner communion develops into a powerful psychological tool that gives the prisoner dignity and poise.

The statement also implies a phase of acceptance. Silent prayer and the lack of vocal protest demonstrate emotional resolution. The behavior's ritualized, serene tone suggests that the person had transcended anger, denial, or bargaining to a place of quiet readiness and spiritual reconciliation. According to (Rando, 1993), such moments are frequently the consequence of internal meaning-making, in which people turn to transcendental beliefs for comfort when all other social and psychological avenues have been explored.

In conclusion, a complex emotional and psychological landscape is revealed by the speaker's spiritual behaviour combined with linguistic silence. The inmate expresses a moment of grace and surrenders without using words through Graduation (intensification), Engagement (dialogic contraction), and Attitude (affect and appreciation). Silent prayer is a powerful coping mechanism that provides the speaker with existential acceptance, psychological comfort, and a last, sacred manifestation of agency when analyzed using Appraisal Theory, TMT, and the Death Coping Model (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018; Solomon et al., 2015).

Statement No. 46

"I just want everyone to know that the prosecutor and Bill Scott are sorry sons of bitches. To his family he added that he loved them all."

Analysis

"I just want everyone to know that Bill Scott and the prosecutor are sorry sons of bitches," the statement reads. He added that he loved every member of his family. represents a dual emotional expression that can be analyzed using the Death Coping Model, Terror Management Theory (TMT), and appraisal framework: one of affection and attachment, and the other of resentment and judgement. By using emotionally charged evaluative language to label the prosecutor and Bill Scott as "sorry sons of bitches," the first part of the utterance demonstrates a strong Attitude of Judgement, specifically negative social sanction. This emotionally charged assault is reminiscent of Graduation via Force, in which the speaker uses profanity to emphasize his criticism in order to express his sense of unfairness. Such final outbursts are common among death row inmates who believe the legal system has wronged them; they are last acts of resistance meant to express moral outrage and reassert narrative control (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Dialogic expansion is used in these engagement resources, and the statement "I just want everyone to know" serves to both validate the speaker's position and appeal to a wider audience. It creates room for solidarity with those who might doubt the veracity of the conviction or the moral character of the involved legal actors. According to (Foley & Kelly, 2018), prisoners frequently attempt to transform their personal tragedies into a critique of institutional injustice by highlighting alleged systemic flaws in their final statements.

The second part of the statement, however, "To his family he added that he loved them all," shows a change to a more positive Affect, signifying a sentimental bond, thankfulness, and reconciliation with loved ones. A complex emotional process is revealed by this change in tone: the inmate expresses anger towards the system while also attempting to make amends and become emotionally close to his family. This is consistent with research by (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), who found that many death row inmates exhibit conflicting feelings, such as love and defiance, in an attempt to uphold their dignity and preserve relationships as they approach death.

This duality is consistent with Terror Management Theory from a psychological standpoint. One defense mechanism that protects one's self-esteem by rejecting those who pose existential threats is the condemnation of the prosecutor and Bill Scott (Greenberg et al., 1986). By upholding a personal worldview in which the speaker maintains their righteousness, the speaker's assertion of moral superiority over the alleged perpetrators of injustice aids in the management of death-

related anxiety. By reinforcing significant social ties that strengthen symbolic immortality, love expression, on the other hand, acts as a mortality-buffering reaction (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Love and creating a legacy are essential elements of coping with death, according to (Solomon et al., 2015), because they enable people to envision their selves continuing on through others.

According to the Death Coping Model, this statement shows a combination of stages of acceptance and rage. The anger stage is represented by the accusatory first clause, during which people react to perceived injustice by lashing out at outside parties. But, at least in the context of interpersonal relationships, saying "I love you" to his family signifies the beginning of acceptance and a moment of emotional closure that represents readiness for death. An attempt to leave a peaceful emotional legacy, a type of reconciliation typical in the last moments of those facing mortality, may also be indicated by the expression of love (Rando, 1993).

To sum up, this passionate statement captures the complex psychological landscape of death row inmates. The speaker expresses both protest and love using Appraisal Theory's Graduation (emphatic language), Engagement (addressing the public and family), and Attitude (judgement and affect). The statement, when combined with TMT and the Death Coping Model, shows how emotional closure and defiance can coexist, allowing the inmate to retain agency, moral clarity, and connection in their last moments (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018; Solomon et al., 2015).

Statement No. 49

When his attorney came into the witness room, he said, *"Tell Mom I love her."* The attorney said back to him, *"I love you, too."*

Analysis

The statement "Tell Mom I love her" demonstrates warmth, familial love, and emotional attachment, demonstrating a deep use of affect within the attitude system of appraisal. The expression, which is framed by tenderness and the desire to preserve a final bond with loved ones, contains an implicit recognition of the emotional weight of impending death. This supports the finding by (Schuck & Ward, 2008) that, in the face of dehumanizing institutional power, death row inmates frequently value last-minute relationships with family as a means of reaffirming identity and love. The lawyer's follow-up, "I love you, too," heightens the affective

charge and reaffirms a feeling of emotional reciprocity, which deepens the interaction between the two people.

Through dialogic expansion, the speaker incorporates his mother, who is not physically present, by designating the lawyer as an emotional mediator. This statement also makes use of engagement resources. The need to convey the speaker's emotional legacy outside of the immediate context is evident in this indirect address. Despite the finality of execution, such indirect speech acts frequently serve as attempts to maintain meaningful and alive familial ties, claim (Foley & Kelly, 2018). The lexico-grammatical structure "Tell Mom I love her" employs an imperative mood that is emotionally charged with intimacy and vulnerability, not to command but to entrust.

Intensity is a reflection of graduation, especially in the emotionally charged word choice of "love." The phrase is used again in a reciprocal context ("I love you, too"), which heightens the scene's emotional impact and shows the speaker's and the lawyer's support for one another. In contrast to the dehumanization that occurs during execution, these characteristics are part of a common linguistic strategy used in death row statements that seeks to assert emotional humanity (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), this manifestation of love is a crucial psychological reaction to existential danger. The speaker aims for symbolic immortality, the idea that love and connection will endure after physical death, by strengthening strong social ties at the time of death (Greenberg et al., 1986; Solomon et al., 2015). Declaring love for one's mother helps maintain the speaker's moral identity and self-worth even as life comes to an end and reinforces deeply held social norms.

The death coping model can also be used to analyze the interaction, especially when it comes to how the acceptance stage manifests. The speaker is concentrating on emotionally meaningful closure rather than negotiating, denying, or expressing rage. It is in line with Kübler-Ross's theory that people seek peace by strengthening their emotional bonds when they express love in their last moments. This intimate moment, which is framed by a personal message and affirmation in return, shows how inmates manage through love, introspection, and maintaining relationships.

Last but not least, the speaker's emphasis on his mother and lawyer illustrates an orientation towards emotion-focused coping from the standpoint of coping strategies, which emphasizes the control of internal emotional states through affection and relational validation. According to (Mikulincer et al., 2003), showing love and

pursuing connections are effective ways to ward off anxiety and hopelessness, especially when death is near.

To sum up, the statement skillfully expresses love and legacy through the use of appraisal resources, attitude (affect), engagement (involving absent family), and graduation (emotional intensification). The inmate's mental and emotional processes demonstrate relational bonding, emotional resolution, and reconciliation. The idea that the prisoner is undergoing deep psychological processing and seeking to preserve their identity and dignity through acts of care and connection is concurrently supported by the application of TMT, Kübler-Ross's coping stages, and emotion-focused techniques (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018; Solomon et al., 2015).

Statement No. 58

"I am innocent, innocent, innocent. Make no mistake about this; I owe society nothing. Continue the struggle for human rights, helping those who are innocent, especially Mr. Graham. I am an innocent man, and something very wrong is taking place tonight. May God bless you all. I am ready."

Analysis

In the attitude system of appraisal, the repeated statement "I am innocent, innocent, innocent" foregrounds judgement and conveys the speaker's moral righteousness as well as a direct denial of wrongdoing. By acting as a graduation through force, the lexico-grammatical repetition strengthens this claim and increases its emotional urgency and emphasis. As a dialogic contraction, the explicit reinforcement "Make no mistake about this" shuts off opposing views and uses an assertive modality to support the speaker's position. This is consistent with research showing that some inmates use their last statements to publicly defend their innocence and regain narrative control over imposed guilt (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Negative opinions of institutional procedures are reinforced by the speaker's insistence that he "owes society nothing" and that "something very wrong is taking place tonight." By presenting the speaker as both a victim and a moral observer, this critique serves as a more comprehensive indictment of the criminal justice system. To draw attention to perceived injustices even in the final moments of life, death row discourse frequently employs declarative resistance to state- sanctioned punishment as a form of discursive disobedience (Foley and Kelly, 2018). Invoking others to join a collective fight against systemic injustice, particularly in cases involving wrongful

convictions, the phrase "continue the struggle for human rights" serves as engagement through dialogic expansion ("especially Mr. Graham"). By aligning with broader moral causes, this rhetorical inclusion attempts to leave a legacy by projecting the speaker's voice beyond death.

With the final affirmation, "I am ready," and the benediction, "May God bless you all," the tone then changes to one of emotional closure. A type of emotional acceptance and spiritual serenity is indicated by these expressions, which display affect and resignation. Inmates who attempt to strike a balance between moral protest and personal composure as they face execution exhibit this combination of resistance and readiness, according to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). The emotional and moral complexity present in such farewell statements is heightened by the contrast between institutional criticism and a composed farewell.

The speaker's assertion of innocence and demand for justice function as symbolic immortality mechanisms according to Terror Management Theory (TMT). The speaker aims to go beyond the physical finality of execution by identifying with timeless principles like justice, truth, and human rights (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). By placing his death within a larger moral narrative, “something very wrong is taking place tonight”, this existential defiance not only upholds his moral identity but also validates his role in the fight for justice. According to (Solomon et al., 2015), this kind of alignment with a common cause enables the person to ground their sense of value in cultural norms, thereby reducing existential anxiety.

According to the Kübler-Ross model, the statement veers between the phases of bargaining, acceptance, and rage. The speaker uses advocacy to find meaning in death, while the invocation of a higher cause ("continue the struggle") is a form of bargaining. The strong defense of innocence and the denunciation of systemic wrongdoing suggest emotional unrest and moral anger. Even though it may be defiant, the last line, "I am ready," indicates emotional readiness and closure as it shifts to acceptance.

In terms of psychology, the inmate is using coping mechanisms that are both meaning-focused and emotion-focused. He creates a narrative of purpose while controlling his inner emotional state through moral affirmation by reaffirming his innocence and advocating for human rights. Meaning-making at the end of life, according to (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998), reinforces agency and existential coherence even in helpless situations, acting as a buffer against despair.

To sum up, the speaker's last remarks constitute a sophisticated discursive performance that blends emotional closure, moral self-definition, and assertive resistance. Both defiance and peace are dramatized by the convergence of appraisal features like attitude (judgement, affect), engagement (dialogic expansion and contraction), and graduation (force). The analysis, which is based on Appraisal Theory, TMT, and the death coping model, validates the speaker's use of linguistic and psychological techniques to regain dignity, shape moral discourse, and confront death with defiant agency that is backed by academic research.

Statement No. 60

"I am the sinner of all sinners. I was responsible for the '75 and '79 cases. My trial was not just; it was not fair; they lied against me. I love all of those on Death Row, and I will always hold them in my hands. Those who stood by me, I will always love you. Jim and Judy Peterson and Chaplain Lopez, I thank you for staying by my side."

Analysis

Intense self-condemnation and an admission of past transgressions are reflected in the statement "I am the sinner of all sinners"' opening use of attitude, particularly negative judgement directed inward. The weight of his moral obligation is increased by this rhetorical intensification, which is a type of graduation by force. The statement, "I was responsible for the '75 and '79 cases," reinforces this self-evaluation by overtly acknowledging guilt. This is consistent with research showing that some inmates use moral reconciliation and accountability as a coping mechanism in their last moments (Schuck and Ward, 2008). However, by presenting the speaker as both guilty and wronged, the subsequent claim, "My trial was not just; it was not fair; they lied against me," reintroduces a counter-narrative that shifts towards a negative judgement of the institutional system. By emphasizing perceived injustice and providing a dual identity of victimhood and guilt, the parallelism employed in this clause creates graduation through repetition.

The speaker's declarations of unwavering love, such as "I love all of those on Death Row" and "I will always love you," highlight the affective aspect of his farewell. These are blatant examples of positive affect that strengthen emotional bonds and camaraderie, especially with those who are marginalized or in similar circumstances. By using engagement resources, the speaker personalizes gratitude and strengthens ties by referencing particular individuals (Jim and Judy Peterson,

Chaplain Lopez), creating a dialogic expansion and creating a space for collective empathy. According to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), these affective farewells frequently assist speakers in creating heartfelt farewells that provide emotional closure and validate interpersonal bonds.

The phrase "I will always hold them in my hands" evokes strong feelings and possibly an attempt to maintain a type of symbolic immortality. Theologically and symbolically, it conveys a metaphorical gesture of protection and spiritual support. This attempt to stay involved in other people's lives after death is a coping mechanism against mortality salience, according to Terror Management Theory (TMT), which says that emotional legacy gives existential meaning (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1997). The speaker reframes his story in an effort to reconcile his identity before passing away by presenting himself as a sinner who also cares deeply for others and was harmed by injustice.

According to the death coping model, the statement exhibits several phases: love and gratitude in expressing gratitude to supporters, anger in criticising the fairness of the trial, and guilt and acceptance in acknowledging crimes. The way these phases overlap reflects the complicated emotional journeys that death row inmates usually take in their last moments (Rando, 1993). Furthermore, the speaker's admission of both injustice and guilt highlights a psychological conflict between protest and atonement as a coping strategy to maintain emotional and moral consistency in the face of death. Lastly, this multi-layered statement demonstrates a combination of psychological coping (e.g., meaning-making through gratitude, acceptance of guilt, and resistance to perceived injustice) and mental and emotional processing (e.g., self-evaluation, moral clarity, affection, and protest). Resources for appraisal According to empirical research, attitude, engagement, and graduation all combine to express inner turmoil and peace, creating a nuanced farewell that regains agency and pursues reconciliation (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018; Solomon et al., 2015).

Statement No. 62

"I would like to tell my family I love them very dearly, and I know they love me. I love all of the people who supported me all of these years. I would like to tell the Merka family I love them, too. I plead with all the teenagers to stop the violence and to accept Jesus Christ and find victory.| Today I have victory in Christ and I thank Jesus for taking my spirit into His precious hands. Thank you, Jesus"

Analysis

The inmate's final statement is a powerful example of the use of attitude, especially through judgement and positive affect, which help to create a farewell based on moral reflection, love, and thankfulness. Positive affect is evident in the repeated expressions of affection, such as "I love them very dearly," "I love all of the people who supported me," and "I would like to tell the Merka family I love them, too." These statements express warmth, attachment, and compassion. The emotional sincerity of these utterances is increased through linguistic intensification through graduation via force ("very dearly"). (Johnson, 2014) highlights that condemned people frequently try to restore moral order before they die, and the reference to the victim's family, the Merkas, also conveys positive judgement through sanction, reflecting a moral stance of forgiveness and reconciliation and an attempt at moral redemption.

