To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Li Ravicz entitled "The Experience of Longing." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Psychology.

Howard Pollio, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

THE EXPERIENCE OF LONGING

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Li Ravicz

December, 1998

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Bobbi Ravicz
and Richard Ravicz,

My grandmother,
Mrs. Frances Kallison

and to
the memory of Dr. Robert Ravicz

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There are many people to whom I am grateful for making my time at the University of Tennessee so rewarding. I have benefited enormously from my contact with faculty in and outside of the Department of Psychology and feel particularly fortunate to have had the outstanding Dissertation Committee of Howard Pollio, Jack Barlow, Ron Hopson, and Jack Reese. I would like to thank each of them for sharing their insight, enthusiasm and curiosity about my dissertation with me and for providing invaluable guidance and support throughout my graduate training.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to describe the human experience of longing. The dialogical method of existential phenomenology was utilized to arrive at a description of the experience. Eleven participants were interviewed about their experience of longing. The interviews were transcribed and the resulting transcriptions were interpreted using a hermeneutic approach.

Longing was characterized as a dynamic state of consciousness punctuated by fluctuations in what was figurally noticed. Participants described their awareness as shifting among four interrelated themes: Reaching For, Desired Object, Barrier, and Bittersweet Feelings. The thematic structure of longing emerged against a ground described as a state of consciousness: "As Is/As If." Fluctuations in thematic experiences corresponded with alternations in "As Is" and "As If" modes of consciousness. The "As Is" mode concerns phenomena experienced as existing in the world; the "As If" mode concerns objects and experiences regarded as products of fantasy or imagination.

These findings suggest that longing is a complex phenomena characterized by paradoxical relationships among aspects of its own state. Such interrelationships express and instantiate

transformational aims: In longing, individuals experience a desire to change ontological states — to become other than who or what they were at that moment. Present findings were considered in relation to a select number of philosophical and psychological theories. The theoretical descriptions of longing provided by Hegel, Sartre and Hillman closely accorded with the descriptions provided by participants in this study.

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In my solitude I have seen things very clearly that were not true.

Antonio Machado, *Times Alone*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The experience of longing is an important part of our emotional vocabulary. Our hopes and fantasies are often suffused with its essence, as are our losses. An insistent force, longing propels us into the future and helps us reclaim important experiences from the past. We dream of what we have been or what we may yet become. In longing for what is lost we paradoxically keep alive an aspect of our past. In yearning for a dream we realize an aspect of our future. For some individuals longing may be a basic mode of experience — one which provides meaning and shapes their relationships with other people. Longing may even become a desirable other, a lover, in which case one longs for longing. As the poet Cavafy (1975/1992) entreats,

> Come back often and take hold of me/ sensations that I love come back and take hold of me/ when the body's memory awakes/ and an old longing again moves into the blood,/ when lips and skin remember/ and hands feel as though they touch again. (p. 43)

Longing may also be a temporary or occasional experience: a weigh station between destinations that is soon forgotten among the demands of the day. But what is longing?

Longing occupies an important place within the canon of western history. The German philosopher Hegel (1807/1964) argued that experience itself is a desire or a longing. Pilgrims and seekers of all kinds who have devoted themselves to their dreams would be hard pressed to argue the point. So too would those poets who have dedicated verse upon verse to the celebration of longing's charms. Yet, the discipline of psychology has ventured very little into this territory. Perhaps we are ashamed of our longings — immaterial fantasies which may never come to pass. From the beginning, our discipline has disparaged fantasy as childish and pathological. Even William James (1890/1950) our most gifted reconnoiterer, considered wishes and fantasies of dubious value. Psychologists also may exclude longing from study because it is too vague and hazy a phenomena to be of interest to science. Yet this is exactly the point: The experience of longing is diffuse and dreamy. It may be harnessed to a purpose but it is not of itself necessarily pragmatic or categorical.

Although certain theorists refer to longing, few consider it explicitly. (The French psychoanalyst and philosopher Jacques Lacan is the notable exception.) Rather, longing often is subsumed within a discussion of loss, regression, deprivation, and similar related topics. In this sense it becomes an invisible part of these psychological discourses. Other accounts transform longing into an entirely

different phenomena — often something other than a psychological experience. For instance, Freud's drive theory reduced both longing and desire to a mechanical set of principles organized on the basis of psychic energy.

Empirical descriptions of longing also are largely absent from the psychological literature. The present phenomenological account attempts to redress this oversight. To this end, Chapter Two offers a review of the psychological and philosophical literature in which longing and similar or related terms are presented. In several cases I have introduced longing into the discussion of a theory that has failed to reference it. In these instances, I wager that longing is a central if implicit aspect of these accounts. This view emerges from my own life experience and understanding of psychoanalytic and existential theory. Many personality theories are undergirded by teleological assumptions about human existence. These views reflect a kind of conceptual longing; that is, they express in theoretical language the goal of reaching an elusive but ideal state. The promise of achieving such ends, either for ourselves or our patients, may furnish us with important motivations as clinical psychologists. The experience of longing continues to have that kind of influence in my own life. In this respect, my dissertation is an academic account and a personal expression of longing.

Chapter Three, the method section, presents the qualitative procedures employed in this project, combined with a rationale for their use. Chapter Four, the results section, presents the findings of the study and includes a thematic structure of the experience of longing as well as supporting narrative results. Chapter Five, the discussion section, addresses the relationship between the findings of this study and the theories of longing presented earlier. The phenomenological understanding of longing also may be expected to contribute to the psychological literature about important topics such as loss, mourning, and creativity. It is hoped that the present account will shed light upon what appears to be a significant, if not fundamental, human experience.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

The subject of this dissertation is elusive; the objects we long for frequently elude capture — perhaps because they are products of our fantasies. Moreover, our own wants may shift and change without warning and this may lead us to question not only the reliability of that which we seek but the nature of our longing as well.

Not surprisingly, representing this experience in language takes multiple forms, and these significations express various nuances of meaning. The present chapter reflects my own work with, and response to, these words as they emerge in different accounts and contexts. For example: I found that the terms **"longing"** and **"desire"** often are used in closely related ways. While desire is defined as "to long or hope for," longing is regarded as "an intense desire" (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1982). Words such as **yearning, wish, and want** also provide parallel if not identical meanings. In fact, the results of a literature search on longing always revealed co-occurrences of these concepts and there were no instances when they emerged independently of one another. Thus,

the present chapter includes a review of these experiences as they relate to the current topic. Without their inclusion the phenomena of longing could not be adequately explored. Where possible, however, distinctions will be made between related terms.

The present review includes philosophical as well as psychological accounts of longing. The phenomena of longing (or desire) is more of a focal concern in academic philosophy than in any other discipline; in fact, it has been considered to be one of the most important philosophical topics of the 20th century (Goodheart, 1991). The present discussion provides an important backdrop against which to consider psychological accounts of longing. Although psychologists often are unaware of this philosophical current, I believe it has contributed to the "*Zeitgeist*" out of which psychological accounts of longing have emerged. As is the case with every academic discipline, cultural and philosophical underpinnings invariably frame theoretical discourses.

Finally, reviewing psychological and philosophical accounts of longing together helps forge a critical distance from each. In many cases psychological and philosophical theories provide consistent or complementary views of longing. Important differences also emerge between accounts. For example, contemporary philosophical work considers longing within a socio-political and historical context. Such a rendition challenges the essentialist program embedded within

many psychological theories of personality which are predicated upon invariant and ahistorical accounts of human subjectivity. The inclusion of philosophical conceptions about subjectivity should provide a useful corrective to such bias within our discipline.

Longing and Subjectivity

The discussion of longing must include an account of the person who longs, as well the effects that longing have upon the person's subjectivity. Identity, itself, may be understood as a product of longing. According to Hillman (1979), "We are defined not by what we are or what we do, but by our *Sehnsucht:* Tell me for what you yearn and I shall tell you who you are" (p. 56). Certain contemporary theories have gone so far as to conflate the experience of subjectivity and longing or desire. For instance, some existential theorists regard subjectivity as a process of desire. According to Sartre (1943/1956), the subject is nothing more than a fiction constructed through creative acts of desire.

In what ensues, the philosophical understanding of subjectivity and desire is considered followed by a review psychoanalytic and existentially influenced psychological accounts of these phenomena. In several instances, implicit rather than explicit views about subjectivity frame the related discussion of longing. Next, longing is considered as a basic ontological experience and as a psychological

reflection of an archetypal reality. A review of the relationship between longing and cognate experiences such as creativity, mysticism, and nostalgia is also provided. The conclusion of this chapter offers summary reflections about relationships between subjectivity, longing and related experiences.

Philosophical Treatment of Longing and Desire

Desire and subjecthood are two of the most significant topics in contemporary philosophy (Butler, 1987). In the philosophical literature desire can be allied with the psychological understanding of longing: That is, it describes a broad set of experiences rather than a specific aspect of human sexuality. Working out of the Hegelian tradition, French existential and post-structuralist theories are specifically concerned with the relationship between desire and subjectivity. In what follows, this understanding is traced in philosophy beginning with Hegel's anthropocentric concern with consciousness, other and the movement of desire. Following this account, four modern thinkers are taken up; Sartre, Lacan, Deleuze and Foucault, each of whom is indebted to Hegel for their understanding of the relationship between subjectivity and desire. This review is not a comprehensive account of their work, only a summary sketch of those points related to the present discussion.

Hegel's Account of Subjectivity and Desire

In The Phenomenology of the Spirit Hegel argues that desire both creates and embodies subjectivity (Butler, 1987). Desire mediates the relationship between alterity (that which is different) and consciousness. This process, which is dialectical in nature, creates self-consciousness or "spirit." For Hegel, self-consciousness is the teleological goal of existence. In its full expression, self-consciousness comprises all of reality. Thus, Hegel's account of desire simultaneously instantiates his metaphysical account of "The Absolute."

In response to Kant's dualistic conception of knowledge, Hegel proposed a unitary theory of experience, "a principle of subject object identity" (Beiser, 1993, p. 12). He regarded nature as an organism that unites finite experience in all its variety with properties of the infinite. Nature is comprised of matter, but matter that is vitalistic and self-organizing rather than mechanistic and dead. Physical and mental phenomena are qualitatively alike but reflect different degrees of organization and development. Thus, "spirit" or consciousness represents a highly developed form of matter rather than a faculty dualistically opposed to it. This is a conception which closely followed Spinoza and Schelling's metaphysical theory of nature (Spencer, 1996). Hegel's account of

desire demonstrates how encounters with alterity transform consciousness into self-consciousness.

Negation: Hegel's dialectic exemplifies his metaphysical account (Beiser, 1993). He referred to the dialectic as "the experience of consciousness" and to his phenomenology as "the science of the experience of consciousness" (Beiser, page20). Hegel argued that consciousness is partial and contradictory, and that only by rising to more inclusive levels of awareness are such contradictions overcome (Taylor, 1975). He described this dynamic process as the power of negation (Spencer, 1996). Negation refers to a variety of relations including difference, opposition, contradiction, and reflection. Through negation, stagnant and habituated thought processes are broken down and transformed into new dynamic wholes.

In negation, aspects of consciousness are rejected as unsatisfactory or contradictory. This brings about an affirmation of their negative which is also subsequently rejected. This process continues through each successive stage of the dialectic until the most inclusive whole, The Absolute, is realized. The Absolute embodies each successive stage of consciousness in both its opposed and synthesized forms. It preserves or "sublates" within itself all the elements which have been overcome. This dialectic is often schematized as the triadic structure of *thesis, antithesis and synthesis*; Hegel, however, never used those terms to formulate his logic (Spencer, 1996). As an

imminent philosopher, he eschewed attempts to schematize or impose a conceptual overlay upon experience.

Desire and Negation: For Hegel, desire is a form of negation. In opposing and appropriating the other it creates consciousness or subjectivity. Consciousness evolves as it rejects self-limiting aspects of its own spirit. Through desire for the other it surpasses itself (Hegel, 1807/1964). That is, subjectivity identifies itself with the difference or "alterity" sought by its desire. The other is both canceled and preserved *("Aufhebung")* within the subject. Consciousness is never completely self-identical because it is always dialectically related to the other. As Hegel (1807/1964) notes, consciousness is both "in itself" and "for the other." Thus, consciousness is governed by a principle of complete conservation.

Subject as Process: Subjectivity is transformed through this dialectical process. It constitutes itself in desire or perpetual striving. In fact, Butler (1987) suggests that subjectivity is nothing but a way of describing desire's endless movement. We exist as our desire. This view is consistent with an existentialist reading of Hegel. For instance, Kierkegaard wrote, "A self, every instant it exists is in process of becoming for the self... is only that which it is to become" (May, 1983, p. 139). Although Hegel establishes this equivalency throughout the Phenomenology, he also sought to transcend it. In the last section of that work, Hegel argued that desire may discover

the unity it seeks through its negative encounter with and re-conceptualization of alterity. Difference or alterity leads to an all embracing ontological union or harmony (Beiser, 1993). This is self-consciousness.

Hegel's totalizing metaphysic is critiqued by existential and post-structural schools who otherwise are influenced by his thought. For instance, Bataille (1990) rejects the notion that the other can be both canceled and preserved within consciousness. He argues for a more radical negation that does not magically redeem the phenomena that has just been canceled. This position challenges Hegel's conservative metaphysical economy. Further critiques will be considered in my discussion of Sartre, Lacan, Deleuze, and Foucault's view of desire.

Desire as Force: According to Hegel (1807/1964), desire forges self-consciousness in a succession of related movements. These movements represent a series of subject-object relations that are recapitulated at higher levels of organization. At each step a more inclusive identity is established. In section four of the Phenomenology entitled "The Truth of Self-Certainty," Hegel elaborates upon the concept of "Force" introduced in section three, "Force and Understanding," to illuminate the intentional relationship between consciousness and world. Force in this context refers to a perceptual or cognitive movement between the subject and its intentional object. Hegel suggests that the subject must perceive

something outside of itself in order to exist. It becomes external to itself by taking an object. This creates the conditions for a dialectical "unity" between subject and object. That is, the self is both different from its object and simultaneously related to it.

Consciousness, however, is unable to grasp the dynamic nature of the intentional process (Butler, 1987). It continues to situate identity on one side or the other of the dialectic, and fails to understand the vital unity implied by the movements between them. In consciousness' struggle to do so it first apprehends itself as an object. That is, it becomes reflexive by recognizing its own frustrated attempts to explain Force. Consciousness discovers that it is other to itself and that the self shares an identity with the other. Thus, self-consciousness emerges from the subject's effort to explain inner difference or to conceptualize the paradox of Force. It unwittingly enacts the paradox it sought to explain. "Consciousness of the world is always simply consciousness of itself in its alterity" (Butler, p. 31).

Desire as Longing: The issue of self-consciousness is revisited in Hegel's discussion of the "sensuous perceptual world." The union of subject and object requires a shared physical condition. Hegel proposes that desire's own sensual properties connect consciousness with the world (Butler, 1987). Although Force creates relationships between the subject and its objects, a vital absence or lack remains. The subject continues to feel alienated from the sensual world and

hungers to overcome the disparity between itself and its objects. The "sensuous perceptual world" is regarded as an essential aspect of life which excludes the subject. The subject feels "that inevitable melancholy that attends the knowledge of irretraversable distance" (Butler, p. 36). The experience of desire or longing reveals the subject's psychic poverty. This is a theme that will be returned to in discussing Sartre's view of desire.

Death and Desire: Lacking what it desires — life in the world — the subject comes to experience itself as empty and dead (Hegel, 1807/1964). It responds by appropriating the role of the negative for itself. That is, it finds its agency as an agent of death. In this guise, the subject sets out to consume or annihilate other life forms. Desire or "*Begierde,*" manifests itself as an animal hunger or appetite. Its oral experience restores to the subject a positive determinate role. The effects of the subject in the sensate world demonstrate its existence. Moreover, these effects also confirm the subject's relation to life, if only in a destructive sense.

Hegel's subject, however, discovers a difficulty in its incorporative project. First, it finds that it is dependent upon its objects even as it dominates them. As a destructive agent its identity relies upon having a world to destroy. Hegel (1807/1964) remarks,

> Desire and the certainty of its self obtained in the gratification of desire, are conditioned by the object; for the certainty exists through canceling this other; in order that this canceling may be affected, there must be this other. (p. 225).

Secondly, the subject cannot completely monopolize life because life is more than any determinate number of representations. In theory, the subject would have to incorporate an infinite number of objects to achieve its ends. Life and the sensual object world cannot be completely assimilated. Desire or longing is permanent because externality is unsurpassable. "Self-consciousness is thus unable by its negative relation to the object to abolish it; because of that relation it rather produces it again, as well as the desire" (Hegel, 1807/1964, p. 225).

Desire in Hegel's "The Truth of Self-Certainty" presents several other problems. First, the subject becomes aware of the fact that it will lose itself if it manages to eliminate all its objects (Butler, 1987). This is because its form relies upon its determinate relationship with these objects. Second, identity remains a precarious achievement as long as it is defined by this form of negation. Every time an object is disposed of the subject must incorporate another life form in order to sustain its identity of negation. Ultimately this is a tiresome and unrewarding condition. Thus, the subject looks for Desire to establish another path to identity.

Lordship and Bondage: In the section of Phenomenology titled "Lordship and Bondage," Hegel (1807/1964) argues that the subject must take something other than itself as its object. Desire is always the desire for something else. Hegel also claims that self-consciousness is equally for the self. This means that the subject must discover an other who also positively reflects its own reflexivity (Butler, 1987). In Hegel's (1807/1964) words, "Self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness" (p. 226). Desire fulfills itself in its desire for a subject that desires it. Thus, the satisfaction of "Desire" is finally achieved in relationship to an object which mirrors its own reflexive structure. This is Hegel's dialectical principle of "Recognition" *(Anerkennung).* In its recognition of the other's self-consciousness or desire, the subject succeeds in forging a union with difference. Consciousness realizes itself as "Spirit" *(Geist)* or the absolute being that it has always been. An ontological unity is established.

Predictably, the subject encounters new difficulties in the realization of this identity. The process of recognition is more challenging than first supposed. Where consciousness expects an object that passively reflects it, it discovers an autonomous subject motivated by its own need for freedom and independence. Where the subject intends to make its identity more inclusive it finds its own subjectivity appropriated by the other's quest for an expanded identity. Although recognition is a gift consciousness bestows upon the other,

it is now regarded as a sacrifice, theft or confiscation. In its effort to become coextensive with the world, it has been claimed by the other. These problems highlight the difference between the abstract conception of encounter that is invariably shaped by self-serving expectations and the material actualization of that experience.

Moreover, desire creates a related difficulty: self-consciousness may be eclipsed by "Desire's" intentional structure (Butler, 1987). That is, the subject loses itself in its ecstatic involvement with its object. It is alienated from itself and at the same time surpassed or negated by the desire of the other. At this point, freedom is considered the exclusive property of an individual body. In as much as the other exhibits autonomy it also usurps the subject's freedom. Thus, consciousness seeks to destroy the other to restore its own autonomy. This circumstance is remedied when consciousness learns to recognize that the other is experiencing a similar disturbance. The subject discovers its parallel effects on the being of the reflected other. The desire of each self-consciousness helps determine the subjectivity of the other. This equivalence is the basis of their interdependent relationship, although, interdependence is only realized (if at all) through a further series of negations. This is the dialectical territory encountered in the "Life and Death Struggle."

The Life and Death Struggle: At this point, Hegel's subject is challenged to risk its own determinate life to win its freedom from

an other. It hopes through violence to liberate itself from the externality of the other and from the limitation of bodily existence (Butler, 1987). In this struggle the subject discovers that it can lay claim upon its own determinate existence but never to that of the other. The other blocks its path to an all-inclusive identity. This transforms the nature of the subject's desire. Instead of striving to be the immanent source of reality, consciousness desires to become a "pure abstraction" not determined by any particularity. This is, in fact, a two-fold action with each subjectivity seeking to obliterate the boundaries existing between itself and the other.

Thus, a destructive intent emerges for a second time in Hegel's Phenomenology (Butler, 1987). In this case, the subject's desire is not to destroy the other through incorporation but to overcome corporality altogether. Hegel regarded this as an essential step towards the realization of a negative subjectivity; that is, consciousness as a creative, self-surpassing process or "negativity." Each subject must be willing to move beyond instinct or "first nature" to become a transcendent being. "The individual who has not risked his life may well be recognized as a person, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness" (Hegel, 1964, p. 187). The subject must learn to see negativity or death as a defining aspect of itself. Hegel notes,

> Spirit attains its truth only by finding itself in absolute dismemberment. It does not attain that (prodigious) power by being the Positive that turns away from the Negative... no, Spirit is that power only in the degree to which it contemplates the Negative face to face [and] dwells with it... (Bataille, 1990, p. 18)

In Kojeve's words this is a "death which lives a human life" (Bataille, 1990, p. 18). Bataille argues that through the ritual of sacrifice man symbolically destroys his corporeal or animal nature and lives on as a negative subjectivity. By embodying this negativity the subject experiences the exhilaration and freedom that attends finitude (Bataille, 1990). On this unsheltered ledge of experience identity is pressed into the service of non-identity; the two are never properly one. The subject also learns that its spiritual life depends upon its determinate existence — spirit or life is extinguished when the body is destroyed. Moreover, if the other is eliminated the subject is deprived of the recognition which it desires.

Domination and Submission: Hegel addresses this quandary in the lord and bondsman dialectic; a mythic encounter between two self-consciousnesses. These may either represent relations between individuals or between personified aspects of a single consciousness. In the context of "the life and death struggle," each self-consciousness struggles for control over the other to attain its own freedom. The subject who triumphs becomes the lord and the one that submits his bondsman. An ethic of domination and submission

ensues (Butler, 1987). This is regarded as a kind of annihilation within the context of life. The other who had captured the subject is now subordinated and enslaved. The other is "forced to live its own death...to become a nothing in life" (Butler, 1987, p. 52).

The lord and bondsman dialectic is a struggle to achieve recognition and self-realization. In the bondsman's service to his lord he finds his identity reflected in the products of his labor. His identity is expanded by "turning substance into subject." The bondsman incorporates the world into his own subjectivity. In this respect he gives form to his desire and is transformed by it. His submission, however, reflects his fear of autonomy. He is unable to risk his life in order to win his freedom.

The lord's victory in the life and death struggle helps to establish him as a negative or transcendent being. It also causes him to negate his body and its associated needs, which are projected upon the bondsman (Butler, 1987). Ironically, this results in an unanticipated dependency. The disavowal of needs subordinates the lord to his bondsman. At the same time he inadvertently abandons the transformational project of desire. This is because desire emerges through its negative encounter with the physical world. The subject is transformed through its effects upon the world. Without the creative force of labor desire resolves into greed. Physical ends supplant transformational ones.

Hegel (1807/1964) regards domination and submission as defenses against creative engagement. Having rejected the transcendent possibility of suicide, the lord assumes a passive relation to life. Rather than transforming life through active negation, experience is provided in the form of the bondsman's creative labor. The bondsman's submission also demonstrates a failure in living. He accepts his servitude rather than face the challenge of freedom. This reflects his decision to endure or exist rather than to live. (Fromm,1941, addresses these points in his discussion of freedom and authoritarianism.) Each subject experiences a kind of death in life or what Kierkegaard refers to as "the despair of not being able to die" (Butler, 1987, p. 54).

Hegel argues that consciousness begins its journey as an undifferentiated and unreflected instinctual force (or "first nature") and moves through perpetual negation or estrangement to become a more differentiated and inclusive phenomena. In the Lord and Bondsman dialectic, consciousness abandons this negative movement and settles into "second nature" or habit. The subject construes experience in a "naturalized" or given form rather than as a negatively rendered process. The world is regarded as a self-identical object rather than as dialectical creation. Life becomes reified.

The lord and bondsman also school each other in the inherently interrelated aspects of Desire. That is, in canceling or negating each other they discover the other in themselves and cancel a self-limiting aspect of their own identity. Hegel (1807/1964) notes,

> ...just as lordship showed its essential nature to be the reverse of what it wants to be, so, too, bondage will, when completed, pass into the opposite of what it immediately is: being a consciousness repressed within itself, it will enter into itself, and change round into real and true independence (p. 237).

The bondsman discovers in the lord a desire for freedom and autonomy. The lord discovers from the bondsman the transformative value of labor. This is a creative act which transforms "substance into subject."

Desire requires both dimensions of experience. Hegel suggests that desire is not negated by its labor but is stilled: "Desire (is) held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words work forms and shapes the thing" (Hegel, p. 195). In this manner, the object becomes a reflection of the subject. Consciousness is a purely creative force. Recognition emerges between subjects in respect to their transformative actions on the world. Each self-consciousness recognizes the other as a desiring being whose labors recast the world as extensions of themselves. In the process, subjectivity is remade into a reflective being or an "embodied freedom." This can

only occur within a community that provides reciprocal recognition. It is within this context that self-consciousness becomes Hegel's ideal of spirit or *"Geist."*

Desire and Contemporary Philosophy

An exhaustive survey of Hegel's influence on the topic of desire is beyond the scope of the present work. Instead, the discussion will be restricted to the views of a few important contemporary philosophers, each of whom considers desire in the light of his respective philosophical program. Related themes emerge from each account which generate both agreement and dissent. For instance, Sartre (1943/1956) and Lacan (1977) each consider desire in response to a fundamental lack or absence which desire cannot resolve. On the other hand, Deleuze (1977; 1983) and Foucault (1978) regard desire as an affirmative gesture or even as an expression of fullness. Lack is construed as either a political creation or a generative condition. A similar point of departure is also observed in the work of psychoanalytic theorists, such as Klein (1940) and Winnicott (1969), who are not explicitly aligned with either philosophical tradition. From a phenomenological point of view, these correspondences are not surprising. Analogous if not identical themes should emerge from any deep encounter with related phenomena. As in this case, the construal of such experience is impacted by philosophical and historical influences.

The Metaphysics of Presence

Post-structuralism proposes a deconstruction of the subject and the role that desire plays in that process. This movement, which is by no means uniform, asserts that experience is discontinuous and that subjectivity is a false imposition of an order on difference and flux. Further, this critique argues that the epistrophe of the subject is a form of essentialism which construes it as a transcendent or metaphysical entity. In this rendering, the subject is treated as an ahistorical phenomena independent of political forces. From the post-modern perspective, desire represents those facets of experience which resist being reified by subjectivity. For Sartre, (1943/1956) desire is fulfilled through the creative authorship of one's life, and the "subject" and its respective desire are regarded as meaningful fictions. For Deleuze (1977/1983) and Foucault (1978), desire is a form of boundless expression that represents the discontinuous nature of experience — a "luxury of being in multiplicity" (Goodheart, 1991 p. 13). Subjectivity is no more than the expression of multiple and contradictory desires and the self is a misnomer.

Sartre: In Sartre's (1943/1956) understanding, desire represents a longing to achieve a complete synthesis with the world. In Hegel's terms, this is the desire to turn "*substance into subject*" which Sartre views as an impossible project. Each apparent union is undermined

by the necessity of renewing that relation in the present. In this mode, every fulfillment leads to a new desire. We are conditioned endlessly to strive for an identity with the world that is forever beyond us. Sartre argues, however, that our desire for completion is satisfied through imagination. In the imaginary mode temporal contingencies are negated along with the experience of transience and self-estrangement. Instead we experience ourselves as a timeless presence that achieves a complete or total satisfaction.

For Sartre, such completion is achieved most notably in the creation of a literary text. The literary act creates a temporary satisfaction by momentarily denying the factual world and replacing it with another. In this world subjectivity, a fiction manufactured on the basis of creative labor, comes into being. That is, desire magically transforms nonbeing into its opposite. There is no subject prior to this fictional creation and none afterward. Subjectivity is a kind of "as if" phenomena. Yet, it is this striving "to be" which creates meaning and provides free choice. It defines our humanity even though Hegel's self identical, universal "being" remains an impossibility. This is what Sartre meant when he wrote, "Man is the being whose project is to be God" (Yalom, 1980, p. 221).

Sartre's views are analogous to those psychoanalytic theorists (Klein, 1940; Bowlby, 1961; Fairbairn, 1938; Segal, 1952; Storr, 1972; Pollock, 1975; and Brink, 1977) who argue that creativity is a

productive response to loss and longing. The creative act is interpreted as a symbolic attempt to restore or repair a damaged or lost whole. Psychoanalytic and Sartrian perspectives also evidence critical differences: whereas the former assumes the presence of real subjects and objects, Sartre eschews the reality of any self-identical structure. The psychoanalytic view considers creativity a compensatory act which defends against the reality of loss. By contrast, Sartre suggests that loss as such is an illusion which gives rise to human striving. In this context, creative works are "vital lies" which constitute the "essential nothingness" of the human life.

Lacan: The effects of loss and desire are also at the center of Lacan's (1977) post-structural psychoanalytic theory. Lacan argues that the libidinal union with the original object, the mother, is prohibited by the incest taboo or "law of the father." This prohibition gives rise to the individuated subject and to the symbolic domain of language. Subjectivity is viewed as a necessary defense against regressive fusion with the maternal body and the absolute satisfaction or *"jouissance"* associated with her. Thus, the subject is never complete and autonomous in itself. Rather, it becomes a sign and remains a substitute of that which it lacks. According to Lacan, the subject is "the introduction of a loss into reality" (quoted in Butler, p. 193). Its lack or "manque" is revealed in the experience of desire.

Lacan reinterprets Freud's conception of wish or "*Wunsch*" as desire (Kovel, 1981). While Freud regarded wish as the desire to relieve tension, Lacan considers desire as a remnant of the unconscious pre-oedipal experience — a nostalgic memory of those pleasures which proceeded individuation. It signifies this loss and initiates a movement of return or de-individuation by transgressing against consciousness. Transgressive acts are structured as chains of metonymic signifiers that arbitrarily replace one another through the psychoanalytically elaborated processes of displacement, condensation, and negation. These processes sever the narrative flow by introducing disjunctions or 'intervals' into the speech act. "In the interval intersecting the signifiers, which forms part of the very structure of the signifier, is the locus of what... I have called metonymy" (Butler, 1987, p. 193). We observe the effects of this process of signification in utterances that create unintended or surplus meanings. The subject is inherently estranged from the meanings of its own language. As Ogden (1992) notes, Lacan's deconstructed subject is "...spoken by the Other and is in that sense without a head" (p. 524).

