To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by James E. Barrell entitled "A Phenomenological Investigation of Feeling Alone." 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 R. Pollio, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Provost
and Dean of The Graduate School

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF FEELING ALONE

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

James Edward Barrell

December 1988

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee members-- Howard Pollio, Charlie Cohen, Sandra Loucks, Tom Hood and Kathy Emmett. Although often in the ground of my experience, my committee was an ever-present structure that encouraged my progress. Further, the multiplicity of intellectual perspectives which they represent facilitated my broadened view of the phenomenon I investigated. Special thanks go to those with whom I worked most closely, Howard Pollio and Charlie Cohen. Howard's confidence in my work helped me overcome obstacles within myself and Charlie taught me the power of critical thinking.

In doing a dissertation on aloneness, I became aware of the aloneness of doing a dissertation. Many hours were spent with myself, away from others which left me "hungry" for human contact. I would like to thank Pat Marterer for her friendship and support in the final months of my effort. When I lagged in motivation, she was there for me.

In looking back, I find that there were many times that I felt alone and vulnerable, not knowing if what I was thinking or writing about this project made any sense. At those times, a collaborator would help me get me out of the "fog" and I could go on. I would like to thank my collaborators, my father James J. Barrell and my friend Larry Ross.

Throughout this process I have been steadied like a ship on high seas. Thanks go to Larry Gangaware for keeping me on course. If it were not for him I may have stayed in port.

When I embarked on this year long voyage, I was struggling with my own aloneness. Yet never did I feel so "un-alone" as when I interviewed my generous research participants who shared their aloneness with me. I appreciate all of their help greatly. I also appreciate the assistance of my reliability raters, Mukti Khanna and Joyce Ingram, who sacrificed their time to aid my progress.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this investigation was to discover the thematic structure of the experience of feeling alone. An empirical phenomenological approach was utilized in which 20 normal-functioning adults were interviewed regarding their experience of aloneness. The interviews produced descriptions by participants of a wide variety of situations where they had felt alone; these descriptions constituted the data analyzed in this study.

Data analysis involved a series of steps in which descriptions of feeling alone were summarized, condensed and formulated in a manner to elucidate more clearly the meanings of the phenomenon for the participant. Analyzed descriptions of feeling alone were then compared across participants in order to arrive at a final listing of themes representing the various meanings of feeling alone described by participants in this study.

Many ways of feeling alone were found and a thematic category system was developed which involved four themes, each consisting of two subthemes: (1) Missing (Yearning, Emptiness); (2) Barrier (Different, Indifferent); (3) Vulnerability (Unsupported, Exposed); (4) Freedom (To, From). All particular examples of feeling alone given by participants were scored according to this category system. Reliability of the system was assessed in terms of interrater procedures using three independent raters.

Feeling alone was found to include not only feeling lonely but also other forms of both painful and pleasurable aloneness. The themes related to different desires and emotions, and tended to appear in different situations. Although distinct, themes also were found to be interrelated and often co-occurred in the same experience of feeling alone.

Findings were discussed in terms of their relevance to previous theory and research in the area of aloneness. Various theoretical perspectives were seen to illuminate only specific aspects of the thematic structure found. Clinical implications of findings were discussed, including some possible relationships between the themes and psychopathology. Applications of results for psychological treatment also were offered.

Suggestions for future research were made including more specific investigation into the relationship of the experience of aloneness to various psychological disorders, life situations and developmental stages, and a more detailed investigation of pleasurable forms of aloneness.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Loneliness and Aloneness

The Meaning of the Term "Aloneness"

The term aloneness could be understood in many ways. Let us take the simplest meaning, that of physical aloneness. A person is alone when no other people are physically present. Aloneness, however, may or may not be experienced in this situation. Since other people may be real or imagined, it is possible that the physically alone person may not experience aloneness. Although such individuals may be alone from the point of view of an external observer, they may imagine the presence of others and not experience aloneness from their own perspective. Likewise, a person may be surrounded by proximal others and still experience aloneness. This is sometimes referred to as feeling alone in a crowd. Aloneness refers to the psychological experience of feeling alone rather than the objective circumstance of being in a place without others. It is a way of meaningfully construing one's lived situation. It is not essential that a person be physically distant from others to experience aloneness, nor does separation from others necessarily produce such feelings. The term aloneness refers to a felt quality of experience rather than to the absence of proximal others. Whether

aloneness is experienced as pleasurable or painful, problematic or non-problematic is determined by the meaning of the experience for the individual experiencing it. In this study, aloneness will also be referred to as feeling alone.