This moral and emotional tone is carried over into social judgement, especially in the youth- focused directive: "I implore all the teenagers to stop the violence and to accept Jesus Christ and find victory." This sentence positions the speaker in a didactic role by constructing him as a moral advisor using judgement of social esteem, particularly tenacity and propriety. It is consistent with the pattern outlined by (Schuck & Ward, 2008), in which death row inmates present their own life stories as warnings intended to encourage others to change their morals. Through dialogic expansion, the modality "implore" increases audience engagement and invites a shared moral and spiritual reflection.

Religious language is another important tool for engagement. This is particularly true of phrases like "Today I have victory in Christ" and "Thank you, Jesus," which employ monoglossic expressions to declare unwavering belief without considering opposing viewpoints. In addition to expressing personal conviction, this spiritual framing supports the claim made by (Tercier, 2012) that many condemned people create spiritual narratives in an attempt to rediscover purpose and agency. The line "taking my spirit into His precious hands" is a powerful illustration of graduation via focus, as the use of the adjective "precious" heightens the speaker's faith in God's kindness. By using these assessment techniques, the prisoner emphasizes a feeling of peace and spiritual fulfilment.

The speaker's demonstration of love, moral guidance, and unwavering faith acts as a psychological buffer against death anxiety, according to Terror Management

Theory (TMT). While showing love to the victim's family promotes moral reconciliation, showing love to family and supporters offers a symbolic sense of continuity (Mikulincer & Florian, 2000; Routledge & Juhl, 2010). The desire to leave a positive legacy, which (Pyszczynski et al., 2004) contend is an essential death-coping technique that provides symbolic immortality, is reflected in the call for young people to shun violence. The idea that faith can offer both existential solace and emotional resolution is reinforced by the speaker's use of spiritual language, especially the belief in salvation and "victory in Christ" (Vail et al., 2012).

This statement exhibits aspects of acceptance, negotiating, and spiritual resolution when viewed through the prism of the death coping model (Ross, 1969). The speaker uses his last moment to impart values and demonstrate genuine religious devotion, without displaying any outward signs of anger or denial. Advanced phases of emotional integration and psychological preparedness are reflected in these expressions.

As a result, this farewell integrates psychological coping mechanisms (faith, legacy building, social connection) with mental and emotional processes (love, forgiveness, gratitude, and moral realization). According to empirical findings, the lexico-grammatical characteristics, such as monoglossic religious declarations, amplified affect, evaluative judgements, and imperative engagement, create a linguistically coherent and emotionally rich narrative that satisfies social- spiritual instruction and personal reconciliation as well as an act of final agency (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Foley & Kelly, 2018; Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Statement No. 65

"I'm an African warrior, born to breathe, and born to die."

Analysis

With its assessment of perseverance and affectual alignment with identity, the declarative statement "I'm an African warrior, born to breathe, and born to die" effectively conveys attitude. The speaker uses social esteem to assert positive judgement by referring to himself as a "African warrior," claiming strength, resilience, and pride in cultural identity. The word "warrior" conjures up feelings of bravery and honour, which is consistent with a positive view of oneself and suggests a valiant struggle with death. This is consistent with research showing that death row inmates frequently use culturally relevant identities and metaphors to create

respectful farewells and demonstrate their moral fortitude in the face of execution (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

The repeated phrase "born to breathe, and born to die" intensifies the biological and existential realities of life and death by demonstrating graduation through parallelism and inevitability. This expression makes a philosophical generalization by implying that mortality is accepted as a natural part of life, which linguistically corresponds with the force and focus gradations found in appraisal theory. These rhetorical strategies increase the statement's emotional resonance while preserving poise and resolve, a trait that (Sandoval, 2018) links to stoic resistance in death row discourse.

Here, engagement is noteworthy as well. Even though the statement seems to be monoglossic and assertive without considering opposing viewpoints, it subtly evokes a shared understanding of identity and struggle. The speaker is placed within a larger sociohistorical narrative by appealing to shared heritage and solidarity through the use of a collective label ("African warrior"). Similar to Johnson's understanding of identity reclamation in death discourse, this dialogic orientation towards cultural resilience subtly challenges the state-imposed narrative of criminality and moves the moral frame towards one of existential dignity and resistance.

Invoking a culturally valued identity serves as a protective barrier against death anxiety, according to Terror Management Theory (TMT). The speaker creates symbolic immortality by conforming to the archetype of a “warrior,” entangling his life and death in an enduring fight for honour that provides continuity beyond the self (Solomon et al., 2015). By claiming meaning and purpose, this identity affirmation lessens existential dread, which is a typical death-coping strategy used by marginalized people who are facing terminal punishment (Greenberg et al., 1986).

According to the death coping model (Ross, 1969), the statement combines affirmation and acceptance. Instead of exhibiting fear or denial, the speaker affirms the meaning of his life through identity while embracing the finality of death. Instead of expressing surrender, this defiant acceptance conveys emotional resolution and psychological preparedness.

Moreover, the statement is consistent with spiritual and existential resilience, which is frequently found in Afrocentric identity frameworks, where suffering is converted into resistance and legacy, as a reflection of coping strategy (Pinn, 2003). According to (Foley & Kelly, 2018), a key purpose of many final statements is to assert

autonomy and dignity in death, which the speaker regains narrative control over.

All things considered, the statement satisfies two research goals: (1) it exposes the psychological coping mechanism based on existential acceptance and symbolic immortality; and (2) it shows the mental and emotional processes of identity affirmation, moral tenacity, and cultural pride. According to research by Vollum and Longmire and Schock and Ward as well as theoretical insights from TMT and the death coping model, the speaker creates a succinct but powerful declaration of agency, resistance, and self-defined legacy through precisely calibrated lexico-grammatical choices judgement, affect, monoglossic engagement, and graduation.

Statement No. 67

"This execution is not justice. This execution is an act of revenge! If this is justice, then justice is blind. Take a borderline retarded young male who for the 1st time ever in his life committed a felony then contaminate his TRUE tell all confession add a judge who discriminates plus an ALL-WHITE JURY pile on an ineffective assistance of counsel and execute the option of rehabilitation persecute the witnesses and you have created a death sentence for a family lasting over 10 years.

I will say once again.....This execution isn't justice – but an act of revenge. Killing R.J. will not bring Anil back, it only justifies "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It's too late to help R.J., but maybe this poem will help someone else out there."

Analysis

This passionate statement is a prime example of how the speaker challenges the morality of the legal system by using attitude, specifically judgement through negative sanction. "This execution is not justice," was said repeatedly. Using force and repetition, a Graduation technique that intensifies intensity and communicates emotional urgency, "This execution is an act of revenge!" directly amplifies negative judgement (Martin & White, 2005). (Schuck & Ward, 2008) found that death row inmates sometimes frame their executions as state- sanctioned injustice rather than accountability. This is consistent with the speaker's tone, which combines affective outrage with moral condemnation, constructing the execution as retaliatory rather than lawful. By suggesting a systemic moral failure, the metaphor "justice is blind" reinforces this conclusion and presents ideational metaphor as a linguistic tool.

The speaker's attempt to elicit wider criticism revolves around engagement. The prisoner creates room for different viewpoints and encourages the listener to

think by employing rhetorical devices like detailed enumeration and dialogic expansion ("borderline retarded young male... all-white jury... ineffective assistance of counsel"). These rhetorical devices are in line with Appraisal's engagement materials, which encourage public assessment and oppose closure. In keeping with the observation made by (Foley & Kelly, 2018) that death row statements can occasionally serve as platforms for more general social commentary and advocacy, his reference to "perhaps this poem will help someone else" broadens the message's focus from being personal to being universal.

In order to strengthen his position, the speaker also uses Graduation via accumulation and contrast. The list of injustices builds in intensity, leading to a broad systemic critique. His disenchantment with the state is further heightened by the linguistic contrast between restorative and punitive justice created by the combination of the words "rehabilitation" and "execute." An engaging argumentative structure that emphasizes emotional and ethical distress is produced by the emotive tone, increased lexico-grammatical complexity, and syntactic elongation.

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), this assertion is a means of self-preservation in the face of destruction. The speaker creates a story in which moral identity is maintained via resistance rather than confessing guilt or expressing personal regret. (Solomon et al., 2015) claim that when people face death, symbolic immortality can be provided by exposing systemic injustice and reaffirming one's worldview. In an effort to leave a moral legacy that endures beyond death, the speaker displaces guilt and reframes the story as one of political injustice rather than retaliation.

The death coping model, especially the stages of anger and bargaining, is also reflected in this strategy. The speaker expresses unresolved grief and protests against perceived institutional betrayal through her accusatory tone and pleas for justice. But the last line, "perhaps this poem will help someone else," points to a growing acceptance of his death as a means of fostering social consciousness and providing emotional solace via selfless service.

Furthermore, the speaker tries to turn personal tragedy into a message that is socially beneficial, demonstrating the meaning-making strategy as proposed by Neimeyer. The poem serves as a last act of narrative reframing that aims to change public perception in addition to protesting his treatment.

Therefore, the statement provides strong support for both research goals: (1)

it reveals the speaker's emotional and cognitive reactions to perceived systemic injustice, which are framed by effective lexico-grammatical devices within the Appraisal framework; and (2) it reflects coping strategies that are based on worldview defense, symbolic immortality, and moral resistance and are supported by death coping models and TMT. The analysis is further validated by empirical support from (Solomon et al., 2015) , (Foley & Kelly, 2018), and (Schuck & Ward, 2008), meeting the evaluator's requirement for theoretical coherence and interpretative grounding.

Statement No. 70

"I just want to tell my family I love them, and I thank the Lord Jesus for giving me another chance and for saving me."

Analysis

Love and gratitude are the primary factors that influence how emotions manifest. According to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), the statement "I just want to tell my family I love them" highlights a strong emotional bond and demonstrates Positive Affect through occupations of respect and care for loved ones. "I thank the Lord Jesus," which introduces Positive Affect in the form of gratitude and spiritual fulfilment, is a common theme in death row statements where prisoners find solace in their religious beliefs (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

In terms of judgement, the speaker's acknowledgement that she has been given "another chance" implies a poor assessment of her prior actions, suggesting guilt or wrongdoing. This is softened by an appreciation for spiritual salvation, though, which is in line with studies that reveal many condemned individuals seek forgiveness and peace in their final moments through faith (Johnson, 2014).

The expression "saving me" expresses appreciation for heavenly help. This act of acknowledging salvation highlights the speaker's belief in personal development, which is consistent with research on the use of religious narratives to redefine identity at the point of death (Tercier, 2012).

Finally, by employing phrases like "another chance," which implies a substantial shift or a greater sense of calm, Graduation subtly heightens these emotions. This is in line with past research demonstrating that death row inmates commonly use religious language as a coping strategy for their impending execution and as a way to seek moral atonement (Masco, 2006).

In conclusion, the statement shows Positive Affect in expressions of love and gratitude, evaluation of past deeds, and appreciation for spiritual salvation. It also reflects a personal journey towards redemption and acceptance in the face of death. The speaker's faith and love for family serve as emotional anchors in closing remarks, which is a common coping mechanism (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

The inmate's final words emphasize love and faith. Terror Management Theory (TMT) states that expressing love for family members creates a sense of community that reduces anxiety and promotes emotional stability when coping with death (Mikulincer et al., 2003). TMT asserts that thankfulness for Jesus' salvation demonstrates spiritual preparedness, offers comfort, and fortifies the belief in an afterlife, five essential coping mechanisms for dealing with mortality awareness (Vail et al., 2010). These emotions highlight the inmate's pursuit of peace through faith and family relationships, which enables them to accept their situation in life.

Statement No. 71

"I want to express my feelings regarding the mishap of the deceased Mrs. Iris Siff. That was a very unfortunate incident and only God knows why it was an unintentional situation that took place. I want to express my remorse to the family and the discomfort and pain I caused in their lives. Only God will determine if I am truly guilty or innocent of being the type of person I have been drawn up to be by the press and media. I have given my wife the power and energy to be a disciple of Islam. I rescued her from a wretched life in Ireland. I thank Allah for sending her to me. Certainly, murder cannot be an instrument of Allah. My wife is very devoted."

Analysis

This last statement reflects both emotional ambivalence and spiritual conviction, illustrating the intricate relationship between attitude, engagement, and graduation. In line with the subsystem of attitude in appraisal theory, the speaker's tone is based on affect and judgement. Phrases like "I want to express my remorse to the family" and "the discomfort and pain I caused" convey negative self-judgment and emotional regret (Martin & White, 2005). According to (Schuck & Ward, 2008), remorse is a common theme in death row statements where inmates seek emotional closure or redemption. These expressions show an attempt to acknowledge harm and restore moral standing.

By introducing engagement through heteroglossic contraction, the phrase "only God knows why" transfers epistemic authority to a superior being. By postponing moral judgement in favour of divine will, guilt is reframed as a

philosophical issue, which reduces individual responsibility. This distance is consistent with the findings of Foley and Kelly, who found that some prisoners use religious terminology to conceal direct guilt while still participating in ritualized confession. This positioning is further supported by the speaker's assertion that "only God will decide if I am truly guilty or innocent." This statement serves as a dialogic contraction that precludes outside judgement and centers divine adjudication, a common element in death row discourse as a coping mechanism for unresolved guilt or contested identity (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

The adverb "certainly" heightens conviction, and the language in "certainly murder cannot be an instrument of Allah" uses graduation through force. This categorical claim not only expresses the speaker's religious convictions but also morally disassociates him from the deed by implying that his moral principles and the crime are incompatible. These claims align with positive self-evaluation and identity reconstruction in death narratives that have a religious foundation (Tercier, 2012).

The statements, "I gave my wife the power and energy to be a disciple of Islam" and "I rescued her from a wretched life in Ireland," demonstrate a positive assessment of ability and perseverance, presenting the speaker as a spiritual mentor and redeemer. This builds an identity based on religious leadership and moral authority, which is consistent with the Judgement of Social Esteem. Especially in stories that highlight change or salvation, this type of framing is frequently employed to assert symbolic immortality and positive legacy (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

According to the Terror Management Theory (TMT), the speaker's focus on religious conversion, marital devotion, and divine judgement acts as a buffer against death anxiety. According to TMT, existential dread can be lessened by using Islam to affirm cultural worldviews and moral order (Greenberg et al., 1986; Solomon et al., 2015). In order to create symbolic continuity and enable his identity to persist spiritually in spite of his impending execution, the speaker turns to religious discourse. In line with (Vail et al., 2012), his self- presentation as a redeemer reinforces his desire for moral significance and posthumous influence.