The metonymic process also defends the subject from its desire by repressing the meaning of unconscious significations. The metynomic symbol of desire is only incidentally related to what is signified and this defensive process makes it impossible for the subject to identity the nature of its own lack. Desire and the unconscious remain

inscrutable and opaque. Thus, Lacan criticizes Hegel for proposing that consciousness is realized as a transparent self-consciousness. Rather, desire's opacity precludes reparation and wholeness. Because desire seeks to recover *"jouissance"* with the mother at a displaced level, it results in a series of unrecognized "mesconnaisances." That is, the desire for other is mistaken for the desire for "The Other." Unlike the Hegelian subject, the Other (variously conceived as the unconscious, the maternal body or desire, itself) cannot be reincorporated *("Aufhebung")* within the Lacanian subject. The difference between the subject and the other is not an "internal" difference characterized by a more inclusive unity. The signifier and the subject are permanently alienated from one another. Lacan's deconstructed subject is a displaced and broken vessel continually negated by its own nostalgic strivings for wholeness.

Lacan's (1977) formulation of desire as negativity sets his work apart from the views held by psychoanalytic contemporaries such W.R.D. Fairbairn (1938), Melanie Klein (1940), John Bowlby (1961) and others. That is, Lacan regards primary repairs such as those described by Klein in her account of the "depressive position" as an impossibility and suggests that secondary or symbolic repairs (i.e. those provided by love, art, scholarship etc.) create additional experiences of alienation and suffering. This conclusion reflects the radical disjunction between the conscious subject and the "Other" or unconscious in Lacan's work. These differences will be considered

more fully in my review of Klein and Bowlby's theories of subjectivity and loss. Lacan's theory of language as an inevitable form of estrangement also distinguishes his views of subjectivity and desire from those espoused by Sartre.

Deleuze: Deleuze (1977; 1983) accepts Lacan's decentering of the Hegelian subject but takes issue with the Lacanian understanding of desire as a primary negativity. He argues that lack or "manqué" is a product of economic and ideological conditions and psychoanalytic and capitalist ideologies are so construed. In each, scarcity is reified as an inevitable condition of experience. Deleuze argues that this functions to create and support existing power relations. Like Lacan, he suggests that desire is an expression of an original but now repressed pleasure and satisfaction. This repression produces a derivative form of desire characterized by deprivation and need. The aim of Deleuze's critique is emancipatory: he seeks to reestablish desire as generative and bounteous expression. The experiencing of difference is affirmed as an encounter with life.

Deleuze (1977) reconstructs Nietzsche's will-to-power to support his position. "Will" is regarded as a developed sensitivity to the world and its possibilities. The subjugation of will obliterates this reception and replaces it with an embittered lack. In this context, the negativity of the Hegelian subject is viewed as a product of its own self-destructive inhibition. In its quest for a self-identical existence

it denies the multiplicitous, non-dialectical possibilities of life. By contrast, the Deleuzian subject moves directly into the divergent currents of experience and is enlivened rather than diminished by the differences it encounters. Alterity presents the subject with an opportunity for creative engagement and an enhanced sense of pleasure and joy. Deleuze (1962) notes that, "to affirm is...not to take on the burden of what is, but to release, to set free, what lives" (p. 185). In this frame, Lacan's forbidden *"jouissance"* is accessible once the forces that prohibit its realization are undone.

Deleuze's (1962, 1977) ecstatic view of life is echoed by Eigen's (1981) psychoanalytic account of faith. Following the British psychoanalyst, D. W. Winnicott (1969), Eigan charts the path between the developmental phases of "object relating" and "object usage." In the former case the infant, described as a "unit self" or "self as isolate," regards the world as a contingent dimension of itself. Experience emerges, in a Kleinian (1940) sense, from archaic projective and introjective operations. In Eigen's words, "...the subject continuously tends to bring any incipient sense of otherness into the circumference of its omnipotence" (p. 415). Eigen's description of the unit-self corresponds to Deleuze's reading of Hegel's self-identical subject. In both cases, subjects project themselves into the world and concurrently reincorporate whatever difference they discover there. As opposed to their psychoanalytic

colleague Klein, Winnicott and Eigen regard this as a defensive process that is later outgrown.

Winnicott's (1969) stage of "object usage" emerges from the explosion of the subject's introjective-projective framework. The subject discovers externality or difference as an enduring fact of life after repeated efforts to destroy it fail. Although this realization is disorganizing, it opens the way to a new kind of subjectivity. For Eigen (1981), as for Deleuze (1962), the subject's experience becomes nothing less than an ecstatic affirmation or reception of difference.

> ...it culminates in quickening and enhancing the subject's sense of aliveness. It opens the way for a new kind of freedom, one because there is a radical otherness, a new realness of self-feeling exactly because the other is now felt as real as well (Eigen, p. 415).

Desire and creativity emerge from the subject's experience of vitality and are not in any measure substitute strivings. For Eigen, this vitality is predicated upon the subject's ultimate faith in a supportive and enduring otherness. Benjamin (1988; 1992) makes a related point in her discussion of recognition and subjectivity.

> This perspective (separation-individuation theory) also misses the pleasure of the evolving relationship with a partner from whom one knows how to elicit a response, but whose responses

> are not entirely predictable and assimilable to internal fantasy (1992, p. 46).

Foucault: Foucault's (1978) analysis of desire extends Deleuze's sociological critique (1977/1983). However, he eschews the idea of an original, primary desire that can be recovered or liberated from repression. The psychoanalytic view suggests that the subject's experience of desire is repressed, converted into a symptom or neurosis, and then recovered through the "talking cure." Although Lacan's (1977) theory argues against the possibility of this recovery, it confirms the ontological status of desire. By contrast, Foucault's theory proposes the cultural production of desire; one that emerges out of a historically situated discourse to reproduce existing power relations. For instance, psychoanalysis is considered in regulatory terms: desire is manufactured in a confessional speech act in order to consolidate institutional power. In this context, both the subject and its alienated desire are considered social constructions rather than essential entities in need of emancipation.

Foucault (1978) suggests that the "juridical" control and regulation of subjectivity and desire can also give rise to productive consequences. Conflict tends to create transformative opportunities. In the contemporary era, productive forms of power emerge out of the social-political context of war. According to Foucault, war symbolizes the contemporary rendering of power. Civil society is considered a

kind of occupied territory subject to the oppressive control of military might. (Conservative political and Christian rhetoric, which often construes diversity as a "Culture War" and opposition to drug use as a "War on Drugs," provide support for Foucault's position.) In response to oppression, individuals may chose to engage in a renewed struggle for life; a struggle paradigmatically expressed through sexuality. Desire affirms itself in the sustained tension of struggle rather than in a consumable act. It emerges as a new form of power in a field of perpetually reversible forces. Because closure is resisted, dissatisfaction and lack (manqué) are no longer regarded as problematic aspects of desire. Rather they are favored because they create new opportunities for erotic experience. In this sense, Foucault makes a virtue out of those experiences which are lamented by Sartre and Lacan in their theories of desire.

Subjectivity in Psychological Theory

Like philosophy, contemporary psychological theory is concerned with the issue of human subjectivity. However, these psychological accounts suggest that subjectivity or selfhood is a realizable project — one that is necessary and desirable. The following five sections review contemporary psychoanalytic and existentially influenced psychological accounts of subjectivity and longing. In many of these accounts the terms **pine, yearn, want, desire**, and **wish** represent experiences that are analogous or closely related to that of longing.

A critique is also provided of essentialist trends within the psychoanalytic account of longing.

Subjectivity in Psychoanalytic Psychology

The exploration of human subjectivity has been one of the most important developments in contemporary psychoanalysis (Mitchell, 1993). Freud regarded subjectivity as a psychological given and never developed a clinical term to distinguish the self as a discreet phenomena (Mitchell, 1991). By contrast, contemporary psychoanalytic thinkers have taken the subjective domain as the major ground of their work and this new psychoanalytic focus corresponds with contemporaneous sociological developments. (Mitchell, 1993; Yalom, 1980). For instance, the social and economic effects of modernity have affected traditionally important institutional supports and uprooted cultural values and mores at an unprecedented pace. In this context, issues of choice and personal meaning have become more salient.

At the same time, the psychoanalytic study of the self appears to be just one of many similar developments to emerge from the enlightenment era (Taylor, 1989). In Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum*, the self-conscious subject is first identified as the center of importance and concern (Worthington, 1996). In the Romantic period the self was further valorized as the source of creative

expression and truth. Likewise, the Protestant reformations focus upon individual salvation reflected a concern with individual meaning and value. In the contemporary era, the secular self has all but eclipsed the role that religious institutions play in defining moral and ethical conduct (Bellah, 1985; Lasch, 1978). Thus, the erosion of institutional structures and supports may be viewed as both a cause and an effect of the rising importance of selfhood and subjectivity. In this context, Lasch (1978) and others suggest that the current psychoanalytic emphasis upon selfhood and narcissism is no surprise.

Contemporary psychoanalysis is concerned with those psychic processes which underlie and lead to the development of subjective experience (Mitchell, 1993). This is particularly true of the Object Relations and Self Psychology schools. These theories have looked to infancy to establish the developmental origins of human personality and suggest that selfhood develops from the infant's encounter with its early maternal or parental environment. If this interpersonal environment fails to provide for an infant's needs, problems of selfhood such as narcissistic and borderline personality disorders result. In this light, psychopathology is viewed as a form of arrested psychological development. Psychoanalytic treatment is intended to address these deficits in order to re-initiate psychological growth. In Mitchell's (1988) words, "The analyst's task is to fan the embers, to

rekindle the spark... [of] the patient's subjectivity" (p. 189). Likewise, Ogden notes,

> It is the task of the therapist...to provide conditions wherein the patient might dare to create personal meanings in a form that he can experience and play with. The therapist... is forever trying to 'pry open' the space between symbol and symbolized, thus creating a field in which meaning exists. (quoted in Mitchell, 1993, p. 32.)

In both of these accounts, the analyst wagers that his or her patient's subjectivity will emerge out of the "pre-ontological" chrysalis of developmental arrest. The psychoanalytic project is to help the patient reclaim his or her subjective potential by providing a space in which he or she can explore and express experiences of need, longing, and desire. This is largely conceived of as an intersubjective ground where personal experience comes into being. That is, subjectivity and its associated desires emerge in a psychological space created and shared by two people. Ogden notes, "...the analytic process (is) one in which the analysand is created through an intersubjective process...analysis is... a process of creating an analytic subject who had not previously existed" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 34).

According to Orange (1996), subjectivity is "...the experience of organizing, making sense of one's own experience" (p. 125). Following Benjamin (1988), she argues that the subject organizes his or her experience with respect to needs and desires. These

experiences are shaped by their intersubjective contexts — certain wants are sanctioned, others prohibited (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992). Prohibited desires threaten emotional ties with important others and are subject to defensive processes such as repression and splitting. In addition to these disallowed experiences, Stolorow (1998) argues that other desires have never been properly symbolized in the first place. These are desires which were neither supported nor prohibited by the original intersubjective environment. In Stolorow's words these experiences represent an "unvalidated unconscious" (1998). Where large areas of experience are left unsymbolized, or are repressed, the individual is essentially *alexithymic* (from the Greek "no words for feeling") with regard to these experiential fields. As a result, subjectivity is restrained and muted. The relation between *alexithymia* and longing is further considered in Yalom's (1980; 1989) existential account of wish and will.

Although psychoanalytic theories frequently equate desire and sexuality, Orange (1996) argues that from an intersubjective perspective this is an unwarranted reduction. Instead of recognizing sexual desire as a component of a larger human experience, such an assumption reduces people to "body parts and sexual practices. ...Sexual desire of any sort is inseparable from a person's capacity to **want** anything at all, one's experience of being a subject" (pp. 124-125). Orange suggests that desire is equivalent not just to sexuality

but to subjective experience at large. The experiential breadth of the subjective field is coordinate with the degree to which early parental and later environments have provided appropriate and attuned responses to inherent human needs and strivings (Stolorow and Atwood, 1992).

Longing and Object Relations Theory: Longing is frequently cited in contemporary psychoanalytic literature (Winnicott, 1955; Klein, 1940; and Bowlby, 1961) as describing an intense desire for interpersonal or experiential contact with important others by a vulnerable or dependent subject. This experience is most intense when there is some barrier preventing such contact. The American Heritage Dictionary (1982) defines longing as "a strong persistent yearning or desire, especially one that cannot be fulfilled." Psychoanalytic accounts typically reduce these experiences to a set of infantile needs which the individual attempts to address as an adult. Longing is viewed in regressive terms (Tuttman, 1979) as a kind of movement back, or reversion, to a previous developmental state. This is considered pathological in some circumstances and healthy in others (Balint, 1968).

According to British object relations theory the infant moves from a symbiotic relationship with its mother to a state of greater differentiation and independence (Mahler, 1972). Difficulties are encountered along the way which create developmental deficits and

associated longings. Relational theorists present various accounts of this process, attended by different forms of longing.

Winnicott (1962) argues that the infant's life begins in a state of dependent "omnipotence." Omnipotence refers to the infant's illusion of control as supported by the apparently magical provision of environmental supplies. For instance, the mother meets her child's spontaneous gestures with appropriate nursing and/or comforting responses. In such instances qualitative factors such as the timing and sensitivity of the mother's initiatives are more important than her nominal behavior. Myerson (1981) suggests that the parental attitude (and the way in which this attitude is conveyed) is the single most important factor in this process. For example: a parent in soothing a distressed child conveys a concern with the child's well-being rather than a desire to terminate the child's distressed behavior. These experiences nurture the infant's sense of authenticity and efficacy (Colman, 1988).

Although environmental frustrations and intrusions eventually overturn omnipotence, this should occur after the infant has established a pattern of good internal experiences. In that case a positive template is built which supports a genuine and secure self-experience. Moreover, the infant's loss of omnipotence at this time simultaneously opens a channel to the interpersonal world of autonomous others (Colman, 1988).

Omnipotence is often breached at a developmentally inappropriate time. The baby is forced to respond to impinging cues initiated from without. This usurps his or her experience of mastery and vitality. "...the baby learns to want what the mother gives, to become the mother's idea of who the baby is" (Mitchell, 1993, p. 132). Winnicott's "false-self" construct describes the character type shaped in compliance to this form of care. The false self is conceived as a defensive structure that protects the infant's authentic potentialities from exploitation. As these strivings are driven further underground the individual experiences a loss of vitality and a growing sense of futility and despair. Thus, the premature loss of omnipotence produces an ontological rupture. Longing is represented as a desire to experience or recover an authentic, vital, or whole self.

Winnicott (1955) and other object relations theorists (Balint, 1968; Kahn, 1960; and Little, 1960) argue that when patients evidence such developmental deficiencies, a compensatory experience in psychotherapy should be provided. Thus, psychoanalytic treatment provides a safe and secure setting — a "holding environment" — designed to facilitate a "therapeutic regression" (Winnicott, 1955; Kahn, 1960). In this regressed and symbiotic state the patient is able to build up good self experiences through the spontaneous expression of needs and the analyst's timely gratification of them. Ultimately, this helps the patient construct a more coherent, authentic self-

experience and allows him or her to develop differentiated and mature relationships with others. Winnicott (1955) suggests that it may take several years of preparation before the patient is willing to accept this provision from the analyst.

In contrast, Klein (1940) argues that the infant's innate aggression produces disturbances in the developmental process. In the phase referred to as the "depressive position," the infant fears that fantasized aggression has damaged or destroyed his or her "internal love objects." Internal objects are unconscious fantasies of need-satisfying objects such as the mother or her breast (Segal, 1974). At an unconscious level, these are felt to be real live persons or entities (Klein, 1940). The infant experiences both guilt for his or her destruction and the paranoid fear that the damaged or destroyed object will retaliate against and annihilate him or her. Thus, pining or longing represents an intense desire to repair and recover these objects to protect the self against disorganizing fears. Klein proposes that manic defenses are used to guard against and deny the suffering produced by loss and longing. Once these defenses abate, the infant has the opportunity to repair and internalize lost objects. According to Klein, this works to resolve the experience of infantile mourning. She suggests that significant experiences of longing in adulthood represent unresolved states of infantile mourning. That is, the individual continues to pine for those lost objects that were never adequately recovered and internalized during the depressive

position. Contemporary disappointments and losses tend to aggravate and trigger such early unresolved feelings.

Bowlby (1961) also views longing, or what he refers to as "yearning," as a part of the mourning process. However, he rejects the pathogenic role of innate aggression in this experience and argues that mourning proceeds from real environmental losses. According to Bowlby, mourning is frequently triggered by a prolonged absence from or the death of a parent or sibling. Yearning is viewed as a desire for reunion with the lost other. It is accompanied by behavioral attempts to "search for" and "recover" the now unavailable person. As this proves futile, feelings of depression and despair emerge. Bowlby suggests that such feelings of loss are accompanied by the structural disorganization of the personality. In the final phase of mourning, the bereaved detach their feelings from those they have lost and begin to forge new relationships. In this manner, the individual reorganizes his or her personality around new relationships. Bowlby argues that significant losses in childhood or early adolescence often produce irreparable harm. The mourning process takes a pathological course leading to the eventual development of a depressive illness, character pathology and/or substance abuse problem.

Bowlby's theory of loss finds substantiation in Stengel's (1939; 1943) account of a group of institutionalized bipolar/fugue patients under

his care. He reported that these individuals suffered from a pathological compulsion to wander. During manic-depressive episodes they experienced "an irresistible impulse to leave (their current) home(s) and to wander aimlessly" (1939, p. 250). Stengel documented that each of these individuals suffered a traumatic loss or rejection from one or both parents. This resulted in an enduring need to seek out families and homes long gone. Thus, wandering reflected a delusional searching for the persons and places of their past. Stengel also suggests that the desire for adventure and the behavior of runaways may reflect a similar dynamic in a less pathological form; that is, an unconscious desire for reunion due to early loss or neglect.

The Decentered Subject in Psychoanalysis: There is a growing recognition within the psychoanalytic theory of the relational and even radically discontinuous nature of the subject (Mitchell, 1991). Beginning with Freud, psychoanalytic accounts of the mind have employed spatial metaphors to make sense of self-experience. These descriptions suggest that the self physically exists someplace within the psyche. "The hypothesis we have adopted is of a psychical apparatus extended into space" (Freud, 1940, p. 196). Many contemporary theorists have exchanged the spatial metaphor of self for a temporal one which presents selfhood as a mobile description of what people do and experience in time. As Mitchell (1993) notes, the "self refers to the subjective organization of meanings one creates as

one moves through time, doing things, such as having ideas and feelings, including some self-reflective ideas and feelings about oneself" (pp. 101-102).

A self which is organized by time is simultaneously shaped by its relational contexts. If I experience myself as one kind of person in a given moment I may have a very different self experience with very different needs and desires at a different time with other persons. No particular constellation of self-experience, and no particular expression of longing or desire is necessarily privileged over any other. Further, these patterns are themselves mutable. Thus, "the self" has multiple and discontinuous features.

Object relations theorists have highlighted this heterogeneity of experience. For instance, Fairbairn's (1952) theory designates the subject as a collection of subsidiary egos and objects. These are construed as competing versions of the self, each with distinct patterns of directed intrapsychic and interpersonal activity. Thus, subjectivity is the discontinuous experience of different selves interacting with the same and different others in a variety of ways. In this regard Bollas (1987) notes,

> The person's self is the history of many internal relations... There is no one unified mental phenomena that we can term self... The concept of self should refer to the positions or points of view from which and through which we sense, feel, observe, and

> reflect on distinct and separate experiences of our being. One crucial point of view comes through the other who experiences us (Mitchell, 1991, p. 128; also in Bollas, pp. 9-10).

Following Hegel, Ogden (1992) proposes a decentered subject engaged in a dialectical relationship with itself and its object. He notes that Freud's dynamic conception of conscious and unconscious forces implies a division in subjectivity. Psychoanalysis decenters our relationship with ourselves by negating the identity between consciousness and being. In this conception, subjectivity is found in the relation between the unconscious and the conscious personality. Freud's structural model of id, ego, and superego is also regarded as a mutually defining dialectic of exchange. The experience of "I-ness" or subjectivity emerges out of this dialectic.

Fairbairn's (1952) theory, however, posits an original unitary ego which is only divided in the course of development and may become reintegrated later. Moreover, the positing of a decentered dialectical self as considered by Ogden (1992) is different from a deconstructed self as presented by Lacan (1977) and other postmodern theorists. Where the decentered self is still figured as whole or completed in its dialectical relationship with is objects, Lacan's deconstructed subject is radically disconnected from itself leaving a central void. No metaphysical/metapsychological salves are offered for our psychological wounds. Subjectivity as considered by Deleuze (1977)

and Foucault (1978) is also multiplicitous, if more productive. Finally, psychoanalytic theorists typically eschew the political dimension of subjectivity; instead, they regard the illusory sense of continuity provided by the self as a defense against the experience of fragmentation.

Psychoanalysis Critiqued: The neglect of political understandings in psychoanalytic theory may reflect the regulatory rather than critical role it plays in western culture (Foucault, 1978). That is, psychology as a discipline supports the dominant political ethos of the culture in which it is situated. As Foucault noted, the therapeutic agenda may well function to reinforce political power and authority. In this light, the self may be understood as a supporting industrial capitalism's social and economic aims (Sampson, 1985; Cushman, 1990). Cushman (1990) and Hoggett (1986) both argue that social forces create selves which are empty and needy in order to soothe and fill them with material goods. "It is a self that seeks the experience of being continually filled up by consuming goods, calories, experiences, politicians, romantic partners, and empathic therapists in a growing attempt to combat the growing alienation and fragmentation of its era" (Cushman, p. 600).

In a society that reproduces itself by offering consumerism as a balm for psychological discontent, therapy becomes one more commercial product. This provides one reason why disordered subjecthood is the

primary therapeutic problem described in contemporary psychoanalysis. More particularly, it helps explain why psychoanalytic discourse continues to proffer spatial metaphors despite an avowed preference for temporal ones (Schafer, 1976; Mitchell, 1993). We seem to be overcome by an urge to reify our subjectivity even as we attempt to liberate ourselves from objectification.

This critique admittedly neglects many of the finer points of both psychoanalytic theory and technique. Theorists such as Winnicott (1962), Balint (1968), and Benjamin (1988) are concerned with the nature and impact of power in the experience of desire and in the development of subjectivity. In particular, Winnicott's (1962) discussion of vitality reflects a concern with subjective experience which is unfettered by coercive forces. Winnicott and Balint fail, however, to consider the issue of subjectivity in an explicitly political context. On the other hand, Benjamin's work falls outside of the psychoanalytic mainstream. In the end, the psychoanalytic paradigm remains largely committed to the construct of a core self out of (or through) which relationships are formed, and agency is registered (Mitchell, 1988). Thus, longing is conceived of in relation to a self regarded as empty, damaged or in need of repair. Such a perspective seems to reflect an implicit acceptance of enlightenment mores as opposed to the post-modern critique of them.

Subjectivity in Existential Psychology: Subjectivity is also an important concern of the existential and Gestalt movements in psychology. This is particularly evident in the discussion of terms such as "responsibility, wish, and will" (May, 1969/1989; 1983; Mitchell, 1988; Yalom, 1981; 1989). Responsibility relates to the role that each individual has in constructing his or her own world. The world is not simply given but is also made, and the subject discovers him or herself in this process of making his or her world. Heidegger's (1927/1962) "*Dasein*," or "being there," refers to the paradoxical state of being both in the world and also the creator of that world. Our subjectivity or personhood emerges from the choices we make. In failing to recognize our constitutive identities we engage "inauthentically" (Heidegger) or in "bad faith" (Sartre) with ourselves and the world. In this respect, psychoanalytic theory, as a doctrine of psychic determinism, suffers from the same "bad faith" (Mitchell, 1988). It provides an account of human meaning that eschews personal responsibility.

The issue of personal responsibility has complex social implications. As recent conservative trends have demonstrated, the discourse about responsibility is often co-opted for political gain. For instance, minority populations and other disadvantaged groups may become scapegoats to deflect attention from those who profit from exploitative social conditions. In this context, a charge of "irresponsibility" is frequently nothing more than a thinly veiled

racial or classist epithet. At the same time, the issue of personal responsibility continues to have important existential meanings. As Yalom (1980) points out, adversity often presents individuals with meaningful opportunities for change, and choices made under these circumstances tend to have ontological significance. For example: individuals may respond to a diagnosis of terminal illness with a renewed sense of meaning or personal fulfillment. In this case, the immediacy of death helps the person recognize and prioritize important features of his or her life. There is an implicit or explicit understanding that existence cannot be postponed but must be lived in the present.

Perls (1969) and Schafer (1976) also note that by taking responsibility for ourselves we may reclaim previously disavowed aspects of our own subjectivity. That is, we come to know our wants and desires instead of attributing their effects to forces outside ourselves. Perls argues that as long as life simply happens to us, nothing can be done to change it. Therefore, he actively encouraged individuals to identify and correct failures in "responsibility assumption." For the therapist, this includes noting when a patient used or failed to use first-person pronouns and switched from an active to a passive voice. Individuals also are encouraged to translate experiences of helplessness into the more genuine feeling of unwillingness. This an appropriation enhances personal vitality and provides new opportunities for self-expression. Thus, Perls notes

that, "...taking responsibility for your life and being rich in experience and ability [are] identical" (Yalom, 1980, p. 249). Responsibility assumption may also improve the quality of relationships by supporting more realistic social perceptions.

Yalom (1980) argues that subjective experience is coordinate with the ability to "wish." Following May (1969/1989), he defines wish as an imaginative form of play that takes up the possibility of some occurrence in time. As Lynch notes "...every genuine wish is a creative act" (May, 1969/1989). Wish is understood as the subjective affirmation of ourselves in relation to a desired future. "It is... a molding by a symbolic process which includes both memory fantasy, of what we hope the future will be" (May, p. 211). In this sense wish is a precondition for willing. Through the will the individual attempts to actualize his or her wishes in the world and become what he or she desires to be. This understanding of wish is in contrast to the Jamesian view. James (1890/1950) felt that wishes constitute desires which by definition are not achievable. On the other hand, will emerges when we desire something "...whose end is in our power, and real it presently becomes... " (p. 486).

Individuals may suppress their wishes because they fear that their needs and desires will cause them to be rejected by important others (as Stolorow and Orange also note) or lead to other dangerous consequences. For instance, by becoming what he or she desires, the

individual fears losing something that he or she is or has. At the same time, feelings that accompany suppressed wants and desires also are negated or blocked. As a consequence, various feeling states (anger, sadness, joy) arouse anxiety and are judged equivalently. Sifenos coined the term *"alexithymia"* to describe this problem. The *alexithymic* individual is often rigidly utilitarian and obsessive; for instance, thinking in stereotyped patterns about what he or she "should" or "ought" to do rather than what he or she feels or desires. Such individuals lack a felt sense of their own value and worth and are easily swayed by the opinions of others (Stolorow, 1998). As Camus' protagonist notes in The Fall, "Not taking what one doesn't desire is the hardest thing in the world" (Yalom, p. 313, 1980).

An individual's experience of subjective meaning or purpose is obscured by the process described above; that is, the person is unable to determine the significance of his or her experience or chart a meaningful course of action for him or herself. As May (1969/1989) notes: "To cease wishing is to be dead, or at least to inhabit a land of the dead" (p. 213). In this state one may look to an external authority for clarification and direction (Fromm, 1941; Stolorow, 1998). The authority figure is one who is privileged with the power to exercise his or her own will — a privilege that is often predicated on the suppression of the other's subjectivity (Benjamin, 1988). This power gradient and the patterns of reinforcement and punishment that maintain it are observed at every level of social

organization. The issue of power and subjectivity will be further considered in Hoggett's (1986) discussion of "nameless longing."

Impulsive trends also are regarded as problems of wishing (May, 1969/1989; Yalom, 1980; 1989). From an existential perspective, each decision we make projects us into a particular future and simultaneously eliminates competing possibilities. We recognize that to become someone (the fulfillment of the wish) precludes being someone else. Being is constituted in the concrete particularity that emanates from choice or will. The impulsive individual, however, negates the process of wishing by indiscriminately reacting to every stimulus. Through his passive failure to discriminate between choices he is fixed as potential rather than realized through will in being.

Freud — Desire and Longing

Desire or "libido" is a central component of Freud's original theory. He regarded human instincts or sexual desire as the determining principle of human personality. "Nothing but a wish can set the mental apparatus in motion" (May, 1969/1989, p. 209). Freud defined the pleasure principle as the force of this energy as it seeks tension reduction or satisfaction. He believed that human behavior is motivated by the avoidance of "unpleasure" or the production of pleasure. It is generated this way by an inner necessity rather than

an outward demand (van den Berg, 1974/1996). Reality and the forces of socialization intrude upon libidinal drives and cause their repression thereby creating a system of dynamic conflict between conscious and unconscious forces. These conflicts produce a compromise in which libido expresses itself in disguised and symbolic forms. The phenomena of dreams, slips of the tongue, neurotic symptoms, and intellectual and artistic activities are seen as various forms of symbolic compromise.

In Beyond The Pleasure Principle, (1920) Freud considered desire in a different light, one that more closely relates to the experience of longing. In this work he suggested that the pleasure principle which had been the cornerstone of his dynamic theory, fails to provide an adequate account of certain clinical phenomena such as the symptoms involved in obsessive-compulsive disorders and war traumas. Freud noted that in both of these disorders there is a compulsion to repeat or re-encounter the traumatic experience. This compulsion appeared to have a self-destructive or masochistic aim. In his effort to account for these observations Freud postulated the existence of an aggressive, destructive instinct. He juxtaposed this aggressive drive which he termed "the death instinct" against a libidinal one, Eros.

According to Freud, all existence is subject to conflicts between life and death drives. In human beings this manifests itself as a struggle

between those experiences and behaviors related to love and to those of hate. While love supports the processes of life, hate attacks and dismantles them. In physiological terms Freud related this to anabolic and catabolic processes and suggested that the ultimate goal of the death instinct is to return the organism to a previous condition or to "... lead organic life back into an inanimate state" (Freud, 1920). Thus, life is defined by a kind of nostalgia. We are all subject to a primordial longing for our inanimate and undifferentiated past. Poet Mary Oliver (1986) encapsulates this understanding in her poem, "Members of the Tribe":

> I know/ death is the fascinating snake/ under the leaves, sliding/ and sliding; I know/ the heart loves him to, can't/ turn away, can't/ break the spell. Everything/ wants to enter the slow thickness/ aches to be peaceful finally and at any cost/ Wants to be stone (p. 32,).

Freud refers to Aristophanes speech in Plato's Symposium (1960) to illustrate the death instinct. During a special banquet, Socrates and his friends exchange views on the nature of love. When Aristophanes' turn comes he creates a fable about love and its origins. Aristophanes suggests that originally hermaphroditic organisms populated the world. Each being had two heads, two arms, two sets of genitals, etc. Zeus was threatened by these creatures, so complete in themselves they resembled gods, and cut them in half with his thunderbolt. Human beings have longed and searched ever

after for their literal other halves, their soulmates, in order to make themselves again whole.

> Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the indenture of a man, and he is always looking for his other half... And when one of them meets his other half, the actual half of himself... the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship and intimacy, and will not be out of the other's sight even for a moment: these are the people who pass their whole lives together; yet they could not explain what they desire of one another. For the intense yearning which each of them has towards the other does not appear to be the desire of lover's intercourse, but of something else which the soul of either evidently desires and cannot tell, and of which she has only a dark and doubtful presentiment... Human nature was originally one and we were whole, and the desire and the pursuit of the whole is called love. (Ackerman, 1995, pp. 96-97.)

From Freud's perspective this myth reflects the human desire to return to the original ground of being. As Ackerman (1995) notes, this is a special passion for the indivisible, for oneness. Freud's account of this desire anticipates an important aspect of the object relational view of longing. Although most object relations theorists reject Freud's conception of the death instinct, their work frequently describes longing as a drive to restore or repair a severed or broken whole. In this sense, they moved away from Freud's conflict model founded as it is upon the problems of sexual desire and towards an understanding of psychopathology as related to developmental

deficits and needs. Myerson (1981) notes that conflicts and desires and deficits and needs are not mutually exclusive dimensions of human experience. Rather, most individuals experience a complex interaction of needs and desires throughout their lives.

Ontological Longing

While Klein (1940) and Bowlby (1961) view longing as a response to a developmentally experienced loss or transgression, existential and Jungian theorists argue that longing reflects a universal human desire to return to an original state of relatedness to the world (Lacan, 1977; Fromm, 1956; Neuman, 1962; and Yalom, 1980). According to this view, human consciousness, which includes the awareness that one is different from others and set apart from the world, is attended by anxiety concerning limits and/or death. This has been variously described as "...the fragility of being (Jaspers), (the dread of) "nonbeing" (Kierkegaard), the "impossibility of further possibility" (Heidegger), and as "ontological anxiety" (Tillich), (Yalom, 1980, p. 42). In longing, individuals may attempt to transcend all of those conditions.

Some theorists regard ontological longing in progressive terms whereas others view it as a defensive process. For instance, Yalom (1980) regards such longing as a defense against a full experience of life or in Heidegger's words "authentic being." Longing is an

inauthentic mode of experience that works to circumvent immediacy. In tandem with fantasy it assuages the anxiety that attends our direct encounter with those facts of existence that signify limitation and death. As long as we are submerged in longing we may deny responsibility for the shape our lives have taken and squander opportunities to forge meaningful choices in the present. Longing, so construed, represents a wish divorced from the possibility of will (May, 1969/1989); that is, the wish represents an impossibility that cannot be actualized through the force of will in the future and thus curtails the existential possibility of freedom.

Yalom (1980) describes two fundamental fantasies that defend us against the full realization of our existential condition. The first is a sense of "personal inviolability" which emerges in relation to power or privilege and has a narcotic-like effect upon our ordinary sense of vulnerability and limit. The second is the belief in a "personal rescuer" who will provide us with all needs and safeguard us against harm. In this case passive submission produces an experience of safety and well-being. This hope may be supported by a belief in a personal caring God and an immortal, everlasting life in heaven and nostalgic longing may be understood as a secular variant of the immortality defense. Nostalgic states divert us from experiencing our mortality by freezing time. Through a preoccupation with the past one avoids facing "the shortening coil of the future." Alternatively, one looks for the past in the future and thereby

obliterates the present. Yalom (1980) suggests that most of us "...long for authority" (the personal rescuer defense) and/or "...lust for power" (p. 116) in order to obviate death anxiety. Yet it is death's very reality which allows us both to live fully in the present and to experience our freedom. Yalom (1980) states, "Death is the condition that makes it possible for us to live life in an authentic fashion" (p. 31).

By contrast, Lacan (1977), Jung, and others suggest that longing represents a profound desire to experience existence itself. For Jung (Hillman, 1975) and his followers (Neuman, 1962; and Jacobi, 1985), longing often designates a progressive striving towards integration and wholeness as seen in the individuating process. Individuation in this sense refers to the full realization of an individual's life in particular and unique terms. Thus, longing represents a desire to overcome alienation by establishing a consonance and accord between self and world. This experiential fit is regarded as part of a developmental process rather than as a personal destination or end point. As Jaffe (1971) notes, "So long as one continues to develop, inner peace... is only a breathing space between the conflict solved and the conflict to come..." (pp. 55-56).

On the other hand, the mother complex in Jungian thought represents a desire to de-differentiate and return to the maternal environment of early infancy (Hillman, 1975). Norman O. Brown comments, "All

walking, or wandering, is from mother, to mother, to mother; it gets us nowhere. Movement is in space; and space as Plato says in the Timaeus is a receptacle... as it were a mother" (Hillman, 1975, p.51). In this context longing is characterized by a passive merger with the environment intended to obviate conflict and difference (Jacobi, 1985). The conditions of passive merger requires a dissolving of personal identity or selfhood and may result in madness or death. Jung's description of the "mother complex" is clearly related to Freud's account of the *death instinct* and Yalom's conception of passivity and denial.

Lacan (1977) and Nacht and Viderman (1960) argue that this anxiety is engendered by the circumstances and conditions of human embryological development. Specifically, the infant's biological prematurity and primary dependence at birth creates a desire for unity and wholeness through the mother. "It would seem that the nostalgic longing for fusion was born of the primitive insecurity which can only be overcome by the link with the mother" (Nacht and Viderman, p. 386). Without this link the individual experiences himself as "radically deficient."

According to Lacan (1977), subjectivity itself is constituted by lack. Desire violates the subject's boundaries in order to reunite the individual with the mother and thereby recover the complete satisfaction or *"jouissance"* that accompanies such fusion. Desire is

actually a movement back to a "pre-ontological" condition before the advent of language and individuated existence. The metynomic process itself also defends the subject against the realization of its desire. Because desire is represented as a chain of metynomic signifiers, the true nature of its goal is obscured and recognized only in terms that are commensurate with the subject's individuated existence. The subject incorrectly identifies the objects of its desire in the "ontological world" rather than in the "pre-ontological" state of infancy. Lacan refers to these attributions as *"mesconnaisances."*

Butler (1987) suggests that *"jouissance"* represents a fantasy of lost and forbidden pleasure rather than an actual developmental episode. She argues that our memory of a primary undifferentiated pleasure could not exist if our only access to it is through language structures that deny it; that is, through chains of metonymic signifiers which create these misattributions. "It makes sense, then, to ask whether Lacan has not rediscovered a religious dream of plenitude in a fantasy of lost pleasure that he himself has constructed" (Butler, 1987, p. 203).

Winnicott (1962) regards the infant's loss of primary omnipotence as the simultaneous loss of a perfectly responsive environment. As omnipotence gives rise to and helps consolidate the experience of subjecthood, its premature interruption is a primary ontological threat. The infant defends against such fears through the

development of a "false self." Winnicott argues that experience with a good enough mother prepares the infant for its eventual and appropriate loss of omnipotence. Moreover the genuine relationship with independent others countermands the experience of loss.

Winnicott (1969) uses the term "object usage" to indicate the developmental point in which the infant learns to recognize the mother as an independent agent rather than a projected form of the self. He suggests that the capacity for object usage depends upon the object surviving the infant's destructive attacks against it without retaliation. Under this reading, the object is identified as a separate entity that does not impinge upon or coerce the subject. It exists outside the self and is not just a mental construction. As such, the object evokes experiences of "externality."

According to Eigen (1981) and Benjamin (1992) what survives is externality itself as an independent and enduring phenomena. While the loss of omnipotence engenders anxiety and upset, it results in the enhancement of an individual's experience of being alive. "Externality" opens the way to a new freedom because the other is also recognized as alive. This fact gives rise to an experience of mutuality with, and an enjoyment of, the external world. Thus, Eigen writes, (1981)

> One is sustained sheerly through the unfolding sense of self-other presencing, a presencing no longer taken for granted but experienced as coming through... The real here is self and other feeling real to one another, breaking past residues of depersonalization-derealization (p. 416).

Similarly, Benjamin (1992) notes, "...it is in contrast to the fantasy of destruction that the reality of survival is so satisfying and authentic" (p. 52). The existence of an external other creates the possibility for a shared reality. These accounts bear a striking similarity to Deleuze's view of multiplicity in which otherness presents itself as "...a condition of enjoyment, an enhanced sense of pleasure, the acceleration and intensification of the play of forces which constitute... *jouissance* " (Butler, 1987, p. 209).

Aspects of Longing

Hoggett (1986) notes that the psychoanalytic account of human subjectivity is troubled by a proliferation of terms to describe the phenomenon of longing. In large, theorists have neglected to distinguish between terms such as want, need, and desire and Hoggett attempts to map out thematic differences among these dimensions of experience. In so doing he touches upon aspects of longing considered by Winnicott (1962), Bowlby (1961), and Stengel (1943) as discussed above.

Power and Need

Hoggett argues that there is a causal relationship between the distribution of power in a society and the experience of need in its citizenry. Where a society disempowers individuals or groups they loose the ability to experience subjective need. He suggests the term "nameless longing" to designate the condition in which needs are not represented and become inexpressible. Hoggett argues that nameless longing results from a violence against the psyche that robs the individual of the language appropriate to describe his or her own experience. This creates a sense of malaise in which the person feels depression and anxiety without knowing why. According to Hoggett nameless longing "... exists as a perturbation, as a disturbance, but beyond that is quite incomprehensible" (p. 126).

Although Hoggett emphasizes the role that political oppression plays in the development of nameless longing, its description corresponds to Stolorow (1998) and Yalom's (1980) discussion of "*alexithymia* " and Winnicott's description of the false self syndrome. As Winnicott (1962) noted, individuals are forced to disavow their needs and desires in order to appease a powerful and coercive other. This results in a loss of vitality and an increasing sense of futility, alienation, and despair. Hoggett's analysis suggests that political activism and psychotherapy may work in related ways to help people reclaim aspects of their own subjectivity. In both cases the

experience of nameless longing may give way to a more expanded capacity to experience and express authentic needs.

Loss and Nameless Longing

The idea of nameless longing also may be expanded to include other conceptions of longing. For instance, Bowlby (1961) and Stengel's (1943) accounts of loss and yearning may be considered in these terms. They suggest that while an individual's experiences of early loss or neglect are sometimes forgotten or repressed, an unidentified absence or lack remains. According to Bowlby, identity is constituted through relationships with important others and early traumatic loss disorganizes the self and diminishes self esteem. In such instances, nameless longing reflects an ongoing desire to reach and recover a missing or lost aspect of the self. A restless pattern of behavior is often observed that is thought to reflect an unconscious need to search for this missing essence.

Coerced Longing

In contrast to nameless longing, "want" is compelled or manufactured by a specifically identified object. Marketing provides a paradigmatic example of this process. The advertiser's goal is to produce and manipulate the consumer's desire for particular objects. Through the promotion of cars, jeans, computers, and other products

advertisements create a sense of emptiness in the consumer that, at the same time, they promise to fill. Objects presented in this way tend to frustrate rather than gratify the consumer. Pressure develops because want represents a desire for identity rather than consumption. We want to become what the object stands for rather than to possess (or consume) it. Want fails us because objects alone are incapable of producing a transformation of identity: shoes, beverages, and hamburgers can't help us "be like Mike." Hoggett suggests that this type of frustration leads to rage and violence. We wish to retaliate against and destroy the objects that have created want and left us in despair. He argues that urban riots represent one instance of this outcome. The denial and repression of legitimate needs along with the manipulative stimulation of wants is a dangerous and combustible combination.

Although nameless longing and need can be considered separately, in practice, they frequently accompany each other; in particular the experience of nameless longing predisposes us to want. The forces that suppress authentic desires create exploitable experiences of lack. Those who market consumer products define this lack in material terms and simultaneously provide material solutions. That is, advertisements persuade us that a material object will transform us from weak, empty, or diminished individuals into full, powerful, vital, or otherwise desirable ones. Where early loss or neglect create

nameless longing, advertisements suggest that a material object will augment or repair a damaged or depleted self.

Desire and The True Self

Unlike the forms of longing considered to this point, desire as Hoggett defines it, is based not on an insufficiency or lack but rather on a fullness or surfeit. It is a longing to manifest externally one's vitality and inner fullness. This experience corresponds to Winnicott's view of the "true self," a self that is composed of those aspects of experience which collectively represent a sense of being alive. This experience emerges from an individual's spontaneous bodily expression and registers as a sensory motor vitality or aliveness. According to Winnicott (1974) these vital expressions give way to creativity and the experience of play. Spontaneous self-expression in play is considered intrinsically rewarding. Thus, one longs for opportunities to manifest desire.

The condition of nameless longing preempts the opportunity to experience desire by numbing the sphere of subjective experience. Moreover, our preoccupation with wants, "the commodification of needs," further alienates us from opportunities for genuine fulfillment. As Hoggett notes, wants "become the catalyst for feelings of helplessness, frustration and rage rather than imaginative activity." Over time this combination of factors leads to an increase

in both human misery and social unrest. Hoggett suggests that such will be the case as long as production supersedes demand and wants preempt desire.

Archetypal Psychology and Longing

Hillman's (1975; 1979; 1975/1992) archetypal psychology is an unusual amalgam of Jungian and post-structural theories and this combination may be seen in his account of longing. For Hillman, psychological theories provide reductive analyses that devalue human experience. Psychology typically confers the label of "symptom" on experience and then accounts for the symptom through an analysis of the past; this means that experience is reduced to an effect. With this in mind, Hillman dispatches with the conventional theory that longing is a regressive desire for return. Longing cannot be reduced to a single literal effect such as the desire for maternal incest (Neuman, 1962; Brown, 1966;) or of the recovery of a lost love object (Klein, 1940; Bowlby, 1961). Rather, archetypal psychology suggests that longing has multiple meanings.

Hillman and other archetypalists regard human experience as a reflection of an archetypal or imaginal realm. Everything we experience, including pathological states, has an archetypal substrate. Following Jung, Hillman argues that our personal lives correspond with transpersonal images detailed in mythology. Thus, he suggests

that the phenomenological "what" of consciousness ultimately resolves into a question of "Who?" "Who is it that is acting through me now? Which God, Goddess or hero?" Hillman compares this manner of psychological inquiry to the form of questioning used at the oracles of Delphi and Dodan. He suggests that, "Once we know at whose altar the question belongs then we know better the manner of proceeding" (1975/1992, p. 139). One important consequence of this approach is that even psychopathological experience is regarded with considerable reverence. As Jung wrote, "The Gods have become diseases" (Hillman, 1975, p. 50)

In regard to longing, Hillman suggests that we look to a class of young godlike men, or heroes, who make up the archetype of the "*Puer Eternas.*" The term comes from Latin epithets for heroic and divine figures and an examination of these figures provides an archetypally rendered phenomenology of longing. Heroes such as Gilgamesh, Ulysses, Dionysus, Hercules, and Mithras are wanderers. In yearning for distant, unobtainable objects they wander endlessly from one adventure to the next. Ultimately this pattern of ceaseless adventure is detested but the hero is prevented from returning home. Thus he is afflicted by nostalgia or *"pothos." Pothos* reflects the desire for an ideal which is beyond realization or capture. As a personification of the Puer Eternus archetype, *pothos* is described as a divine youth with "...ripened body." He is the erotic element of the spirit or "love's spiritual portion." In contrast to *"himeros"* which is a

physical desire which seeks immediate gratification, pothos desires the unattainable, the unknowable, or the transcendent. The wanderer's idealization of love propels him on. As Hillman (1975) notes,

> This component of Eros is the factor...(responsible) for the mind's mad wanderings after impossibilities, our forever being at sea, and the fictive goals we must set for ourselves — all so that we may go on loving" (pp. 53-54).

According to Hillman (1975), archetypes are paradoxical structures containing ambivalent trends. Thus, the Puer archetype can also be considered a Puer/Senex polarity. Where the Puer is "a divine youth," the Senex is the mythical old man or king who stands for rule, law, order, limit, learning, longevity, and survival. The Puer refuses, and struggles against these constraints. He is driven by his phallic love to inquire, explore, quest, search, invent, and transgress limits. As a transitional figure he is always on the move and never at home. As a personification of longing, the Puer straddles a line between time and eternity. He subsists in the world but yearns for the vertical flight of the spirit — a transcendent homecoming. Yet his own humanity, often represented by a wound or a specific vulnerability, limits his reach and predisposes him to danger and self-destruction. Thus, he may overestimate his strength like Patheon, soar too high like Icarus and Bellerphon, or venture into a forbidden territory like Actaion and Hippolytus (Moore, 1979).

Hillman (1975) further reflects on the Puer/Senex relationship by considering the ancient Greek cult of Kabirooi on the Island of Samothrace. After the Eleusis cult, it was considered the most important of all mystery initiations in the Greek world. Little is definitively known about the cult but legends report that wandering heroes, sailors, and adventurers stopped on the island to be initiated there. The Kabirooi were called the "Mighty Ones" and its ritual appears to have involved a ceremonial relationship between a pair of unequal male figures. Statues of Pothos and a blind old man suggest that the Mighty Ones were in fact representations of the Puer and Senex archetypes. Hillman argues that in that case the ritual could have been a way for Puer and Senex qualities to rejoin each other. Young spirits learn from their ceremonial counterparts to develop caution and forbearance whereas the hearts of weary elders are reawakened with Eros.

The Kabirooi initiation also provides a fundamental understanding of Puer experience: An awareness of what Hillman refers to as "our double nature." We are never just ourselves but always "something else." In our longings and wanderings we are in search of something lost or unattainable and this is a condition of human experience. No one is "whole hearted" or "single minded." Our fate is to be divided and through initiation come to recognize that. Ultimately the Kabirooi initiation cannot resolve tension or assuage our longing, but

it provides an archetypal context for them. We learn to see our longings as transpersonal effects — imitations of mythic fate. In this respect, longing is understood as a human reflection of a spiritual reality.

Longing and Cognate Experience

Creativity in Psychoanalytic Theory

The study of creativity has been an enduring concern of psychoanalytic theorists almost from the beginning. A number of different authors have drawn on Klein (1940) and Bowlby's (1961) accounts of loss and mourning to explain the motivation for creative expression (Fairbairn, 1938; Segal, 1952; Storr, 1972; Pollock, 1975; and Brink, 1977). In particular they have suggested that the artist responds to feelings of longing for lost others by symbolically attempting to restore them through creative acts. Pollock (1975) notes, "I have been impressed by the seemingly great significance of the mourning process in those who are creative... I have discovered over 1,200 writers who have had such traumas" (p. 335).

According to Klein (1940) and Bowlby (1961), personality structure is organized around relationship with important others. When these relationships are severed by death or extended separation, the bereaved experiences a sense of disorganization or personal

deterioration. Thus, the symbolic restoration of the love object afforded by art may help to reorganize and repair the individual's damaged experience of self. This account of mourning and creativity is supported by case studies considering the relationship between loss, longing, and creative inspiration in the life and works of artists (Brink, 1977; Pollock, 1975, 1978; Burnham, 1996; Hamilton, 1969; Martin, 1983; Shaw, 1984; and Silver, 1983). For example, Martin (1983) considers the poet Robert Lowell's creative work in light of his experiences of early trauma and loss. He suggests that both Lowell's psychotic difficulties and his poetry emerged in response to his experiences of maternal rejection and neglect. Lowell himself remarked upon this neglect in one of his last poems entitled, "Unwanted." In this work Lowell recalls his mother's remark that she had wished to kill herself when pregnant with him. Speaking in this poem for both himself and his friend and fellow poet John Berryman, Lowell confesses, "He always loved what he missed" (p. 477).

Martin (1983) notes that these longings made Lowell exquisitely sensitive to the experience of loss. Lowell, he says, noticed small losses in all their variety, and each reflected his own sense of psychological fragmentation and emotional deadness. At the same time these painful feelings inspired Lowell's poetry, particularly his celebrated "Elegies." Through these works Lowell held off the disorganizing effects of loss by giving grief a creative form. Martin

(1983) states that for Lowell, "Poetry gave lost things a way of continuing; it gave (him) a way of surviving" (p. 457). This is to say, Lowell's poetic grief connected him to persons needed for psychological survival. Lowell himself concludes his poem "Unwanted" with the questions: "Is getting well ever an art/or art a way of getting well?" (p. 483).

Hamilton (1969) provides a similar analysis of the role of loss in John Keats' life and creative work. Beginning with the death of his brother — when Keats was 6 — there followed the deaths of his father when he was 8, his grandfather when he was 9, his uncle at age 13, his mother at 14, his maternal grandmother at 19, and finally at 23, his brother Tom. These losses had a devastating effect on Keats. In a letter to his beloved Fanny Brawne, Keats noted, "I have never known any unalloy'd Happiness for many days together: the death or sickness of some one has always spoilt my hours" (Hamilton, p. 494).

Hamilton reports that of all of Keats' losses, the death of his mother had the greatest effect upon him. Keats' mother abandoned him shortly after her husband's death and left him in the custody of his maternal grandparents. Hamilton suggests that this action reflected Mrs. Keats' failure to adequately mourn the death of her husband. She returned home three years later already suffering the ravages of tuberculosis. Keats nursed his mother, feeding her and sitting by her bedside for long hours. Her death the following year was

catastrophic, overwhelming Keats with inexpressible grief. He withdrew from others and turned to solitary interests and activities that would occupy him for the remainder of his life. These included his love of dreams and poetry, his study of history and mythology and his exploration of nature. Hamilton reports that increasingly, Keats' only escape from depression came through reading and writing poetry.

Soon after, Keats also began to pursue a career in medicine. In his role as a caretaker, Keats sought to master at a displaced level the effects of his own traumatic past. In so doing he substituted the dependent stance of an abandoned child for the omnipotence of a healer. Although he proved an adept physician, he withdrew from medicine because of the deaths of several patients suffering from tuberculosis. His failure to cure these individuals undermined the symbolic function medicine was supposed to provide him. Since his patients were lost, by extension his own lost loved ones also were unrecoverable. He was left with nothing but his own unresolved feelings of grief and rage. The balm Keats sought against loss and death would have to be found elsewhere.

Thereafter, Keats turned to a career as a poet, vowing that he would either find fame or death in suicide. Poetry provided Keats with a more adaptive medium for the symbolic restoration of his lost love objects — one that did not depend upon the ability to heal real

people. His creative work provided him with a way to redress his longing for lost others, most especially that of his mother. Segal (1952) writes, "... all creation is really a re-creation of a once loved and once whole, but now lost and ruined object, a ruined internal world and self" (p. 390). Through poetry Keats evoked his mother's image in formalized and highly idealized descriptions of the feminine. In so doing, he made the maternal/feminine live in his art and so always remain available to the needy and desiring poet/child.

Kleinian theorists have argued that the creative act provides a safe outlet for the expression of the artist's destructive impulses (Fairbairn, 1938; Segal, 1952). They suggest that this destructive component is what makes the restorative experience in art emotionally resonant. From this point of view, art provides a symbol both for the destroyed and restored love object. Fairbairn (1938) provides examples of this process of symbolization in his analysis of cubism and surrealist art. For instance, he notes that in Paul Klee and Picasso's work, objects are distorted and/or broken into fragments. He interprets this as the artist's sadistic attack against his objects. However, he also notes that the artist carefully reassembles these broken parts into an aesthetic composition. Fairbairn suggests that this outcome provides symbolic restitution for the earlier acts of destruction.

Segal's (1952) analysis of classical tragedy suggests a similar dynamic. Although tragic narratives depict themes of death and destruction, Segal argues that such events are mediated by their aesthetic rendering. The artist transforms painful life experiences into a symbolic structure that imparts universal value and meaning. Thus, the artist revives the objects he or she has previously destroyed and grants them a form of immortality. In Peters (1962) words: "The work of art is the immortal child of the artist, and as such is his guarantee against death" (p. 136). This provides a salve for depressive feelings. Segal (1952) notes that the artist must overcome manic defenses before he or she is capable of affecting this creative form of restoration. Guilt and longing motivate this response.

It should be noted that Freud anticipated the approach to aesthetics proposed by Fairbairn and Segal in his work, Beyond The Pleasure Principle (1920). There he related the story of his young grandson's game of "Fort" and "Da" or "There and Gone. " The boy's game consisted of throwing a toy attached to a spool of thread over the edge of his curtained cot while calling out "Fort" and then reeling it back and with great joy and satisfaction announce "Da." Freud discovered that this game represented the boy's sense of loss when his mother went away from home and his joy at her return. He suggests that certain aesthetic experiences have in common with his

grandson's game recouping a pleasurable experience from an unpleasant event.

Loss, Longing and Mysticism

Aberbach (1987) also suggests that there are important similarities between the phenomena of grief and longing as described by Klein (1940) and Bowlby (1961) and certain mystical experiences. He argues that the mystic, like the artist, longs for a lost or absent other (God) and attempts to recover or restore contact with him. Aberbach notes that the structure of this experience is much like the grief process outlined by Bowlby: both the mystic and the bereaved detach themselves from the social world, yearn and search for an absent or departed other, become depressed and disorganized when their quest fails (i.e. the dark night of the soul) and then undergo a transformation that allows them to return to the world. This parallel suggests that in some cases the mystical experience provides a transcendent substitute for personal human loss. Aberbach regards this as an essentially healthy and adaptive response.

Aberbach (1987) provides several examples in which an early loss appears to be related to the development of a mystical orientation. The philosopher and mystic Martin Buber's early life history is one such case. According to Buber's biographer, Maurice Friedman, Buber's mother "disappeared without leaving a trace" when he was 3

years old. Friedman conjectures that this loss "was the decisive experience of Martin Buber's life, the one without which neither his early seeking for unity nor his later focus on dialogue and on the meeting with the 'eternal Thou' is understandable" (p. 521).

Pollock (1975) also argues that early childhood loss may lead an individual to long for a conflict-free condition as represented by a utopian ideal or the concept of immortality. This is not viewed as a defensive reaction or a failure to adequately mourn a loss. Rather these longings may represent the human need to construct meaning in life by envisioning relationships between mortality and the permanence represented by certain ideals. For instance, individuals who work for social justice often long for an egalitarian future in which equity and justice are normative and their contribution to this ideal state helps them to feel their lives are meaningful and that their struggles and hardship have purpose. Pollock's analysis is related to Davis (1979) and Lifton's (1974) discussion of nostalgia as considered below. While Pollock regards a future-oriented longing for immortality as a way to make sensible and meaningful one's current life, Davis and Lifton suggest that the nostalgic condition idealizes the past in order to provide continuity and fortify identity in the present.

Longing and Nostalgia

The word *nostalgia* was coined in the 17th century by Swiss physician, Johanes Hofer to describe a condition of homesickness that occurred among Swiss mercenaries fighting abroad. The word is derived from the Greek *"nostos,"* to return home, and *"algia"* meaning pain. Davis (1979) suggests that the broader meaning current today only began to take shape at the beginning of this century, where nostalgia became identified with a bittersweet feeling for the past that might or might not be in any way directly related to the literal home.

The experience of "nostalgia" is regarded as similar to that of longing (Davis, 1979; Hillman, 1979; Jacobi, 1985). Whereas longing is defined as "a strong yearning, especially one that cannot be fulfilled," nostalgia is regarded as "a longing for things far away or long ago" (Webster's, 1980). Thus, both terms describe a desire for things presently out of reach that may or may not be attainable. The definition of nostalgia, however, specifies a condition which is only implied by longing; that is, distance, considered either in terms of time or space, is the barrier standing between the nostalgic individual and the goal. In most accounts the effects of time are considered the critical problem (Davis, 1979).

Freud and Nostalgia: The term nostalgia does not appear in Freud's collective works. This may be explained by the fact that most of his original manuscripts were published before the term had assumed its current meaning, although Freud's (1920) account of repetition and return in Beyond the Pleasure Principle suggests significant interest in this class of experience. For example, the death instinct can be understood as a nostalgic condition. It is an organic drive to return to a previous inanimate, undifferentiated condition. (Being abandoned to the object of "unbeing.") The death instinct may seem to reflect a longing for the primacy of unbeing, for a first home.

The nostalgic pull "home" may be compared to Freud's (1919) earlier published account of "the uncanny" or "the unhomely" (*"unheimlich"* in German). While *"unheimlich"* is typically characterized as something unfamiliar and eerie, Freud describes it clinically as "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (p. 369). This suggests that in certain respects the meaning of *"unheimlich"* approaches that of its of linguistic opposite, *"heimlich"* — "familiar, native, or belonging to home." Further etymological research into the word *"heimlich"* reveals meanings which relate it to the experience of *"unheimlich."* Freud notes that one of *"heimlich's"* definitions is of something "concealed or kept out of sight."

The confluence and transposition of meanings between the words *"heimlich"* and *"unheimlich"* suggests that the experience of "being at home" may be inherently ambivalent. We may be pleasantly engaged by our familiar pasts (nostalgia) or utterly unnerved by them (the uncanny). Freud, conceived of return as a regression from greater to lesser degrees of differentiation. As surmised above, the ultimate extent to which one may become undifferentiated is in death or "unbeing." Given the interpretation that the nostalgic individual seeks this state of unbeing, his experience of return should generate anxiety as well as pleasure. As Heidegger (1927/1962) notes, to experience the uncanny is to have an intimation of one's own death. This view is consistent with Klein's (1948) assertion that the death instinct is accompanied by deep-seated fears of annihilation. Although this account is speculative it does suggest an important link between the phenomena of nostalgia and the uncanny.

Lacan and Nostalgia: Lacan's (1977) view of desire is also implicitly an account of nostalgia: desire is both the memory of a lost maternal paradise and the symbolic drive back to that original state. In this reading, consciousness is predicated upon the continued repression of this nostalgic movement and repression works to keep the subject from having an immediate encounter with the nostalgic object. Instead, the metynomic process of signification subjects him to a endless series of *"mesconnaisances."*

Contemporary Psychoanalytic Accounts of Nostalgia: Since the death instinct was never a popular psychoanalytic construct, Freud's work related to nostalgia was not directly taken up by other psychoanalytic theorists. Moreover, Lacan's post-structuralist theory was largely rejected by the psychoanalytic community outside of France. Thus, the contemporary psychoanalytic understanding of nostalgia was prepared by the work of other theorists. Following Klein (1940) and Bowlby's (1961) investigations of mourning and reparation, many psychoanalytic writers regard the nostalgic individual's preoccupation with the past as a pathological response to early childhood loss (Sands, 1985; Sohn, 1983; and Werman, 1977). From a psychoanalytic perspective, incomplete mourning leads to a continued search for the object lost in the past combined with an inability to establish interpersonal ties in the present. In effect, the nostalgic response attempts to nullify the effects of time and the realities of loss. The pleasure derived from this search is considered a "screen affect" that defends against suffering (Werman, 1977).