The Importance of Aloneness

Existential philosophers have long claimed the significance of aloneness for man. Aloneness is not only a common human experience but argued to be so close to the truth of what man "is" that it is inevitable and unavoidable. Paul Tillich comments of man that:

> He is not only alone; he also knows that he is alone. Aware of what he is, he therefore asks the question of his aloneness. He asks why he is alone and how he can overcome his being alone. He cannot stand it either. It is his destiny to be alone and to be aware of it. Not even God can take away this destiny from him. (1963, pg. 15)

Thus, it is the destiny of man to have the psychological experience of aloneness regardless of what he may do to alter his physical situation, such as in maintaining the company of others. Existentialists view much of our activities in the social and interpersonal world as attempting to compensate for the experience of aloneness. They tend to highlight the painful or aversive aspects of the awareness of aloneness.

The pleasurable aspects of aloneness also have been commented on in existentialism, art and literature. Pleasurable experiences of aloneness are typically labelled

solitude and are often viewed as an important source of creativity and personal growth.

Sociological and psychological perspectives tend to concentrate on the negative or problematic aspects of aloneness. Experiences of loneliness, alienation and isolation have been seen as forms of aloneness which represent impairments of psychological and social functioning. Experiences of solitude and other forms of pleasurable aloneness, in contrast, are not considered problematic and have been relatively neglected. In terms of problematic forms of aloneness, sociologists and psychologists have focused particularly upon the problem of loneliness.

The Problem of Loneliness

Loneliness is considered a common problem in contemporary American society. Cross-national survey estimates of the number of people that report experiencing loneliness frequently range from 11 to 26% (Peplau and Perlman, 1982). Although adolescents appear to be more plagued by loneliness than any other age group, research shows that the experience of loneliness affects people of all ages (Bernikow, 1986).

Loneliness also has been found to be prevalent in a variety of social classes and life situations (Peplau and Perlman, 1982; Hartog et al, 1980). As Gordon (1976) comments "knowing no limits of class, race, or age,

loneliness is today a great leveler" (1976, pg. 16). In addition to being widespread, loneliness has increasingly been considered a severe social and personal problem. For example, some research has suggested that persistent and severe loneliness can lead to alcoholism (Nerviano and Gross, 1976), drug abuse (Bernikow, 1986), suicide (Diamant and Windholz, 1981; Trout, 1980) and heart disease (Lynch, 1977). The prevalence and severity of the problem of loneliness in contemporary society has provided an impetus for a growing volume of research pertaining to the topic.

Social scientists only recently have begun to investigate loneliness and possible reasons have been suggested for an apparent reluctance to investigate this experience. First, loneliness may be such a painful experience that we seek to avoid it and have difficulty talking about it. As Fromm-Reichmann (1959) notes:

> The writer who wishes to elaborate on the problems of loneliness is faced with a serious terminological handicap: Loneliness seems to be such a painful, frightening experience that people do practically everything to avoid it. This avoidance seems to include a strange reluctance on the part of psychiatrists to seek scientific clarification of the subject. (1959, pg. 325)

Secondly, a social stigma attached to feeling lonely may discourage investigators from becoming associated with this topic (Peplau and Perlman, 1982). Nevertheless, the study of loneliness has expanded rapidly in the past fifteen years. While most of the literature on loneliness was fragmentary and theoretical prior to the 1970's, this topic

has since begun to be empirically researched (Peplau and Perlman, 1982).

Despite the recent boom of research, very few studies have been able to illuminate what it is like to feel lonely. Sadler (1978) identifies four stages of loneliness: 1) a causal stage; 2) the experience itself; 3) consequences of it; and 4) attempted responses to cope with it. Further, he claims that "many commentators on loneliness tend to mix up these stages by confusing the experience itself with something that precedes or flows from it" (Sadler, 1978, pg. 160). The lack of a clear understanding of the experience, in distinction to other related phenomena, leads to conceptual confusions which impede our understanding of loneliness.