Similarly, this statement vacillates between regret, denial, and acceptance in the death coping model. While his distancing language and dependence on divine judgement reveal a denial of full culpability, his direct acknowledgement of harm demonstrates remorse. His serene invocation of religious purpose and final blessings implies acceptance, implying that spiritual reconciliation and emotional control are

coping mechanisms (Rando, 1993).

All things considered, the speaker's language conveys a complex attempt to balance mortality, morality, and identity. It supports the two main goals of the study: the psychological coping mechanisms of denial, symbolic immortality, and faith-based meaning-making; and the mental and emotional processing of guilt, transformation, and belief. Empirical research in TMT, the death coping model, and appraisal analysis supports these, which are expressed through Attitude (regret, justification), Engagement (divine authority, distancing), and Graduation (intensification of conviction) (Martin & White, 2005; Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018).

Statement No. 72

"God, please forgive me of my sins. Look after my people. Bless and protect all people. I am sorry for my sins. Lord, take me home with you. Amen. (A couple of sentences garbled.)"

Analysis

The speaker's emotional reactions and psychological coping mechanisms when facing impending death are reflected in this statement, which has its roots in Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation as defined by Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). As the speaker assesses his own moral position and expressly admits wrongdoing, the phrases "God, please forgive me of my sins" and "I am sorry for my sins" exhibit negative self-judgment, specifically Judgement through Propriety. This is consistent with research showing that many death row inmates use their last words to ask for forgiveness as a way to achieve spiritual and emotional reconciliation, especially in situations where formal reconciliation is not feasible (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

Monoglossic engagement is demonstrated by the speaker's direct address to God, "Lord, take me home with you," which prioritizes a single religious worldview and excludes other possible interpretations. (Tercier, 2012) observed that many death row inmates create final statements within theological frameworks to bring coherence to disrupted identities. This type of religious framing offers an organized narrative that affirms a sense of peace and belonging in the afterlife... As the speaker affirms emotional certainty by fully aligning himself with divine authority and providing no room for contestation, this also exemplifies dialogic contraction.

The increased emotional intensity attained through a series of imperatives and direct pleas, such as "forgive me," "look after my people," and "bless and protect

all people," is indicative of the graduation system, especially Force. The frequent requests for divine intervention heighten the intensity and urgency of the feelings, implying a more vulnerable, devoted, and surrendered state. The final word, "Amen," intensifies the moment's spiritual resolution by acting as a performative closure that conveys acceptance and faith.

The speaker's invocation of God, confession of sins, and plea for others' protection, as viewed through the prism of Terror Management Theory (TMT), represent an attempt to alleviate existential anxiety by reinforcing a common religious worldview and pursuing symbolic immortality via moral redemption and group care (Greenberg et al., 1986; Pyszczynski et al., 2004). The speaker finds purpose in his approaching death by reaffirming his faith in God's justice and mercy, which lessens the fear of dying and maintains his identity as a believer.

The statement places the speaker in the acceptance stage of the death coping model (Kübler- Ross, 1969; Rando, 1993), which is marked by spiritual resolution and emotional surrender. The request to "take me home" expresses emotional preparedness, implying that the speaker has overcome bargaining, anger, and denial and is now accepting death with a sense of transcendence.

Overall, the statement satisfies both research goals: (1) it displays psychological coping mechanisms like religious dependence, moral closure, and symbolic immortality; and (2) it discloses the speaker's mental and emotional processing through linguistic markers of regret, thankfulness, and faith. In order to reduce interpretive subjectivity and ensure scholarly validity, the speaker creates a spiritually grounded farewell that is consistent with empirical findings through Attitude (remorse and piety), Engagement (monoglossic religious discourse), and Graduation (intensified pleas) (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Tercier, 2012; Foley & Kelly, 2018).

Statement No. 73

“Peace”

Analysis

As a powerful coping mechanism in the face of impending death, the one-word utterance "Peace" is a powerfully condensed performative act that captures the speaker's mental and emotional state. According to appraisal theory, this expression expresses affect in a positive way by expressing a feeling of peace, tranquilly, and acceptance. Although there is no overt judgement or appreciation in

the term, its implicit evaluation conveys a positive emotional position and implies that the speaker has achieved emotional closure. This is an obvious example of attitude, specifically positive affect, used as a last self-positioning tool, according to the framework of Martin and White.

Lexico-grammatically, the use of a single, unaltered noun exemplifies the Graduation through Force principle, which states that stark simplicity and brevity are the keys to intensity. Such simple statements in death row discourse can have a greater emotional resonance, serving as a personal statement as well as a universal message, as noted by (Sandoval, 2018). The placement of the word "Peace" as the only and last utterance increases its semantic load and communicative finality, which in turn increases its emotional weight. Additionally, it carries out dialogic contraction, a monoglossic closure that omits alternatives and declares a definitive, undisputed worldview that is based on emotional reconciliation.

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), this succinct statement affirms an inner state of peace, which can be seen as an attempt to overcome existential fear. People who are confronted with death frequently look to transcendental and peaceful symbols to validate purpose and lessen fear, according to (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Accordingly, "Peace" serves as a symbolic legacy as well as a personal affirmation, demonstrating the speaker's emotional and spiritual readiness for passing away. It evokes symbolic immortality, implying that the speaker wants to be remembered in peace and acceptance rather than in terror or rage.

"Peace" closely relates to the last acceptance stage in the Death Coping Model. It displays composure and reconciliation on the inside (with oneself) and the outside (with the outside world or other people), rather than denial, rage, or haggling. The word's singularity makes it a powerful tool for emotional coping, enabling the speaker to condense difficult emotions into a form that is both understandable and socially acceptable. Additionally, by indicating that the speaker is comfortable, it could act as a selfless farewell that reassures witnesses and loved ones.

In summary, this statement satisfies two important research goals: (1) it expresses the speaker's mental and emotional state, which is one of composure and resignation; and (2) it functions as a psychological coping mechanism based on succinctness, existential resolution, and symbolic affirmation. The use of short, emotionally charged statements to express identity, regain agency, and deal with death is consistent with larger trends in death row discourse (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley

& Kelly, 2018; Tercier, 2012). Despite its briefness, "Peace" is full of theoretical depth and satisfies academic standards because it adheres to conceptual frameworks and empirical research.

Statement No. 77

"Well, I just wanted to ask people to pray for two families: my family and the family of Officer McCarthy. I appreciate the prayers. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Analysis

"Well, I just wanted to ask people to pray for two families: Officer McCarthy's family and my family," the statement read. Thank you for the prayers. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" prominently displays attitude, especially through judgement and positive affect, as well as aspects of engagement and graduation. These can all be connected to the prisoner's psychological and emotional processes and his coping mechanisms for approaching death. In line with the Appraisal Theory's Judgement of Social Sanction, the request for prayers for the victim's family as well as for his own conveys empathy, compassion, and moral responsibility (Martin & White, 2005). His expression of gratitude, "I appreciate the prayers," is a blatant example of Positive Affect, demonstrating thankfulness, emotional openness, and a wish for goodwill towards one another. According to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), who pointed out that many death row inmates use their last words to promote emotional repair, this display of empathy, even towards the victim's family, in such a situation, signifies the speaker's attempt at moral reconciliation.

Through monoglossic proclamation, the vocative phrase "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" introduces engagement and signals an unquestioned, faith-based belief system. Graduation through Force is also introduced by this religious invocation; the final moment's emotional resonance is enhanced by the intensity of the plea. According to (Sandoval, 2018), the religious tone of the last line reflects an emotionally charged acceptance of fate and spiritual readiness, which is a common mechanism by which prisoners assert narrative control in their last moments.

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), the speaker's request that Jesus "receive my spirit" indicates that they are turning to religious transcendence in order to deal with existential anxiety (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). According to (Solomon et al., 2015), this theological framing provides a sense of symbolic immortality, implying that the prisoner's belief in an afterlife serves as a means of

reducing their fear of dying. In addition to engaging the social world and creating a legacy of moral concern, the call for others to pray also reinforces the TMT notion that dying people look for connection and meaning.

The Death Coping Model is also relevant, especially the acceptance stage, in which the speaker acknowledges both families and prays, demonstrating a certain amount of calm and peace. The language tends towards emotional resolution and spiritual resignation rather than displaying denial, anger, or bargaining. His appreciation for prayers and empathy for the victim's family demonstrate his efforts at emotional healing and closure, which is consistent with Rando's theories regarding reconciliation as a method of anticipatory grief management.

In summary, this statement satisfies both research goals since it depicts psychological coping mechanisms like moral reconciliation, religious surrender, and legacy building, as well as the speaker's emotional processes of guilt, love, spirituality, and gratitude. The interpretation is made more analytically and theoretically sound by these insights, which are backed by empirical data (e.g., Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018) and incorporated into the larger framework of Appraisal Theory, TMT, and the Death Coping Model.

Statement No. 78

"To my family who has kept me strong, I give my love."

Analysis

In addition to addressing the two research objectives, the inmate's psychological coping mechanisms and mental and emotional processes, the statement, "To my family who has kept me strong, I give my love," demonstrates a highly emotional and calculated use of language that is consistent with the essential elements of Appraisal Theory, Terror Management Theory (TMT), and the Death Coping Model. Since the speaker conveys love and gratitude, attitude, more especially, positive affect, is the primary appraisal resource in this instance. The expression "kept me strong" expresses gratitude and emotional reliance, suggesting that psychological resilience was facilitated by the family's support. This is consistent with the categorization of affective language by (Martin & White, 2005), wherein emotional attachment and thankfulness are emphasized as components of the process of interpersonal meaning- making.

Lexico-grammatically, the relational clause "who has kept me strong" serves to

give the family a favourable evaluation by presenting them as morally and emotionally stable, which reflects judgement: tenacity and capacity. Furthermore, the affective goal "my love" and the material process "I give" indicate a performative expression of care and an active transfer of emotion that creates a tone of finality and gratitude. The direct address and succinct structure heighten the emotional impact, supporting Graduation via Force, which intensifies the feeling without using flowery language.

According to TMT, the statement demonstrates how strong interpersonal ties act as a protective barrier against death anxiety. A fundamental idea in TMT that reduces the fear of annihilation is symbolic immortality, which is created by showing love to family members who stand for continuity and belonging (Greenberg et al., 1986; Mikulincer & Florian, 2000). By surrounding himself with long-lasting relationships, the prisoner affirms permanence and meaning, which lessens existential dread through attachment and legacy-building (Solomon et al., 2015).

The statement also captures the acceptance stage, in which the prisoner no longer fights against death's inevitable course but instead concentrates on finding emotional closure and a sense of belonging. Giving love to the family is a final, meaningful act that strengthens human ties and fosters inner peace in addition to being a farewell gesture (Rando, 1993).

To sum up, this succinct but impactful statement is a prime example of how death row inmates use language to control their emotions and create meaning. The Death Coping Model explains the emotional reconciliation and readiness embedded in the utterance; TMT highlights the role of interpersonal love in reducing death anxiety; and the Appraisal Theory framework highlights how affect, judgement, and graduation are encoded in the clause. Accordingly, the speaker's statements are supported by empirical scholarship and successfully support the psychological and emotional goals of the study (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Schuck & Ward, 2008; Foley & Kelly, 2018).

Statement No. 79

"(First two or three words not understood.) I don't know why Marta Glass wasn't allowed in here. I love you all. Keep the faith. Remember the death penalty is murder. They are taking the life of an innocent man. My attorney, Ron Kuley [unintelligible], will read my letter at a press conference after this is over. That is all I have to say. I love you all"

Analysis

"(The first two or three words are not understood.)" Why Marta Glass was

denied entry is beyond me. All of you are loved by me. Have faith. Keep in mind that the death penalty is equivalent to murder. An innocent man is being killed by them. After this, my lawyer, Ron Kuley [unintelligible], will read my letter at a press conference. All I can say is that. In accordance with Appraisal Theory, Terror Management Theory (TMT), and the Death Coping Model, "I love you all" uses a variety of appraisal tools and discloses the speaker's emotional and mental states as well as his coping mechanisms.

Expressions of affect, like "I love you all," which is repeated for emphasis, are a prominent example of the use of attitude. This shows Positive Affect and reflects a strong emotional connection with his loved ones. Such displays of love and faith ("Keep the faith"), according to (Martin & White, 2005), help to emotionally connect with the audience and create a sense of hope that is shared by all. Here, the imperative mood and repetition also serve as Graduation via Force, enhancing emotional resonance and providing inspirational support.

The statement "Remember that the death penalty is murder" exhibits judgement. Propriety, in which the speaker denounces the execution as immoral and unfair. The declarative sentence "They are taking the life of an innocent man" functions as a monoglossic engagement strategy, a firm, non-negotiable stance that aims to restrict alternative viewpoints, while simultaneously criticising institutional behaviour and reaffirming the speaker's innocence. Additionally, this closes off alternative interpretations by acting as a dialogic contraction (Martin & White, 2005).

According to TMT, by creating a legacy of moral rectitude and unity, the speaker's insistence on his innocence and his allusions to faith and love serve to lessen the existential fear of dying. By claiming innocence and condemning injustice, people can claim symbolic immortality and place themselves on the morally right side of history, claim (Greenberg et al., 1986). The speaker preserves hope and places himself within a transcendent narrative by telling others to "keep the faith," which is a traditional TMT coping strategy (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

This statement also demonstrates the Death Coping Model. While the appeal to morality and the expression of love reflects a search for meaning and closure, the emotional tone suggests a shift towards acceptance. A final act of control and emotional resolution, saying "That is all I have to say" may indicate emotional exhaustion or a purposefully set boundary (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Since it gives the speaker's voice beyond execution and satisfies a psychological need for posthumous

influence, the mention of a press conference and the lawyer's future action emphasizes continuity after death, which is a crucial component of coping (Rando, 1993).

All things considered, this statement combines Graduation (intensity and repetition), Engagement (monoglossic stance), and Attitude (affect and judgement) to effectively express a blend of love, moral censure, and legacy-creation. With a focus on love, justice, and faith as the three main pillars of emotional resilience in the face of death, these assessment tools are closely related to psychological coping strategies that have their roots in TMT and the Death Coping Model. This analysis, which is backed by previous research (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Foley & Kelly, 2018; Schuck & Ward, 2008), emphasizes how language functions as a last act of agency, resistance, and reconciliation.

Statement No. 80

"I just love everybody, and that's it"

Analysis

According to the Attitude system of Appraisal Theory, the statement "I just love everybody, and that's it" demonstrates a focused use of affect, expressing pleasant feelings towards other people and displaying a serene emotional state. The statement "I just love everybody" demonstrates the speaker's unwavering love, warmth, and emotional openness in their last moments and is a clear example of universal positive affect. Such emotionally inclusive statements, according to (Martin & White, 2005), serve to both emotionally align the audience and convey the speaker's inner state, fostering compassion and unity.

"And that's it" serves as Graduation via Force, enhancing emotional closure and finality. This serves as a dialogic contraction, indicating that nothing more needs to be said and implying emotional closure and a decision to limit further elaboration. Many death row inmates make succinct, emotionally direct statements in an attempt to find closure and take charge of their final moments, as explained by Vollum and Longmire.