Werman introduced the term "screen affect" to designate a distorted representation of an emotional state which belies the original affective experience. The notion of screen affect is derived from Freud's (1899) analysis of "screen memories;" extremely well-remembered events from childhood whose subject matter is of an indifferent nature. Freud suggests that screen memories both

represent and screen — or cover — the memory of an experience related to an unacceptable sexual impulse. The melancholic aspect of nostalgia suggests that its screen function is not an entirely successful form of defense — the effects of time cannot be transcended. Parenthetically, psychoanalytic work on nostalgia, which seems so indebted to Klein (1940) and Bowlby's (1961) theories, fails to reference them.

Nostalgia and object loss may also be considered in a manner that is consistent with Freud's (1921) account of depression in "Mourning and Melancholia." According to Freud, melancholy emerges when a person loses his or her object and then re-cathects object libido on the self. He suggests that the melancholic's "love escapes annihilation" by taking refuge in the ego. This is considered a narcissistic identification. By extension, nostalgia could also be viewed as a form of narcissistic object cathexis. In this case, the pleasurable feelings associated with nostalgia would reflect the libidinal gratification that is derived from an ongoing cathexis.

According to this reading, the melancholic aspect of nostalgia may derive from two related factors: First, it may result from a partial decathexis of libido from the narcissistic object. Freud (1917) describes decathexis as a process in which the ego divests itself of each cathected memory and experience related to the love object. "Reality passes its verdict upon each single one of the memories and

hopes through which the libido was attached to the lost object... " (p. 166). This is an inherently painful process. Secondly, aggressive impulses which were originally part of the ambivalent experience of the lost other are redirected at the ego, which has a narcissistic identification with the lost object. Freud suggests that in the melancholic condition this aggression and the dysphoria caused by it ultimately work to loosen the libidinal ties between the ego and its narcissistic object. Neither of these factors, however, explain the enduring quality of nostalgia nor do they help differentiate melancholic experiences from those of nostalgia.

Nostalgia and Existential Psychology: Several existentially oriented theorists consider the psychoanalytic account of nostalgia insufficient on different grounds. For instance, Howland (1962) argues that the experience of nostalgia provides a sense of continuity between the past and future. He suggests that in nostalgia there is a recognition of loss along with a continued sense of connection with the past. "...(A) part of being always consists of having been" (Howland, p. 203). As Werman (1977) notes, the experience of nostalgia does not necessarily represent a literal wish to exchange the present for the past; rather, it seeks to create a meaningful link between the two. Lifton (1974) makes an analogous point in his discussion of death and "symbolic immortality." He argues that in nostalgia the individual searches for a "symbolic immortality" to recover an experience of continuity in life.

Davis (1979) adds to these points by detailing the relationship between identity and nostalgia. He argues that during transitional periods of life, particularly at the juncture between phases of the life-cycle, we attempt to consolidate our identity by looking to the past for positive and reliable self-representations. He notes that the nostalgic view helps cultivate an appreciative stance towards one's past self by screening unpleasant or shameful representations and by elevating other aspects of experience. This perspective is then used to bolster and support one's self-esteem. Moreover, the nostalgic journey may also facilitate recognition of positive developments leading to the present. May (1983) takes a similar stance by noting that, "The past... is the domain of contingency in which we accept events and from which we select events in order to fulfill our potentialities and to gain satisfactions and security in the immediate future" (p. 139). It should be acknowledged that May's view reflects a different philosophical perspective from that of Davis. As an existentialist, May's concern is with the individual's commitment to being or *"Dasein"* rather than with his "sense of identity" as such.

The dimension of time is highlighted in each account. This is in keeping with the existential view that time is among the most significant grounds of human existence. As May (1983) notes, existence is not fixed or static but emerges through time. He

suggests that depression and some delusions should be understood as a disruption in the time process. Thus, the provision of continuity and identity enhancement detailed by Davis, may explain Fodor's (1950) observation that people in crisis find a consolation in nostalgia that often helps them re-engage with the present. According to May (1983) one's relationship with the future also may work in a reciprocal fashion to bring one's past back to life: "What an individual seeks to become determines what he remembers of his has been" (May, p. 140).

Discussion

Hegel's Phenomenology (1807/1964) anticipates the historical discussion of longing and desire that follows him. For Hegel consciousness is, itself, a form of longing. Subjectivity is realized through its dialectical movement in the world. It must face its own negation and dwell with it in order to "...convert the negative into being" (p. 93). The processes of longing or desire have no beginning, consciousness has always been on the move, and in existential renderings, has no end. Longing perpetuates itself in its striving for an inclusive self-identity. For Hegel this process is at once progressive and self-limiting — the experiential sense of lack or "manque" is recapitulated at higher levels of organization. In Hegel's own words, "subject desires to become substance," and through desiring finds itself perpetually alienated from the other.

Negation is also vitalizing. Hegel expresses a genuine appreciation for the negative, even an outright enjoyment of it. As he notes in the Phenomenology (1807/1964),

> Spirit attains its truth only by finding itself in absolute dismemberment... The truth is thus the bacchanalian revel, where not a member is sober...every member no sooner becomes detached than it *eo ipso* collapses straight away" (p. 105).

Perhaps Hegel is expressing here the thrill or quickening of experience that attends the transgressive, as Foucault (1978) later celebrated it. His ecstatic view also prefigures Deleuze (1977; 1983) and Eigen's (1981) accounts of multiplicity and difference: that is, the joy discovered by multiplicitous, non-identical states of excess as opposed to static experiences of union and identity. Hegel's subject ultimately concludes its journey in self-consciousness and becomes spirit or *Geistk,* and this is a significant departure point for Sartre, Lacan, Deleuze, and Foucault.

The philosophical literature that followed Hegel outlined two broad conceptions of longing: In the first, longing was regarded as a desperate response to lack or absence. Prototypically this lack refers to a subjective desire for a self-sufficient identity. The subject wants to be whole, integral and complete, and inevitably finds itself partial, contingent, empty, and fragmented. Hegel described this state of

consciousness as a primary negativity journeying towards its own completion. Whereas Hegel's journeying subject ultimately realizes self-identity (at the end of history) through the dialectical force of recognition, Sartre (1943/1956), Lacan (1977), and other postmodern thinkers argue that this can never be the case. Consciousness is not completed by "Spirit" but is perpetually haunted by the specter of it — we desire precisely that which we will never experience. Sartre provides at least one concession: He suggests that our desire for completion is symbolically realized through imaginative processes. In creative labor, we construct fictive identities, and experience meaning and free will through them. Sartre describes this as a "vital lie."

Lacan (1977) is less hopeful. While the infant's life begins in a state of symbiotic completion with the mother, the incest taboo severs this relation. Lacan views subjectivity as a defense against regressive fusion with the mother and the absolute *"jouissance"* associated with her. At the same time, subjectivity signifies its own lack. It is "the introduction of a loss into reality." Thus, desire or longing is instantiated as a transgressive attempt to return to a state of original relatedness. The subject's desire, however, is obfuscated by the very language used to represent it and this results in a series of unrecognized misappropriations or *"mesconnaisances."* In this sense, desire's characteristic opacity precludes any hope of reparation or

wholeness. Every striving casts the subject further from his or her goal.

A second general conception of longing repudiates the idea of an essential negativity as wrongheaded and oppressive. In this view, as described by Deleuze (1977), experience is not conditioned by a fundamental lack but by multiplicitous and bountiful nature. Desire reflects our longing to manifest and embrace experience in all its variety rather than a need to incorporate it into ourselves. Scarcity or lack — and the desire that results from them — are regarded as ideological constructs used to create and support political power. In Foucault's (1978) thought, even these machinations of power offer individuals opportunities for creative engagement with life.

This schematic organization helps to situate psychological accounts of longing, although certain theorists either consider or integrate both renderings. Most traditional and contemporary psychoanalytic theories consider longing to be a reparative response to some form of developmental trauma. (See Hawthorne, 1988, for a conceptual review and phenomenological description of the experience of reparation.) Creative, mystical, and nostalgic experiences are similarly regarded and each is construed as a symbolic form of reparation for early trauma or object loss. Jungian and existential theories also view longing in reparative terms, but propose an ontological basis for this response. In general these accounts regard

longing as a desire to repair the breach that separates individual consciousness from an original organic participation with the world.

While reparative trends emerge in each of these accounts, different views are presented as to what is considered absent or damaged (an aspect of the self or a related dimension of the world), and whether it is appropriate or healthy to long for reunion or wholeness. For example: Klein (1940) and Bowlby (1961) regard longing as a desire to repair or recover an important other whose presence helps consolidate the self. Klein asserts that inner security and a sense of well-being depend upon a reliable and supporting relationship with significant others. Without such reinforcement the self experiences disintegrating fears of loss and persecution. Klein argues that these depressive conflicts present the most consequential psychological challenges. Thus, she regards the ability to repair and restore objects through mourning as the *"sine qua non"* of mental health.

Creativity is also construed as a means of symbolically restoring either damaged or lost self or object structures. The psychoanalytic study of creativity reveals a frequent correspondence between early object loss and artistic inspiration. Biographic studies suggest that the artist often attempts to restore lost or absent others through creative acts (Hamilton, 1968; Martin; 1983). Kleinian theorists (Fairbairn, 1938; Segal 1952) suggest that creative acts also offer a safe outlet for destructive impulses. Art provides a symbol of both

the destroyed and the restored love object. Through this symbolic integration of experience, art produces emotionally resonant responses.

Although there is a poignancy to these accounts, they present a reductive understanding of longing and creative experience, one that is obsessed with issues of scarcity. Is creativity nothing more than a coping device, albeit a highly skilled one? Following Deleuze's (1977; 1983) discussion of desire, we may suppose that creative expression is also an intrinsically rewarding experience; one that provides poets and artists with an immediate and intense encounter with life. The emotional conflict and personal difficulty expressed in artistic work is one index of the artist's commitment to this process.

In contrast to Klein (1940), who considered longing to be a response to the loss of a primary other, other relational theorists have suggested that longing represents a desire to recover and develop a whole self. Balint (1968) argues that a rupture of the infant's primary relationship causes a basic fault or fragmentation in the core of the self. Longing expresses a profound desire to recapture lost developmental opportunities and to heal structural faults. In psychotherapeutic care, this desire may be enacted in the form of a "benign regression." On the other hand, longing also may take a pathological course in the form of alcoholism, drug abuse, cult

participation, or ideological extremism. Winnicott (1955), Little (1960), Guntrip (1969), and Kahn (1960) make related observations.

According to Fromm (1956), Yalom (1980), Freud (1920), Jacobi (1985), and Neuman (1962), longing represents a desire to repair or restore a relationship with the environment that has been ruptured by human consciousness. Fromm (1956) and Yalom (1980) consider such longing for wholeness as a regressive response to the existential concerns of freedom, isolation, meaninglessness, and death. Such regressive behavior may be observed in cases of both totalitarian surrender and obsessive romantic love. Fromm and Yalom argue that the primary human task is to relate to others without using them as a brace against fear and loneliness. Individuals are charged with the responsibility of accepting human limits and recognizing the existential realities which face them. Such requests help us to engage the present and to experience responsible choice and freedom. Thus, Yalom (1980) states, "Death is the condition that makes it possible for us to live in an authentic fashion" (p. 31).

Yalom regards nostalgic longing as a secular version of what he termed the immortality defense. In this defense, the individual avoids death anxiety by projecting him or herself into an everlasting future. In contrast, nostalgia states shield us from the effects of our mortality by arresting the flow of time: We avoid facing the reality of death by submerging ourselves in an enduring and everlasting past.

Yalom's view prompts us to live in the present, to accept direct responsibility for our lives and to face inevitable existential limits. Speaking of his work as a psychotherapist he writes (1989), "I think my quarry is illusion. I war against magic. I believe that, though illusion often cheers and comforts, it ultimately and invariably weakens and constricts the spirit" (p. 154).

Psychoanalytic theorists also regard nostalgic experience as a pathologic response to loss (Sands, 1985; Sohn, 1983; Werman, 1977). From this point of view, incomplete mourning leads to a continued search for the lost object and an inability to establish meaningful interpersonal ties in the present. The pleasure derived from this search is considered a "screen affect" designed to defend against an experience of suffering. In this context, a screen affect designates a distorted representation of an emotional state that belies the original affective experience of loss.

Taking a different view, existentially oriented theorists regard nostalgia as a productive experience. They suggest that nostalgic experiences help consolidate identity by providing a sense of continuity between the past and the future. As Howland (1962) notes, "(A) part of being always consists of having been" (p. 203). Instead of becoming fixated with the past, nostalgic experiences may help individuals reengage with the present.

Freud's (1920) theory of the death instinct may be construed as a kind of nostalgic drive to return to an original, undifferentiated organic condition. Like Aristophanes, Freud supposes that, "Human nature was originally one and we were whole, and the desire and the pursuit of the whole is called love." This interpretation of the death instinct is also supported by Freud's (1919) account of "The Uncanny." Uncanny experiences may be regarded as a kind of mirror reflection to nostalgic states. Supposing that the death instinct is an ambivalently experienced phenomena, the uncanny or *"unheimlich"* may highlight its terrifying and unfamiliar aspects whereas nostalgic states reflect the pleasurable components associated with "home."

Jacobi (1985) and Neuman (1962) suggest that longing for wholeness or unity can take either regressive or progressive turns. Regressive longing is characterized by a desire for passive merger and de-differentiation. In this situation, the person seeks to negate his or her individuality to avoid alienated experience and psychological conflict. Jacobi notes that this dynamic is frequently observed in cult behavior, clinical depression, drug abuse, and suicidal phenomena. Similarly, Lacan (1977) construes desire as a nostalgic drive for return to an original, preconscious identification with the original environmental other. This maternal state is regarded as a kind of paradise which can provide the individual with a sense of absolute satisfaction.

As opposed to the views considered above, a second account of longing has also been presented: In this case longing is considered primarily as an expression of fullness, vitality, or subjective meaning rather than as a way of either denying absence or loss or recovering wholeness. For example, May (1969/1989) regards longing as an expression of a subjective "wish," which is viewed not as a kind of fantasy designed to defend against existential threats but as an instance of existential choice. Following Winnicott, Eigen (1981) and Benjamin (1988; 1992) both construe longing as a desire for genuine encounter with an external other. This relationship creates new ontological realities which enhance the individual's experience of being alive. Finally, Hillman (1975) regards longing as the human component of a transpersonal reality. To be human is to recognize that one is always other than oneself. Through longing, we learn to identify and embrace this "double nature."

A few theories integrate both aspects of longing in their accounts. For example, Winnicott's (1962) theory describes how developmental events often suppress an infant's experience of vitality and create a "false self syndrome." For Winnicott, longing represents a desire either to repair or to recover authentic subjectivity following the precipitous loss or severing of an infant's experience of "primary omnipotence." Winnicott regarded the true self as nothing other than those personal instances collectively representing the experience of being authentically alive. These experiences first emerge as the

infant's spontaneous gestures and provide the basis for both creative expression and authentic relationships with self and other. Winnicott suggests that where psychoanalytic treatment allows "therapeutic regressions" to occur, patients can learn to relinquish compliant false self adaptations and recover this sense of vital subjectivity.

Postmodern Issues

Of the two views considered, the psychological literature most often regards longing as a compensatory process; one longs to exchange a sense of absence or lack for one of wholeness or completion. The healthy "self" is construed in just these terms — in the course of development the divided or conflicted infantile self gives way to an integrated subject who experiences both autonomy and relatedness to others. Moreover, this self is thought to experience an enhanced sense of agency in the world and to recognize of its own needs and desires.

Although rarely stated explicitly, theorists tend to consider the integrated self as a universal, trans-historical norm. A "firstness" or primacy is asserted for the self which provides a bulwark for the larger theoretical enterprise. Yet, this essentialist perspective is vulnerable to a particularly damning critique: Foucault (1978) and others suggest that any claim of firstness or essence reinforces a particular pattern of social relations as normative. For instance, if

the healthy self is by definition an integrated being or event, this fact also delimits its experiential possibilities. To exist as a whole requires that divergent experiences are culled and mediated, and this mediation only reinforces socially desirable characteristics. Thus, the integrated subject is usually characterized as stable, adaptive, and productive.

Deleuze (1977; 1983), Cushman (1990), and Hoggett (1986) note that the construction of a unified and integrated subject necessarily creates a possible experience of dysfunction and lack. We experience a sense of deficiency in comparison to a fictional norm or standard of subjective health. The integrated self is a kind of psychological mirror that reflects our inadequacy. This negative reflection supports the production of goods and services (including psychotherapeutic ones) that promise to restore our sense of wholeness. Thus, our needs and desires are constructed for us along with those products or services that promise to satisfy them.

For May (1969/1989; 1983), Eigen (1981), Benjamin (1988), Hoggett (1986) and Hillman (1975; 1979) the vitalistic dimension of experience is of primary concern. Like the philosopher Deleuze (1977), each of these psychologists characterize subjectivity as a divergent encounter with multiplicity. Encounters with the external non identical world enlivens rather than diminishes subjectivity. By embracing alterity, the movement to holism is rendered unnecessary.

In fact, the holistic agenda implies a defensive attempt to control multiplicity rather than to engage it with immediacy. In Hillman's (1975) terms, the ideal of wholeness, Hegel's "spirit" or *"Geist,"* is a kind of monotheistic oligarchic fantasy. One longs not to restore an original unity but to live out one's "dividedness." He notes, "..no individual is wholehearted and single minded, at one with himself and in at-one-ment with the Gods." Nor does one need to be. "Self-division or the divided self of modern psychiatry is not a result, mistake or accident... (longing) makes us aware of always being in a syzygy with another figure, always in a dance, always a reflection of an invisible other" (p. 60). Ultimately, one longs to enter this dance, and one longs to experience such longings.

Conclusion

Philosophers have considered longing as either a desire for wholeness (Hegel, Sartre, and Lacan) or an expression of vitality (Deleuze and Foucault). This division is also evident in psychological accounts: For instance, relational theorists have described longing and nostalgia as a regressive attempt to make a damaged, absent, or destroyed subjectivity, complete, whole, and available again. (Winnicott, 1955; Balint, 1968). Longing also has been associated with the symbolic restoration of self or object structures (Klein, 1940; Bowlby, 1961; Winnicott, 1962). A third view considers longing as a desire to repair or restore a relationship with the environment and

such a view conceives of longing as either a defense against existential givens (Yalom, 1980 and 1989; and Fromm 1956) or as a restorative effort to reframe the subject-object paradigm in more holistic terms (Jacobi, 1985; Fauteux, 1987). Finally, Freud (1920) regards longing as a desire to return to an original, undifferentiated organic condition.

Longing is also conceived as an expression of fullness, vitality, or subjective meaning. This view may seem to define a kind of existential choice (Yalom, 1980, 1989; May 1969/1989,) or to reflect a desire to encounter an external other (Eigen, 1981; Hoggett, 1986; May, 1983;, Benjamin, 1992; and Hillman, 1975). In this case, longing may become a desired end in itself. Longing instantiates a vital experiencing of life, and one comes to long for opportunities to experience longing.

The theoretical diversity of these conceptions suggest that longing is an important human experience. Empirical science, however, has given it little consideration to this point. It is the intention of the present study to obtain first-person accounts of longing in order to obtain a fuller description of the phenomena as experienced by individuals. In this way, I hope to learn more about longing in relation to subjectivity and related topics such as loss, mourning, and creativity. Moreover, I may find that a phenomenological account describes issues and themes that were not anticipated by the

theories just considered. In that case, this study would cast significant new light on both these theoretical accounts and the experience of longing.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

To date, work on the topic of longing has been theoretical rather than empirical. Since observations often represent *"ad hoc"* derivatives of other work, little is directly known about the topic. The present study is intended to offer descriptions of the experience of longing as these are provided by individuals. An existential-phenomenological approach will be employed in order to provide a description of the experience of longing. To present the nature of this approach, it will be helpful to review the rationale which supports its methodology.

An existential-phenomenological approach to research regards human experience as a primary subject for scientific exploration. In particular, it assumes that the everyday lived world defines an appropriate domain for the social sciences (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1989). Further, dialogic theory suggests that meaning is necessarily constructed in the interpersonal field (Holquist, 1990) and knowledge emerges only in dialogic movements between non identical "I" positions. Therefore, the phenomenological or dialogic interview (Kvale, 1996) provides a natural and appropriate medium for any investigation of experiential meaning. In this medium, the phenomenological researcher seeks to

describe this world, or particular aspects of it, through conversations with ordinary people. Conducted skillfully, this method facilitates an open, nuanced description of the participant's life experiences. Descriptions obtained through this approach present specific detailed first-person accounts rather than theoretical or philosophical generalizations. Thematic meanings emerge from these descriptions which organize and highlight the phenomenologically experienced world.

An existential-phenomenological method is a discovery oriented, rather than a deductive, investigative approach (Kvale, 1996). That is, the researcher hopes to learn something new rather than to confirm a pre-established belief or hypothesis. In this context, research participants are regarded as experts of their own experience, and the investigator's task is to understand experiences as presented in the interview process. This approach provides a more inclusive investigative strategy than that allowed by natural science methodology. In the latter case, methodological procedures circumscribe the investigative field. The investigator determines ahead of time the possible scope of discovery by operationally defining his subject and then establishing procedures that allow for the confirmation or disconfirmation of a given hypothesis (Valle, King and Halling, 1989; Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997). On the other hand, phenomenological methods open up the investigative field to

novel insights by focusing upon the participants' accounts of their experience.

First person description never occurs in a vacuum. The investigator is not a recording device or value-neutral facilitator of the participant's expressive experience. Rather, he or she is part of that experience as it emerges in the dialogic moment. The investigator represents one of two first-person positions in the dialogue. Participants construct their experiences out of other relevant experiences including the immediate one with the interviewer. In the language of Gestalt psychology, the interviewer is to be regarded as one ground out of which the participant's experience is made figural. For this reason, Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, (1997) suggest that the phenomenological interview creates the conditions for a two person psychology — one that focuses upon the participant's lived world in all of its relevant contexts.

This view is consistent with both social constructivist (Berger & Luckman, 1966) and hermeneutic (Gadamer, 1960/1975; Ricoeur, 1976) paradigms. Experience is socially mediated and embodied through particularity. It does not exist in an absolutely true or "ideal form." "The real is that which is lived as it is lived" (Pollio, Henley and Thompson, 1997); therefore, the research process must investigate experience, not a filtered representation or copy of it. The investigator's responsibility is to select a methodology that is

sensitively related to the topic of inquiry. Doing so creates a greater likelihood that the topic will be illuminated by the investigation.

Placing phenomenology under the umbrella of the social constructionist movement requires a reformulation of one of Husserl's (1913/1931) basic conceptions and procedures. Husserl defined "Bracketing" as a process of suspending one's assumptions and preconceptions in order to perceive the essential or transcendental structure of consciousness. In this sense, bracketing is regarded as a subtractive process; as an ideal to be strived for. From a constructionist perspective, it is impossible to subtract or bracket out "bias." If the term bracketing is to be retained, it must be reworked to fit within a relativist framework. Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, (1997) suggest that the term be applied in a positive sense to describe a disciplined way of seeing. The interviewer strives to view the participant's experience from a perspective that is sensibly related to it. For example, he or she may identify themes in the participant's account by reflecting upon similar trends in his or her own experience or that of other participants. At the same time, contextually sensitive observation helps to alert the interviewer to unique aspects of each account.

Validity

Validity criteria in phenomenological research differ from those conventionalized in the natural sciences. The natural science model seeks to establish validity on the basis of a presumed correspondence between research findings and some pre-existing and external reality. By contrast, interpretive disciplines seek to provide accounts which are experienced as meaningful and apt. In this context, Giorgi suggests that validity is established when "... a reader, adopting the same viewpoint articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not he agreed with it" (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997, p. 53). In addition, the phenomenological reader should be able to find adequate textual support in the data and to discover a meaningful first-person account of the experiential phenomena. This model provides a rhetorical basis for evaluation; one that, like the judicial process, is necessarily ambiguous (Polkinghorne, 1989; Spence, 1987). Evidence is considered convincing or unconvincing rather than as true or false. It is argued that rhetorical operations also implicitly underlie natural science validity criteria.

Procedure

Phenomenological research procedures can be separated into two basic phases: **Data collection** and **data analysis.** The following is a brief account of the steps to be taken in both phases.

Collecting Data

Data collection consists of three basic steps:

1) Bracketing
2) Participant Selection
3) Interviewing

Bracketing: The data collection procedure is initiated with a "bracketing interview." In this interview the investigator is interviewed by a colleague, and as such, becomes a participant. A transcribed version of this interview is presented to a phenomenological research group for thematic analysis. The purpose of the interview is to help deepen the investigator's relationship to the various dimensions of his or her own experience of the research topic. Moreover, the procedure may help to sensitize the investigator to his or her own presuppositions and to the demand characteristics these assumptions may introduce into the interview and/or interpretation process. Although a certain critical distance may be

established, bracketing does not claim to provide an objective perspective.

Participant Selection: Articulate, reflective, and motivated individuals are generally considered the most promising participants for phenomenological research. In the present case, participants were solicited from groups likely to include such individuals. The Knoxville Writers Guild is one group which provided participants of this nature for this study. Recruiting individuals from a writers guild has the added benefit of exploring the presumed relationship between longing and creative writing noted in the psychological literature. In addition, participants selected for this study were required to meet two basic criteria defined by Collaizzi (1978): personal experience of the topic being studied and a willingness to talk about the topic. All participants were adults: seven were female and five were male. All subjects were presented with a consent form explaining the research objectives, methods, measures of protection, and potential risks and benefits of the study. Participants were encouraged to ask questions about the study at that time. All participants decided to proceed to the interview and signed a consent form agreeing to the terms of the study. One participant was uncomfortable with the dialogic process and did not complete the interview. Her description of longing was not included in the thematic analysis attained.

Interviewing: People typically share knowledge with one another in conversation. The dialogic interview is considered a conversation having the express purpose of generating knowledge for research purposes (Kvale, 1996). In this case, the interviewer seeks a detailed description of the participant's life world. To this end, the interviewer attempts to follow these accounts closely and, when possible, to facilitate their telling. It is hoped that a thematic understanding of a particular experience will emerge from this interaction. All participants were asked the following question at the beginning of the interview: "Can you tell me about some times in your life when you experienced a sense of longing?" This inquiry was followed by questions intended to facilitate and clarify participants' descriptions of longing. Queries were restricted to aspects of experience already introduced by the participant.

Data Analysis

Eleven of the twelve interviews were transcribed from audiotape and analyzed in a manner consistent with a phenomenological/hermeneutic interpretive approach (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997; Polkinghorne, 1989). One incomplete interview was not transcribed. Audiotapes and transcribed interviews were secured in a locked file drawer in the project director's office. Approximately half of these interviews were analyzed with the help of the phenomenology research group at the

University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Steps in the data analysis are as follows:

1) The interview is read aloud in segments or units. Dapkus (1985) and Labov & Fanchel (1977) have concluded that a unit is delimited by a change of subject or by an elaboration following an inquiry.

2) Units resulting from this procedure are then examined to determine, in the subject's own words, the meaning that dominates that unit. Words or phrases used by participants are designated to represent the meaning of that unit.

3) Meaning units are then established for the entire transcript. A similar procedure is followed for each transcript.

4) After meaning units are established for all transcripts, these units are progressively collapsed into a smaller number of units (sub themes), again using the subject's own words.

5) Sub themes are next synthesized across transcripts into a general description (themes) of the experience of longing. "Synthesis involves tying together and integrating the meaning units into a consistent and systematic general description of the psychological structure of the experience under investigation" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 56).

The following analysis of a fragment of text excerpted from a participant's interview protocol illustrates the phenomenological methodology employed in this study. The protocol's text is presented

in the left column of Table 1 (see page 111) while the meaning units derived from the text appear in its right column. In Table 2 (see page 113), the meaning units are presented in the left column and the text's sub themes are shown in the table's left column. Table 3 (see page 115) presents sub themes in the left column and the protocol's themes in its right column. The analysis of the entire protocol from which this fragment was excerpted and the other interview protocols presented the same set of themes. Considered together they provide a thematic structure of the experience of longing. That structure comprises the results of the present research study as considered in the next chapter.

Table 1. Text/Meaning Units

Text	Meaning Units
Now what comes to me, and this is not an image from anywhere, but I think of moments when I had it. Just an image of looking up at the stars. I think of onetime, this was a particularly appropriate time for it. When I was at (college). Towards the end around Junior or Senior year there were these two people I got to know. This was (a person's) little brother. His girlfriend lived out in Colorado between Colorado Springs and Boulder. She lived on a ranch up in the mountains, up in the foothills of the Rockies. Her father was a pilot, not that that matters. We went out into this field late at night. We looked up at the stars. I had never ever seen so many stars in my life. There was a way in which that too is longing. Again there is a reaching for. I want to go up and... I mean I would never do it but I would sort of want to go up and get to that star. I would want to get to that place. So I can associate longing with looking up at the stars at night. Its funny how these things inter link. The minute I think of that I think of the Little Prince. The Little Prince for me as a book. That is a book about longing. Boy is that for me about longing. Because that is really about the world that we imagine is not complete for us. The experience of the flyer for a friend is an experience of longing. Its an almost poignant, and (inaudible) and total experience of longing. Its not coincidental that when the little prince dies... The little prince who has been his friend and represents longing he goes up to a star. And the little prince says, "Whenever	1. Now what comes to me, and this is not an image from anywhere, but I think of moments when I had it. Just an image of looking up at the stars. 2. I think of onetime, this was a particularly appropriate time for it. When I was at (college). Towards the end around Junior or Senior year there were these two people I got to know. This was (a person's) little brother. His girlfriend lived out in Colorado between Colorado Springs and Boulder. She lived on a ranch up in the mountains, up in the foothills of the Rockies. Her father was a pilot, not that that matters. We went out into this field late at night. We looked up at the stars. I had never ever seen so many stars in my life. There was a way in which that too is longing. Again there is a reaching for. I want to go up and... I mean I would never do it but I would sort of want to go up and get to that star. I would want to get to that place. So I can associate longing with looking up at the stars at night. 3. Its funny how these things inter link. The minute I think of that I think of the Little Prince. The Little Prince for me as a book. That is a book about longing. Boy is that for me about longing. Because that is really about the world that we imagine is not complete for us. The experience of the flyer for a friend is an experience of longing. Its an almost poignant, and (inaudible) and total experience of longing. Its

Table 1. Text/Meaning Units (continued)

Text	Meaning Units
you get lonely think of me laughing up in the stars." And again if you think rationally we know that the little prince is not really in that star. But we allow ourselves to imagine, to place together an experience we had of a friend, which is what is real in the book, and an experience of having lost that friend, and we combine it with something else. That experience of staring up at the stars. (I: Yes.) And by combining those two things we get an experience of longing. Its sort of love and loss put together. (I: Yes. That is interesting.) There is love of a friend and loss of a friend. And again I can think of all these experiences that I have talked about as a sense of love and loss. There is love of Susan and loss of Susan. There is love of where you and I were in that time that you and I had that was truly special. That is lost. Because as I said at the beginning, it can't be recreated. It can't even if we were to go back... It's like the reunion thing. Its like going to the tenth reunion. Even if we were to go back it wouldn't be the same. So there is something permanently lost and there is something that we love. I think it's the union of those two things that makes the longing for me.	not coincidental that when the little prince dies... The little prince who has been his friend and represents longing he goes up to a star. And the little prince says, "Whenever you get lonely think of me laughing up in the stars." And again if you think rationally we know that the little prince is not really in that star. But we allow ourselves to imagine, to place together an experience we had of a friend, which is what is real in the book, and an experience of having lost that friend, and we combine it with something else. That experience of staring up at the stars. (I: Yes.) And by combining those two things we get an experience of longing. Its sort of love and loss put together. 4. (I: Yes. That is interesting.) There is love of a friend and loss of a friend. And again I can think of all these experiences that I have talked about as a sense of love and loss. There is love of Susan and loss of Susan. There is love of where you and I were in that time that you and I had that was truly special. That is lost. Because as I said at the beginning, it can't be recreated. It can't even if we were to go back... It's like the reunion thing. Its like going to the tenth reunion. Even if we were to go back it wouldn't be the same. So there is something permanently lost and there is something that we love. I think it's the union of those two things that makes the longing for me.