The majority of speculative theoretical discussion about loneliness in the literature has focused upon its possible antecedents. Developmental "causes" of loneliness have been suggested which increase the likelihood of loneliness in adulthood (Sullivan, 1953; Bowlby, 1977; Klein, 1963; Guntrip, 1969). Social factors have also been suggested which contribute to an increased prevalence of loneliness in contemporary American society. Aspects of the American social character, such as individualism and other-directedness (Bellah et al, 1985; Riesman, 1961; Slater, 1970), as well as external changes in the nature of social living, such as geographic mobility (Packard, 1972),

have been proposed as contributing to loneliness. A great deal of theorizing has provided numerous possible causes for loneliness, few of which have been empirically validated or, even, lend themselves to such validation.

In addition to speculation about possible antecedents of the experience of loneliness, the literature also consists of theories and research concerned with identifying phenomena associated with loneliness. For example: theorists have associated loneliness with various forms of psychopathology (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959; von Witzleben, 1958; Zilboorg, 1938; Horney, 1937) despite scant empirical evidence to substantiate these claims (Peplau and Perlman, 1982). In empirical research, loneliness has been correlated with heightened levels of various mood states, problems in self-concept, cognitive styles and other personality variables although the theoretical basis for these findings have been controversial (Peplau and Perlman, 1982; Loucks, 1974). Without a clear understanding of what the experience of loneliness is like and the various forms of this experience, there is difficulty in explaining the results of this research.

Reasons for Investigating Feeling Alone

As noted, the problematic aspects of aloneness, i.e., loneliness, have received the greatest attention in previous research. Two problems result from this narrow

focus upon loneliness. First, one may neglect important contrasting experiences where aloneness is not problematic for the individual, such as solitude or pleasurable aloneness. An investigation of these experiences may provide important information regarding how we might alleviate the pain of aloneness. Second, defining the topic of investigation as loneliness may result in excluding or de-emphasizing painful or problematic experiences of aloneness which individuals do not refer to as "feeling lonely". Such experiences would also be important to investigate in order to better understand human suffering. What is currently needed is a re-focusing on the broader range of experiences denoted by the label "aloneness" or "feeling alone". Feeling alone includes the experience of loneliness as well as other experiences of aloneness. This study will be aimed at investigating the more general experience of feeling alone.

Research Approach and Goals

This project sets out to correct the problem that very little attention has been paid to the experience of aloneness in the psychological literature. A lack of understanding of the various ways aloneness is experienced represents a harmful void in the literature. Deficient understanding of the meaning of a concept such as aloneness or loneliness in experiential terms, can lead to confusion

in using it in research or theory. One may seek the causes and associated aspects of aloneness or loneliness but, without a clear awareness of what these terms refer to any conclusions one might draw will be questionable. For this reason, it is necessary to go back to the experience which underlies a concept before seeking explanations of it. A phenomenological method, which will be utilized in this study, is uniquely suited to understand phenomena as they are lived and experienced.

The Phenomenological Method

Traditional research methods have been criticized as being inappropriate for studying psychological reality (Giorgi, 1984). The need for methods which effectively reveal the qualitative aspects of psychological phenomena has been increasingly recognized leading to the emergence of phenomenologically-oriented research methodologies (Polkinghorne, 1983; Barrell et al, 1985). A wide variety of ways of doing phenomenological research has been proposed. Several articles and books currently focus on the praxis of phenomenological research (Aanstoos, 1983; Barrell and Barrell, 1975; Fischer, 1978; Granit, 1981; Ihde, 1979; Keen, 1975; Kruger, 1979; Kvale, 1983; Sardello, 1971; Wertz, 1983; Valle and King, 1978; von Eckartsberg, 1971). What these methodologies have in common is that they take as their subject matter human experience and attempt to understand this experience.