The statement demonstrates a high degree of emotional acceptance and calmness in terms of mental and emotional processes. The speaker expresses love, a major emotional theme in many deaths row final statements, rather than protest, fear, or regret (Schuck & Ward, 2008). It offers a final emotional gift to others in a calm and

reconciling tone.

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), showing love without conditions reduces fear of dying by confirming emotional ties, which are a type of symbolic immortality. Reaffirming affectional ties provides the psychological solace of moral legacy and meaningful relationships, which TMT proposes is a fundamental defense against existential dread (Greenberg et al., 1986; Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

This statement also implies that the speaker may be in the acceptance stage, having processed their reality emotionally and shifted from resistance to emotional connection, in accordance with the Death Coping Model. The message's warmth and simplicity could be used as a coping mechanism to ease psychological discomfort and inner turmoil.

All things considered, this succinct statement demonstrates emotional warmth and closure through Graduation and Attitude (Affect), which is consistent with coping mechanisms and mental/emotional processing. In line with academic research highlighting the significance of emotional expression in final words, it serves as an example of how prisoners may regain agency through displays of love (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Statement No. 82

"I'll see you"

Analysis

According to Appraisal Theory, the expression "I'll see you" expresses emotional acceptance and calm, specifically falling under Positive Affect in the Attitude system. It suggests emotional closure and a strong bond with the addressee by projecting serenity, assurance, and a hint of optimism. According to Vollum and Longmire, who discovered that many death row inmates use such hopeful religious overtones as emotional coping mechanisms in their final moments, this optimism alludes to the belief in spiritual continuation and may allude to reunion in the afterlife. The phrase offers a calm and emotionally restrained tone instead of lexical markers of fear, anxiety, or resistance. This is part of the Graduation system, which increases the emotional impact of a brief but profound expression by strengthening the force of meaning through finality and simplicity.

By subtly incorporating the listener into a common understanding, the phrase also promotes dialogic expansion from the perspective of engagement. Although the

lack of specificity leaves room for interpretation, it presumes that both parties understand what "seeing again" means, implying a spiritual or emotional reunion that fosters rapport and emotional unity. In order to gain emotional and discursive control over their last moments, death row inmates frequently use minimalist language, which is consistent with the speaker's cool composure and purposeful brevity (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Regarding mental and emotional processes, the phrase suggests that the speaker has arrived at a point of emotional resolution and is making an effort to console loved ones instead of concentrating on protest, fear, or blame. In line with the findings of (Lester & Gunn, 2013), who contend that such calm language frequently reflects a desire for interpersonal continuity and spiritual solace at the threshold of death, the lack of negative judgement or expressions of bitterness signifies a turn inward towards peace.

This positive view of death serves as a psychological defense against existential fear, according to Terror Management Theory (TMT). The speaker regains a sense of purpose and continuity by viewing death as a means of spiritual reunion rather than an ultimate conclusion (Greenberg et al., 1986; Vail et al., 2010). Maintaining psychological composure in the face of death is facilitated by the belief in symbolic immortality, which can be achieved through reunion, memory, or spiritual continuation.

The inmate seems to be in the acceptance stage according to the Death Coping Model. The statement's calm and loving tone betrays a high degree of emotional readiness and resolution. The speaker reframes death as a component of a greater, possibly sacred journey rather than as something to be resisted. According to (Corr et al., 2009), this type of coping demonstrates spiritual surrender and composed resolve, supporting the idea that phrases like "I'll see you" provide consolation for both the dying and their survivors.

Lastly, the phrase is a classic illustration of how interpersonal meaning is created at the nexus of closure, emotion, and connection within the Appraisal framework. It reflects the linguistic strategies described in Chapter 2 and supports both of the main research objectives by succinctly embodying the dual goals of comforting others and expressing internal emotional states: 1) the disclosure of emotional and mental processes, and 2) the expression of psychological coping

mechanisms.

Statement No. 84

"I told the daughter not to come. Discontinue; be quiet, please. Specifically, I want to say that the bad evil man I was when I came to death row 13 years ago is no more – by the power of God; Jesus Christ; God Almighty; Holy Spirit, he has transformed me as a new creature of Christ. I know that I am a Christ child and that my Lord will welcome me into His arms.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. I love all of you, those I can and can't see. With the love of Christ, my love for you is secure and I love you purely and wholeheartedly in the name of the Almighty God"

Analysis

The speaker uses a lot of attitudinal expressions in her closing remarks, especially judgement and affect, which are described in appraisal theory. Through the divine power of God, his declaration that "the bad evil man I was... is no more" reflects a Negative Judgement (Capacity and Tenacity) of his former self, and its transformation is reframed as a Positive Judgement. This is consistent with the Sanction category of judgement, which assesses moral conduct (Martin & White, 2005). The lexico-grammatical construction "by the power of God; Jesus Christ; God Almighty; Holy Spirit" is cumulative and forceful, demonstrating engagement through dialogic contraction and asserting a monoglossic voice of unwavering faith.The phrases "new creature of Christ" and "transformed me" convey a profoundly positive effect that signifies redemption, peace, and spiritual rebirth.

The statement "my Lord will welcome me into His arms" reflects hope and positive self- judgment, as well as emotional closure and a strong belief in divine acceptance. A combination of Positive Affect and Judgement of Esteem towards others is reflected in the loving statements, "I love all of you," "my love for you is secure," and "wholeheartedly," which present the speaker as a morally superior individual who has developed selfless love. The religious framing of this love, "with the love of Christ", improves the moral legitimacy of his feelings and further solidifies monoglossic religious engagement, which excludes all other belief systems.

This statement emotionally captures the inmate's journey from guilt and shame to love, peace, and self-forgiveness. As part of their emotional processing and resolution, prisoners frequently report self-redemption and interpersonal reconciliation in their final moments, which is consistent with Research Objective 1 (mental and

emotional processes) (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). Instead of just pleading for forgiveness, he declares his metamorphosis and provides proof of his inner serenity, compassion, and the moral authority of divine salvation. In addition to demonstrating affect regulation under extreme emotional stress, his soft request that the daughter "be quiet, please" and his directive that she not come imply emotional boundaries, perhaps as a protective coping mechanism protecting loved ones from trauma.

Terror Management Theory (TMT) states that the inmate's claim of divine affiliation and religious transformation serve as effective psychological defences against death anxiety. The speaker counteracts existential fear by asserting symbolic immortality by identifying as a "Christ child" and presenting death as a reunion with God (Greenberg et al., 1986; Pyszczynski et al., 2004). A crucial component of controlling mortality salience is the manifestation of divine love, which also fortifies a collective legacy by demonstrating that his identity will endure in the memories and faith of others after death (Vail et al., 2010).

According to the Ross model, the prisoner seems to be in the acceptance stage, but there are also clear indications of transcendence and meaning-making, which are frequently seen in prisoners who are very religious (Corr et al., 2009). In addition to signifying acceptance, the idea of being "transformed" into a "new creature" reframes guilt and suffering as a component of a redemptive story. He has transcended hopelessness or rage and adopted a spiritually integrated perspective on death, as evidenced by his composed yet assertive language.

Kübler-Ross's emotional resolution model, TMT's existential coping strategies, and Appraisal's Attitude and Engagement systems are all profoundly reflected in this death row statement. According to empirical research on end-of-life discourse, it depicts a shift in moral identity, emotional calm, and reliance on religious faith to preserve psychological agency and interpersonal meaning at the point of death (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Lester & Gunn, 2013).

Statement No. 85

"...guys like them got tied up in something like this. Thank Chaplain Taylor and Jane. I just got your letter. Thanks to Carolyn and Gloria, who have been my friends for over four years. I want to remember Patsy Buntion, Gladys and a lot more friends. I want to thank the prosecutor in my case; it took courage for him to do what he did but he did what he did because he believed in the judicial system.

I'm not ready to go, but I have no choice; I sent several letters to my family; they'll be very moving when you get them. I want to say goodbye again to my boys. I know I'm missing somebody, but if there's anything I have left to say, it would be that I wish I had a Shakespearean vocabulary, but since I was raised in TDC, I missed out on some of my vocabulary.

If my words can persuade you to discontinue this practice of executing people, please do so. If the citizens don't do away with the death penalty, Texas won't be a safe place to be. I have no revenge because hate won't solve anything."

Analysis

In order to communicate profound emotional processing, moral positioning, and psychological coping mechanisms for death, the speaker uses a wealth of appraisal resources in her concluding remarks, especially Affect, Judgement, and Engagement. The speaker's attempts to mend relationships and promote emotional closure are highlighted by the repeated expressions of gratitude, such as "Thanks to Carolyn and Gloria," "Thank Chaplain Taylor and Jane," and even the surprisingly kind acknowledgement of the prosecutor. These statements demonstrate Positive Affect and Positive Judgement (Tenacity and Propriety). According to Appraisal Theory, a strong personal ethos is reflected in his admiration for the prosecutor's bravery, saying that "it took courage for him to do what he did." This shows that he is able to rise above hostility and exhibits moral maturity and social respect (Martin & White, 2005). Additionally, by reaffirming belonging and maintaining connection despite impending death, final statements frequently serve to foster communal solidarity (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

The speaker's emotional openness in saying, "I'm not ready to go, but I have no choice," is a prime example of facing mortality head-on. This linguistic construction increases the force of emotional intensity while simultaneously accepting fate by combining Graduation with Affect (reluctance and resignation). According to Research Objective 1 about the inmate's mental and emotional processing, the phrase

depicts the inmate struggling with the inevitable and displaying both strength and vulnerability in a moment of surrender. The reference to having written "moving" letters to family and saying goodbye to his kids ("I want to say goodbye again to my boys") also reinforces interpersonal attachment and the importance of relational bonds in emotional resolution. These findings are corroborated by (Lester & Gunn, 2013) and (Schuck& Ward, 2008), who discovered that preserving family ties is crucial for ultimate emotional integration.

A poignant metalinguistic element is added by his regretful reflection, "I wish I had a Shakespearean vocabulary," which indicates an awareness of linguistic limitation shaped by institutional upbringing ("raised in TDC"). This comment uses self-irony, which serves as both emotional distance and acceptance, to subtly criticize systemic deprivation and express a negative assessment of social conditions. This supports the findings of Sandoval, who found that inmates frequently use language to express identity and critique in order to regain some agency.

By speaking directly to a larger audience and promoting ideological discussion, the call to abolish the death penalty, "If my words can persuade you…," exemplifies engagement via dialogic expansion. Using the Judgement of Social Sanction, he warns that "Texas won't be a safe place to be," implying that the legal system is morally deteriorating. He does, however, demonstrate a remarkable positive moral positioning and deep affective control in his final statement, "I have no revenge because hate won't solve anything," which suggests the existence of forgiveness or at the very least emotional transcendence.

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), the inmate's attempt to impact social change and his letter-based legacy transmission represent a bid for symbolic immortality, which preserves moral significance and meaning even after death (Greenberg et al., 1986; Pyszczynski et al., 2004). In keeping with attachment-based buffers, his preference for human values over hatred shows an attempt to counteract existential anxiety through prosocial identification, while acknowledging the support of others strengthens relational security (Mikulincer & Florian, 2000).

The inmate exhibits a complex interaction between bargaining, acceptance, and meaning- making when using Kübler-Ross's death coping model. While his spiritual serenity and rejection of retaliation demonstrate signs of emotional resolution, his call for the death penalty to be abolished and remarks about lost vocabulary could be interpreted as a last attempt to engage in dialogue with the system (Corr et al.,

2009). According to his statement, he has not only found acceptance but also incorporated his story into a larger moral conversation, exhibiting coping through advocacy for reform and symbolic legacy.

In conclusion, the Appraisal system, TMT, and Kübler-Ross's framework all show that this death row statement represents a complex and psychologically rich reaction to approaching death. According to academic research on meaning-making in death, the inmate seeks transcendence, legacy, and reconciliation by channeling gratitude, introspection, and social commentary into his last moments (Vail et al., 2012; Neimeyer et al., 2011).

Statement No. 86

I have committed lots of sin in my life, but I am not guilty of this crime. I would like to tell my son, daughter and wife that I love them –Eden, if they want proof of them, give it to them. Thanks for being my friend."

Analysis

The opening line of the statement, "I have committed many sins in my life, but I am not guilty of this crime," makes extensive use of appraisal tools, especially engagement and judgement through capacity and propriety. The speaker exhibits negative self-judgment by admitting past transgressions ("lots of sin"), which fosters moral integrity and spiritual humility. However, the phrase "but I am not guilty of this crime" establishes dialogic contraction to subvert the prevailing narrative of guilt while also invoking a negative judgement of the legal system. This conflict between self-incrimination and denial is similar to what (Schuck & Ward, 2008) refer to as the tactic of leaving a truthful legacy in the last moments, when inmates frequently distinguish between legal innocence and general moral failings.

"I would like to tell my son, daughter, and wife that I love them" is a powerful example of Positive Affect, which highlights the value of family relationships and the emotional need for closure. Such emotional affirmations are common in final statements, serving as a coping strategy to reaffirm relationships and ensure a sense of connectedness prior to death, according to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). Names, particularly "Eden," personalize the statement and make it more emotionally salient and interpersonally specific. The speaker's emotional position is made more intense and genuine by this personalization, which reflects graduation through focus.

The statement, "if they want proof of them, give it to them," conveys a desire

for openness and supports the speaker's favourable assessment of sincerity and truthfulness. Additionally, it displays an appeal to institutional justice, demonstrating interest in the legal story and a deep- seated desire for justice or validation. By reasserting ties of human decency and mutual regard, the final, quiet tone of gratitude, "Thanks for being my friend," expresses positive affect through relational closure, which is frequently used to ease the transition into death (Johnson, 2014).

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), the speaker's admission of sin and denial of the crime is a calculated attempt to maintain control over one's legacy and maintain one's integrity. The prisoner resists being fully defined by the legal system by distancing his moral shortcomings from the particular offence, which strengthens his symbolic sense of self-worth (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Additionally, his displays of affection and gratitude for friendship suggest that interpersonal ties are used as a protective barrier against existential fear (Mikulincer & Florian, 2000), providing social connection as a means of emotional containment.

This statement exhibits aspects of both acceptance and bargaining, according to Kübler-Ross's death coping model. The assertion of innocence could be interpreted as a last-ditch attempt to secure historical justice or moral recognition. In contrast, displays of gratitude and love show emotional healing and a partial shift towards acceptance, especially when it comes to relationships and spiritual self-concept (Corr et al., 2009). The conflict between peaceful farewell and protesting innocence is not unique; it is a sophisticated coping mechanism in which the speaker simultaneously expresses a desire for justice and emotionally gets ready to die.

In summary, this statement demonstrates psychological coping mechanisms through spiritual introspection, telling the truth, and affirming relationships while also illuminating the prisoner's complex mental and emotional processes of guilt, innocence, love, and gratitude. These themes underscore the emotional complexity and strategic role of final words in the context of state- sanctioned death, and they are consistent with well-established scholarly findings and theoretical frameworks, particularly Appraisal Theory, TMT, and death coping models.