Table 2. Meaning Units / Sub Themes

Meaning Units	Sub Themes
1. Now what comes to me, and this is not an image from anywhere, but I think of moments when I had it. Just an image of looking up at the stars.	
2. I think of onetime, this was a particularly appropriate time for it. When I was at (college). Towards the end around Junior or Senior year there were these two people I got to know. This was (a person's) little brother. His girlfriend lived out in Colorado between Colorado Springs and Boulder. She lived on a ranch up in the mountains, up in the foothills of the Rockies. Her father was a pilot, not that that matters. We went out into this field late at night. We looked up at the stars. I had never ever seen so many stars in my life. There was a way in which that too is longing. *Again there is a reaching for. I want to go up and...I mean I would never do it but I would sort of want to go up and get to that star.* I would want to get to that place. So I can associate longing with looking up at the stars at night.	Again there is a reaching for. I want to go up and... I mean I would never do it but I would like to get to that star.
3. Its funny how these things enterlink. The minute I think of that I think of the Little Prince. The Little Prince for me as a book. That is a book about longing. Boy is that for me about longing. Because that is really about *the world that we imagine is not complete* for us. The experience of the flyer for a friend is an experience of longing. *Its an almost poignant*, and (inaudible) and total experience of longing. Its not coincidental that	The world we imagine is not complete. Its almost poignant.

Table 2. Meaning Units / Sub Themes (continued)

Meaning Units	Sub Themes
when the little prince dies... The little prince who has been his friend and represents longing he goes up to a star. And the little prince says, "Whenever you get lonely think of me laughing up in the stars." And again if you think rationally we know that the little prince is not really in that star. But	
we allow ourselves to imagine, to place together an experience we had of a friend, which is what is real in the book, and an experience of having lost that friend, and we combine it with something else. That experience of staring up at the stars. (I: Yes.) And by combining those two things we get an experience of longing. *Its sort of love and loss put together.*	...we allow ourselves to imagine, to place together an experience we had of a friend, which is real in the book, and an experience of having lost that friend, and we combine it with something else. That experience of staring up at the stars. It's sort of love and loss put together.
4. (I: Yes. That is interesting.) There is love of a friend and loss of a friend. And again *I can think of all these experiences that I have talked about as a sense of love and loss. There is love of Susan and loss of Susan. There is love of where you and I were in that time that you and I had that was truly special.* That is lost. *Because as I said at the beginning, it can't be recreated.* It can't... Even if we were to go back... It's like the reunion thing. It's like going to the tenth reunion. *Even if we were to go back it wouldn't be the same. So there is something permanently lost and there is something that we love.* I think it's the union of those two things that makes the longing for me.	I can think of all these experiences I've talked about as love and loss. There is love of Susan... There is love of where you and I were in that time that you and I had that was truly special. Because as I said at the beginning, it can't be recreated. Even if we were to go back it wouldn't be the same. So there is something permanently lost and there is something we love.

Table 3. Sub Themes / Themes

Sub Themes	Themes
Again there is a *reaching for.* I want to go up and...	Reaching For
I would like to get to that star.	
There is love of Susan... There is love of where you and I were in that time that you and I had that was truly special.	Desired Object
Because as I said at the beginning, it can't be recreated.	Barrier/Boundary
Even if we were to go back it wouldn't be the same.	
I mean I would never do it.	
We allow ourselves to imagine, to place together an experience we had of a friend, which is real in the book, and an experience of having lost that friend, and we combine it with something else. That experience of staring up at the stars.	Bitter-Sweet Feeling
I can think of all these experiences I've talked about as love and loss.	
The world we imagine is not complete.	
Its almost poignant.	
So there is something permanently lost and there is something we love.	
Its sort of love and loss put together.	
The world we imagine is not complete.	

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

As described by participants in this study, longing seems best characterized as a dynamic state of consciousness punctuated by fluctuations in what was figurally noticed. Participants described awareness as rapidly shifting among four interrelated themes: **Reaching For, Desired Object, Barrier,** and **Bittersweet Feelings.** One order describing the flow of these aspects of the experience of longing was that the person reported reaching for the desired object and encountering a barrier that led to a bittersweet feeling. Narrative accounts of longing, however, included many other, and different, sequences of these themes in relation to each other. For instance, participants also described noticing bittersweet feelings, encountering barriers, and then attempting to reach past those barriers to their desired objects.

Although themes will be described separately for purposes of explication, they are best construed as constituting a single gestalt that manifests itself in different ways. Each theme is a necessary component to the complete experience. A person ceases to long if one of the themes is absent; for example, if an individual transcends

the experience of barrier and reaches the desired object, longing disappears.

> (#6) It seems to me that the doing something about it put an end to the longing. The being with him wasn't longing. You're being with him. Then after I left him the longing came back.
>
> (#7) I don't think it quite happens all the way. Not for me. That is where the frustration comes in. It just always feels like its close but not quite close enough. If it happened I wouldn't be longing anymore, would I? (I: Oh you think so?) Yea. That is the thing. If it was satisfied there wouldn't be any longing. I'd know. I'd know what it was. I'd be it.

Moreover, one cannot envision a desired object without having some awareness of being a desiring subject. Nor can one experience "reaching" without recognizing an object that is reached for. Each of these experiences always accompanied the other in narrative accounts provided by participants.

The Thematic Structure of the Experience of Longing

Considered as a whole, the themes of **Reaching For, Desired Object, Barrier, and Bittersweet Feeling** describe the experience of longing. This organization of themes, and the narrative accounts emerging from it, comprise the results of the present study. Figure 1 (see page 118) presents a geometric illustration designed to

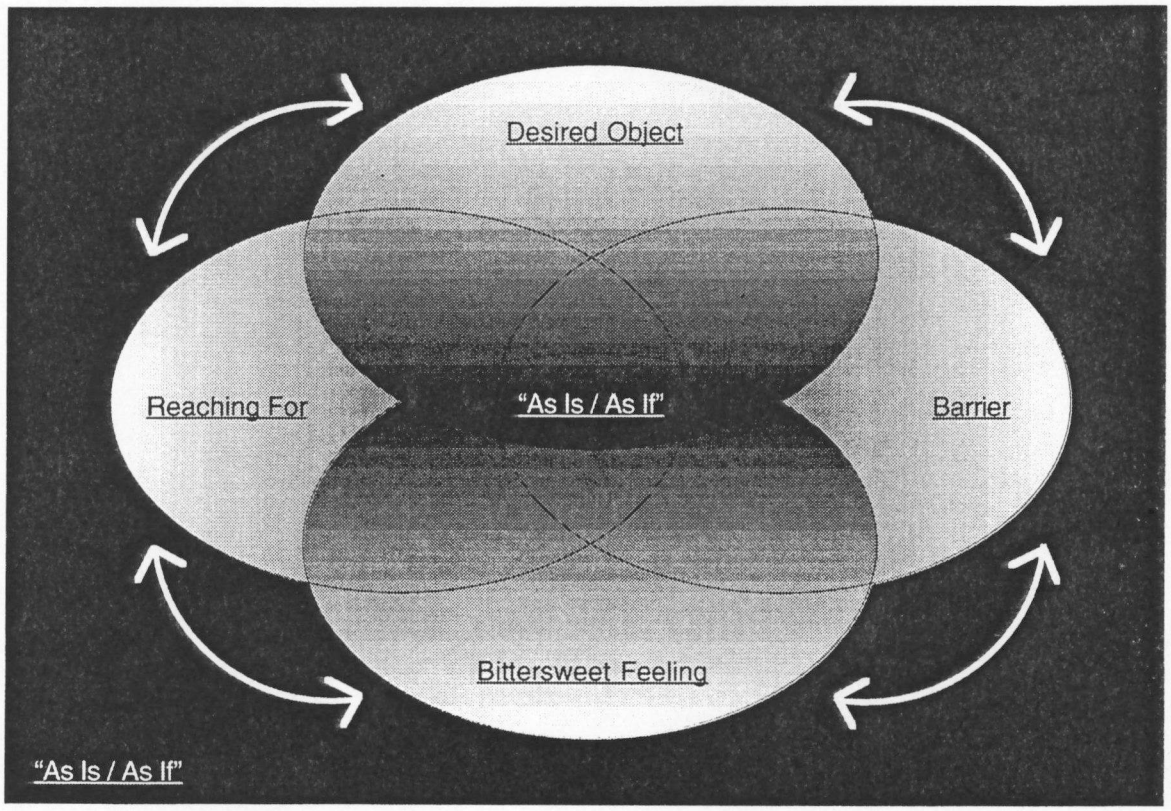


Figure 1. Thematic Structure of Longing

capture relationships among themes and their pattern of interaction. The dynamic aspect of this experience is represented by bi-directional arrows that lead to and from each of the structure's major themes.

The thematic structure of longing always emerged against a particular ground, and this ground can be described best as an oscillation between two interacting states of consciousness; "As Is/As If." The "As Is" mode represents phenomena experienced as existing in the world; the "As If" mode signifies objects and experiences regarded as products of fantasy or imagination. For instance, participants construed the theme of "Reaching For" as something they imagined doing or as something they did or could do in the world. Similarly, the "Desired Object" was experienced as a product of imagination or as something existing independently in the world. The themes of "Barrier" and "Bittersweet Feelings" likewise were described in both modes of awareness.

Individual themes, as well as the overall structure of longing, are contextualized by both As Is/As If modes of awareness. Together, the thematic structure and the dialectical ground form the experiential gestalt of longing. Figure 1 also is meant to suggest that participants characterized longing as a process in which their attention or awareness moved among the themes of Reaching For, Desired Object, Barrier and Bittersweet Feelings, even as their

experience of those poles changed in relation to corresponding fluctuations in "As Is" and "As If" modes of consciousness.

The following description of a participant's longing to have another child is meant to illustrate the alternation between modes in relation to the themes of Desired Object and Barrier: While driving alone one night the participant experienced (in an "As If" state) herself holding a small child (a Desired Object) in her arms, against her chest. For several months following that experience, she had similar fantasies of holding a child in her arms and of observing the child as he or she gazed up at her. The participant always initially experienced these encounters as "real" and would then suddenly recognize (in an "As Is" mode) that they were products of her imagination. This insight emerged in tandem with thoughts as to why she could not have another child "in reality" (Barrier) as well as in feelings of disappointment. These experiences often were followed by a subsequent reexperiencing of her fantasy.

In participant accounts of longing, the theme of Barrier was most often described in relation to the "As Is" mode of experience, and was reported to produce painful or bitter feelings. The barrier, however, was "transcended" or passed through, in participants' fantasies as these emerged from the "As If" mode. For example: the participant described above experienced a feeling of connection to her desired objects through fantasies of them. This experience

provided her with a sense of satisfaction or completion — a sweet feeling.

> (#7) I don't know where my children are. It may be that my children end up just existing in my very own imagination. That will be all right. If that is where they are, that is where they are. That will take care of itself. That has that feeling to me. That is an O.K. kind of longing to fall into. To conjure now and then.

The thematic structure illustrated in Figure 1 is meant to present a schematic account of longing. Thus, it is unable to convey the poignancy or depth of experience provided by more immediate descriptions of the phenomenon. Schematic accounts, however, provide certain advantages: if the thematic structure is used as a kind of map it helps identify and describe important facets of longing. Such an understanding should also serve to facilitate more sensitive and immediate encounters with the experience. The reader is invited to move back and forth between this schematic account of longing and the ideographic descriptions presented in Appendixes D and E. If we forget, however, Korzybski's caution that "the map is not the territory, and the name is not the thing named" a path to greater understanding will be lost (Bateson, p.30, 1979/1988).

The Theme of Reaching For

This theme describes the experience of feeling pulled by something outside of oneself, while simultaneously extending oneself towards that something. This process is characterized by a sense of expectation and promise. Participants felt excited about what they might discover or become. The following descriptions provide examples of this theme:

> (#7) I can almost feel myself spatially redirecting. It's hard to describe. I feel like how I think a plant must feel when it directs itself toward the light. It's not something I do with my outside body. It's something I feel happening inside of myself. Almost like some kind of internal compass is swinging to hit north. It didn't know where north was and now it does and goes, "Oh. Over there."

> (#9) We went out into this field late at night. We looked up at the stars. I had never ever seen so many stars in my life. There was a way in which that too is longing. Again there is a **reaching for.** I want to go up...and get to that star. I would want to get to that place.

> (#11) I feel with writing, with poetry, which is what I write, there is a tremendous longing for something I might call the transcendent experience. The transcendent moment. And there is a **reach toward** that. Not in every poem but in plenty of them. And I've had that experience of trying to **reach** for that. And sometimes maybe achieving that but not necessarily getting

there. Which is OK. Sometimes it doesn't quite matter if you get there. I mean perhaps you've gone quite a distance.

Participant experiences of reaching often were accompanied by bodily sensations, particularly in their torsos and arms.

(#6) There was a physical feeling. It is a physical feeling...I just really had a lot of feeling in my arms. Its almost like a...I would find myself thinking about prospective children a lot. Little 3 year olds. Lots of little 2 and 3 and 4 year olds. Sometimes babies. Really having this feeling of wanting to hold one. More with babies. It's up here. It's in this part of me where I feel it. I guess that is the part of you that is most in contact with them is just up to here and that is where I would experience it. The feeling of **stretching out towards something.**

(#7) I can feel it right around my solar plexus. The only way I can describe it is like a gasp. Where you are taking in something...air. Taking something in and filling myself. I can feel a sense of warmth around my solar plexus and a sense of feeling more open. Then there is a feeling of almost reaching towards something. This kind of yearning, reaching feeling.

(#11) It's as if you've reached the top of your hill. And you can view something. You have some kind of clear view you didn't have before. There is sometimes even a physically jolting sensation of having a change occur.

The Theme of Desired Object

This theme describes the phenomenon, object or event for which participants reached or toward which they were drawn. Encounters with the object were expected to have important consequences; specifically, participants anticipated experiencing a transformation. Such desired experiences ranged from ones that might help participants feel better about themselves to others that might change them in larger ways. In the former case, participants often described a desire to connect with others and to be valued by them.

> (#2) I think I really wanted recognition from the people I had grown up with. I think part of what it would have meant to have succeeded at that would be to...just show them that I could do it.

In the latter case, participants frequently hoped to join completely with the objects longed for, and to become a part of them.

> (#7) Its what I feel when I'm with the earth in a certain way. So I want to be part of it. I don't want to be separate from it anymore. There is this sense of just absolute connection with it. Just this sense that if I just knew how to do it, it would just coalesce into one thing. I would see how its all put together.

Often participants' expectations moved back and forth between these polarities: that is, a participant's experience or expectation of feeling better about him or herself produced hopes for or expectations of

becoming part of something larger than him or herself. In turn, this experience, or at least an intimation of achieving it, became figural in the participant's ongoing, "every day" sense of themselves. For instance, several participants characterized themselves as persons who had access to or experience with alternate states of consciousness. Participants reported that these experiences made them feel special or unique. Thus, larger transformational experiences also contributed to participants' feelings of self-worth. These transformational opportunities usually emerged from participants' encounters with "alternate" or "transcendental" forces.

> (#7) That is what I mean about seeing the bones of the thing. Seeing the true of the thing. Seeing what is holding it all up. (I: Yea. The world behind the world feels different?) Ah-ha. It feels bigger (I: Yea.) for one thing. It feels...vast. It's strange to think of the bones of the thing as feeling vast but that is what it feels like to me. If you got underneath it, it would be bigger than the thing that it's holding up.

> (#11) There is a desire for alterity. Like an alternate state. An alternate space. Something beyond the ordinary. I suppose I experience that through poetry. With Rilke in particular, when I think that is going on with him he is high, he is elevated. He's not on the earth anymore. He is looking down on things. The point of view he writes from is one of elevation and it's not because he's in heaven. It's because he's not in his body. He's not in the world. He becomes like spirit or energy and he's looking down. He's boundless.

In general, participants described their desired objects and the experiences associated with them in idealized terms. For instance, their accounts included words like, "immortal and universal" (#1) "perfect, infinite, absolute, sacred, and spiritual" (#7), "magical" (#6, #7, #10), "transcendent" (#7, #8, #11) "unlimited and glorious" (#4) "ideal" (#1, #2, #5, and #9), "purity" (#8 and #9), and "complete" (#9).

> (#1) I guess I'll get into some metaphysical weirdness. I can almost see a golden aura and just see light radiating around her. Anyway, it just seems she radiates in some way.

> (#7) That (experience) put me in touch with a longing to transcend myself. [and later] To re-experience what that had felt like to be moving toward some other different way of being.

Participants reported experiencing the Desired Objects, and their accompanying feelings about them, as contributing "something more" to their lives, or as making up for "a feeling of being less than," which the object was thought to address. For example, in desiring "something more," participants often described striving to develop themselves and their relationships with others and the world. In making up for feeling less than, they specified a set of needs without which they felt they would be incomplete. Participant descriptions alternated between these two different ways of construing their relationship with their desired objects as well as between the types of objects they reported desiring.

The following excerpts provide examples in which participants' longed "to have more":

> (#4) I feel that Brazilians have a warmth that I haven't seen in other cultures. Brazilians I feel are a very sensitive, warm, dynamic, creative independent. They are a very bold people. Very big. So I think a lot of the longing is for that. They love music. Wherever there are three Brazilians there is music.

> (#10) My longing has been very tied up with Spanish. Longing for the Spanish language. Speaking another language transforms you, you have access to different kinds of emotions. Your gestures, my gestures change. My being in the world, there is an ontological shift with being in a different language. So for me language is essential to transformation. That had a lot to do with the longing.

> (#10) It's a certain type of being in the world that is about being able to be sensitive to experience and being able to immediately reflect on that experience. It's opening to the world at the same time that you're open, you're open enough that you can respond to it! I guess assimilation isn't the right word. Its not about controlling. It's not about taking it in. It's about feeling yourself contingent or connected in that something happens and you respond.

The following excerpts provided examples of "making up for less":

> (#3) What it engendered in me was always a longing for acceptance. Consequently, I always managed to figure out a way to do the things that people would accept from me.

> (#5) Once again it comes back to...filling some space but it's a sense of someone who accepts, takes care of you. I think I had a lot of longing for that. My folks were pretty stern, I think that was a lot of it. So when you have this ideal person...that just sort of takes care of it all. And anything you do and say is fine. No matter what, everything is all cushy, and loving and wonderful.

The hope of becoming hugely successful or famous often was related to the need to make up for less as illustrated by the following excerpts:

> (#2) I had these ideas of megalomania...of being super successful as a farmer. [and later] For awhile there I was reading a lot of books that had to do with usually poor kids who as businessmen or financiers achieved great wealth and success. That fit into that kind of fantasy.

> (#4) I guess I always thought that it's just all there and it will be discovered and then it will just be kind of effortless.
> I: Kind of like you have a fate or some sort of destiny?
> P: A glorious fate. And that I don't have to do a lot. Its just going to come to me.

The Theme of Barrier

This theme describes participants' encounters with obstacles or limits that prevented them from reaching the objects of their longing. Participants typically felt thwarted by some characteristic of the object or experience for which they longed.

> (#1) For the last few years it seems like no matter what I ask for, no matter what I offer it's just, "No, no, no." So that is where the doubts have started to come in.

> (#3) You know I have this very comfortable loving relationship now but still at night I'll dream about the other relationship... The dream always runs that my first husband and I are off on vacation somewhere and he forgets to give me our room number and **I can't find him.** I go looking through the hotel and I know that I have to be there at a certain time or he is going to leave. And I don't know where he is and I can't find him. It's a recurring thing.

Some participants also felt limited by some condition, liability, or fault within themselves. In this case, they reported experiencing a kind of personal Angst that included feelings of guilt and remorse.

> (#3) Being rejected meant that I had done something wrong. I would try to figure out another way to approach it or I would try to ask him, "What did I do wrong?" I would feel very insecure and just in agony. (I: Yeah.) It was pure and utter agony to think that a thing could be more important than a person. I kept

thinking, "It must be that I have done something or that I am just so horrible that he chooses a thing over me."

(#7) There is always the sense...a bubbling up sense of almost being able to touch just infinite possibility. If you could find the key to it. If you just could have enough faith in yourself or the experience that you could transcend it all and could touch something different. You could go someplace different. You could find out what it is. But it never happens. So there is always this ache again of, "There it went again. I didn't have enough faith. Or this wasn't the right time. I wasn't ready or whatever." **Often it feel like a personal failing that I didn't believe in it enough and maybe that is why it never happens.**

(#8) I think it makes it much more difficult to accept knowing that I have culpability in my own limitations. [and later] I guess the analogy again would be if someone had had some kind of fault or contributed to the death of a loved one. Or a loved dog. (I: So not only do you have the loss...) Guilt. **I have the burden of guilt.** The burden of guilt can be really haunting because... like all careless things we do, a simple moment of clear analysis could have averted the tragedy. I don't feel maudlin when I refer to this as a tragedy. I mean it would be one thing if I could produce other art and then not think about mandolin playing. The guilt is a huge part of it.

Some participants also reported intentionally imposing limits on or barriers between themselves and the people or experiences for which they longed. For instance, they described making "conscious efforts" to turn away from or terminate their longing. This was

usually done to avoid an experience of rejection or to safeguard important relationships with others.

> (#6) It took a lot of conscious effort to leave him alone and get him to leave me alone. To leave each other alone. To work so hard not to do something that you really want to do. This is one of the things that makes being a grown-up a bad thing. A hard thing. Because you have to make decisions not on the basis of "I want." Or at least not on the basis of "I want," alone. You have to take other people into account. And whether or not this is an honorable thing. And whether or not, a lot of different things you have to take into account. Could I live with myself if I had this thing that I want. That is what being an adult means to me. I just can't want. [and later] My wanting is just one consideration among many. And longing has to do with dismantling that want when other considerations outweigh it.

Finally, several participants described occasions in which longing had become unduly painful or damaging. They reported experiencing it as having disrupted their lives and/or as having produced experiences of physical or psychological breakdown.

> (#2) One of the strange things of that particular fantasy. In a sense I acted upon it as an adult. I think that is an indication of how strong that longing was. Of course it was a disaster. [and later] At the time I had left there after having finished farming a lot of people thought that I was literally crazy. Somebody that belonged in an institution. I had been behaving somewhat peculiarly. You watch your life go down the drain, it's hard not to react. I went through some manic-depressive episodes at that

time. The ones that got me the reputation were the manic ones. The times I would think, "I can work all of this out." The only time I have been in a hospital in my life was during that time for one night. What happened was I collapsed from exhaustion trying to make it work.

Participants attempted to disrupt their longing, sometimes by reminding themselves of its dangers;

(#6) It took everything in my power just to make a little dent in it. To stop the imagining. To stop the imagining. To stop the wanting. To stop the concentrating. To stop the awareness. It wasn't playful anymore. It was overpowering. I was almost not equal to the task. I could have fallen into that longing and stayed there and not gone on with my life.

In disrupting their longing, participants appeared temporarily to sever the dialectical relationship between the "As Is" and "As If" modes of consciousness by focusing primarily on "As Is" experiences.

(#4) I just knew that it would be pathological for me now that I know this to be the case to even spend one more second thinking that all that went before means that. Because all that went before was his pathology in having to acquire. His Napoleonic thing that ended up making me part of his territory.

(#6) I start the dismantling process before it can ever begin. I start talking myself out of it. I really take a lot of steps now to tell myself that the real man is somebody else. I don't know how he

> feels about me but I talk myself out of him feeling anything similar for me. I really try to dismantle the longing.

In other cases, participants worked through personal issues that were related to longing, and found their experience of it transformed by those actions.

> (#5) I went through, when I was 28, a pretty serious illness... I had tumors. I had all these thing. I think it was my body's last resort at flagging my attention. That is how I look at it. You are working really hard. You're in a relationship you're not really satisfied with. I had a lot of sense of longing. [and later] That is when I started going, "OK, I have to take the first step. You know, it's me. I'm the only one who can really change this. I guess that is when it decreased or I began to look at longing not as an amorphous thing, not as an opponent but more as something that is a part of me and probably a part of everybody and it, it was something that could be worked with.

The Theme of Bittersweet Feelings

This theme illustrates the affective dimension of longing and also provides a description of the entire experience in a nutshell: that is, participants described longing as a hyphenated experience — an amalgam of two otherwise disparate emotional experiences. As one participant noted, it combines feelings of absence or loss with feelings of satisfaction, love and/or completion. This experiential

fusion creates a unique state of consciousness — one characterized by emotional depth and poignancy.

> (#6) There is a sadness in there that wanting doesn't have. Wanting is "go get it." But longing has some ache to it.

> (#4) When they were playing that song I really was on the brink of weeping. [and later] I've met people from all over the world and I've lived all over the world and I have never seen this sort of phenomena about one's home, one's homeland that Brazilians feel about Brazil. I mean when we are there we talk so horribly about Brazil. We say how horrible it is, how terrible. Everything is wrong. Its a big mess. Which is all true. But when you take a Brazilian away from Brazil they will have this terrible *"saudades."*

As an integrated experience, longing creates conditions for its own fulfillment. It is at once a desire to transcend limits or barriers and a transcendence of them. As dreamers do, those who long dispense with the logical principle of non-contradiction in favor of a more paradoxical mode of experience. In this state of consciousness, individuals reported being able to unite mutually contradictory phenomena such as the experience of pleasure and pain, discovery and loss, past and future. These combinations were experienced as creating a world for the person who longs that is as resonant as it is painful. Some individuals chose the experience of longing itself as the object of their desire — a state which is enjoyed even as it is also endured. One may develop, as it were, a taste for the bittersweet.

(#6) At the same time it was painful there was something satisfying about it.

(#11) So I had these two oppositional things at once. I could feel the poignancy of it, for lack of a better word. And perhaps not unlike longing, it was bittersweet. I wanted it and I had some of it but I didn't have all I wanted. I wanted more.

Bittersweet feelings, however, were not always reported as having been evenly experienced in the state of longing. A person may be more, or solely, aware of the bitter savor of longing, or of the sweet, and only later recognize its complimentary aspect.

Sweet: The sweet sense of longing was described as comprised of either the expectation of experiencing the fulfillment of one's longing, or as a temporary sense of doing so. In practice, these experiences frequently overlapped with one another. Participants reported that expectant feelings are themselves rewarding. As such, they were described as representing a kind of preview or taste of what was to come. On the other hand, the experience of fulfillment often inspired further expectation. Both kinds of experience were characterized by a feeling of vitality and excitement.

(#1) That particular instance was a real exhilarating time. It was a rush in my head. [and later] If I had more time to think I probably would have let my doubts override my desire. So I had

to act quickly. In those few seconds from the door to the phone I had this real exhilarating rush.

(#4) Whenever I go to Brazil. You know you would be on the airplane, Pan Am or whatever and then get on "Vardi" which is a Brazilian airline, the energy just (participant slaps her hand) picks right up. You can just feel it in the air. Its really dynamic. People are talking. It's just really natural. [and later] There is just a natural interchange. It's natural for people to just start talking and have a reaction to things. In Brazil if you are having discussions and are politely listening to someone this is rude because you should be interrupting them (laughter) because what you are saying is triggering thoughts. If you are just politely listening until they are done they are going to think you are just a very rude person. There is just this very kinetic, logarithmic thing going on! So the moment you get into a Vardi airplane you already feel, boom, more alive just stepping into the airplane.

(#7) My heart starts beating faster. My palms start getting a little sweaty. I think my breathing gets kind of shallow. There is just this real excitement and a little bit of awe. I feel really happy.

Longing is also experienced as a deeply comfortable and soothing phenomena — one characterized by sensual properties.

(#4) I think the dream with Brazil is to be surrounded by a very, very fun, lively, supportive, and intriguing community of friends and family and then all the smells and aromas. The whole fabric of being in Brazil. Its very luscious.

(#9) It's a sense of feeling at home. I think the landscape or environment really represents home. At least for me. I have an image of a place in which I really feel comfortable [and later] But there is just a kind of a feeling of warmth and coziness. I usually imagine the picture somewhat in the rain. It's wet and kind of gray. I have this experience of feeling "Oh." I am just all wrapped up in warmth and so on.

Bitter: The bitter aspect of longing was related to the pain they experienced when they felt barred from what they desired. Such pain may be experienced as a threat to the person's feeling of safety and well-being and, in several cases, participants reported attempting to stop their longing to avoid this threat.

(#1) The longing to act will come up and I'll just put a stop to it immediately. I'll be able to see the outcome before it happens, know that she is going to say no and I'll be aware of having put her in an awkward position.

(#6) I don't know if I could make it through a second time. I don't know if I could. It was one of the most painful things of my life. And it took so many years. I remember at one point thinking, "If I had any idea how long this was going to take to get over.

In addition, the expectation of getting what one longs for is also frightening.