A phenomenological method attempts to understand phenomena as they present themselves, it does not rely on preconceived notions such as operational definitions or hypotheses (Giorgi, 1984, 1983, 1975). The idea of beginning with operational definitions of a phenomena becomes particularly inappropriate when one considers that it is the primary aim of phenomenological research to define what the phenomenon "is" in terms of its psychological meaning (Colaizzi, 1978). To understand the phenomenon in this way, one must begin with the phenomenon as lived and experienced. Giorgi (1984) notes that it is the purpose of the phenomenological method "to do justice to the lived aspects of human phenomena, and to do so one has to know how someone actually experienced what has been lived" (pg. 1). Thus, the phenomenological method must begin with a naive description of experience and then go beyond such descriptions to discover and make explicit the meanings revealed by these descriptions.

A phenomenological method attempts to collect several descriptions of a phenomenon as they appear in ordinary experience (Giorgi, 1975, 1983). These descriptions are provided by participants and may be generated either concurrently or retrospectively in relation to the phenomenon. The data of phenomenological investigation are usually linguistic, although the form of descriptions may be oral or written. Descriptions of the experience are

analyzed by the researcher through a systematic and rigorous process to find what is common across the various incidents of the phenomenon as well as understand the subtle nuances and unique variations of the phenomenon as it is experienced. The final results provide a descriptive summary of the qualitative aspects of the experience investigated.

Research Goals

The major goal of this study is to find the themes of aloneness that are common across individuals. Themes, in this case, refer to different ways of feeling alone. They also refer to different meanings that feeling alone might have for the individual. The goal of finding the themes of a particular phenomenon is similar to that found in previous phenomenological research (Dapkus, 1982; Myers, 1985; MacGillivray, 1986). This goal is also analogous to what Colaizzi (1978) labels formulating an "exhaustive description of the investigated phenomenon" and Giorgi (1975) calls finding "the General Psychological Structure". To find the thematic structure of aloneness, a number of participants were interviewed regarding their experience of feeling alone and the descriptions generated from these interviews were analyzed in a manner similar to Colaizzi (1978), Kruger (1981) and Dapkus (1972). The results of this study were related to previous theory and research in the area of aloneness.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing the literature on aloneness, four major perspectives were found: psychodynamic, sociological, existential and phenomenological. From a psychodynamic perspective aloneness is understood in relation to the context of the person, and sources of aloneness are sought both in the intrapsychic world and in the developmental history of the individual. The sociological perspective attempts to understand phenomena in relation to the social context in which it appears. As such, aloneness is viewed as originating from societal and cultural conditions and processes. Aloneness from an existential perspective is believed to be an aspect of the basic condition of being human and is seen in relation to man's existential context. Finally, the phenomenological perspective, does not concern itself with the causes or sources of aloneness but with what the experience of aloneness might be like. By focusing on the world of experience, the phenomenological perspective encompasses the intrapsychic, societal and existential domains.

A Psychodynamic Perspective On Aloneness

From a psychodynamic perspective, aloneness is a psychological state influenced by characterological and

developmental factors. The psyche of the person is emphasized. The psychodynamic literature focuses almost exclusively on painful experiences of aloneness, specifically loneliness, to the exclusion of positive forms of aloneness such as solitude. Peplau and Perlman mention three points of agreement in the way loneliness is viewed: "First, loneliness results from deficiencies in a person's relationships.. Second, loneliness is a subjective experience; it is not synonymous with objective social isolation.. Third, the experience of loneliness is unpleasant and distressing" (Peplau and Perlman, pg. 3).

Psychodynamic theories stem largely from their roots in clinical settings, which may account for their tendency to see loneliness as pathological. Psychodynamically oriented theorists attribute loneliness to early influences. While these early influences may have been interpersonal in nature, the focus is on how factors within the individual, including traits and intrapsychic conflicts, lead to the experience of loneliness.

Loneliness and Psychopathology

Loneliness is so intrinsic to the nature of mental illness that van den Berg (1972) labels psychopathology the science of loneliness. Fromm-Reichmann (1959) stressed the importance of understanding loneliness in understanding mental disorders. Although the relationship between loneliness and mental illness has been recognized, there

has been disagreement over the exact nature of this relationship (Peplau and Perlman, 1982). Loneliness has been associated with several different forms of psychopathology by different theorists. In the following, psychodynamic theories of the relationship between loneliness and mental disorders as well as empirical evidence relevant to these theories will be discussed.