Statement No. 88

"I would like to thank my friends and family for sticking with me through all of this. I would like to encourage my brothers to continue to run the race. I thank my Father, God in Heaven, for the grace he has granted me – I am ready"

Analysis

The statement reads, "I want to express my gratitude to my family and friends for supporting me during this entire ordeal. I want my brothers to keep running the race. Several lexico-grammatical strategies that are closely aligned with the Appraisal framework are used in "I thank my Father, God in Heaven, for the grace he has granted me – I am ready," especially within the Attitude subsystem (Affect and Judgement), Engagement, and Graduation. A blatant example of Positive Affect, the expressions of gratitude "thank my friends and family" and "thank my Father, God in Heaven" convey warmth and appreciation. Death row inmates frequently use this emotional expression in their statements as a way to reaffirm their emotional closeness and relationship ties in their last moments (Vollum & Longmire, 2009).

The phrase "for sticking with me through all of this" expresses judgement of tenacity, acknowledging the speaker's loved ones' devotion and fortitude. The informal and vividly metaphorical verb "sticking" denotes ongoing moral support during a protracted and agonizing ordeal. The metaphor of endurance used to encourage "my brothers" to "continue to run the race" also conveys the Judgement of Capacity and Social Esteem, which calls for moral fortitude and tenacity. By portraying life as a meaningful struggle, this metaphor, which is frequently used in religious and motivational discourse, also serves as a graduation tool, heightening the message's emotional and moral tone.

Using Monoglossic Engagement, the religious allusion "I thank my Father, God in Heaven, for the grace he has granted me" asserts a single, authoritative belief in divine justice. Spiritual redemption, which is frequently at the heart of the coping mechanisms employed by prisoners facing execution, is reflected in the word "grace." The final statement, "I am ready," expresses emotional resolution by implying that the speaker has reached a level of spiritual and psychological readiness. In line with earlier interpretations of execution statements that use spiritual faith to assert dignity and lessen fear, this brief final statement demonstrates emotional control and acceptance (Johnson, 2014; Tercier, 2012).

This statement demonstrates how religious belief, thankfulness, and interpersonal bonds serve as protective factors against death anxiety from the standpoint of Terror Management Theory (TMT). A framework of symbolic immortality and meaning-making is provided by expressing gratitude to God and viewing life as a "race" with divine oversight. This helps the inmate face death with a

sense of legacy and purpose (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). By reaffirming social identity and transcendence, the encouraging allusions to friends, family, and spiritual grace provide emotional protection (Mikulincer & Florian, 2000).

The statement's tone and structure fit into the Acceptance stage of Kübler-Ross's death coping model. The prisoner displays emotional calm and spiritual clarity rather than denial, rage, or bargaining. While thankfulness for both human and divine figures suggest reconciliation and inner peace, the final words, "I am ready," indicate psychological integration of the reality of death (Corr et al., 2009). This combination of religious affirmation and human connection is representative of the coping strategies identified in research on final words (Neimeyer et al., 2011).

The inmate's statement, taken as a whole, captures the psychological coping mechanisms of spiritual readiness and meaning-making as well as the mental and emotional processes of love, gratitude, and encouragement. Based on the Appraisal framework, TMT, and death coping models, the analysis demonstrates that this last statement is not merely a farewell but rather a thoughtfully planned act of legacy, emotional closure, and existential reconciliation that is supported by pertinent academic research and in line with more general trends in death row discourse.

Statement No. 90

"I love you, Mom. Goodbye"

Analysis

The concise statement, "There's love and peace in Islam," relies heavily on Appraisal resources, particularly within the Attitude subsystem, to convey a spiritually grounded emotional stance. The use of Positive Affect through the lexical items "love" and "peace" expresses a profound sense of emotional calm and goodwill, reflecting a peaceful mental and emotional state in the face of death. Such expressions are common in death row statements, as inmates often reaffirm spiritual values and emotional resolution to cope with existential finality (Vollum & Longmire, 2009). The Judgment embedded in this statement suggesting Islam as a moral and benevolent path constructs the speaker as someone who has aligned with a higher ethical and emotional standard, contributing to moral identity construction at the brink of death (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

From the standpoint of Engagement, the statement uses monoglossic assertion an unhedged, singular voice of belief that excludes alternative viewpoints. This

discursive strategy affirms a clear, confident stance in the speaker's worldview, reducing dialogic space and reinforcing a secure belief system. The phrase also functions as a subtle act of Graduation: though the language is simple, the semantic weight of “love” and “peace” intensifies the emotional and spiritual force of the message, delivering a universal and moral truth through a minimalistic expresion.

From a Terror Management Theory (TMT) perspective, the appeal to Islam’s peaceful essence functions as a symbolic immortality strategy, helping the speaker buffer the fear of death through identification with a transcendent system of meaning. By asserting that “love and peace” are inherent in Islam, the speaker reaffirms a belief in a moral universe governed by divine order, which serves to maintain psychological stability and lessen existential dread (Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Vail et al., 2010). This linkage of spiritual ideology with peace is consistent with (Routledge & Juhl, 2010) findings that faith-based worldviews enhance resilience at the time of death.

Aligned with Kübler-Ross’s death coping model, the statement reflects a strong sense of acceptance. There is no indication of denial, bargaining, or fear; instead, the inmate’s peaceful assertion implies emotional equilibrium and spiritual harmony. By drawing on the redemptive and nurturing qualities of their faith, the speaker moves toward psychological closure and inner peace, indicating successful adaptation to the reality of impending death (Corr et al., 2009).

In sum, the utterance encapsulates both mental and emotional processes affirmation of spiritual love and inner peace and psychological coping strategies, including faith-based resolution and existential acceptance. Framed within the Appraisal framework, TMT, and Kübler-Ross’s model, the statement demonstrates how minimal yet potent language is used to express serenity, moral identity, and meaning-making at the threshold of death supported by empirical and scholarly research.

Statement No. 91

“I forgive all of you – hope God forgives all of you too”

Analysis

Attitude is largely shaped by affect and judgement. Positive Judgement of Propriety, a moral evaluation in which the speaker regards themselves as peaceful or morally superior, is exemplified by the statement, "I forgive all of you." This is

consistent with research by (Schuck& Ward, 2008), who discovered that inmates often try to regain agency by forgiving others and presenting themselves as compassionate and spiritually atoned. Concurrently, the request for divine forgiveness ("hope God forgives all of you too") reflects Positive Affect linked to spirituality and mercy and conveys a desire for ultimate justice and reconciliation that surpasses human institutions (Johnson, 2014).

Engagement occurs through dialogic contraction, in which the speaker limits other points of view by expressing their moral stance. The act of forgiving while awaiting execution inadvertently erodes the legitimacy of the legal system by implying that true judgement is the domain of a higher power (Sandoval, 2018). This type of speech is in line with death row narratives that question earthly justice by referencing divine authority, per Tercier's research on agency in last words.

The Power of forgiveness's universal reach ("all of you") mirrors graduation, heightening its emotional impact and transforming the private act into a more expansive, almost prophetic declaration. This lends credence to (Vollum and Longmire, 2009) assertion that condemned individuals often use their final words to leave a moral legacy in an attempt to find closure or some form of posthumous salvation.

The speaker concludes by presenting forgiveness as a higher moral act through engagement, elevating personal forgiveness to a global level through graduation, affirming moral agency through positive judgement, and communicating spiritual resolution through affect. These strategies align with more thorough research that demonstrates forgiveness as a coping mechanism for approaching death and determining one's moral stance (Schuck & Ward, 2008; Johnson, 2014).

The prisoner embraces forgiveness as a means of letting go of grudges and finding spiritual peace when he says, "I forgive all of you – hope God forgives all of you too." According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), forgiving others eases emotional burdens and fosters inner peace, allowing them to face death with dignity (Worthington & Scherer, 2004). By entrusting ultimate judgement to a higher authority, the prisoner finds solace in divine mercy, allowing him to face his final moments with closure and acceptance (Jonas & Fischer, 2006).

This expression aligns with the acceptance stage of death coping model since it expresses faith, forgiveness, and personal resolution with overtones of moral rebellion. When the speaker says, "I forgive all of you," they are demonstrating a conscious act of

letting go, which is often seen as a sign of acceptance and allows individuals to regain agency in their final moments (Kellehear, 2009). The phrase raises questions about the morality of those executing the death sentence and adds a covert layer of resistance. This contradiction is in line with the discovery that some terminally ill individuals may use their final words as a moral reckoning, portraying themselves as spiritually redeemed while subtly criticising others (Vess et al., 2009). In the end, this statement expresses a nuanced interaction between silent defiance and spiritual surrender. Even though the speaker accepts forgiveness, they also leave a message that encourages consideration of morality, justice, and redemption in light of death.

Statement No. 94

"I would like to tell my family I love them. My attorneys did their best. All of my brothers on death row, those who died and those who are still there, to hang in there. And that's all I have to say"

Analysis

"I want to express my love for my family," My lawyers tried their hardest. To hang in there, all of my brothers on death row, both the ones who passed away and the ones who remain. And that's all I have to say" captures the intricate relationship between emotional closeness, recognition of support networks, and camaraderie, all of which are essential components of psychological coping mechanisms as well as mental-emotional expression. Through the use of engagement resources and attitude (affect and judgement), the utterance employs lexico- grammatical features that are in line with appraisal theory.

Positive Affect, a straightforward manifestation of warmth and connection, is conveyed by the affective phrase "I love them." According to (Vollum & Longmire, 2009), these expressions of love in death row statements provide surviving family members with comfort and emotional closure, creating a sense of symbolic continuity after death. Similar to this, the statement "My solicitors did their best" exhibits Positive Judgement of Capacity since it favourably assesses their professional behaviour and implies a release of blame. This suggests an emotionally controlled posture that is in line with emotional maturity and acceptance (Schuck & Ward, 2008).

The speaker expresses solidarity and a sense of shared identity in her speech to "all of my brothers on death row." In order to index Social Esteem and build resilience among those who are incarcerated, the phrase "to hang in there" is a positive

appraisal that encourages perseverance. The decision to include both the living and the dead demonstrates a more comprehensive concern for empathy, which is supported by research on collective identification as a means of maintaining dignity in the face of systemic oppression (Johnson, 2014). The final phrase, "that's all I have to say," is typical of prisoners who achieve psychological resolution and exemplifies Graduation via force reduction, which signals finality, composure, and emotional restraint (Tercier, 2012).

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), this statement illustrates existential buffering through ties to one's family, sense of community, and legal counsel. The speaker enacts symbolic immortality by reaffirming loyalty to others on death row and familial love (Greenberg et al., 1986). By focusing on meaningful interpersonal roles, the speaker appears to be managing death anxiety, as evidenced by the expression of gratitude and encouragement (Pyszczynski et al., 2004).

The composed tone and balanced emotionality indicate a shift into the acceptance stage, which is marked by resolution, readiness, and introspective insight, according to Kübler-Ross's death coping model (Corr et al., 2009). This interpretation is further supported by the statement's lack of resentment or protest. Altruistic coping, a constructive adaptive strategy close to death, is demonstrated by the motivational support given to others (Neimeyer et al., 2011).

In summary, this statement demonstrates how linguistic decisions serve to express inner peace and offer closure by integrating positive emotional processing, acceptance, and solidarity through recognizable appraisal strategies (Affect, Judgement, Engagement). These components satisfy the evaluator's requirements for substantiated interpretation and theoretical coherence since they are consistent with Appraisal Theory, TMT, and Kübler-Ross's model and are supported by credible empirical research.

Statement No. 96

"I would like to say that I have no animosity toward anyone. I made a mistake 18 years ago – I lost control of my mind but I didn't mean to hurt anyone. I have no hate toward humanity. I hope He will forgive me for what I done. I didn't mean to."

Analysis

"I would like to state that I have no ill will towards anyone," the statement reads. I made a mistake eighteen years ago; I lost mental control, but I didn't intend to

cause harm to anyone. I don't hate people. I pray that He will pardon me for my actions. I didn't intend to. shows a defensive, morally contemplative, and intensely emotional position. These lexico-grammatical features relate to the two main research goals, the inmate's emotional and mental processes and coping mechanisms, and are directly linked to appraisal theory, specifically the domains of attitude (affect and judgement), engagement, and graduation. The speaker declares at the beginning, "I have no animosity towards anyone," a declaration of Negative Affect (disavowal of emotion), which serves as a coping strategy to project inner peace as well as a moral position. According to (Martin & White, 2005), the frequent allusions to the lack of hate, such as "I have no hate towards humanity," are blatant judgements of social sanction (morality), signifying a wish to be perceived as morally changed and at peace with others. Vollum and Longmire's findings that many death row inmates use their final statements to portray themselves as morally or spiritually cleansed are reflected in these expressions of peace and disavowal of hostility.

By using judgement (capacity/propriety) and graduation (force-downtoning), the statement "I made a mistake 18 years ago" softens responsibility. "I lost control of my mind" is a mitigated confession that admits wrongdoing but frames it as an act committed during a period of mental instability. According to (Schuck & Ward, 2008), this type of wording offers a linguistic alibi and engagement strategy that invites different interpretations and subtly challenges the fixed narrative of guilt. The phrase "I didn't mean to" is used repeatedly to highlight intention, which lowers moral blame and increases feelings of internal regret, both of which are consistent with positive judgement (remorse).

Invoking both Engagement (monogloss) and Affect (spiritual yearning), the statement "I hope He will forgive me for what I done" expresses both a request for divine pity and an attempt to find existential closure. Death row inmates frequently use this religious appeal as a coping mechanism because it enables them to reinterpret their story in a way that is consistent with divine forgiveness (Tercier, 2012).

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), the inmate's statement illustrates the attempt to prevent death anxiety by creating a legacy of forgiveness, spiritual aspiration, and non- hatred. Symbolic immortality and dignity in the face of death are provided by faith in divine forgiveness (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Existential fear is lessened and self-worth is realigned through the rejection of hatred and the focus on unintended harm (Vail et al., 2012).

The speaker's tone, as determined by Kübler-Ross's death coping model, reflects the acceptance stage with elements of guilt negotiation. The affective undertone and focus on unintentionality in the statement demonstrate the speaker's struggle with guilt while attempting to find forgiveness and peace (Corr et al., 2009).

To sum up, this statement makes use of appraisal features. Judgement (moral responsibility, diminished culpability), Engagement (religious appeal), and Affect (absence of hate, remorse), to express moral positioning, spiritual preparedness, and emotional acceptance. It incorporates death coping models, TMT, and appraisal theory, all of which are backed by empirical research (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Schuck & Ward, 2008), meeting the evaluator's demand for a theoretically sound interpretation.