(#7) **It's scary.** What if it sucked what you saw? What if it was too overwhelming? What if you went mad from it? Any time you're entering that space where everything is unknown, it's a little scary. So along with the excitement there is also always just a little bit of, "Dear God. What if it does work this time? What am I going to do then?" (I: Holy shit!) "Shit! Literally, holy shit!" I guess I felt that a lot when I was working on myself too. It was a different way of seeing. It was a seeing inside as opposed to seeing outside. But it still felt scary. What if you were to get under there and you didn't like the bones of it? What if you were to get under there and you were to find out it was something you couldn't tolerate? That would be scary.

(#11) I mean I would love, actually, to be swept away like that. That would be great. (But) there is a fear. There is a certain fear. I wouldn't want to have to stay. Well, this is a difficult thing. There is an attraction and there is a lot of fear...to be taken to that kind of a place.

One participant explained that if she got what she longed for she would also risk losing herself as she was. She would have what she wanted but she would not be the same person who had wanted it. By contrast, her longing allowed her to imagine having the thing she desired, to enjoy that experience, without having to face the consequence of actually having it.

The Experience of As Is/As If

The major ground against which longing is experienced was described as involving a dialectical relationship between "As If" and "As Is" modes of consciousness. "As If" experiences were described as based upon the experience of others and the world as participants imagined them to be. They referred to these states as "dreams," "fantasies," or "ideals." These experiences often embodied hopes for the future and were influenced by lived (As Is) and/or imagined (As If) experiences from the past.

> (#9) It's a part of my dream. It's a part of how I imagine myself. Oddly enough, longing is a past. It's also a future. It's something created out of my past. It's a wish for a past experience and yet it is also a push towards the future. It's as if somehow the longing is a meeting of the future and the past. Because I am projecting out from past experiences and creating an image. In that sense it creates a kind of a circle.

> (#10) I felt that I left it (Peru) incomplete and that I needed to go back and know more. There was a sense that I left when things were beginning to get interesting. I left before I even knew anything. [and later] It made me decide, "OK, I want to invest a lot of time in getting to know this place intensely."

> (#6) Those potentialities becoming actualities is beautiful in itself and wonderful. But there is a little piece of me that thinks, "I want to do the process (parenting) all over again. I just truly want to do it again!"

By contrast, "As Is" states of consciousness were described as emerging from participants' experience of "the real world." This world and the objects in it, were regarded as dense and unyielding. Participants described feeling bound by "As Is" demands, and noted that every decision made in this state introduced a new set of constraints. In this regard one participant commented, "That is what being an adult means to me."

Participants' descriptions of longing included comparisons between "As Is" and "As If" modes of experiences.

> (#7) Most of the time I'm perfectly satisfied with what this world has! Its just that I can't make sense of some of the feelings I have based on that. That alone. It just doesn't feel like enough. [and later] I think I've always felt this way. I know I've always felt this way. 'Cause I know that I used to run out in the front yard when I was little early, early in the morning to see if I could catch the fairies before they went back underneath the toadstools. 'Cause my mom had me firmly convinced that they were living under there.

Participants often described feeling torn by the differences they encountered in these two experiential states. For instance, they felt that they should find or achieve what they longed for in the "As Is" world while recognizing the improbability of doing so:

(#4) I remember when I saw Madonna's Truth or Dare I got so depressed because I thought. **"Damn it. Damn it! I should be living a life like that!"** Because I grew up with that idea that I was supposed to be really big...(and) its passing me by.

At other times, participants suggested that they should be more realistic and honest about their own limits.

(#10) I feel like I've spent a lot of time and I've learned a lot of things but what have I produced out of them? So perhaps I've lived off a certain kind of prestige that I had. Not only a prestige but a kind of aura that has accrued from having gone places. But I almost find from my own experiences that sometimes those things are way too short to make something out of them. "(Name of the participant) tell us about your trip to Peru?" Well, what do I have to say. Its a **reach** to find anything that would be interesting to anyone.

Often times participants found that the life opportunities provided by the world of "As Is" could be more meaningful and rewarding than they had imagined. They no longer felt that they needed what they had longed for (or needed it in the way they had thought) in order to be happy or fulfilled.

(#2) I thought it would be a huge emotional upheaval for me to let go of the little bit of land that I still had and my parents house. But once I had made up my mind to cut those ties then cutting them was fairly easy. And I have not looked back. I have never

once thought, "Well maybe I shouldn't have done that." No, I didn't. The only regret if anything about that is that I should have done it 20 years sooner. My life has been enormously better since then.

(#4) It probably leaves me with, which is good, with myself. Whatever my life is going to be I have to create it from the bottom up... and not skip steps. That is what these men have afforded me. To be able to go "pshew." I went from never having planted anything to a 200-acre farm. And this is my first garden. So its kind of like starting right where you are at and building on that... It's been quite a journey to get here.

(#5) It's part of a course that runs along with you or I'm working beside of. It's like over to my left is this path of longing. Yes, I do want a partner and someone to grow with in life and have that. But it's not overwhelming me, it is moving beside me. So I go, "Well look, in the mean time I will continue to work on me so that if this situation happens..." So it becomes almost a partner... in itself! I never thought of it like that. (I: How interesting!) Its not overwhelming. It's not something against me. It's part of what I feel. It's part of my hopes. I'm not sitting underneath it, cowering and immobile. I keep moving. Therefore it moves along and shifts and changes. Shifts like a stream or current. My longing shifts and changes.

The differences between As Is/As If modes of consciousness also was clearly evident in the way in which participants described experiences of their body, time, world, and other people. Each of these domains of human experience (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997) was described from the perspective of "As Is" and "As If"

states of consciousness, and narrative accounts of longing often were characterized by an oscillation between modes. This oscillation is evident even in those excerpts presented to illustrate one or the other state of consciousness.

"As Is"

Participants' descriptions of "As Is" experiences emphasized constraints encountered in each experiential domain. In the "As Is" mode, participants reported feeling limited or even trapped within their own bodies. Participants described their bodies as separating them from experiences they desperately needed or desired. They reported experiencing a sense of disappointment and frustration that often led to feelings of hopelessness and despair. The following quotes capture the "As Is" ground of body in participants' accounts of longing:

> (#2) I felt very weak and very incompetent. In my situation I think a lot of kids feel, because they are weak physically. I think that is fairly universal among small children.
>
> (#5) I really hit rock bottom and said, "OK, you'll be dead by the time you're 30 if things don't start to change."
>
> (#7) I know there are times when I'm with my husband, particularly times when we are just holding each other I wish I could just crawl into his skin. That I just can't get close enough...

> There is some sense of orienting myself to something in him that is mysterious. That our skins get in the way of.

> (#8) If you take tendenitous far enough you create scar tissue. I am hearing all these metaphors for longing, aching, scar tissue. (I: Yea.) You create scar tissue and it's irreparable. There might be some really expensive hand surgery that you could have performed that would extend the tendons back. But scar tissue is never as long as the original tissue which explains why I still have aching to this day. Well, I have tried everything. I have had physical therapy. I have had alternative medicine remedies. Organic herbs. Yoga. Everything. I have never fully excluded the possibility of those remedies enabling me to play again but they just never have.

In at least one case, a participant also described feeling rejected and stigmatized because of his body:

> (#1) I guess I should tell the tape that I am handicapped, I walk funny, so most women just don't really want anything to do with me on a romantic level. In that sense there is a particular longing that has just always been there for me.

With respect to the ground of Time, participants described feeling the objects they desired were out of reach because they existed as a part of the past rather than in the present. Participants often reported feeling a sense of sadness or regret that these experiences were now lost to them. The following quotes describe the "As Is"

mode in accounts of longing rendered by the present group of participants.

> (#6) There is a part of me that says, "Get real kid." I don't honestly think I will get pregnant and have another baby that way. If I was going to do that last year, for some reason in my mind with the birthday coming up it feels as if the decision needs to have been made. I think that I won't do that anymore. I think that would be dangerous and not a good way to go about it.
>
> (#9) I suspect if I went back and replayed (a woman) replayed (a city) or replayed (a college) I would have a similar sort of experience. That of never being quite complete. I think that is also part of longing. It's sort of how I imagine my past. How I imagine a previous experience. It can never be real. It can never be what it is. It would be something else. Like projection. (I: The longing is to have these things again and to have the sense that even to the extent that you do return you have the sense that it can't ever really be picked back up or taken back in, in the way that it was.) Yeah. It's kind of like Thomas Wolfe. Not that I've ever read the book. You can't go home again. That is a kind of longing.
>
> (#10) I guess I say that because longing is about longing for experience in my own case. Generally, a place and time that is elsewhere.

Occasionally, participants also reported that events related to "As Is" modes of experiencing time prompted them to make important changes in their lives:

(#5) I really hit rock bottom and said, "OK, you'll be dead by the time you're 30 if things don't start to change... [and later] So I began to make these connections and that just led on to this big, huge path.

Participants' descriptions of experiences in the "As Is" mode emphasized the absence in the world of the things for which they longed. They described desiring experiences which were different from or beyond what the world could provide:

(#4) Even when I went back at 23...to make a movie...that was another kind of out of reality experience because it wasn't like I was part of the fabric of Brazilian culture. I was there five months making this movie. So I...wasn't in the day-to-day rigmarole of Brazilian life. (I was) traveling all over the country. So I think I have always been afraid of what it would be like and kind of losing the mythology perhaps, of how wonderful Brazil is... If I would go back there and just live there and do the day to day...

(#9) When I'm not in New York I always imagine New York as a slightly different place than it actually is. I was in the shower this morning. I was thinking about New York and I was thinking about a dream I have always had. It's a kind of a longing for a shower all done in glass bricks. I saw myself being in that place. Being in a physical space where I looked out over the city or a kind of an urban environment. That is an image that comes back to me a lot. Being behind glass looking out over the panorama of a city. I've never had that experience but it is an experience that kind of comes back to me. It has a representation of kind of an

ideal of urban life... I think there is a way that I'll never get that. I never get that image.

Several participants also reported that cultural and/or political barriers prevented them from realizing their longings:

(#11) I think it was a desire to have access to a sort of interior richness. I literally wanted to be inside the interior. But I wanted to be inside the culture which I loved and was all around me but I couldn't penetrate. I couldn't really get into because you have so many constant barriers. Besides language there is custom, there is familiarity, everything. You might have a word right but you might not have your accent right and therefore someone might not understand you. You realize how foreign you are at all times. You constantly have that put back on you even if you are able to forget it. Therefore, you can't really forget it, I think. And you move...I feel when you're in Europe...this was most strongly my experience the first time I went when I was 20 years old...you almost move in a bubble of sorts that keeps you very isolated.

(#10) It's fascinating when I've been able to think about it critically now because we are talking about a U.S. occupation force. The reason my Dad was in the military stationed there was because the US occupied Japan following W.W.II. And I could not be more foreign. Foreign in the worst kind of way. And being from Japan. So it's a place that I cannot go back to. Because in some sense I didn't belong there in the first place... What kind of claim do I have to my own experience. It's not at all obvious. It's not a given.

With respect to experiences of other people in the "As Is" mode, participants reported finding that others often were not what they were imagined to be. Although the following quotes are meant to describe participants experiences of other people in the As Is mode, the "As If" mode also is often evident:

> (#1) My theory, I don't know if it's crazy but I think its true, that there are two people there. There is one who is on the clock. She is the professional bartender and then the other one is the real one. Except for occasionally asking her out for dinner or something like that I never have tried to make a connection to the real one. I have never tried to find out if the real one would like me and have the same kind of relationship with me as the professional one does on the clock. So, in one sense my ongoing longing is simply for the on the clock person.

> (#5) (I: You mentioned before that you had... maybe you said it in the context of being a child but that this idea of a prince in the shining armor motif...) Yeah. Thanks for the fairytales mom. [and later] So when you have this ideal person. Bless their heart, they aren't out there. I don't think anybody could be all that. That just sort of takes care of it all. And anything you do and say is fine. No matter what everything is all cushy, and loving and wonderful.

> (#6) I think about him a lot. I talk to him inside of my head. When I notice myself do that...I really take a lot more steps now to tell myself that the real man is somebody else.

In making this discovery they often described feeling disappointed and let down.

> (#4) It was kind of the dream life was being presented... According to what was being expressed about marriage and the whole thing there would be no end to that because that was what we were creating together. When it became obvious to me that that wasn't really...that that was an illusion. That basically that this person had a pattern of conquest and then disinterest. Then I found out that that was the history... which I could play by just pulling back myself and then the interest would be there again. But I didn't want to live a life like that. I think when I made that realization and decided to step out of that whole scene both personally and professionally I went through a lot of letting go. Letting go of the dreams that had been generated about what my life would look like. So, it was a lot of longing.

> (#4) So it was letting go of the Cinderella thing too because this was the knight in shining armor discovering me and taking me off to this wonderful new life. I think for me it's the last round of the Cinderella complex.

"As If"

In their descriptions of "As If" experiences, participants emphasized the sense of freedom or possibility they felt in each experiential domain. When they described the ground of body in the "As If" mode, they reported experiencing themselves as becoming more vibrant and alive or as having an expectation of becoming healthier

and more vital in the future. The following quotes describe the "As If" examples of Body:

> (#2) I was the youngest of six children so everybody I associated with was older and they were able to do things that I wasn't able to do. I remember having these intense feelings that I just couldn't wait to be more mature and more, competence was really the thing that I was longing for at that point. (Imaginary friend) could do all these things that I couldn't do. (Imaginary friend) could plow and saddle a horse. All of these kinds of competencies. As I said, I see that as a manifestation of that longing to be competent and be able to do the things that my brothers could do. That sense of wanting to do so badly the things that my brothers and father could do. And the other people around.

> (#4) As a little girl I always thought that I was a boy. I played with the boys and just hated the girls. (The boys) played Batman and Robin, they played cowboys and indians, they climbed trees and rode mini-bikes.

> (#8) Beginning when I was 28 I have had a long period of longing for health. Specifically, enabling health.

> (#11) There is some sort of energy that comes through my body which is very strong. It often will come after being, I don't want to say in a trance-like state, but a deep state of thinking. (I: Right.) Perhaps, another distinction. It is not subtle. It is active. Very active. In a way that I don't think of usually as active. I feel like there is some kind of awakening moment. A clarion call.

In the "As If" mode of experiencing time, participants' reported experiencing themselves, others, or aspects of the world in different and unique ways. They described feeling that impossible or unreachable experiences for which they longed became possible:

> (#1) Part of it is the old idea that through art or poetry or longing you achieve some kind of immortality.

> (#4) My aunts say that my mother is more Brazilian than a Brazilian because she has taken like a time capsule from when she was a child and carried it. Like that is how Brazil still is. So I think that in a way I've sort of done the same thing.

> (#7) I think it (longing) has gotten even stronger for me after my Mom died. I think it would be very comforting for me to think that she is part of that somehow. That she is part of what I feel little glimmers of now and then. [and later] Thinking that maybe time has a different meaning in this other sphere. Time and space and just everything feels different.

At times participants described imagining the occurrence of something in the future which seemed almost inconceivable to them in the present:

> (#6) The first day I had him...it was just such an unbelievable experience. I remember then thinking, "Someday he will be a teenager. He will be grown-up. Oh, I wonder what he will be like?" There is just so much possibility and so much wondering, and so much mystery and its all very exciting to me.

In the "As If" mode of experiencing World, participants reported encountering a world that was different from the one they usually experienced — one characterized by a sense of mystery and/or magic. They described feeling an intense connection to the world and a sense of freedom from constraint. The following quotes capture the "As If" mode of experiencing World in participant accounts of longing:

> (#7) As the moon got over the horizon there was this path of moonlight on the water. It went from the very edge of the seashore all the way up into the distance so that it looked like it was touching the moon. So I was sitting there looking at this and I said, "God, doesn't it look like you could just walk on it. If you just had enough faith you could put your foot on it and walk... who knows where. To the moon. To some different place." I just remember feeling first of all this feeling of incredible excitement. Thinking the possibility that you could enter some sort of magical space and all of the normal rules of physics would just be gone. You could put your foot on this path of moonlight and walk someplace else. Someplace mysterious.

> (#9) A lot of people conceive of an urban environment as having a lot of barriers. They think of all these physical structures. For some reason I don't. I can take Big Bend on the one hand and the urban experience on the other hand and they are both longing for me. They are both freedom from barriers... And it's interesting too that Big Bend is an actual place and the initial longing is sort of a collage of different kinds of experiences. As I say, I have a pull to both of these kinds of things because they represent wholeness.

(#11) Rilke was swept away to the other side, I think. Swept a good distance. And left there! Which is the genius of what he wrote! I would love, actually, to be swept away like that. That would be great...to be taken to that kind of a place. Yeah, if I were offered that in my life, like Rilke was, I would take it.

In the "As If" mode of experiencing other people, participants reported either encountering, or anticipating that they would encounter, people with whom they would have special relationships. These others were often characterized as possessing ideal or magical qualities:

(#3) I grew up on fairy tales of where the knight in shining armor comes and saves the princess and they lived happily ever after. I was very wrapped up in fantasy.

(#6) I would find myself thinking about prospective children a lot. Little three year olds. Lots of little two and three and four year olds. Sometimes babies. It's like I see them. It's like I see their faces in certain ways. The way they look up at you when they are asking you something. They are doing something and they look and check back with you when you're their mother to see you seeing them. I would just be imagining this. It would be the feeling. It would be like it was very real to me.

(#9) I will always have this image. She was about so high. She was slightly above my shoulders. I kind of see her shoulders in front of me. She had this long blonde hair that is two, two and a half feet long. I used to sit there with a hair brush and go through it and through it and through it. It was sort of golden and had this great coloring. It's odd because that is not explicitly

sexual but there is just a sense of the texture of her hair. Just the feel of the brush or comb as it was going through her hair... Just the subtlety of the sensualness as it was going through her hair... Somehow that is longing. I don't long for her body. I long for that. For that experience of pulling the comb through her hair.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Longing is an enigmatic and paradoxical phenomena — one which eludes categorization and sidesteps scrutiny. When grasped tightly it changes its form and slips away. For instance: If longing is a melancholic defense against life as some accounts claim (Yalom, 1980; Werman, 1977), how do we understand its vitalistic and life-affirming aspects (Deleuze, 1977/1983; Eigen, 1981)? If it is an expression of vigor and fullness, then what of its darkness and grief? In longing, each conceptual account is offset by an opposing one so that eventually "what is not *A*" does in fact appear "to be *A*." Perhaps Aristotelian logic fails here because longing adheres to a different order; one which provides illumination not in the clearness of day but in those "dark regions" of night where, as Hegel reports, "nothing is revealed to be fixed, definite or certain" (quoted in Spencer, 1996, p. 66).

More than once these ambiguities reminded me of a fable I was told as a child — the tale of "The Blind Men and the Elephant." The American poet, John Saxe (1865), tells us that these were not simple fools but scholarly ones, academics in their day: "It was six men of Idostan/To learning much inclined, Who went to see the Elephant

(though all of them were blind), that each by observation/ Might satisfy his mind" (p. 1959). Each of the men examined a separate part of the elephant — the side, tusk, trunk, knee, leg, or tail — and made a different and equally absurd determination. Saxe concludes his version of the story, "And so these men of Indostan/ Disputed loud and long,/ Each in his own opinion/ Exceeding stiff and strong,/ Though each was partly in the right,/ And all were in the wrong" (p. 64).

This account gives pause if taken seriously: How often have we also grasped a part and taken it for the whole? How complete is our knowledge even in our areas of nominal specialization? The story of the blind men and the elephant dramatizes the consequences of intellectual factionalism and suggests another route to knowledge — one which prizes careful attention, communication, and collaborative efforts between peers.

The fable of the elephant, however, is more critical of the scholars of its day than I mean to be of those who discuss longing. Although conceptual accounts highlight different aspects of the phenomena , most offer meaningful insights. These descriptions are delimited by the assumptions that often undergird them. For instance, most psychological accounts (Freud, 1920; Lacan, 1977; Winnicott, 1962; Klein, 1940; Fromm, 1956; Bowlby, 1961; Neuman, 1962; Werman, 1977; Jacobi, 1985; and Yalom, 1980) regard longing as a

determinant and/or effect of another psychological phenomena or condition. Thus, it is understood in relation to what it achieves or how it is produced rather than in terms of what it is. By structuring their accounts in terms of "linear temporal" patterns, traditional theories produce uni-dimensional, and contradictory descriptions of what appears to be a complexly organized phenomena. By contrast, phenomenological descriptions provided a dynamically rendered integration of these divergent experiential aspects of longing.

In the present study I have focused on the personal experience of longing rather than on its causation and function. A rich description of the phenomena emerged from a set of dialogic interviews about the topic. Participants described longing as a special state of consciousness characterized by paradox and movement. These paradoxical experiences were interrelated with a second major finding: For participants, longing both expressed and instantiated transformational aims. Individuals experienced a desire to change ontological states — to become other than who or what they were at that moment. In what follows, I will elaborate upon these two related findings and discuss their bearing upon a select number of philosophical and psychological accounts of longing.

A Special State of Consciousness

The results of this study suggest that longing is a special state of consciousness characterized by rapid fluctuations in the experiential field. In keeping with other descriptions of consciousness (Pollio, Henley, and Thompson, 1997), longing appears to be a fluid and dynamic interaction between focal and peripheral aspects of experience. In the language of Gestalt psychology, longing is structured by two inter-related sets of alternating figure/ground relationships. One figure/ground configuration occurs among the shifting set of interrelated themes — **Reaching For, Desired Object, Barrier, and Bittersweet Feeling.** In this configuration, each theme is framed or grounded by the other three. In turn, all four themes are framed by another context or ground — a multidimensional mode of awareness that is itself characterized by figure/ground reversals. This mode was described by participants as an **"As Is/As If"** state of consciousness.

These conjoint figure/ground oscillations form dynamic states of consciousness in which pleasurable feelings and painful sensations overlap to varying degrees. One may consider longing a single phenomenon which assumes multiple forms or a series of related but distinct experiences. To use a visual metaphor, each experiential state is suffused by a momentary after-image of the other. As one after-image begins to dissipate, an alteration in consciousness occurs

which reinstates the previous experiential mode and an opposing "after-image." In some instances (or cases) pleasurable or **"sweet"** components (or experiences) predominate, at other moments (or in other examples) pleasurable and painful sensations are of relatively equal magnitude and in still others painful or **"bitter"** feelings are most strongly felt.

Pleasurable aspects of longing accompany the experience of connection provided by **"As If"** states of consciousness whereas painful or **"bitter"** feelings emerge from **barrier** experiences encountered in **"As Is"** modes of awareness. Each feeling state contributes to the other, and the relatively constant interchange between them creates and perpetuates the experience of longing. As an enduring state of consciousness, longing includes and even feeds off this tension and ambiguity; that is, the state accommodates a broad range and mixture of experiences (**Bittersweet**). The person who longs is never fully satisfied but neither is he or she completely hopeless or utterly demoralized. The constant oscillation between contrary experiences creates a homeostasis or balance.

Transformation

Longing, however, is more than a compromise or accommodation of contrasts. It is a deeply felt emotional state that reflects the transformational aims and experiences of individuals. For instance,

participants believed that the objects they longed for would induce or facilitate important changes in their lives. They anticipated finding fulfillment or being realized through their encounters with significant others (a **Desired Object**). This hope emerged either out of a sense of dissatisfaction with their lives (**Barrier**), a desire to find greater fulfillment or a complex interaction between the two. In all cases, participants hoped to achieve a form of self realization by becoming different (in an "**As If**" state) from who they felt they now were (in an "**As Is**" mode of experience). In dialectical terms, participants construed **desired objects** as an authentic part of the self (at least potentially) whereas they regarded their own "identities" as alien. Alternations or transpositions between these forms of identification constituted an important part of the experiential gestalt of longing.

At times these transformational aims appeared to parallel or overlap the psychoanalytic description of the mourning process. Psychoanalytic accounts suggest experiences of longing may provide symbolic replacements or substitutes for lost or damaged object (Klein, 1940; Bowlby, 1961). Participants often described longing as a painful search, the resolution of which led to a transformation of identity. For instance, one participant reported,

> (#9) ...the images of longing that I'm pulling up. They are a way to complete my life. They are a way to make my life whole.

> Because there is a kind of grieving or mourning [and later] Its sort of love and loss put together.

This search was often initiated in creative modes of experience as Fairbairn (1938) and Segal (1952) outline, and in transcendental states as Aberbach (1987) reported. Participants hoped to recover or experienced recovering a lost or missing other through their artistic and mystical pursuits and thereby come to experience themselves differently as a consequence of these efforts. This finding is consistent with an intersubjective understanding of identity in which self and other are regarded as reciprocally interacting, co-constructed phenomena (Bowlby, 1961; Stolorow and Atwood, 1992).

Participants usually were aware of the symbolic rather than literal quality of this reparative process and often described their "lost objects" as illusory constructions of their own imaginations. That is, they were experienced as "lost" before they had ever been "found" or realized. In this sense, the lost "object" was conceived as a kind of potential of the individual — one which had been forgotten or suppressed — which now was re-imagined or re-experienced. In the words of one participant, this process "combined the memory of something past with the image of something hoped for in the future." Longing was the amalgam of these two aspects rather than a replacement of one by the other. In striving towards these

constructed phenomena this participant reported experiencing himself in new and creative ways. Another participant noted,

> (#10) The things that mean the most to me come from a space of longing. Longing enables me to move elsewhere. It motivates me. The trick is to take the leap without ever really believing you're going to get there. Valuing and prizing whatever the melancholic fixation is for its potential to transform. It's a trick. We are talking about a trick here. And yet it's sincere. The longing is absolutely sincere.

In these cases, participants experienced a sense of reward from the movement or change longing created in their lives. In failing to reach their imagined objects (**Barrier**), they were presented with new opportunities and discoveries that were not, nor could have been, anticipated at the outset. These experiences created an intensely felt and deeply resonant or **"bittersweet"** experiential state in participants and contributed to their feeling of being alive and to a sense that their lives were meaningful. In this way, the process of longing was also a realization of participants' transformational intentions.

> (#10) The desire to do comes very much from a space of longing for me. It comes from a dissatisfaction, out of a dissatisfaction in the here and now. It's completely tied up with melancholy. There is a darkness at times to that longing...but there is something special, too.

Philosophical Theory and Longing

Of the theoretical accounts reviewed in Chapter Two, those which concern seemingly paradoxical interrelationships provided perspectives which accorded best with these descriptions. That is, a number of philosophical theories are structurally consistent with the phenomena of longing and accommodate its paradoxical and transformational qualities on that basis. Although structural similarities exist among various philosophical theories of longing, significant differences also are evident. As such, it is important to realize that correspondences between my accounts and these theoretical characterizations do not provide validation of any theory's larger philosophical conceptions, or help to advance its claims over any other school of thought.

Hegel

Both Hegel's (1807/1964) account and the one developed in the present study depict longing (or desire) as a dialectical form and/or mode of consciousness. In this understanding, longing takes place on the basis of dynamic exchanges between aspects of its own state. In Hegelian terms, desire attempts to assimilate difference (or alterity) into itself in order to make consciousness an internally related self-identical phenomena. That is, consciousness or desire strives to become an organized whole or totality that it is already in its

dialectical form. Hegel described this ongoing transformational process as "turning substance into subject." This goal was described by a participant in the following way:

> (#7) There is this sense of almost being taken up by it. Just wanting to be a part of that. Wanting to be that power. Not even feel it, just be it. Wanting to be able to be a part of it. Be the storm. You know, be the ocean. Be the moon. Be (pause) everything.

Sartre

Sartre (1943/1956) describes longing or desire in terms similar to those used by Hegel: as partial and contingent, consciousness strives to achieve a complete synthesis with the world. Sartre regards this hope as an impossible project to be realized only as a kind of fiction or "vital lie." Thus, Hegel's dialectic is revisited in the interchange between states of non-identity (reality) and fictional "As If" constructions of identity. Such an interchange enabled Sartre to describe both depressive (**Bitter**) and vitalistic (**Sweet**) aspects of longing. Fictional, or "As If," states engendered experiences of vitality and meaning whereas feelings of alienation and angst accompanied experiences of non-identity in an **"As Is"** mode of consciousness. The following excerpt presents one participant's account of this conjunction of experiences in her own life:

(#36) Those were times when longing was not in my control... If I had known then what I know now, I could have dismantled it. I could have stopped it. That is where I say, "I'm not nearly as sorry as I should be." I'm so glad I had that experience the one time. I don't know if I could make it through a second time. I don't know if I could. It was one of the most painful things in my life.

Sartre's fictional, or "As If," subjectivity is clearly related to the aspect of consciousness I have also described as a kind of **"As If"** phenomena — one which undergirds many of the vital, satisfying or otherwise **"sweet"** aspects of longing described by participants in this study. An important difference between these views, however, must also be noted: Although **"As If"** experiences are commonly regarded as "fantasy," this does not make them any less "real" to the person than **"As Is"** forms of experience. As a monistic philosophy, phenomenology eschews Cartesian subject/object and fact/value distinctions. Knowledge (fact) and meaning (value) are regarded as inseparable aspects of human experience.

Psychological Theory and Longing

Although a number of psychoanalytic theories are constructed dialectically, they provide causal explanations for particular phenomena embedded within them. In this case the dialectical whole is subdivided into units, which are then hypothesized to

interact with each other in cause and effect sequences. For instance, psychological structure from a Kleinian point of view emerges from the dialectical relationship between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (Ogden, 1992). Each position represents a pole in constant dynamic relation with the other. Longing (or pining), however, is described in causal terms as a depressive response to paranoid-schizoid forms of destruction (Klein, 1940). In this understanding, longing reflects real (**As Is**) or fantasized (**As If**) attempts to repair and restore a love object that was damaged or destroyed by aggressive impulses.

A Kleinian understanding of longing could only emerge if her conception of longing was expanded to include the dynamic relationship between aggressive (paranoid-schizoid) and reparative (depressive) tendencies. In other words, a dialectically constructed psychological whole would have to be put back together again in the account of longing. The Kleinian understanding of creativity is described in such terms: Kleinian theorists (Fairbairn, 1938; and Segal, 1952) describe creativity as a dynamic synthesis of sadistic and reparative aims and the creative product as a symbol of both the destroyed and restored love object.

While longing includes an admixture of experiences, the aggressive or destructive qualities emphasized by Kleinian accounts of creativity were not described in participants' accounts of longing. For instance,

the following excerpt presents a participant's reparative account of longing without any suggestion of aggressive precipitant.

> (#7) I think it (longing) has gotten even stronger for me after my Mom died. I think it would be very comforting for me to think that she is part of that somehow. That she is part of what I feel little glimmers of now and then...thinking that maybe time has a different meaning in this other sphere. Time and space and just everything feels different.