Theory. For Zilboorg (1938) not all loneliness is pathological. He differentiates between pathological loneliness and what he calls normal lonesomeness. Normal lonesomeness has a temporary quality while pathological loneliness is apt to be chronic. Zilboorg views pathological loneliness as intimately tied to narcissism and sees this loneliness as including the psychological triad of narcissism, megalomania and hostility. Pathological loneliness is a narcissistic problem because it includes an intense need for others to reflect one's self-love; a need that is easily frustrated. Its developmental roots involve an upbringing that perpetuates the child's illusion of omnipotence. In meeting the outside world, the child with a narcissistic-megalomaniac attitude will be rejected and isolated leading to loneliness and hostility. Zilboorg views chronic loneliness as a symptom of an underlying pathological narcissism.

Frieda Fromm-Reichmann (1959), in her classic paper entitled "Loneliness", focused on what she calls real loneliness and its relationship to psychopathological states. In so doing, she attempts to distinguish between real loneliness and other forms of normal loneliness, such as solitude, isolation and aloneness. Real loneliness, in contrast to these other psychological states, is related to severe forms of psychopathology. In fact, she claims that real loneliness "leads ultimately to the development of psychotic states" (in Hartog et al, 1980, pg. 326). Akin to panic, real loneliness is such a terrifying state that it is difficult for people even to talk about which, according to Fromm-Reichmann, is one of the reasons for the lack of attention given it in the literature. Fromm-Reichmann sees a strong link between the experience of real loneliness and the development of schizophrenia.

In a paper written in honor of Fromm-Reichmann's incomplete work, von Witzleben (1958) identified two types of loneliness: (a) primary loneliness, which represents an awareness of our existential position of being fundamentally and inevitably alone in the world and (b) secondary loneliness, due to the loss of a significant other. Secondary loneliness typically leads to depression whereas primary loneliness has the potential of leading to schizophrenia. Primary loneliness, in contrast to secondary loneliness, is independent of the actual loss of

an object. With primary loneliness there is a withdrawal of object libido in a desperate attempt to restore integration to the ego. Unfortunately, this withdrawal provokes the experience of being unable to communicate or participate with others in the face of an upsurge of terrifying unconscious material. This, in short, may produce schizophrenia. The primary loneliness of schizophrenia of von Witzleben is similar to the real loneliness described by Fromm-Reichmann.

Horney (1937) conceptualized loneliness as symptomatic of neurotic adjustment. In fact, the experience of loneliness may be a major characteristic of the neurotic person whom Horney characterizes as both being incapable of loving and having a great need for love and affection. Horney argues that chronic loneliness reflects an underlying surplus of basic anxiety. Basic anxiety is fostered developmentally by a rejective parental attitude which leaves the child with an "all pervading feeling of being lonely and helpless in a hostile world" (Horney, 1937, pg. 89). Although she calls this developmental root of neurosis basic anxiety, she could have as easily labelled it basic loneliness.

Rubins (1964), while sharing Horney's view of the development of neuroses, relates these ideas more specifically to the topic of loneliness. Again, loneliness is seen as a characteristic of the neurotic person and,

thus, never healthy. Similar to Horney, he claims that loneliness originates in a neurotic conflict between a glorified need for love and affection and an underlying feeling of low self-esteem. The experience of loneliness is divided into two components: a centrifugal force, which is a drive towards others and away from inner experience and a centripetal force, which is a desire to fill one's inner emptiness with the experience of the other. These forces become activated when there is a disruption of either the outer pole of object relationships or a disruption of the inner pole of repressed unconscious needs. According to Rubins, loneliness emerges through such temporary disruptions of neurotic equilibrium.

Applebaum (1978) differentiates between existential loneliness, reactive loneliness, pervasive-nonspecific loneliness and psychotic loneliness. He contends that existential loneliness and reactive loneliness are normal states of loneliness. Applebaum describes existential loneliness as an experience of aloneness resulting from the normal separation-individuation process. He defines reactive loneliness as a transient situational disturbance due to a recent object loss. Applebaum, however, does view pervasive-nonspecific loneliness and psychotic loneliness as pathological.