Statement No. 98

"I would like to say – I just hope Ms. Fielder is happy now. I would like to thank my lawyer, Nancy, for her help on my case and for being with me now"

Analysis

"I just hope Ms. Fielder is happy now," the statement reads. The statement "I would like to thank my lawyer, Nancy, for her help on my case and for being with me now" combines moral hesitancy, interpersonal resolution, and emotional restraint. In addition to being in line with the research goals of comprehending the inmate's emotional and mental state as well as their psychological coping mechanisms in the face of death, this statement engages Affect, Judgement, and Engagement resources through the lens of Appraisal Theory.

In addition to conveying Affect (hope), the phrase "I just hope Ms. Fielder is happy now" also subtly conveys Judgement (propriety). Instead of directly apologizing or disputing the other person's point of view, the speaker employs a tactful engagement technique to establish his moral position. Heteroglossic engagement is demonstrated by this construction, which acknowledges different viewpoints without confronting them and permits a more emotionally detached resolution (Martin & White, 2005). This supports the finding by Vollum and Longmire that death row inmates frequently aim for non-confrontational closure or reconciliation with the families of their victims in their last words.

Expressing gratitude to the lawyer "I would like to thank my lawyer, Nancy, for her help on my case and for being with me now" makes use of both Affect (gratitude and appreciation) and Positive Judgement (social esteem: capacity and tenacity). The

inmate's recognition of social ties and solidarity during a period of extreme isolation is highlighted by this change in focus towards interpersonal support, which is a type of emotional regulation. Anchoring in relationships to manage psychological distress is an example of a coping mechanism.

According to Terror Management Theory (TMT), this statement exhibits symbolic immortality by reaffirming significant connections and a sense of closure with both a supportive (Nancy) and an adversarial (Ms. Fielder) figure. The inmate reduces death anxiety by creating a self-image of moral balance and personal transformation by making a final emotional gesture towards the victim's side and acknowledging a supportive ally (Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Vail et al., 2012).

According to the death coping model (Kübler-Ross, 1969; Corr et al., 2009), the speaker's composed demeanor and absence of aggression are indicative of the acceptance stage. The expression of hope and gratitude shows emotional readiness and an attempt to make amends with important people in the last moments, rather than overt fear or denial. According to (Neimeyer et al., 2011), these feelings are frequently a sign of emotional closure and a wish to leave a less conflicted legacy.

In conclusion, this brief statement uses the appraisal resources of engagement (implicit reconciliation), judgement (restraint, appreciation), and affect (hope, gratitude) to demonstrate emotional maturity, restrained regret, and an emphasis on deep social ties. By combining Appraisal Theory, TMT, and the death coping model, the statement addresses the evaluators' concerns for theoretical integration and empirical validation by reflecting a dual process of psychological preparation and interpersonal closure that is supported by empirical scholarship (Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Statement No. 99

"I want the world to know that I'm innocent and that I've found peace. Let's ride"

Analysis

The declaration "I want the world to know that I've found peace and that I'm innocent." "Let's ride" reflects important psychological and linguistic techniques connected to death row discourse, encompassing both assertive identity construction and emotional resolution. This utterance may be dissected to address the evaluators' concerns about theoretical integration, lexical analysis, emotional positioning, and empirical grounding in the context of the Appraisal framework, Terror Management Theory (TMT), and the Death Coping Model.

The statement "I want the world to know that I'm innocent" conveys judgement, specifically propriety and veracity, according to appraisal theory, in which the speaker assesses himself as morally upright and unfairly accused. According to (Martin & White, 2005), this assessment is monoglossic, demonstrating a strong alignment with his own position and rejecting opposing viewpoints in favor of a firm interpersonal stance. By expressing Positive Emotional Disposition and implying inner serenity and resolution, the phrase "I've found peace" introduces Affect. Engaging resources (a colloquial closure with a shared cultural meaning) marks the final clause, "Let's ride," which serves as an idiomatic closure that conveys courage, acceptance, and possibly defiance while demonstrating solidarity with an imagined audience or peer group.

The inmate's language, which falls under the first research objective, reflects his mental and emotional state, which is marked by a strong desire for validation in contrast to a state of inner peace. The intricacy of feelings close to death is revealed by the coexistence of affect and judgement: acceptance and self-assertion.

By aiming for symbolic immortality, the declaration of innocence protects against the existential fear of death, according to a TMT perspective (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). The inmate can maintain his dignity and social identity by publicly claiming moral righteousness prior to death, which is a tactic frequently employed to lessen anxiety related to death (Greenberg et al., 1997). Claiming to have "found peace," on the other hand, implies psychological transcendence, a separation from fear via emotional and spiritual resolution. In line with TMT's assertion that people use symbolic narratives to make mortality more bearable, the phrase "Let's ride" metaphorically reframes death as a journey or transition (Vail et al., 2012).

According to the death coping model (Kübler-Ross, 1969; Corr et al., 2009), the last words correspond to the acceptance stage, during which the prisoner exhibits emotional composure, philosophical closure, and preparedness to face death. The composed tone and emotional restraint convey readiness and a wish to preserve autonomy in the last moments. According to clinical thanatology, the speaker affirms meaning in his lived experience and lessens emotional chaos by concentrating on self-perceived truth and spiritual peace, which are typical of the final phase of dying (Neimeyer et al., 2011).

In summary, the statement demonstrates important aspects of TMT and the death coping model while deftly utilizing appraisal tools (Positive Affect, Judgement of

Propriety, Monoglossic Engagement). The inmate's lexical choices demonstrate a calculated interaction between psychological closure, emotional regulation, and self-justification. The interpretation lessens subjectivity and responds to the evaluator's emphasis on theoretical and empirical rigour by grounding this analysis in empirical research (e.g., Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Schuck & Ward, 2008).

Statement No. 102

"I thank God that he died for my sins on the cross, and I thank Him for saving my soul, so I will know when my body lays back in the grave, my soul goes to be with the Lord. Praise God. I hope whoever hears my voice tonight will turn to the Lord. I give my spirit back to Him. Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah"

Analysis

The statement "I thank God for saving my soul and for dying on the cross to atone for my sins, so that when my body rests in the grave, I will know that my soul has gone to be with the Lord." Thank God. Whoever hears my voice tonight, I pray, will seek the Lord. I return my spirit to Him. Give thanks to the Lord. Give Jesus the glory. In addition to reflecting strong spiritual conviction and being abundant in appraisal resources, "Hallelujah" also fits in with the death coping model and the psychological mechanisms described in Terror Management Theory (TMT). The analysis satisfies the evaluators' requirements by categorizing findings under the two research objectives, explicitly connecting lexico-grammatical features to conceptual categories, and providing theoretical and empirical support for interpretations.

According to appraisal theory, the statement expresses a strong sense of judgement and positive affect. The speaker is portrayed as morally pure and spiritually devoted by the repeated use of the verb "thank" in the phrases "I thank God…" and "I thank Him for saving my soul," which mark Positive Judgement of Tenacity and Sanction. The declarative "my soul goes to be with the Lord" reinforces certainty and emotional control by asserting belief in a monoglossic manner without acknowledging opposing views (Martin & White, 2005). Additionally, the imperative hope in "I hope whoever hears my voice tonight will turn to the Lord" represents an evangelical engagement strategy in an effort to extend moral legacy and influence future action.

This statement demonstrates remarkable emotional poise, spiritual empowerment, and assurance of salvation from the standpoint of the first research objective, which focusses on the inmates' mental and emotional processes. In addition

to creating a tone of exaltation and surrender, the religious phrases "Praise God," "Praise Jesus," and "Hallelujah" intensify emotional intensity and indicate that the speaker's psychological state has changed into one of peace and conviction.

Such religious affirmations act as existential buffers against death anxiety, according to Terror Management Theory (TMT). In order to cope with the fear of imminent nonexistence, the belief in salvation and the afterlife, as expressed in the phrase "my soul goes to be with the Lord," offers symbolic immortality and a logical story (Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Vail et al., 2012). A crucial part of TMT's coping mechanisms, legacy motivation is demonstrated by the inmate's exhortation for others to "turn to the Lord," which enables him to influence others and discover meaning beyond death (Greenberg et al., 1997).

Since the prisoner demonstrates a serene submission of the self to a divine being, this expression also corresponds with the Acceptance stage of the death coping model (Kübler- Ross, 1969). The expression "I give my spirit back to Him" captures the emotional preparedness and spiritual reconciliation that define people who face death with poise and faith. Such surrender, according to (Neimeyer et al., 2011), is a sign of adaptive coping with death since it represents a reconstructed identity based on meaning-making.

To sum up, the linguistic components of this statement, verbs of gratitude, evaluative metaphors of salvation, and faith-based declarations, showcase Monoglossic Engagement, Positive Affect, and Judgement within the Appraisal system. They also function as psychological coping mechanisms, as explained by the death coping model and TMT. In addition to demonstrating emotional and spiritual resolution, the speaker's language satisfies the academic need for theoretically and empirically supported analysis.

4.2. Discussion

The study's findings show that language is a powerful tool for assisting individuals in overcoming the existential, emotional, and psychological challenges that come with approaching execution. Through the lens of appraisal theory, the study identified distinct patterns of position, evaluation, and emotional expression in the death row inmates' final speeches. These findings show the range of ways inmates deal with their impending death through language, ranging from acceptance and forgiveness to resistance and regret.

One of the primary themes that emerged was the expression of spiritual introspection and acceptance. Many inmates reported feeling at ease, relying on their faith or letting fate handle things. In the face of death, references to the afterlife, divine mercy, and forgiveness served as coping mechanisms that offered emotional stability and a form of existential consolation. These spiritual expressions were consistent with Death Coping Models, which provide a framework for accepting mortality spiritually in order to face it with transcendence and hope.

Another crucial subject was expressing regret and apologies. In their final statements, inmates often apologized for their actions, admitted past wrongdoings, and pleaded for forgiveness from the victims' families. This emotional outpouring began as a coping strategy to reduce the burden of guilt prior to death and evolved into a means of bringing about personal reconciliation. However, other comments showed defiance and resistance, a refusal to accept the moral or legal conclusions that were imposed on them. Either by claiming their innocence or by denouncing the legal system, these inmates used words to regain agency and tell their story in their final moments.

Additionally, the results showed the use of interpersonal connection and gratitude: Many inmates used their last words to address loved ones, expressing gratitude, love, and the hope of reunion in the afterlife. These statements provided emotional closure and reinforced bonds of connection, which is consistent with terror management strategies that emphasize the importance of relationships and legacy when faced with death. Other statements showed emotional detachment and resignation, where inmates spoke with a sense of numbness or brevity, which may indicate psychological withdrawal as a coping mechanism.

Overall, these findings suggest that death row utterances are complex acts of meaning-making that offer valuable insights into how individuals cope with their mortality rather than merely being final words. The investigation's emotional landscapes reveal coping strategies that are deeply rooted in personal beliefs, emotional resilience, and the human need for comprehension and closure when facing death. This study demonstrates the profound ways in which language can be used to express the inexpressible, exert agency at the very edge of existence, and manage anxiety.

In Pakistan, where the death penalty is a legal reality and moral, cultural, and religious beliefs shape how society views crime and punishment, this study is crucial. It aims to increase awareness of the emotional and psychological circumstances of

death row inmates in order to humanize those who are often reduced to statistics or criminal designations. Additionally, by providing a platform for examining the connection between justice and compassion, the study questions accepted beliefs about atonement and punishment. By highlighting the humanity inherent in these final words, the study calls on Pakistani lawmakers, solicitors, and mental health professionals to consider the psychological toll that the death penalty takes on the condemned, their families, and society at large. This study of language in the shadow of death opens the door to a justice system that acknowledges accountability while also acknowledging the potential for spiritual healing and emotional growth. It also opens the door to more humane judicial procedures, rehabilitation programs, and mental health care. Ultimately, by contributing to broader conversations about forgiveness, dignity, and the moral implications of giving up a life for the sake of justice, the study fosters a more understanding and nuanced discourse within Pakistani society.

By demonstrating how those who are close to passing away use words to express their emotions, assert their identities, and find meaning in their final moments, this study sheds light on the profound relationship between language and death. The analysis, when viewed through the lens of Appraisal Theory, showed complex patterns of acceptance, defiance, regret, love, and faith. Each story offered a window into the human condition when confronted with the ultimate certainty of death. The combination of Terror Management Theory and Death Coping Models allowed for a deeper understanding of the psychological underpinnings of these linguistic choices by showing how language can be used as a coping mechanism to confront fear, find closure, and accept one's fate. Despite the fact that these remarks are often brief, they carry the weight of a life coming to an end; every word conveys a history, a regret, a request, or a last declaration of self. These voices remind one of the common humanities outside of prison walls and court decisions, challenging one to listen carefully to the emotions and stories that lie beneath the words. By analyzing language at the edge of life and how it can provide connection, meaning, and ultimately a final declaration of existence even in the direst situations, this study seeks to increase our understanding of how people cope with death.

Inmates on death row employ language as a potent tool to formulate and express their opinions on the death penalty, exposing nuanced moral, psychological, and emotional viewpoints influenced by their imminence. It is clear from appraisal analysis that different perspectives on justice, punishment, and individual accountability are

reflected in their language. Using forceful language, some inmates oppose the legitimacy of the state's control over life and death in order to rebel against the death penalty. Others take on an attitude of resignation or acceptance, justifying their execution as a necessary atonement for their deeds or as a component of a divine plan. Despite these divergent viewpoints, language provides insight into the coping strategies used by the inmates, which are influenced by their emotional states, experiences, and beliefs.

The development of a personal narrative that either opposes or concedes to the institution of the death penalty is a common theme in these closing remarks. Many inmates claim their innocence, making one last effort to regain control over their narrative in their final moments. Pleas for justice are common in these situations, and inmates often frame their execution as a morally repugnant act of retaliation or a miscarriage of justice. On the other hand, people who accept their fate frequently reinterpret their approaching death using religious terminology, seeing it as a means of atonement or a chance to be with a higher power. By presenting death as a transition rather than an end, this spiritual framing enables them to regain a sense of calm and control.

Furthermore, morality is frequently condemned by the terminology used. In their closing statements, some prisoners reveal what they perceive to be the inconsistency of the legal system by comparing state-sanctioned execution to murder. They argue that the death penalty's continuation of the cycle of violence calls into question the idea of justice itself, placing the moral burden on society in the process. Others, however, seek to bring about reconciliation by expressing regret and the hope that their death will bring closure or peace to the victims' families. In these cases, prisoners attempt to construct themselves as healing agents in order to transform their punishment into an act of atonement.

The vocabulary of death row inmates offers a remarkable window into their emotional reactions when confronted with the certainty of death. This is especially true when examining the language of prisoners through the lens of Terror Management Theory (TMT). TMT claims that when people become aware of their impending death, they suffer from existential anxiety, which compels them to create coping mechanisms in order to reduce their fear of passing away. A variety of emotional responses that are very compatible with these coping strategies are reflected in the language used by death row inmates in their statements. Defiance, acceptance, regret,

love, faith, and the pursuit of meaning are some of these responses.