Hence the results of this study do not support Klein's contention that aggression is at the heart of reparative experiences. Nor do they accord with Bowlby's (1961) view of mourning as a concomitant of "real" environmental losses because participants also described loss as a symbolic phenomena. The mourning process may be characterized instead as a complex interaction between symbolic and actual forms of loss and reparation. That is, the experience of mourning appears to be actively constructed from both "real" ("**As Is**") and "imagined" ("**As If**") life experiences. As noted above, this dialectic may provide powerful, resonant experiences and produce new opportunities for personal growth.

Hillman

Hillman's (1975/1992; 1989/1991) archetypal phenomenology is one of the few psychological theories to describe longing as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. For Hillman, all

psychological phenomena reflect archetypal sources that are constituted through dialectical relationships. This means that every archetype is inherently paradoxical and multivalent and that psychological accounts that emerge from them are also paradoxical and dialectically instantiated.

Hillman's phenomenology is derived from experiential referents provided by mythological texts. As a descriptive psychology, it provides an "experience near" account of longing that accords with the descriptions provided by the participants of this study. As with Hegelian and Sartrian accounts, longing is characterized as a transformational phenomenon instantiated by dialectical relationships between vital and melancholic aspects of experience. These qualities correspond with a mythological profile of heroic adventure and quest — one which includes the thrill of ascension, transgression and transcendence (**Sweet**) and the bitterness that accompanies human limitation and alienation. According to Hillman (1975), this dialectic perpetuates the experience of longing and concomitantly prolongs our experience of heroic adventure, which by definition has no end.

> (#9) We went out into this field late at night. We looked up at the stars. I had never ever seen so many stars in my life. There was a way in which that too is longing. Again there is a reaching for. I want to go. I mean I would never do it but I would sort of want to go up and get to that star. I would want to get to that place.

Postscript

Negotiating the interplay between varied and contradictory accounts of longing had a surprising effect on me: The experience of longing was enacted in my struggle to achieve an understanding of it. This suggests a parallel or even isomorphic relationship between the phenomenon and its study. In the thematic terms presented in Chapter Three, one reaches for a desired object (an understanding of longing) encounters a barrier (mutually exclusive accounts) and experiences a bittersweet feeling (the sense that one may understand longing in one way or in another but not necessarily in both or as a whole.)

The correspondence between the phenomenon of longing and its study also provided the rational for its investigation. Longing can never be fully understood or realized. Thus, a research study can never describe the entire experience of longing, only its pursuit or the journey made towards it. In fact, the German word for "experience" *Erfahrung*, contains the verb form, "to journey" *fahren* (Spencer, 1996). For phenomenologists — those for whom the description of experience is the object of investigation — this is a particularly important issue. Understanding and experience or in phenomenological terms, noesis (reflecting) and noema (the reflected upon), are ultimately, inextricably, related to each other.

The following excerpt from Anne Carson's Love, The Bittersweet (1986) poetically encapsulates this interrelation. In this account she describes a philosopher whose pursuit of knowledge is reconsidered as a love of pursuit. He is enthralled by the process of discovery that propels him forward rather than by a completed understanding or truth. The story suggests that the learning process is also a form of longing, perpetuated, as life is, by its own strivings. I believe this description provides a fitting conclusion to my inquiry into longing:

> Kafka's "The Top" is a story about a philosopher who spends his spare time around children so he can grab their tops in spin. To catch a top still spinning makes him happy for a moment in his belief "that the understanding of any detail, that of a spinning top for instance, was sufficient for the understanding of all things." Disgust follows delight almost at once and he throws down the top, walks away. Yet hope of understanding continues to fill him each time top-spinning preparations begin among the children: "as soon as the top began to spin and he was running breathlessly after it, the hope would turn to certainty but when he held the silly piece of wood in his hand he felt nauseated."
>
> The story is about the delight we take in metaphor. A meaning spins, remaining upright on an axis of normalcy aligned with the conventions of connotation and denotation, and yet: to spin is not normal, and to dissemble normal uprightness by means of this fantastic motion is impertinent. What is the relation of impertinence to the hope of understanding? To delight?
>
> The story concerns the reason why we love to fall in love. Beauty spins and the mind moves. To catch beauty would be to

understand how that impertinent stability in vertigo is possible. But no, delight need not reach that far. To be running breathlessly, but not arrived, is itself delightful, a suspended moment of living hope.

Suppression of impertinence is not the lover's aim. Nor can I believe this philosopher really runs after understanding. Rather, he has become a philosopher (that is, one whose profession is to delight in understanding) in order to furnish himself with pretexts for running after tops.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ASSENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

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ASSENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

As a member of the Phenomenological Research Lab, I understand that the nature of the research in which we engage is often sensitive. I further understand that the subjects in many of the studies which we undertake, including the present one, have been assured that every effort will be made to protect their confidentiality. I therefore, agree not to discuss the content of these interviews outside of Laboratory group meetings.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX B

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

The purpose of this research project, "A phenomenological Investigation of the Experience of Longing," is to understand the experience of longing from a first-person perspective. Although this phenomena has been referenced in theoretical discussions there have been no empirical accounts of this topic. In particular, there are no systematic first person descriptions of the experience longing within the field of psychology. With this study, I intend to provide a thematic analysis of the experience of longing in order to contribute an experience near account of the phenomena to the academic and professional literature on the subject. This study will be published in the form of my doctoral dissertation. It is also possible that some portion of this project will be published in an academic journal at a later date.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked about some times when you have experienced a sense of longing. The interview will probably last from one to two hours, until you are satisfied that you have fully and adequately described your experience of longing. The interview will be audiotaped. I will transcribe the audiotape and provide you with a copy for you to correct, elaborate or augment. The information obtained will be held in strictest confidence. All identifying information will be removed from the written transcript, and the audiotape will be erased upon transcription. The transcript will be randomly assigned a number by which it will identified forthwith. Transcripts will be analyzed by a multi-disciplinary research group composed of faculty and graduate students. All tapes, transcripts and signed consent forms will be stored securely on University premises. Short quotations from the transcripts, such as phrases or sentences may be used in publications and presentations to illustrate emergent themes, but no identifying information will be included in the quotations. In addition to taping the interview, I will ask you for some non-identifying demographic information: gender, age, occupation, education level and marital status.

Many participants in phenomenological research find the interview to be a rewarding process. It is hoped that this will be the case for you. There is no monetary or other extrinsic compensation for participating. There is no penalty for a decision not to participate in this project, and you may also opt to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Should you at any time have questions or concerns about your interview or the project, please feel free to contact me.

Li Ravicz
401C Austin Peay Building
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996
Phone: (423) 974-6060 (office) or (423) 609-8598 (home)

I have read the above Information and Consent Form and agree to participate in this project.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

APPENDIX C

CATEGORIZED LISTING OF EXPERIENCES, OBJECTS OR PLACES LONGED FOR

APPENDIX C

CATEGORIZED LISTING OF EXPERIENCES, OBJECTS OR PLACES LONGED FOR

Category	Participants
I. Place/Space	
a. home	#3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10, #11
b. town, city or region	#2, #7, #9, #10
c. country	#4, #9, #10, #11
d. sea	#7, #9
e. desert	#7, #9
f. forest	#7
g. mountains	#7
h. moon	#3, #7
i. stars/sky	#5, #7, #9
j. storm	#7
k. transcendent space	#1, #6, #7, #9, #10, #11
Total	All 11 participants
Number of examples of	34

Category	Participants
II. Time	
a. the future	#2, #6, #8, #9, #10
b. the past	#1, #4, #6, #8, #9, #10
c. transcend time	#7, #11
Total	9 out of 11 participants
Number of examples of	13

Category	Participant
III. People	
a. romantic partner	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #9, #10
b. family	#3, #6, #11, #8
c. children	#3, #4, #5
d. parents	#3, #7
e. friends	#3
f. community	#4, #11
Total	All 11 participants
Number of Examples of:	20

APPENDIX C (continued)

CATEGORIZED LISTING OF EXPERIENCES, OBJECTS OR PLACES LONGED FOR

Category	Participant
IV. Relational Experience	
a. acceptance	#1, #2, #3, #5
b. love	#1, #3, #5
c. understanding/validation	#5
d. being forgiven	#3, #8
e. belonging	#3, #11, #4, #7, #10
f. stability	#3, #6
g. joined	#1, 6, #7, #9,
Total	All 11 participants
Number of examples of	21

Category	
V. Expressive/ Vitalizing Experience	
a. singing/ music	#1, #2, #3, #4, #8
b. performing	#1, #4, #8
c. writing	#10, #11
d. dancing	#4, #5
e. flirting/dating	#1, #6
f. Outdoor activity	#3, #7, #9
g. longing/day-dreaming	#4, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10
Total	All 11 participants
Number of examples of	23

Category	Participant
VI. Experiences of Self- Efficacy	
a. skills	#1, #2, #3, #8, #10, #11
b. fame/ success	#1, #2, #3, #4, #8, #10, #11
c. health	#5, #8

APPENDIX D

NARRATIVE SUMMARIES

APPENDIX D

NARRATIVE SUMMARIES

36 year old male: Interview #1

The participant experiences "a longing for love and romance, and just an acceptance, particularly by women." He describes instances in which he has experienced this as, "Very warming. It's very pleasant. She just allows that emotional side of me to come out and kind of bubble up...it was just a big burst of emotion in me." However, he also questions the basis of these encounters. "My theory... (is) that there are two people there. There is the one on the clock... and then there is the real one. I never have tried to make a connection to the real one." More often, he feels rejected by women because of a physical handicap. "I thought she had a rule, 'no crippled guys.' For the last few years it seems like no matter what I ask for, no matter what I offer its just, 'No, no, no.' I have had long periods where I'm just alone. " His longing accompanies and reinforces this experience of loneliness. "The longing is always just there...along with an awareness that it's not going to be fulfilled anytime soon, might not be fulfilled for a long time or ever!" The participant attempts to keep his disappointment in perspective and notes "I've lived without love for a long time so it's not going to kill me. I can survive." Moreover, he feels that it is dangerous for him to indulge in too much longing because it creates additional disappointment and upset. "That is nothing but trouble to be in that place because I'm constantly thinking about it and being aware of it and it tends to multiply the pain that comes with longing that isn't fulfilled." Thus, he feels the need to negotiate between his desires and his sense of an inevitable "limit." "There is a lyric from a Leonard Cohen song...'I saw a beggar leaning on his wooden crutch. He calls to me, 'You must not ask for so much.' A pretty women leaning on her darkened doors, called to me, 'Hey, why not ask for more.' And that is exactly the horns of the dilemma that I find myself under." Even so, the participant occasionally attempts to "transcend that boundary." "That particular instance was a real exhilarating time. It was a rush in my head. I sort of suspended rational control, I guess. When I do

things like that I am caught up in the additional happiness that I feel and it's not until afterwards that I start to worry."

52 year old male: Interview #2

As a child, the participant longed to feel "older and more competent and to have more of a feeling of control." He suggests that he created an imaginary friend in order to address this feeling. "(He) could do all the things I couldn't do. He could plow and saddle a horse. All of these competencies...it was a kind of reflected glory." This longing for "competence" and accomplishment" continued through his teenage and into his adult years. The participant reports that this longing eventually manifested in two different ways: He dreamed about "being accepted where I was and (being) good at that kind of life (farming) and fitting in." At the same time he also longed, "To get the hell out." He felt an "intense dissatisfaction" with his life and dreamed of finding a larger world to be a part of. During his teenage years his interest in literature fostered these fantasies of escape. Like Hemingway he dreamed he "...would go out and live in some exotic place and travel a lot and write books and become rich and famous." However, his fantasies frequently gave way to despair. "You know, you don't long for anything within your reach. It seemed so hopeless." As an adult he tried to put into action the fantasy of becoming a farmer. "I think that is an indication of how strong the longing was to succeed in that place was." Following his parents death and the completion of his masters degree he took over the family farm. "I think I really wanted recognition from the people I had grown up with." However, he became overwhelmed by the task and suffered a great deal of emotional distress. "Of course, it was a disaster. The only time I have been in the hospital in my life was during that time for one night. What happened was that I collapsed from exhaustion trying to make it work." Even so, he suggests that is was important for him to make the attempt. "Although it was a miserable experience, I really don't feel that bad about it because I just had to do that." Some years later he faced this longing for the last time. "...I realized that I had to make a final decision about whether I was ever going back again. I decided that I was not. My life has been enormously better since then." Ironically, home town

friends now see him as a great success even though he doesn't perceive himself that way. "To them, the fact that I have a Ph.D., the fact that I have published a book, those are big deals. I'm almost embarrassed when I go home by the fact that people look up to me."

42 year old female: Interview #3

The participant longed to be "accepted" and feel a sense of "belonging." She hoped to find in these experiences a sense of "security and stability." She notes that as an adopted child she has always experienced a fear of being "rejected again." For her, rejection meant that she "...had done something wrong." She dreamed of being part of a close knit family and felt responsible for the conflicts between her parents. "The first time I saw my father hit my mother (was) when I was 6 years old. I've always... connected Dad hitting Mother with me. My being adopted thinking somehow that was my fault..." Later she dreamed of having a loving husband and supportive family of her own. "I grew up on fairy tales of where the knight in shining armor comes and saves the princess and they live happily ever after. I was very rapped up in fantasy." However, she felt alienated and rejected by her first husband. "He was quite cold ... and very stand-offish... It made me feel like I had done something wrong... I would feel very insecure and just in agony." She searched in vain for his understanding and care. "I never got the sense of really being loved." She describes how eventually her "pain" turned to "frustration" and then into "anger." After 20 years of marriage the participant finally left her husband and found a partner who provides love and emotional support. "The minute I started seeing him and going there that became a place of sanctuary... It just felt like I had come home... Somebody loves me for who I am." Since then her sense of longing has dissipated. "The longing began to wane when (my second husband) and I first got together. Because here was someone that focused so entirely on my happiness. So in turn allowed me to focus on his happiness and not on the sense of longing anymore. We really do have a very nurturing relationship." However, the participant still longs to be "accepted" and "forgiven" by her first husband. "At night I'll dream about the other relationship... The dream always runs that my first

husband and I are off on vacation and he forgets to give me the room number and I can't find him. I go looking through hotel and I know I have to be there at a certain time or he is going to leave. I can't find the right number. I can't find the room. I can't quite find the key. That is almost the dream pun."

38 year old female: Interview #4

The participant longs for a "natural," "vital," creative and dynamic" experience in the world. She dreams of finding a home or being part of a community that inspires or facilitates these experiences. She regards Brazil, her mother's "homeland," as the personification of this ideal. "I think the dream with Brazil is to be surrounded by a very, very fun, lively, supportive, and intriguing community of friends and family and then all the smells and aromas. The whole fabric of being in Brazil. It's very luscious." Her longing for Brazil is felt in a relational context and is also a deeply embodied experience. "We were experiencing this really strong feeling of missing Brazil. We were all holding our chests and kind of leaning on each other and saying "Oh, Oh...its a very emotional thing...it churns in your heart...it gets under your skin...so it really pulls something deep." She suggests that these feelings are both painful and necessary. "There is a saying Brazilians use a lot which is *'Matta a saudades.'* Which means, 'To kill the longing.' But it doesn't make any sense because actually what was happening was we were experiencing more longing. I guess what that means is that longing is there and this experience just brings it out." Her longing often reflects a sense of dissatisfaction with her life as it is and a need to feel important. "So there was longing and it made me dissatisfied with whatever I had. That was instilled in me that...that I was supposed to be on a big stage. (and later) The scale of it. The scale of the things we were going to do with our lives." The experience of longing and Brazil itself are also associated with music. "He talks about the sounds of Brazil where this certain little bird sings. Its a classic Brazilian poem to describe the love some of us have of Brazil. It is saudades. (and later) When they were playing that song I really was on the brink of weeping. Wherever there are three Brazilians there is music." She describes searching for similar sense of community throughout her

schooling in the United States. "I was sort of identifying a lot with the bused-in black kids. I think the reason that I keyed into them was because of my Brazilian background. Because they loved music." She also expected to find this experience through her romantic attachments. "This was the knight in shining armor discovering me and taking me off to this wonderful new life. I think for me it was the last round of the Cinderella complex." In this context she perceived the world as a place in which she would find unlimited success and opportunity. "It was kind of the dream life being presented. I guess I just always thought that its just all there and it will be discovered and then it will just kind of be effortless...there would be no end to that. (and later) It would be a glorious fate. Its just going to come to me." This experience was often associated with agrarian life and the experience of home and family. "My family on both sides are farmers. I started having a relationship with the land. I started planning our home. I actually started blue printing where the kitchen (would be). I started putting together a chest of baby clothes." However, she finds herself confronted by limits and disappointments. "That was an illusion. Kind of like the rug was pulled out from under me. (and later) It was a very clear moment when the whole group just said, 'Your out.' " Moreover, she worries that her idealization of Brazil is unreal. "(My mother) has taken a time capsule from when she was child and carried it. Like that is how Brazil still is...I've sort of done the same thing and am afraid of facing that when I go back. I have always been afraid... of losing the mythology of how wonderful Brazil is. What it would be like (to) go back there and just... do the day by day."

32 year old female: Interview # 5

The participant relates that as a child she was discouraged from having feelings or experiencing desire. Instead, she experienced an "emptiness somewhere within... There was a hole." These feelings were "amorphous" and difficult to "name." "I didn't know why. I didn't know what... (but) dark clouds would roll over." She longed to "fill this space" and often looked to others, particularly men, to do that. "The knight in shining armor. Somebody to make it all better." However, she found that others failed to address these needs. "I was

being observed as sort of a shell and people weren't seeing the whole picture." These episodes recapitulated earlier childhood experiences. " I was the youngest in the family. I could be whoever somebody needed me to be. I don't think (my family) really saw who I was. It left this huge gap." The participant reports that eventually a health crisis forced her to address these concerns. "I really hit rock bottom. My body was saying, 'We are just going to die on you. You're going to get cancer.' That is when I started going, Okay, I have to take the first step. You know, it's me. I'm the only one who can really change this.' " She found that as her body awareness increased her sense of longing also changed. Longing became an experience she could work with to help facilitate her own growth. "It's part of what I feel. It's part of my hopes. But that doesn't mean that I sit there underneath it cowering and immobile. Therefore it moves along and shifts and changes. Changes like a stream or current... Yes, I do want a partner and someone to grow with in life and have that. But (this longing) is not overwhelming me, it's moving along beside me. So it becomes almost a partner in itself. (and later) It can be a positive stimulus to continue to grow on my behalf."

39 year old female: Interview #6

For the participant, longing is "a very strong feeling" related to something she "imagines." These images "connect" her to a longed for domestic or romantic experience — often ones that she had in the past and would like to experience again. "I was thinking about having another baby or having more children...it's like I see them. The stuff they do and being a part of that. (and later) I want to do the process all over again. I want to do it again." She describes such longing as an "ache" which can be "sharp and blunt all at once." She notices this ache in her chest and arms. "Really having the feeling of wanting to hold one... It's up here. I guess that is the part of you that is most in contact with them. The participant feels a certain pleasure from these experiences as well as a sense of "pain" and "absence." "It was very real to me. Then I would realize that it isn't... It has that same satisfaction that really stretching for something has only you never get to touch it. (and later) At the same time it was painful there was something satisfying about it." She suggests that the

satisfaction comes from being "connected" to an experience which is otherwise unavailable. "It feels like an acceptable substitute for the thing you cannot or will not (have) ... so even though it's not a pleasant day dream it's a soul satisfying day dream for me. (and later) It may be that my children end up just existing in my very own imagination. That will be all right." Through longing she was able to establish a continuity in the face of change. "There was a real understanding that wife or no wife our relationship endured. We were bound together." Yet, the experience of longing also changes over time. "The playing with the longing. The describing the longing. The getting to know the longing changed it." Often this is a relatively safe and exciting process. "Its a little bit like playing with... matches. No conflagration yet. If one accidentally lit I could still put it out. It feels like living dangerously in a very safe way." On the other hand, her longing can also become painful and overwhelming. "It took everything in my power just to make a little dent in it. To stop the imagining. To stop the wanting. It wasn't playful anymore. It was overpowering. I was almost not equal to the task. I could have fallen into that longing and stayed there and not gone on with my life." In these instances she attempts to "dismantle" the experience. It (the dismantling) feels like it keeps me safe... I can still say, 'I will stop imagining this. I will stop wanting this right now.' " Finally, she notes that having the experience she longs for eliminates the longing. "It seems to me the doing something about it put an end to the longing. The being with him wasn't longing."

34 year old female: Interview #7

In longing, the participant describes feeling an "incredible sense of excitement" in response to a visual experience, often a natural feature in the environment, such as the moon, a landscape or a certain quality of light. These experiences suggest that a kind of bridge has opened between her and an another dimension. "Thinking that as I drove through I'd come out someplace else. Someplace magical. (and later) There was this path of moonlight on the water. It went from the edge of the seashore all the way up into the distance so that it looked like it was touching the moon." She is aware of being "open" and "reaching" out to the other. "I can almost

feel myself spatially redirecting. I feel like some part of me inside of myself feels like it's more open and more able to receive whatever is out there. (and later) There is a feeling of almost reaching toward something. There is...a bubbling up sense of almost being able to touch infinite possibility." She compares these experiences to more "mundane" ones and notes, "The only way I can think of it as something spiritual." The participant is usually alone when she makes these encounters. "I don't think much about longing when I'm around other people. It's a little bit frightening to me to think of having that union with somebody else. Who knows what they would do. (and later) I think its easier for me to trust the world than it is to trust people." On those occasions when she has experienced such longing in another person's presence she has felt uneasy about it. "I felt kind of exposed. I knew...that the way he was probably thinking about it was different although the feelings might have been similar. So I was afraid to talk to him about it because I was afraid to find out how different it might be." The participant senses these encounters in her body. "You can almost feel it skating across the surface of your skin... I can feel it right around my solar plexus. I can feel a sense of warmth. The only way I can describe it is like a gasp." In these moments she wants to merge with a larger other. "I don't want to be separate from it anymore. I just want to be a part of it. Wanting to be that power. Not even feel it, just be it. Be the storm. Be the ocean. Be everything. There is this sense of absolute connection." These experiences also provide comfort and solace. "...Its comforting for me to think that she (participant's mother) is part of that somehow. That she is part of what I get glimmers of now and then. It's a real sense of solace for me." However, the promise or invitation for further connection is never realized and she experiences profound disappointment. "... It's like reaching out your arms to somebody and they never come. So there is this feeling of being open to that and then you just collapse on nothing. Just this ache." Moreover, she has a concern that if she were to completely merge with this other dimension it could be overwhelming or catastrophic. "What if it sucked what you saw? What if it was overwhelming? What if you went mad from it?" She compares this to the experience of being in therapy and learning new things about herself. "It was a different way of seeing. It was a seeing inside as opposed to seeing outside. But it still felt scary." The participant also

feels a sense of guilt or inadequacy for her failure to realize this experience but maintains the hope of succeeding in the future. "They are part of the perfection of it and I'm not quite. It feels like a personal failing that I didn't believe in it enough and maybe that is why it never happens. But then that also keeps it open for the possibility that maybe it might happen later. So I haven't given up hope yet."

34 year old male: Interview #8

The participant longs for "enabling health." Physical injuries have taken away important abilities and experiences, "really life affirming and sustaining activities." For instance, he developed a stress syndrome in his hands which forced him to give up the mandolin even as he was preparing to become a professional mandolin player. "5 and a half years later I still have it. I've played the mandolin over the last 5 years probably a total of 3 or 4 hours... I have never felt as much optimism again." Even before his injury he longed for opportunities to play the mandolin. "Especially in New York working 60 or 70 hour weeks I could not wait to play the mandolin. It was such an amazing escape. It was an extension of my life. It was all joy." Since injuring his hands the participant has attempted to find other creative outlets. "Film and video is the media I have tried to use as a substitute for mandolin playing. I love visual art...but there is something so much purer about just sound. Nothing has replaced the peace...that was created by mandolin playing. I haven't found any art form that compares in terms of pleasure." In fact, he finds that listening to music can evoke painful feelings that are difficult to bear. "I can't even go to a concert anymore. I can't listen to music anymore. I can't experience any of those things. It's a sense of jealousy. (and later) It makes me self conscious of everything that I have lost." The participant also experiences "a craving for normalcy...just to be normal. Just to be somebody who can grip something. Who can grip a chin-up bar. Who can carry groceries without pain. Someone who can write without pain. Everything I do involving my hands I have to think about them." He feels that his injury creates some limitations in his relationship with his brother. "He is an avid rock climber... Its a huge part of his life. We don't see

enough of each other for either of us. When he's in town I want him to spend the night...but then I'm taking him away from 'a day out on the rock'... and I can't do that...and I can't be out there with him." It also presents concerns about becoming a father. "My wife and I...go back and forth about whether we are going to have a family. We both want to be financially secure but more importantly secure enough in ourselves. I see Dads' at the pool picking up their kids...holding their child's hand. The normal sensation of just holding a hand." Finally, the emotional pain wrought by his disability is exacerbated by a sense of "culpability." "I have the burden of guilt...which can be really haunting. I guess the analogy would be if someone had some kind of fault or contributed to the death of a loved one. The guilt is a huge part of it."

33 year old male: Interview #9

The participant experiences a longing for "home" or an image of home. "The clearest image of longing is an image of home." This image is satisfying in and of itself. "I don't need anything else when I'm in that image... It's this complete moment." This image provides a kind of "inner space" in which he feels a sense of freedom, comfort, warmth and completion. It is a world without "boundaries" or "limits" which provides "a perfect kind of joining. I am one with the sea. I can just blow out into the surround." In this state he feels "wrapped up" within the image even as he holds it in his thoughts. He constructs this picture from what he remembered from his past and what he imagines in the future. "Longing is the meeting of the past and the future." At the same time longing has a "poignant," " bittersweet quality." He describes it as the "union" of loss with an ongoing sense of being loved and being connected. "Longing is loss and love put together." Thus, longing provides the participant with a feeling of satisfaction and completion even while it engenders within him a sense of absence or lack.

32 year old male: Interview #10

The participant longs for an experience of "a place or a time which is elsewhere" and "of origin." These experiences occur while he's alone but are often associated with or personified by a particular person. He suggests that a sense of "incompletion...thrusts (him) back" to them. He feels a "dissatisfaction in the here and now" and a desire for something more which is searched for in the past. Through images and dreams he returns to experiences which have "transformative potentials." These root experiences are considered "integral to (his) identity" and yet somehow inaccessible and even prohibited." What kind of claim do I have to my own experience? Its not at all clear." The participant describes his art and intellectual work as an aspect of longing which attempts to "do justice to (these) experiences. Longing is about not only to get back to a moment but how do you represent a moment. When your in the moment you can't reflect...you're in the flow." Through reflection and representation he tries to understand and appreciate these moments and feel "connected" and "responsive" to his experience of them. "Its being inside of it and outside of it at the same time. Its about feeling yourself contingent or connected in that something happens and you respond." The participant recognizes that there is "an impossibility to return. Its very much about searching and not finding..." However, in this striving new, rich and more vital experiences are created. "The trick is how do you make the leap happen without ever really believing your going to get there. (and later) The best things from me come from a space of longing."

31 Year old female: Interview #11

The participant experiences longing as "a desire to enter or have access to an alternate space" or "a transcendent moment... Something which is far beyond the ordinary." She imagines a kind of "interior richness" within these spaces which she longs to "be a part of. "Your creative energy is attuned. Like all of your life you've been waiting for it to get that clear. Like a lot of pure energy." In some contexts she describes the movement towards these experiences as an "uphill climb." Cresting the top of the hill affords "a clear view of

something" and produces a strong "jolting sensation" in her body. "There is some sort of energy that comes through my body. It often will come after being...in a deep state of thinking. I feel like there is some kind of awakening moment. A Clarion call." Even then, the participant has a feeling of "not necessarily getting there." Moreover, her longing is accompanied by a sense of trepidation. "There is an attraction and there is a lot of fear to be taken to that kind of place. I don't want to get stuck there." She suggests that she would like to be "swept away" and yet remain somehow grounded. "I suppose I want them both. Or be there and come back and be in the world." In other cases, she describes "reaching towards" a kind of "crystalline moment" and finding herself barred. For instance, as a student living abroad she experienced a longing to literally enter French culture. "I remember looking up at people's lighted windows. I wanted inside a domestic space and wanted access to all that I knew was there...and didn't have access to. I couldn't penetrate. I couldn't really get (inside) because of...the constant barriers..." She felt extremely alienated in these circumstances. "You almost move in a bubble of sorts which keeps you very isolated." Isolation, however, also provided rewarding experiences. "In some ways it was great because...it allowed me a greater sort of interior access to myself." Over time she drew closer to French culture but continued to feel a sense of "distance" and "exclusion." "I had something that I really wanted which was to be invited into this interior space. Quite literally a beautiful interior space in Europe. And also the interior of a family but there was a sense of exclusion at the same time. I could feel the poignancy of it...and perhaps not unlike longing, it was bittersweet. I wanted it and had some of it but I didn't have all I wanted. I wanted more."

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE INTERVIEW

LONGING #4: 38 year old female
Interview by Li Ravicz
Participant (P)

I: Can you think of some times in your life when you experienced a sense of longing?

P: My most recent very intense pain type longing I felt I told you about yesterday. During Belshair they had a Brazilian band playing. The band was playing. The only Brazilians they had in the band was the woman who was singing but she was third generation and couldn't speak it if you tried to speak it like this. She had memorized these songs. But they started to play a song that I remembered from my childhood. A classic Brazilian tune. I saw some other Brazilians and we started dancing together. We all were experiencing this really strong feeling of missing Brazil. We were all holding our chests and kind of leaning on each other and saying "Oh oh!" Well the word we were using is *"saudade."* There is a saying that Brazilians use a lot which is *"Matta a saudade."* Which means, "To kill the longing." We were saying that. "Oh we are killing some of the longing." But it doesn't make any sense because actually what was happening was we were experiencing more longing. I guess what that means is that longing is there and this experience is just bringing it out.

I: So to kill the longing is in some ways to have the experience of the longing (P: Yes!) and theoretically it diminishes by experiencing it but that is not necessarily..."

P: That is not the case! There is a beautiful poem that a Brazilian wrote in exile. A poet who was exiled because his poetry was so politically charged. I can't remember it but I would like to get it for you because it really sums up *saudade.* He talks about how much he wants to be back in Brazil. He talks about the sounds of Brazil where

this certain little bird sings. It was the first poem I was introduced to in Portuguese. Its a classic Brazilian poem to describe the love some of us have for Brazil. (I: Yea.) It is saudade.

I: So its all about a place, particularly...

P: Or a people. (I: Or a people.) When I talk to my family we say *"Saudade."* How much longing or nostalgia I have. So people, places.

I: I notice you point to your heart when that comes up.