Pervasive-nonspecific loneliness represents a chronic problem with forming and maintaining relationships while

psychotic loneliness represents a regressive form of loneliness characterized by its severity, chronicity and the presence of primitive defenses. Applebaum maintains that pathological loneliness relates dynamically to the loss of both object and narcissistic libidinal cathexes and to a constriction and weakening of one's ego boundaries. Its developmental precipitant is the experience of object loss due to primitive guilt and anxiety in the oral stage. Applebaum's approach is to point out how loneliness itself can be pathological or normal rather than to associate it with specific psychiatric disorders.

Empirical research. There are a small number of studies supporting the notion that loneliness may be related to some forms of psychopathology. In research involving undergraduate students, Stokes (1985) found a correlation of .51 between loneliness as measured by the UCLA Loneliness Scale and neuroticism as measured by the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Hojat (1983), using the same two measures, found a correlation of .50. Schill et al (1981) administered the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Cornell Medical Index to college sophomores to investigate possible correlations between loneliness and various psychiatric symptoms. They found correlations of .47 with feelings of fear and inadequacy; .38 with hypochondriasis; .38 with excessive sensitivity and suspiciousness; .44 with anger, acting-out and blaming; .32 with nervousness and

anxiety; .38 with neurocirculatory psychosomatic symptoms; .32 with pathological startle reaction; and .28 with gastrointestinal psychosomatic symptoms. Finally, evidence strongly suggesting a relationship between loneliness and depression will be presented in the next section.

Research showing greater problems in self-concept and personality development in lonely individuals provides indirect support for a relationship between loneliness and psychopathology. Nerviano and Gross (1976), administered personality tests and the Bradley Loneliness Scale to chronic alcoholics and discovered that alcoholics who were also lonely had a more immature personality organization, poorer impulse control and greater emotional instability. Jones et al (1981) found a correlation of -.45 between loneliness and self-esteem. Using a measure of interpersonal behavior, Eddy (1961) discovered that loneliness was correlated positively with discrepancies between one's actual and ideal self (.71) and between one's actual and reflected self (i.e. how one believes others perceive him) (.63). Finally, Loucks (1980) examined the relationship between self-concept and loneliness by administering the Bradley Loneliness Scale and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale to undergraduates. She found that greater loneliness was related to a negative self-concept and the uncertainty of one's self-view.

Loneliness and Depression

Loneliness has been consistently linked to depression in both empirical studies and in the theoretical literature. Theorists have had difficulty differentiating between these two psychological states and disentangling their respective psychodynamics. It is commonly held that if an affect is to be found along with the experience of loneliness its is most likely to be depression (Peplau and Perlman, 1982). Despite their common co-occurrence, there is some evidence to suggest that loneliness and depression are distinguishable psychological states. In the following discussion, theoretical ideas and empirical evidence regarding the relationship between loneliness and depression will be reviewed.

Theory. For Zilboorg (1938), the dynamics of loneliness are similar to those of depression. He attributed pathological loneliness to damage of the narcissistic image of one's self because of some form of object loss. Zilboorg maintained that this narcissistic insult lead to a reaction of extreme hostility towards the object in the form of impotent rage. Despite marked similarities, Zilboorg appears to depart significantly from the classic Freud-Abraham model of melancholia in his lack of attention to the phenomenon of guilt. This suggests that the presence or absence of guilt feelings may be an

important factor in differentiating between loneliness with and without depression.

In contrast to Zilboorg, Fromm-Reichmann (1959) sharply differentiates between depression and what she calls real loneliness. She notes that, although depressed patients often complain of loneliness, their "preoccupation with their relationships with others, and the pleas for fulfillment of their interpersonal dependency-needs... are proof that their loneliness is not of the same order" as real loneliness (in Hartog, 1980, pg. 345). Real loneliness, according to Fromm-Reichmann is beyond words and, thus, beyond complaints. It includes a complete loss of hope for relating which is not the case for depression. Fromm-Reichmann's distinction between real loneliness and the loneliness described by depressives suggests that loneliness and depression may represent distinct conceptual categories of experience although, due to the variety of forms of these two psychological states, they sometimes may be experienced simultaneously.