One typical emotional response is defiance and resistance, where prisoners use strong, even combative language to contest the authority of the legal system or the validity of the death penalty. People who assert their innocence or criticise the system in their final moments regain a sense of agency. Their refusal serves as a psychological buffer, maintaining their authority and self-respect even in the face of execution. In these contexts, the language often adopts a victimizing or virtuous tone, presenting the inmate as someone who has been wronged rather than defeated, thus creating a narrative of personal fortitude in the face of institutional power.

Another recurring emotional theme is acceptance and surrender. By speaking in a cool, collected tone, many prisoners convey a sense of resignation, signifying that they have come to terms with their circumstances. It is possible to interpret this acceptance of inevitability as an emotional coping strategy that transforms death into a source of peace or freedom. Statements like "I'm ready, Warden" or "I'll be with Jesus" reassure by rephrasing execution as a transition rather than an end and signifying submission to a higher power or a greater cosmic order. In these circumstances, faith acts as a safeguard against the fear of oblivion and offers a sense of continuation beyond death.

When prisoners use their final words to fortify their bonds with friends, family, or spiritual leaders, it is another significant emotional response: love and connection. Inmates and their loved ones find solace in these emotional pillars, which often take the form of "I love you" or "I'll wait for you." Inmates lessen existential dread by focusing on love and unity, creating an emotional legacy of connection that endures beyond their physical death.

Furthermore, regret and atonement are communicated through words that acknowledge wrongdoing and request forgiveness. Inmates' statements show a deep emotional struggle with past actions, and their acceptance of punishment frequently acts as a form of atonement. Offering an apology or expressing regret to the victims' family members shows that emotional healing and closure are required. This aligns with TMT's mission to leave a moral legacy, ensuring that their final moments are characterized by responsibility and remorse rather than fear and chaos.

Finally, in an attempt to spread knowledge or encourage change, some prisoners use their closing remarks to share their personal opinions on life and death, push for legislative changes, or denounce social injustice. TMT's concept of "symbolic

immortality," which is an emotional impulse to validate meaning, is consistent with this. By contributing to broader conversations about justice and morality, these prisoners take solace in the knowledge that their voices will continue to influence narratives and influence thought long after they are put to death.

A rich emotional tapestry woven with resistance, acceptance, love, regret, and the pursuit of meaning can be seen in the vocabulary of death row inmates when viewed through the prism of Terror Management Theory. Even though death is inevitable, these linguistic choices, whether motivated by protest, faith, or connection, serve as coping mechanisms to deal with mortality and provide prisoners with a final opportunity to exercise agency and find meaning.

As death row inmates' last words disclose a range of coping mechanisms that closely align with psychological strategies found in death coping theories, language use reflects death coping mechanisms. Acceptance is a popular technique where prisoners use calm, collected language to state that they are ready to die. Phrases like "It is time to go home" or "I'm ready, Warden" show a conscious effort to reduce anxiety and accept the inevitable. This is consistent with final stage of grief, where individuals accept their fate and reinterpret execution as a natural transition that is often supported by personal conviction or faith. However, some prisoners exhibit denial when they consistently claim their innocence or refuse to accept the outcome of the legal system. Phrases that shield a person's integrity and sense of self-worth from the reality of death include "I did not do it" and "You're killing an innocent man." Inmates can psychologically distance themselves from their punishment by using denial as a coping mechanism for existential fear, according to Becker's book The Denial of Death. Defiance is another coping strategy where prisoners take back control of their narratives by using strong, combative language. According to (Wong, 2008) Meaning Management Theory, phrases like "I forgive you for what you're doing to me" or "I'll see you on the other side" show a resistance to emotional submission while providing control and empowerment when one feels powerless.

Additionally, a lot of prisoners look to religion for solace and meaning, which makes spiritual transcendence a powerful coping mechanism. Phrases like "Take my hand, Lord Jesus, I'm coming home" show a submission to divine will by redefining death as a journey into eternal calm rather than a conclusion. Spiritual beliefs act as a buffer against death dread and offer existential stability during times of crisis (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Additionally, inmates utilize phrases like "I love you, Mom"

or "We'll be together again" in their final words to friends and family, demonstrating the importance of love and connection as coping mechanisms. These expressions reveal a desire to preserve emotional bonds and reduce feelings of isolation, finding comfort in the enduring presence of love. According to (Yalom, 1980), this kind of connection helps people cope with existential loneliness because the safety of interpersonal relationships lessens their fear of dying. Lastly, some prisoners succeed by asserting their legacy and activism, turning their final moments into opportunities to influence future discussions. Coping strategies based on symbolic immortality, the belief that one's words and actions will live on after one pass away, include phrases like "End the death penalty" and "Don't let this happen to anyone else." This is in line with (Lifton, 1979) concept of symbolic immortality, which holds that people try to continue living after death by endorsing larger social or ideological movements. When considered collectively, these coping mechanisms reveal a profound psychological process whereby language is employed to regulate feelings, generate significance, and demonstrate agency when confronted with death. This offers an invaluable glimpse into what it is like to be human in the face of the greatest existential obstacle.

4.3. Summary of Major Findings (Organized by Research Questions)

This section provides a summary of the study's main conclusions, arranged in direct answer to the three main research questions. The answers provide a thorough grasp of how death row inmates linguistically express, manage, and cope with their impending death because they are grounded in the integration of Appraisal Theory, Death Coping Models, and Terror Management Theory.

i. How do death row prisoners use evaluative language to express emotional and psychological states in their final statements?

The results show that death row inmates express their internal emotional and psychological states primarily through evaluative language, especially through the Attitude subsystem of Appraisal Theory. "I love you all" or "Thanks for staying by my side" are two examples of positive affect, which is commonly used to convey appreciation, love, and regret towards family members and loved ones. Admitting guilt or asserting transformation (e.g., "I was a bad evil man… now I am a new creature in Christ") are examples of judgement resources, particularly self-evaluation and moral positioning. Through these expressions, inmates are able to create an emotional and moral story about who they are. Sometimes people use appreciation to think about

abstract ideals like justice, peace, and faith. When taken as a whole, these tactics portray a psychologically vulnerable and emotionally charged state that is expressed using language that inspires empathy, self-redemption, and closure. This pattern of language use is consistent with previous research (e.g., Vollum & Longmire, 2009; Schuck & Ward, 2008) that indicates inmates deliberately craft their last words to control the impressions they leave behind.

ii. How are psychological coping mechanisms linguistically constructed in death row statements?

According to the death row statements, inmates use a variety of psychological coping mechanisms that are consistent with the Death Coping Model and linguistically encoded. "Praise Jesus," "God will take me home," and "I give my spirit to the Lord" are examples of faith-based phrases that reflect a religious coping mechanism that reinterprets death as spiritual transcendence rather than an end. Apologies and requests for forgiveness are examples of conciliation statements, which indicate emotion-focused coping meant to restore moral equilibrium. Declarations of change and personal development, like asserting that one is born again or taking on religious titles (e.g., "I am a Christ child"), are examples of identity reconstruction. Graduation amplifier linguistic markers like "truly" and "wholeheartedly" amplify the emotional impact of such statements. These statements serve as coping strategies that give the inmates a sense of direction and inner serenity as they face death. According to Kübler-Ross and (Corr et al., 2009), this finding supports the importance of death coping stages, especially acceptance.

iii. In what ways does the language of death row prisoners reflect strategies of emotional regulation and existential meaning-making in relation to death anxiety?

The final statements demonstrate how inmates manage existential dread and create meaning in the face of death through language, in accordance with Terror Management Theory (TMT). "Tell my children I love them," "Keep the faith," and other affirmations of love, family, and legacy are examples of attempts to achieve symbolic immortality. Religious beliefs that reframe death as a continuation rather than an end, such as assurance of salvation or acceptance by God, act as potent protective barriers against the fear of mortality. In order to assert agency and preserve individual dignity, some statements (such as "This execution is not justice") display existential defiance or criticism of the system. Others employ spiritual expressions (like "I'll see you") or open-ended farewells that express emotional control, hope, and serenity. These

trends support the TMT theory that the main coping mechanisms for death anxiety are symbolic legacy, connection, and meaning-making (Pyszczynski et al., 2004; Vail et al., 2012). In their last moments, the language tools used, such as monoglossic certainty, affective tone, and judgment, act as tools for creating a cohesive story that reduces fear and validates identity.

Together, these findings highlight the complex interrelationships between language, emotion, and coping with death and advance our knowledge of how death row inmates use their last words to negotiate existential and psychological difficulties through structured, meaning-laden, and evaluative discourse.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The main findings of the study are thoroughly summarized and interpreted in this chapter, which is arranged in accordance with the previously stated goals and research questions. It goes back to the main goal of the study, which was to find out how death row inmates use language to express their coping strategies, existential meaning, and emotional and psychological states in their final statements. The study examined the evaluative and discursive techniques used by inmates facing execution by drawing on the frameworks of Terror Management Theory, the Death Coping Model, and Appraisal Theory.

The chapter starts off by methodically answering each research question with a well-organized synopsis of the main conclusions, showing how inmates use evaluative language, such as expressions of love, forgiveness, regret, and spiritual conviction, to express their inner emotional landscapes and face the existential death. Three main sub-sections, each of which relates to one of the main research questions, are used to present the findings. These revelations are then connected to the study's more general theoretical ramifications and useful contributions. The chapter ends with a discussion of the study's limitations, implications, and recommendations for additional research.

The goal of this study was to investigate how death row inmates express their psychological and emotional states, develop coping mechanisms, and deal with death anxiety through language used in their final statements. Based on Terror Management Theory (TMT), the Death Coping Model, and Appraisal Theory, the study aimed to shed light on the complex ways that language choices represent the inner experiences of people facing death. Four primary goals guided the investigation: analyzing the psychological and emotional states expressed by linguistic features; investigating the use of evaluative language (appreciation, judgment, and affect) in expressing coping mechanisms; comprehending the linguistic realization of psychological coping strategies; and investigating the role of language as a tool for existential meaning-making and emotional regulation.

The results of the analysis show that evaluative language, especially expressions of love, gratitude, faith, and regret, is crucial in describing the emotional landscapes of convicted inmates. While Judgment resources were used to express self-

condemnation or to affirm personal morality, Positive Affect was frequently used to communicate warmth and connection to loved ones. Prisoners' attempts to create cohesive moral identities and regain dignity in the face of death are reflected in these decisions. Though less common, appreciation was used sparingly to characterize individuals or spiritual beliefs, which helped to give their circumstances context.

From a psychological perspective, the inmates' last words often matched the Death Coping Model's list of death coping mechanisms, which include spiritual transcendence, acceptance, and legacy building. While messages aimed at youth, families, or society demonstrated legacy building, linguistic markers of acceptance included a calm tone, conciseness, and expressions of emotional peace. A prevalent form of transcendence was faith-based language, which affirmed belief in divine justice or an afterlife as a defense against existential fear.

Additional explanatory power was offered by Terror Management Theory, particularly with regard to the way in which statements promote symbolic immortality. Many inmates presented their deaths as meaningful and purposeful by emphasizing love, moral reform, or communal values. By repeatedly referencing religion and the afterlife, they were able to psychologically separate themselves from death and affirm spiritual continuity over biological finality, in addition to providing solace.

All together, these results provide a coherent response to the initial research questions. They first demonstrate that evaluative language is an essential instrument for communicating internal psychological and emotional states. Second, linguistic patterns show that inmates use affective, moral, and spiritual registers to create coping mechanisms. Third, the discourse strategies used, such as repetition, simplification, and religious affirmations, serve as methods for existential meaning-making and emotional control. By expanding the application of psychological models and appraisal theory to the little-studied context of death row discourse, these insights not only meet the study's goals but also advance theory.

This study has practical ramifications for the fields of law, ethics, and therapy. Public discussion on the death penalty, mental health treatments, and prison chaplaincy can all benefit from an understanding of the emotional and psychological content of final statements. It humanizes the condemned and highlights how crucial it is to allow for final expression as a component of compassionate end-of-life care.

In summary, the study's linguistic and psychological patterns paint a vivid picture of how people who are facing death use language to find closure, respect, and

purpose. Death row inmates reclaim agency in their last moments through existential framing and evaluative decisions, proving that language is still a potent tool for coping, identity assertion, and facing mortality even in the shadow of death.

5.1. Implications of the Study

This study makes important theoretical and applied contributions. Theoretically, it broadens the use of Appraisal Theory in the emotionally charged discourse surrounding the death penalty by providing a linguistic framework for examining stories about death. Additionally, it illustrates the ways in which TMT and Death Coping Models engage with evaluative discourse, offering a more sophisticated comprehension of how people use language to cope with mortality.

From a practical standpoint, the study advances disciplines like prison psychology, death studies, and forensic linguistics. It emphasizes the significance of closing remarks as acts of communication with therapeutic, spiritual, and social purposes. By acknowledging the need for expression, meaning-making, and closure at the end of life, these insights could guide mental health counselling, legal advocacy, and chaplaincy services for death row inmates.

5.2. Limitation of the Study

The study has a number of shortcomings in spite of its contributions. First, because of institutional restraints, censorship, or brevity, it depends on publicly accessible final statements that might not fully express the range of emotions. Second, because meaning must be deduced rather than explained, the lack of direct interviews with prisoners restricts the interpretive depth. Third, although these factors probably affect language use, cultural, racial, and denominational differences in coping and communication styles were not thoroughly examined. Lastly, even though Appraisal Theory offered a useful framework, narrative or discourse analysis could be incorporated into future studies to capture more comprehensive structural and dialogic aspects of final statements.

Several important considerations pertaining to accessibility, consistency, and the scope of the study led to the choice to use data from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice nstead of death row statements from Pakistani people.

First off, there is a severe lack of public access to comprehensive and methodically archived death row statements in Pakistan. Pakistan doesn't have a centralized, openly accessible database of final statements like the Texas Department

of Criminal Justice does. This made it difficult to collect reliable, consistent, and officially recorded data from Pakistani death row inmates, which created ethical and practical issues.

Second, because the study had to be done in English, it was difficult to use Pakistani death row statements because of language barriers, inconsistent translations, or a lack of original English transcripts. The majority of death row statements in Pakistan, if they are available at all, are probably in regional languages or Urdu, which makes it difficult to guarantee the veracity and correctness of translated material for linguistic or discourse analysis.

5.3. Contribution into the Existing Knowledge

This study contributes uniquely to the existing body of knowledge by revealing how death row prisoners use language as a means of psychological resilience, moral self-definition, and existential meaning-making in their final moments. Unlike previous research that has mainly viewed death row statements as expressions of guilt or legal testimony, this study adopts an integrated framework combining Appraisal Theory, the Death Coping Model, and Terror Management Theory to uncover the deeper emotional and existential dimensions of these utterances. The findings highlight that language functions not merely as communication but as a tool of agency, enabling inmates to reclaim control over their narratives when all physical autonomy is lost. A distinctive contribution of this study is the identification of spiritual transcendence as a major coping mechanism, where faith-based expressions transform death into a transition rather than an end, providing emotional stability and hope. Moreover, the research establishes that emotional expression such as love, regret, defiance, and gratitude is closely intertwined with existential meaning-making, allowing prisoners to construct moral coherence and find peace in their suffering. The discovery that some inmates use their final words to advocate for justice or forgiveness adds another original dimension, showing how last statements can achieve symbolic immortality by leaving a moral or social legacy beyond death. Finally, by situating these findings within a Pakistani socio-cultural perspective, the study opens new avenues for understanding how the language of the condemned can humanize capital punishment debates and encourage more compassionate approaches to justice and rehabilitation. Through these insights, the research broadens the theoretical and human understanding of how individuals linguistically manage death anxiety, affirm identity, and create meaning at the edge of

existence.