P: Yea. Its a very emotional thing. *"Saudade"* it churns in your heart "saudade" does.

I: You also really feel it there?

P: Oh yeah! When they were playing that song I really was on the brink of weeping. It was...I don't know how to describe it. It's something...you know what? I've met people from all over the world and I've lived all over the world and I have never seen this sort of phenomena about one's home, one's homeland that Brazilians feel about Brazil. I mean when we are there we talk so horribly about Brazil. We say how horrible it is, how terrible. Everything is wrong. Its a big mess. Which is all true. But when you take a Brazilian away from Brazil they will have this terrible *"saudades."* (I: Right.) I haven't seen Germans feel that way about Germany. I haven't seen anybody feel quite that strongly so I think that Brazil has a very, very special culture. Its very emotional and really it gets under your skin.

I: So when you have the longing, the *"saudade"* it's also for the feelings you have in Brazil that maybe you don't have anywhere else?

P: Right. I feel that Brazilians have a warmth that I haven't seen in other cultures. Maybe in some African cultures. What I have seen there is almost too much warmth. Brazilians I feel are a very sensitive, warm, dynamic, creative independent... They are a very bold people. Very big. So I think a lot of the longing is for that.

They love music. Wherever there are three Brazilians there is music. (I: Yea.) There just is a lot of color and...

I: It's not just feelings it's about feeling alive.

P: Right. Right. Oh yea, Oh! That is good because I remember whenever I go to Brazil... You know you would be on the airplane, Pan Am or whatever and then get on "Vardi" which is a Brazilian airline, the energy just (participant slaps her hand.) picks right up. (I: Wow.) You can just feel it in the air. It's really dynamic. People are talking. It's just really natural. It's not like somebody just turns around and says, "Hey, how are you. Where are you from?" And you are thinking, "Oh God, who is this joker." No, there is just a natural interchange. It's natural for people to just start talking and have a reaction to things. In Brazil if you are having discussions and are politely listening to someone (I: Yeah.) this is rude because you should be interrupting them (laughter) because what you are saying is triggering thoughts. If you are just politely listening until they are done they are going to think you are just a very rude person. (I: Yeah.) There is just this very kinetic, logarithmic thing going on! So the moment you get into a Vardi airplane you already feel, boom, more alive just stepping into the airplane.

I: That is interesting because airplanes are transitional places. So just by interring that space, you aren't in Brazil yet you are symbolically. (P: Yeah.) Like a door opens. (Right.)

P: I think Brazilians allow sensuality. I don't mean sexuality. They are just more sweet to each other and just are more... There is just a tenderness. It's not that its going to be backed up by a total stranger, a steward or something. It's just part of the way people interact. (I: Yeah.) I feel that it enlivens more aspects of being human than this culture does.

I: You mentioned the time when you were at the celebration and there was a celebration and you had Brazilian friends with you? (P: I met some Brazilian friends.) You met some friends. And that brought up saudade. (P: Yeah.) Do you feel that kind of longing often in your life? In other occasions or is that something that..."

P: I think the only thing that would come close to it is (pause) like love gone bad. And you wish it hadn't.

I: Is there a time when you experienced that which you could tell me about? (Pause) Longing in relationship to something of that kind.

P: It's pretty raw but...I had an experience last year which was pretty intense. I was really led down the...what is that expression? Led down the... (I: Garden path.) Yeah, the garden path. Ended up expecting an awful lot out of the relationship. It was a very wealthy person and this person made all sorts of declarations and so forth. He has a big farm. Started sending me architectural magazines to help me start to plan a home. To give you some examples of how into this things were. Feng shui books to read up on Feng shui. And we were talking about how the home would be designed. The number of children. Just the whole thing. I ended up having a very pivotal position in his company. It was kind of the dream life was being presented. In an arena that I was, I am very interested in. Every sphere of influence has its maybe top tier. Let's say, if you are in the classical music sphere then the Aspen Colorado music festival would be one of the top drawer music festivals in that sphere. What my job put me in the position of was in the top sphere of the herbal world internationally. So I was meeting the top people in research and cultivation, in everything having to do with herbs, spiritually, scientifically, every aspect. So right smack in the middle of that world is what my position put me in the middle of. According to what was being expressed about marriage and the whole thing there would be no end to that because that was what we were creating together. When it became obvious to me that that was an illusion. That basically this person had a pattern of conquest and then disinterest, and then I found out that that was the history which I could play by just pulling back myself and then the interest would be there again. But I didn't want to live a life like that. (I: Sure.) I think when I made that realization and decided to step out of that whole scene both personally and professionally I went through a lot of letting go. Letting go of the dreams that had been generated about what my life would look like. So, it was a lot of longing. That person really got under my skin during that period when he was acquiring

me, let's say, he really did a good job. He left no stones unturned. So even though I knew I was doing something that was fairly pathological, knowing that didn't help dealing with the feelings of sadness that everything that was built up to be the case was not going to be the case.

I: What you had counted on and based all your feelings on was taken from you.

P: Yeah, the carpet was pulled out from under me. So I went through a lot of longing because for one I just knew that it would be pathological for me now that I know this to be the case to even spend one more second thinking that all that went before means that... Because all that went before was his pathology in having to acquire. His Napoleonic thing and I ended up being part of the territory. Once acquired, then of course, there is not the... (Pause)

I: You can walk away but you mentioned before of letting go of dreams and I am struck by how hard that is to do. (P: Right.) Emotionally how painful that is.

P: Right. I started planing our home. I actually started blue printing out where the kitchen...according to Feng shui. We were talking about having a lot of water. Even having water run through the house. So all that. *I started putting together a chest of baby clothes.* So it was very thorough. It was a very thorough conquest. And then aside from this relationship with this person I started having a relationship with the land. What happened was when I got out here the farm manager wasn't working out. So since I speak Spanish and two-thirds of the work force is Hispanic I ended up (inaudible) most of the farm management responsibilities along with my job. So I really was with the land, working with the land. I got very, very attached to the land. It was really hard to know that I had to let go of that, too. So now I feel very displaced because I got very attached to being on a big farm. I think it went back to... My family on both sides are farmers. On my mother's side they are gentry aristocratic plantation farmers (I: Yea.) but there was that experience. It was very odd. When I was out there with all the Mexican workers I kind of felt like this parishioner something deep inside. Of being the

landlordess and having all my people working! It just felt real natural to be in that position. I worked just as hard or harder than most of them. I led by example so it wasn't like up on the horse with the whip... The image you see of South American...It wasn't like that. On my father's side they were farmers too so it really pulls something deep. To be on the land. I had to let go of that too. I had a lot of comfort. I had a beautiful house the company was helping me out with. I had a very big salary. So there were all these layers of things that I had to let go of.

I: It sounds like from the inside out. (P. Yeah!) From your heart to the house to the soil. Maybe not from the inside out but all the way through.

P: There was really very little left unturned. It was really complete. My heart, everything. The whole shebang.

I: Yeah, even that image "unturned" suggests farming, plowing and seeding.

P: Yeah I remember telling my aunt, "Something good is going to grow out of this compost heap or something I feel like" and she said, "Oh, is that spelled, S-H-I-T." (Both laugh) (I: Is this after the break-up?) Yeah. So it was letting go of the Cinderella thing too because this was the knight in shining armor discovering me and taking me off to this wonderful new life. I think for me it's the last round of the Cinderella complex. That is pretty permeated in our western thinking.

I: Is that something that has been with you.. (P: Had happened before ? Yeah, but not that dramatically.) Part of your imaginings for a long time, expecting to be discovered by somebody like that?"

P: Yeah. I had this really initial bang in life. I was initially brighter and quicker and more evolved than everyone around me through my teens. I was always out with older people and everybody was always saying, "Wow, were did you, how did you...you're only 17." That sort of thing. (I: Yeah.) I think it gave me the impression early in life that I was really special. (I: Yeah.) That I wouldn't have to

work as hard as everybody else because it just came naturally. I had a professor, a teacher once tell me that... I got a "B" in this class. I said, "How did I get a "B" I got "A's" on all my papers, I, you know..." She said, "I gave you a "B" because you have a lot more in you. Even though you were the top person in this class you have a lot more in you so that is why I gave you a "B." (I: Right.) So I think I got the impression from that and because my mother told me that a man would make every...that that would be it. That a man would make your life right and then the culture was still saying that when I was a little girl because I'm in my late '30's. My Dad told me I didn't have to worry about college because I was equipped for life. But my brother did.

I: Equipped for life? What did that mean?

P: That I would get married and everything would be taken care of. (I: Ah.) When he told me that I just thought he meant that I was just that bright. But later on I looked back and went, "That is not what he meant at all." So I got this impression that for one I wouldn't have to work like other people because I just had this natural...but of course what happened was everybody kind of caught up with me, you know. I had this initial burst because according to (pause) lots of different palmist and astrologers and so forth I'm an old soul so I had initially a lot coming in. (I: Right!) But then people caught up so I do have to work like everybody else but I had the impression at first that I didn't. I guess I always thought that its just all there and it will be discovered and then it will just kind of effortless.

I: Kind of like you have a fate or some sort of destiny?

P: A glorious fate. And that I don't have to do a lot. It's just going to come to me. I guess I impersonated that feeling in the form of a male. A powerful male. That is the kind that has been attracted to me. So yeah, I've gone through that round a few times but in the past there wasn't such a sense of...I was really happy to be out in the past. And happy. I guess this really promised a satisfaction, a fruition on many different levels for me. In terms of professionally, the kind of environs I wanted to be in socially. Through this company I went through some incredible symposiums on herbalism.

Worked with the FDA. I ended up feeling very vital. Vitally involved in that arena. Which to me is very exciting right now here in the U.S. Where as the other times the promise was there and then I got in the relationship and you get to feel like all my...that I was being stifled. Where as this one I got in and was doing all these incredible things. Even when the person thing, it was obvious that that wasn't going to...I was still there. Anyway, does that...?

I: Yeah. And you tell me if this is right or not but in both those examples there is a quality in the "*saudade.*" It's like there is a world you are a part of? I mean it's a whole world. Its not just one thing or another. (P: Yeah. Yeah.) It's a whole experience (P: Ah ha. Ah ha.) Which includes land (P: Yeah.) in both cases. The longing comes up because you want that or because its been taken away?

P: Yeah. Yeah. Like I always had to come back to America (I: Ah ha.) from Brazil. That was unavoidable. There wasn't anyway to change that. The other thing that is interesting is I remember when I was 16 years old and I was on the beach in Rio with a bunch of my friends and I said to a friend of mine, I said, "I love this. Look at this. It's just so beautiful. This is probably the best year of my life right now. When I look back this will probably be it." And he said this thing that just scared me so much. No I didn't say that this would be the best year of my life. I was just saying something about how happy I was and he said, "Enjoy it while you can because when you come back to Brazil it will never be the same." It really scarred me because I knew he was right. When I'd come back to Brazil I'd be an adult. There wouldn't be a 16-year-old living with my family, not having to worry about anything except for grades and popularity and things you worry about when you're 16. *It really scared me.* Even when I went back at 23 I went back to make a movie. That was another kind of out of reality experience because it wasn't like I was part of the fabric of Brazilian culture. I was there 5 months making this movie. I wasn't in the day to day rigmarole of Brazilian life. (I was) traveling all over the country. So I think I have always been afraid of what it would be like and kind of losing the mythology perhaps, of how wonderful Brazil is...if I would go back there and just live there and do the day to day...

I: Is it as though the longing is for you about a dream? (Pause) Is this a sort of a dream?

P: I think the dream with Brazil is to be surrounded by very, very fun, lively supportive, intriguing community of friends and family and then all the smells and aromas. The whole fabric of being in Brazil. Its very luscious.

I: There is something about what you said which reminded me of the word, dream, but maybe a better word would be magic? It is a special magical place.

(Participant requests to move interview outside.)

I: So I guess I was just asking you about, I don't recall now,

P: You said, "A special magical place."

I: Yeah, you were talking about you were concerned about when you would come back it wouldn't be the same. And there was something you were saying about when you were 23. (P: I was there but...) Oh, you were working.

P: Yeah, so I wasn't totally enmeshed in Brazilian life.

I: Oh, I remember now. You were saying that if you were in Brazil in a regular way, sort of living there all the time that maybe it would become ordinary. It would lose its...magic is what came to me but I don't know if that is what it means to you?

P: Yeah, I think that has something to do with it. Another thing about Brazil is my Mom, she clung to her Brazilian identity. (I: Yes.) And was really negative on American, North American, USA culture. As much as I was a rebel I think that I sort of internalized her... And that goes into a whole thing of just how displaced she was and how my American family was very unhappy about my father marrying somebody with dark skin. So I think that was her life saver. To really in spite of all of this negative response she got for being so

different she just threw it all back in their face. (I: Ah ha.) That indeed this is who she is and that she is proud of it. (I: Right.) Because in our home there has always been something really special about everything Brazilian. In fact my Mom started a company called "Everything Brazilian. " "Anything Brazilian." My aunts say that my mother, that she is more Brazilian than a Brazilian (I: Ah ha.) because she has taken like a time capsule from when she was a child and carried it. Like that is how Brazil still is. (I: OK.) Yeah. So I think that in a way I've sort of done the same thing and I am afraid of facing that when I go back. I am going to go back this winter. That is going to be interesting to see what happens.

I: For her that connection to Brazil maintained who she was (P: Right.) in a place that was hostile to her. It sounds like for you too there is also something in that feeling about Brazil that is very important to you as the person that you think of yourself as being?

P: Right. I think that having that Brazilian heritage and making sure people know it gives me license to do and be and say things that are a little outside of what is totally comfortable to people. I think that that has been a blessing and a curse. Some people they enjoy that and other people they have a strong reaction to it. Growing up I got a lot of flack for being a little different. As you grow older there are people who appreciate that you're from a different culture, that you have other gifts. (I: Yea.) Kids don't understand that. As a kid I got a lot of flack. I was just like my mother. I was very proud of it and I was in there face about it. (I: Yes.) Where my brother turned his back on everything Brazilian. 'Cause to him it represented being ostracized. (I: Ah ha.) And I was willing to experience that because to me it was more important to feel unique than it was to fit in with peers.

I: So that was a tension between whether you were going to fit in or whether you were going to feel special. (P: Yeah.) And you couldn't be both? (Pause) In some ways it sounds like you had to chose about whether to be unique and have this special connection to this place of origin or...

P: I think you are right. I think I had to chose one or the other just like my mother did. Another interesting thing that happened was I was sort of identifying a lot with the bused-in black kids. (I: Ah ha.) And that had a lot of repercussions. I was the head cheerleader, I was at the top social, cute girl click and I started associating with these black kids. The reason that I think I keyed-in to them was because of my Brazilian background. Because they loved music... I got into their drill team. I was the only white girl on their drill team. There is a drill team league and in all the schools it was all black girls. I was the only white girl in the whole city league. White kids just didn't do that. They were cheerleaders but they didn't do the drill team. That had really big repercussions. I remember getting ostracized by the whole white group.

I: Did you lose your position as the head cheerleader and that kind of thing as well?

P: The actual activation happened in the summer and then I didn't go back to that school. So I successfully completed my tenure as the head cheerleader. (Laughs.) I think Afro- culture had a draw for me because Brazilian culture has a lot of Afro influence in it. All throughout the culture. Its managed to permeate to even the most educated and elite classes. Its permeated throughout.

I: Did you have a sense of what you were risking when you became friends with the African American girls and became connected to their way of being and their culture? Did you have a sense that that would lead to being ostracized?

P: After it was probably too late to do anything about it. But how that ties into *saudade.* "Matta a saudade;" Being around them, to kill some of my feeling some of my culture that I wasn't apart of or wasn't around. It took care of some of that.

I: Well. That makes sense to me. It wasn't just a question of being special in some generic way. It had to be really special...to be who you really were for this to mean something. I mean you were already at the top of the (P: Feeding chain.) right, feeding chain of High School. You had all that regard and I'm sure attention because

(P: Yea.) of being where you were but there was no question that you were going to connect and pick up this other piece of your experience (Ah ha. Right.) and find another way to be special.

P: Right. And I didn't think it would have repercussions because it felt natural to hang out with those people. And they all said, "Oh, you know, you the most white black girl I ever met." And to me that was a great honor when they said things like that because I didn't get...I think it was...I just wasn't aware enough. I was just too young and in my feelings to know, to step back and think about how it was going to affect things. Until they ostracized. It was a very clear moment when the whole group just said, "Your out."

I: Was that painful?

P: Ah ha.

I: In what sense? Did you feel misunderstood or did you feel bewildered by it or surprised like the rug had been pulled out from under you?

P: It had a lot of rug being pulled out from under me experience in it. The first one. This is what it reminded me of. This is what it reminded me of. As a little girl I always thought I was a boy. Played with boys. And just hated girls. I thought girls were just boring as all get out. And then there was that one day I just walked up to my little boys gang to play. As I was walking up they all looked up at me. They were kind of in a huddle. They all looked up and said, *"Ooo,* girl germs, *ooo,"* and they all ran. I was just shocked 'cause I thought I was...I didn't think about it. These were the kids I liked to play with and I thought girls were boring because they had these little stupid Barbies. So that was the first sort of longing. Yeah, I felt a lot of longing to be with the boys because they did things I liked to do. So I went home and told my mother that, "I guess we have to buy a Barbie after all." (Both laugh.) So we went to buy a Barbie and I went to the gang, the little girls' gang holding my Barbie like my *ticket in.* They looked up at me and I sat down and I'm kind of holding my Barbie not knowing what to do and they said, "Well, where are your Barbie clothes? Where is your car? Where is

your...?" thought just the Barbie was enough, right! So we had to go back to the store and get everything. So I longed to be with little boys. They played BatMan and Robin, they played cowboys and indians, they climbed trees and rode mini-bikes. I think it was my first experience of feeling ostracized. Kind of like the rug was pulled out from under me. Now I could not be in an arena, a group of people and so forth that fed me. That I felt fed who I was. I became an atheist at about the age 5. Since I'm a girl there must be no god.

I: Could you explain that to me?

P: Because I hated the things the girls did and liked and I couldn't play with the boys. (I: OK.) The whole thing with the boys now was different. If I wanted to have any attention from them I had to not be their equal. (I: Right.) I had to be under their ability not matching it or challenging it. Where as before...

I: So this was a real breach. So much so that God had to be (P: There was no God.) dead for this to happen. Had you been religious before then?

P: I went to Church 3 times a week and there was an effort to indoctrinate. My Sunday school teacher told me when I was 3 years old...she was putting up the little figurines on the felt. Have you ever gone to Sunday school? They have these little felt things and they put up the figurines of the bible stories. (I: I think I've seen pictures, yeah.) Mary and Joseph etc. She was doing the pearly gates and heaven. What heaven was like. I guess every time she picked up a figurine all the kids were like "Oh!" wanting to put it up. I was sitting there all crossed armed and sour faced. She picked up the pearly gates and said, " Well (name of the participant) what is going on? Everybody wants to put up a piece of heaven and you're not interested. What's happened? Don't you want to come up and put up the pearly gates?" "No." She kept trying to find out what the deal was and she said I finally said I didn't want to put up the pearly gates because heaven sounded boring. So I'm figuring there was a rejection innately of that whole scene.

I: It was your father's...?

P: My Dad's a fundamentalist Christian. I just remember as a little kid walking around all these hallways. Like after church everybody would be out in the lobby talking. I would look up at all these tall Americans. 'Cause that is how I looked at people because that is how my Mom looked at them. (I: Yes.) And I thought they were such phonies. I feel like in Brazil the warmth that people express its genuine. It's not phony. Here there is so much back slapping. People say, "Great. Oh, that is great." It sounds so phony. Brazilians are much more real. (I: Ah ha.) If things aren't great they complain and they make a big scene and they fight about their differences of opinion. In America everything has to be so nice. (I: Yes.) People are so careful to be nice and be happy. You are supposed to have a sort of mono- expression culture. In Brazil your allowed all the different feelings. Your allowed to get mad. You're allowed to argue and the next day you don't say anything. You're just friends again. There is not a big... In fact if you don't fight or you don't tell your friend you don't like what they are wearing or things like that they wonder if you care about them because your not interacting with them passionately. I guess I have a longing for that sort of environment because being like that has been... I've had a lot of reaction. Negative reaction for being like that in this culture.

I: More often ostracized for being that way?

P: Yeah. For being blunt about what I perceive.

I: Do you have a dual citizenship? (P: I did.) You did but you weren't able to maintain that?

P: No, When I was 21 I had to chose. About mid-college time when I was going to get financial aid and things like that I decided it would be best to be an American.

I: Strange. I was under the impression that in some countries your allowed to.

P: It's not some countries. What it is is I wasn't born in Brazil, my Mother is Brazilian. So it made me less. I don't know, I have less

claim to both since I wasn't born there. I still had it but the way I had it when your 21 you have to choose. So I was American.

I: How about your Mom? Has she come to some terms about being here? Made some peace with that? Or is it still pretty hard being a Brazilian in America?

P: It's still pretty hard. Its still pretty hard for her. My mom is just completely loyal. She is very old fashioned in that she really dedicated her life to her husband and children. Period. Its very strange because all my aunts in Brazil are professionals. They are doctors and lawyers and (inaudible). My mom is the only housewife in the bunch. Its strange because Americans have this perception that this is the country where women have more rights. Women have more social standing. But my experience is that my aunts in Brazil who are all... And then here you have the over-developed man and the under-developed woman. My Dad has a masters degree. He has an honorary doctorate actually. My mother having just completed High School. That paradigm you usually think of it as the third world paradigm. Over-developed, under-developed. I see it more here in my immediate family than in my family down in Brazil. My female cousin down there is a doctor. She has her own business. I've just done undergrad work. So to me Brazil is just an example of being more evolved.

I: The people in your world have realized themselves more, at least the women have realized themselves more in the professional realm certainly, there than here.

P: Right. And my Mom is kind of like in the kitchen or something. She is just around the house taking care of things and hasn't ever had a passion for something outside of family. (I: Right.) So she is stuck here because that is her feeling. She married my Dad... For better for worse. Come hell or high water she has to stay there and do that no matter how sad or how unhappy she becomes in the marriage that is it. That's it. That's her fate. That's (inaudible) That's her value.

(Interview is interrupted.)

I: I guess I asked you before about whether this idea your prince was about discovering a real life.... Your special fate? You had said that you did have a sense of a special fate. I don't know if we used the word fate or destiny but there was some kind of special thing for you to have that came from feeling privileged in certain ways or special in certain ways as a child.

P: Ah Ha. Then there was my Dad was famous. He was a celebrity, he was a TV personality. (I: I see.) My Dad's psychology, he is always looking for the standing ovation (I: Ah ha.) and is very good at creating that. So part of my Dad getting standing ovations was having a daughter who was larger than life. There was a lot of pressure on me to be very big. Being a head cheerleader was really good. Being very attractive was very good. All these things helped augment his desire to be the next Cary Grant or somebody which was thwarted. He was in Hollywood and doing really well and then my Mom said enough of this and he ended up moving to (another city) and taking on a job as an anchor man. Then he had his own talk show in (that city). So he hit... for a small pond he went as high and broad as you could go. But he wasn't an international star (I: Yeah.) which was his original idea. So even though he did as well as he could have done in that arena there is a lot of frustration at not having become a major, multi-picture star. So there is a lot of pressure on me to be part of that. So I think I always... I remember when I saw Truth or Dare Madonna's Truth or Dare (I: Yes.) I got so depressed because I thought. *"Dammit. Dammit! I should be living a life like that!"* Because that is what I grew up with that thing that I was supposed to be really big. I think I've finally let go of it. I finally said, "Happiness is what is important." Finally...

I: How does that feel different, Feeling really big and feeling happy? (Pause) For you?

P: I guess I feel like I can be more honest. I don't have to try to figure out what people want. Or what is the most chic way of doing, being, dressing. I don't have to think about that which is a huge relief.

I: So on the one hand there is the excitement of the other. Of being big of having some kind of celebrity but it's also a burden?

P: Yeah. It's a huge burden. Because its kind of soul as commodity. When your creating a commodity that is desirable. So you are externally... It's reactive rather than proactive. I feel like I've switched it now. So that's a huge sense of maturing for me. To not be carrying this kind of projection of my father. Being the ambassador of his greatness. (I: Yeah.) I remember my first wedding: I wrote a rap for my husband and I had my girlfriends be the backup singers and we had a whole lightshow thing. I worked this whole deal out. He didn't know it was going to happen. The reception was in a theater. I was in film production then so all kinds of film production people did this light show thing. So in the middle of this big party all the music stopped and the spot light hit and this rap show unfolded on the stage. (I: Wow.) Nobody knew about it except my girlfriends who were the back-up singers. It just went off... I mean people just... It was great. It just went off great. So I got to really perform. (I: Yeah.) Afterwards my Dad jumped up on stage and grabbed the microphone and said, "That is my girl!" So that was the impetus of my whole childhood to be...he always wanted me to be...in (participant's home city) we have the rose princess. He was always trying to get me to be in beauty pageants and all that kind of stuff. He wanted me to be... If he couldn't be Cary Grant maybe I could be Ava Gardener or whatever, I don't know! It was a stage quality thing. I don't know how we got into that. (I: Well we were trying to...) I guess there was a lot of longing to have succeeded in that respect. I went to Hollywood twice and studied acting down there. I guess there was a longing to have... When I saw Truth or Dare I thought, "Damn. Its passing me by." To be something really big and grand. (I: Right.) I guess it also represented having a lot of (inaudible) too because you have all these resources. Just think the kind of resources that somebody like Madonna has to put a show together. She gets to be quite an artist with the light show and the whole thing.

I: It's a big stage for her to showcase herself upon.

P: Yeah! And that is why I think Madonna is so great at. She molded the... That was instilled in me that somehow I was supposed to be on a big stage. (I: Ah ha.) So there was longing. And it's left me. I don't have that feeling anymore but it was a real thing for a long time. It made me dissatisfied with whatever I had. (I: Yeah.) I guess the scale, that's it, scale. I had a sense of my life being on a really big scale. The farm did that for me. When I came out on the 200 acre farm. The scale of it. The scale of what we were going to do with our lives. (I: Big things!) *Yea, big. Big scale!* So that really hooked me. So letting go of that scale. So I have became very relaxed now with the idea that I'm going to somehow create a scale that makes me really feel like I'm thriving myself. In a manner that would be very hard for someone to take away.

I: That is neat how you've come to that. I don't think I have anymore questions. Is there anything else you would like to say or tell me about before we finish talking?

(Pause)

P: Well did we get off the topic a lot or did you get a lot of insight into longing?

I: Well I think I learned a lot about what longing means for you. It seems to me for you, you can tell me if this sounds right, but for you longing has been about having experiences either where you felt very vital, alive and connected to life as in the case of *saudade*, or its has been for that experience of that large stage where your life is big. (P: Yes.) Again there is an excitement and an importance to what is happening. (P: Right.) So its been about vitality and its been about scale and dimensions. Those are things you have wanted and that you've had in some ways (P: Ah ha.) and then in one way or another they have been pulled out from under you. What you thought you had... The connection to these wonderful ways of being or vocational experiences have been withdrawn. (P: Yea. Interesting yea.) Does that...?

P: Yea. So it leaves me with little faith. (I: Leaves you with little faith?) Ah ha. In people that present... It probably leaves me with,

which is good, with myself. Whatever my life is going to be I have to create it from the bottom up

I: Yeah. 'Cause you mentioned that you personified the scenario where you would be fulfilled as being related to some man sometimes (P: Ah ha.) who would provide the key (P: Ah ha.) to that fulfillment (P: Yea.) to open the door (P: Ah ha.) and there it would be, your destiny. After your last experience you maybe have grown to doubt that that could be the way? (P: Stronger than that. It's over.) So totally rejected it. And perhaps along with that maybe some question about even what you were longing for in the first place is what you truly want? Not that just the messenger was false but that the message itself wasn't what you needed after all? (Pause.) That could be putting too much of something into what you were saying.

P: I think that... I just feel like I have... This is kind of vague but I just feel like I have gotten a lot more real. (I: Ah ha.) I'm now able to... I don't think that before I could have tended to a garden. It wouldn't have meant anything. But now I'm able to... I don't really care about the mass opinion of myself. You know (I: Yea.) I care about sitting around and having a nice connection with people. I don't have to somehow... I don't have to inspire their awe. To somehow be more than just a friend. Maybe friends sometimes, maybe nurturing people or nourishing people but I don't have to impress. 'Cause that is a big worry. (I: So you've come to a good place with yourself in that way.) Yeah. Its been quite a journey to go there.

I: Sound like a lot of lessons but I think that is true for all of us. To give up illusions. To find out what we really are and what is important. And how to be that way. (P: Yea.) Well thank you very much for participating.

P: My pleasure. Yeah, its been good for me to go through this process 'cause I think I've put some things together that I'd never even thought of before. How much my mother's longing may have become mine.

I: Yes. Yeah, I didn't mention that when I was saying what I learned but that certainly sounds like that is true. I heard that.

P: And my Dad's too. (I: Yeah.) His longing to be this really bright star. Both. And only now in my '30s I've reconciled all that and said, "OK, thank you for sharing but I need to figure out what I need to do."

I: I guess that is growing up. When you take charge of what your life means to you instead of living it out as a child to a parent.

P: Yeah. That is how people often personify me. There is something about me that is very young and has never grown up. I think that is changing. So another thing that is good about this is that it has helped me put this last year in perspective. Even though it was really wrenching and hard I think it really served a great purpose. It had to be... A friend of mine said the universe never sends you a lesson in the form of a haggard toothless old man. It sends you lessons in very compelling forms so that you actually go through the lessons. So it had to be a 200 acre farm, beautiful 4000 square foot house, (inaudible) endless wealth, traveling the world. Exploring ethno-botany. It had to be that grand to have me finally learn that lesson.

I: So now maybe your having the opportunity to find your own scale whatever that turns out to be?

P: Yeah. And not skip steps. That is what these men have afforded me. To be able to go pseh. I went from never having planted anything to a 200 acre farm. And this is my first garden. So it's kind of like starting right where you are at and building on that.

I: Yeah. That makes a lot of sense.

P: Well anyway, thanks.

I: Thank you.

VITA

Li Ravicz was born in San Antonio, Texas on October 12, 1965 and graduated from Alamo Heights High School in 1984. He attended the University of Texas and graduated from Vassar College in 1988 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. After working for a year as a research assistant at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, he entered the doctoral program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1991. He completed a pre-doctoral internship in psychology at the Veterans Affair Medical Center, Seattle Washington in 1996 and will receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in psychology December, 1998. His plans are to move back to Seattle in the fall of 1998 and begin a postdoctoral fellowship at the Center of Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment at the Veterans Affair Medical Center.