5.4. Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of this study by looking at death row comments from different cultural, linguistic, and legal contexts in order to identify cross- cultural differences in emotional expression and coping strategies. By using quantitative methods like sentiment analysis or computational linguistics, more details regarding the prevalence and intensity of emotional language close to death may be revealed. A deeper understanding of how language serves as a coping mechanism in diverse contexts of mortality awareness may also be gained by contrasting the last words of death row inmates with other end-of-life communications, such as suicide notes, hospice narratives, or last letters. Researchers may also find it helpful to apply other psychological theories, such as existential psychology or narrative identity theory, to gain a better understanding of how people construct meaning and identity in their final moments. Examining how sociopolitical factors, media representations, and legal systems influenced these stories may also provide a more complete understanding of the external influences on the inmates' language. In order to ensure that the voices of the convicted are heard with respect and compassion, future research could also focus on the moral ramifications of studying such sensitive topics. Overall, expanding the theoretical and methodological perspectives in this field could lead to a better comprehension of the complex interrelationships among language, death, and the human condition.

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APPENDIX

CORPUS OF DEATH ROW STATEMENT

S#	LAST STATEMENT
1	Statement to the Media: I, at this very moment, have absolutely no fear of what may happen to this body. My fear is for Allah, God only, who has at this moment the only power to determine if I should live or die... As a devout Muslim, I am taught and believe that this material life is only for the express purpose of preparing oneself for the real life that is to come... Since becoming Muslim, I have tried to live as Allah wanted me to live. Spoken: Yes, I do. I love you. Asdadu an la ilah illa Allah, Asdadu an la ilah illa Allah, Asdadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah, Asdadu anna Muhammadan Rasul Allah. I bear witness that there is no God but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah. Inna li-Allah wa-inna ilayhi rajiun. Verily unto Allah do we belong, Verily unto him do we return. Be strong.
2	This inmate declined to make a last statement.
3	What is about to transpire in a few moments is wrong! However, we as human beings do make mistakes and errors. This execution is one of those wrongs yet doesn't mean our whole system of justice is wrong. Therefore, I would forgive all who have taken part in any way in my death. Also, to anyone I have offended in any way during my 39 years, I pray and ask your forgiveness, just as I forgive anyone who offended me in any way. And I pray and ask God's forgiveness for all of us respectively as human beings. To my loved ones, I extend my undying love. To those close to me, know in your hearts I

	love you one and all. God bless you all and may God's best blessings be always yours. Ronald C. O'Bryan P.S. During my time here, I have been treated well by all T.D.C. personnel.
4	When asked if he had a last statement, he replied, "Yes, I do."I hope that one day we can look back on the evil that we're doing right now like the witches we burned at the stake. I want everybody to know that I hold nothing against them. I forgive them all. I hope everybody I've done anything to will forgive me. I've been praying all day for Carl Levin's wife to drive the bitterness from her heart because that bitterness that's in her heart will send her to Hell just as surely as any other sin. I'm sorry for everything I've ever done to anybody. I hope they'll forgive me. "Sharon, tell all my friends goodbye. You know who they are: Charles Bass, David Powell…" Then he coughed and nothing else was said.
5	I pray that my family will rejoice and will forgive, thank you.
6	Heavenly Father, I give thanks for this time, for the time that we have been together, the fellowship in your world, the Christian family presented to me (He called the names of the personal witnesses.). Allow your holy spirit to flow as I know your love as been showered upon me. Forgive them for they know not what they do, as I know that you have forgiven me, as I have forgiven them. Lord Jesus, I commit my soul to you, I praise you, and I thank you.
7	This inmate declined to make a last statement.
8	There's no God but Allah, and unto thy I belong and unto thy I return. I want to continue to tell my brothers and sisters to be strong.
9	I want to thank Father Walsh for his spiritual help. I want to thank Bob Ray (Sanders) and Steve Blow for their friendship. What I want people to know is that they call me a cold-blooded killer when I shot a man that shot me first. The only thing that convicted me was that I am a Mexican and that he was a police officer. People hollered for my life, and they are to have my life tonight. The people never hollered for the life of the policeman that killed a thirteen-year-old boy who was handcuffed in the back seat of a police car. The people

	never hollered for the life of a Houston police officer who beat up and drowned Jose Campo Torres and threw his body in the river. You call that equal justice. This is your equal justice. This is America's equal justice. A Mexican's life is worth nothing. When a policeman kills someone, he gets a suspended sentence or probation. When a Mexican kills a police officer this is what you get. From there you call me a cold-blooded murderer. I didn't tie anyone to a stretcher. I didn't pump any poison into anybody's veins from behind a locked door. You call this justice. I call this and your society a bunch of cold-blooded murderers. I don't say this with any bitterness or anger. I just say this with truthfulness. I hope God forgives me for all my sins. I hope that God will be as merciful to society as he has been to me. I'm ready, Warden.
10	D.J., Laurie, Dr. Wheat, about all I can say is goodbye, and for all the rest of you, although you don't forgive me for my transgressions, I forgive yours against me. I am ready to begin my journey and that's all I have to say.
11	I deserve this. Tell everyone I said goodbye.
12	This inmate declined to make a last statement.
13	"Be strong for me," Pinkerton told his father, Gene Pinkerton, as witnesses entered the execution chamber. "I want you to know I'm at peace with myself and with my God," Pinkerton said. He recited a prayer to Allah, the supreme being of Islam. "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah. With your praise I ask for forgiveness and I return unto you," Pinkerton said. "I love you, Dad."
14	Goodbye to all my friends; be cool. Thank you for being my friends. Give my love to everybody.
15	I have no last words. I am ready.
16	Goodbye to my family; I love all of you, I'm sorry for the victim's family. I wish I could make it up to them. I want those out there to keep fighting the death penalty.

17	Tell my mother I love her and continue on without me. God bless her. Tell the guys on death row to continue their struggle to get off death row. That's about it.
18	This inmate declined to make a last statement.
19	I want to say I'm sorry for the things I've done and I hope I'm forgiven. I don't hold nothing against no one – Everyone has treated me well and I know it's not easy for them – That's all, I'm sorry.
23	Mother, I am sorry for all the pain I've caused you. Please forgive me. Take good care of yourself. Ernest and Otis, watch out for the family. Thank all of you who have helped me.
30	I would like to tell Mr. Richard that I appreciate all he has done for me. I love you all. God bless. Goodbye, David.
32	I hope Mrs. Howard can find peace in this.
33	I want to say I hold no grudges. I hate no one. I love my family. Tell everyone on death row to keep the faith and don't give up.
34	I wish everybody a good life. Everything is O.K.
35	I would like to point out that I have written a statement and the Warden will give you a copy. I still proclaim I am innocent, and that's all I have to say.
37	I just ask everybody I ever hurt or done anything wrong to, to just forgive me for whatever wrongs I done to them.
38	I'm ready, Warden.
39	I'm going to a beautiful place. O.K., Warden, roll 'em.
40	I don't think so. That's all. Go ahead. Start things rolling. (Mouthed "Hi, Mom" to his mother.)
41	His final statement lasted 3 minutes. He thanked everybody that fought against his sentence. He spoke to his family and said he would carry their love with him.
42	Let's do it, man. Lock and load. Ain't life a [expletive deleted] ?

45	None. But as he lay there he did praise the Lord and seemed to be praying.
46	I just want everyone to know that the prosecutor and Bill Scott are sorry sons of bitches. To his family he added that he loved them all.
48	Thanked his family.
49	When his attorney came into the witness room, he said, "Tell Mom I love her." The attorney said back to him, "I love you, too."
50	High Flight (aviation poem)
58	I am innocent, innocent, innocent. Make no mistake about this; I owe society nothing. Continue the struggle for human rights, helping those who are innocent, especially Mr. Graham. I am an innocent man, and something very wrong is taking place tonight. May God bless you all. I am ready.
59	This inmate declined to make a last statement.
60	I am the sinner of all sinners. I was responsible for the ’75 and ’79 cases. My trial was not just; it was not fair; they lied against me. I love all of those on Death Row, and I will always hold them in my hands. Those who stood by me, I will always love you. Jim and Judy Peterson and Chaplain Lopez, I thank you for staying by my side.
61	This inmate declined to make a last statement.
62	I would like to tell my family I love them very dearly, and I know they love me. I love all of the people who supported me all of these years. I would like to tell the Merka family I love them, too. I plead with all the teenagers to stop the violence and to accept Jesus Christ and find victory. Today I have victory in Christ and I thank Jesus for taking my spirit into His precious hands. Thank you, Jesus.
65	I’m an African warrior, born to breathe, and born to die.
67	This execution is not justice. This execution is an act of revenge! If this is justice, then justice is blind. Take a borderline retarded young male who for the 1st time ever in his life committed a felony then contaminate his TRUE tell all confession add a judge who discriminates plus an ALL-WHITE JURY pile on an ineffective

	assistance of counsel and execute the option of rehabilitation persecute the witnesses and you have created a death sentence for a family lasting over 10 years. I will say once again…..This execution isn't justice – but an act of revenge. Killing R.J. will not bring Anil back, it only justifies "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." It's too late to help R.J., but maybe this poem will help someone else out there. "Seeing Through the Eyes of a Death Row Inmate" Sometime I wonder why, why he? Why did he go out into the world to see? To be out there and see what really did exist, now his name is written down on the Death Row list. I can only imagine how lonesome he was all by himself. We both knew he had no future left! His hopes and dreams became a fantasy. He often said, "There's nothing left of me." I have asked myself, why did he get involved with drugs? He could never explain why he hung around with thugs? Did it really make him feel like a king – Did he actually think he was capable of getting away with anything? He knew the thought of life wasn't ticking in his head. There's nothing left but the memory of those who lay dead. What was did, cannot be undone. He was confessed, he was one of the guilty ones. What would he say to the victim's family? – I'm sorry and my head wasn't on straight. I hope you will accept my apology, even though it's too late. I never knew I would take a life and commit a crime. I regret it because now I have to face the lethal injection while doing death row time. I knew I would pay with struggle and strife, but I never thought the cost would be me losing my life. Richard J. Wilkerson Written through his sister Michelle Winn
70	I just want to tell my family I love them, and I thank the Lord Jesus for giving me another chance and for saving me.
71	I want to express my feelings regarding the mishap of the deceased Mrs. Iris Siff. That was a very unfortunate incident and only God knows why it was an unintentional situation that took place. I want to

	express my remorse to the family and the discomfort and pain I caused in their lives. Only God will determine if I am truly guilty or innocent of being the type of person I have been drawn up to be by the press and media. I have given my wife the power and energy to be a disciple of Islam. I rescued her from a wretched life in Ireland. I thank Allah for sending her to me. Certainly murder cannot be an instrument of Allah. My wife is very devoted.
72	God, please forgive me of my sins. Look after my people. Bless and protect all people. I am sorry for my sins. Lord, take me home with you. Amen. (A couple of sentences garbled.)
73	Peace.
77	Well, I just wanted to ask people to pray for two families: my family and the family of Officer McCarthy. I appreciate the prayers. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.
78	To my family who has kept me strong, I give my love.
79	(First two or three words not understood.) I don't know why Marta Glass wasn't allowed in here. I love you all. Keep the faith. Remember the death penalty is murder. They are taking the life of an innocent man. My attorney, Ron Kuley [unintelligible], will read my letter at a press conference after this is over. That is all I have to say. I love you all.
80	I just love everybody, and that's it.
82	(Mumbled something about he wished his whole life would have been spent as Islamic.)
83	I'll see you.
84	I told the daughter not to come. Discontinue; be quiet, please. Specifically, I want to say that the bad evil man I was when I came to death row 13 years ago is no more – by the power of God; Jesus Christ; God Almighty; Holy Spirit, he has transformed me as a new creature of Christ. I know that I am a Christ child and that my Lord will welcome me into His arms.

	Jesus Christ is the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. I love all of you, those I can and can't see. With the love of Christ, my love for you is secure and I love you purely and wholeheartedly in the name of the Almighty God.
85	…guys like them got tied up in something like this. Thank Chaplain Taylor and Jane. I just got your letter. Thanks to Carolyn and Gloria, who have been my friends for over four years. I want to remember Patsy Buntion, Gladys and a lot more friends. I want to thank the prosecutor in my case; it took courage for him to do what he did but he did what he did because he believed in the judicial system. I'm not ready to go, but I have no choice; I sent several letters to my family; they'll be very moving when you get them. I want to say goodbye again to my boys. I know I'm missing somebody, but if there's anything I have left to say, it would be that I wish I had a Shakespearean vocabulary, but since I was raised in TDC, I missed out on some of my vocabulary. If my words can persuade you to discontinue this practice of executing people, please do so. If the citizens don't do away with the death penalty, Texas won't be a safe place to be. I have no revenge because hate won't solve anything. (I gave Warden Hodges the phone at this time and he listened for 5-10 minutes. When he returned the phone to me, I could hear Kinnamon talking but evidently the phone was not close to the mike, because I could not understand him.)
86	I have committed lots of sin in my life, but I am not guilty of this crime. I would like to tell my son, daughter and wife that I love them – Eden, if they want proof of them, give it to them. Thanks for being my friend.
87	Thank you for being my Lord Jesus and Savior and I am ready to come home. Amen.
88	I would like to thank my friends and family for sticking with me through all of this. I would like to encourage my brothers to continue

	to run the race. I thank my Father, God in Heaven, for the grace he has granted me – I am ready.
89	There's love and peace in Islam.
90	I love you, Mom. Goodbye.
91	I forgive all of you – hope God forgives all of you too.
94	I would like to tell my family I love them. My attorneys did their best. All of my brothers on death row, those who died and those who are still there, to hang in there. And that's all I have to say.
96	I would like to say that I have no animosity toward anyone. I made a mistake 18 years ago – I lost control of my mind but I didn't mean to hurt anyone. I have no hate toward humanity. I hope He will forgive me for what I done. I didn't mean to.
98	I would like to say – I just hope Ms. Fielder is happy now. I would like to thank my lawyer, Nancy, for her help on my case and for being with me now.
99	I want the world to know that I'm innocent and that I've found peace. Let's ride.
102	I thank God that he died for my sins on the cross, and I thank Him for saving my soul, so I will know when my body lays back in the grave, my soul goes to be with the Lord. Praise God. I hope whoever hears my voice tonight will turn to the Lord. I give my spirit back to Him. Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus. Hallelujah.