Klein (1963) discusses a type of loneliness which is associated with manic-depressive illness. With this type of loneliness, there is a longing to preserve a good object at the same time as there is an incapacity to do so because of destructive impulses towards the object. Klein contrasts this type of loneliness with that found in schizophrenia by stating that "the feeling of loneliness of

the manic-depressive centers more on his incapacity to keep an inner and external companionship with a good object and less on his being in bits" (in Hartog, 1980, pg. 368). Like most of the authors reviewed thus far, Klein conceptualizes two types of loneliness, one strongly related to depression and one not.

Leiderman (1969) utilized the case study approach with the aim of differentiating between loneliness and depression. He notes that depression is experienced more as a sense of loss while loneliness is experienced more as a sense of incompleteness. He claims that loneliness occurs both with and without depression and that when loneliness and depression occur together, anger is more likely to be a dominant affect. Further, he proposes that while depression is related to aggressive drive components expressed through ambivalent feelings directed towards an object, loneliness is more related to libidinal drive components expressed in yearning for the object to give a sense of completeness. Unlike depression, loneliness does not depend on the loss of real objects or ambivalent introjects. Rather, pathological loneliness is caused by poor self-object differentiation during development. Leiderman states of loneliness that "its frequent association with depressive affect can be explained best by the fact that inadequate mothering, along with separation, frequently accompanies situations where self-object

differentiation is also pathological, a pattern that leads to confusion of depression with loneliness" (in Hartog, 1980, pg. 391). Therefore, Leiderman contends that depression and loneliness are two phenomenologically and etiologically distinct psychological states.

Empirical research. The correlation between loneliness and depression has been a well-established research finding. Peplau and Perlman (1982) report that most correlations obtained for loneliness and depression are between +.50 and +.60. Hojat (1983), while administering the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory, found a positive correlation of .54 between loneliness and depression. Bragg (1979) obtained a positive correlation of .49 with the same two measures. Moore and Schultz (1983) found a correlation of .66 between scores on the UCLA Loneliness Scale and the Zung Depression Scale. Loucks (1974) found a correlation of .61 between loneliness, as measured by the Bradley Loneliness Scale, and the depression dimension of the Profile of Mood States Scale. Weeks et al (1980) and Anderson et al (1983) also found correlations between loneliness and depression of .52 and .58 respectively. In general, it has been shown that people who tend to be more lonely also tend to feel more depression.

The results of some empirical studies have suggested specific relationships between the psychological states of

loneliness and depression. Horowitz et al (1982) examined college student's conceptual understanding of loneliness and depression by having them develop verbal prototypes of lonely and depressed persons. Results indicated that the prototype of the lonely person was nested in the prototype of the depressed person. Loneliness was associated with the perception of interpersonal failure while depression involved a failure of any type. The authors concluded that loneliness is a type of depression involving a specific sense of interpersonal failure. A major drawback with this study is that the development of verbal prototypes of a depressed or lonely person may have alot to do with how persons are stereotyped or labelled by others but have very little to do with the actual subjective experiences of depression and loneliness.

Bragg (1979) in comparing lonely and depressed groups of subjects found significant differences between them. He discovered that depression was positively correlated with both the presence of anger and dissatisfaction for aspects of living, while loneliness was not. He also discovered that loneliness was positively correlated with a low initiation of contacts with friends while depression was not. These findings suggest some possible differences between loneliness and depression despite their overall tendency to be correlated with one another.

Eisemann (1984) compared clinically depressed psychiatric patients with normal controls and found that, of the depressive diagnostic subgroups, patients diagnosed with brief reactive depression scored highest on a self-report measure of loneliness. Chronically depressed patients, such as those suffering from unipolar or bipolar depression, complained less of loneliness although still reporting greater loneliness than the control group. These results suggest that the experience of loneliness may be associated more typically with temporary rather than chronic forms of depression.

Rubenstein and Shaver (1982) employed a factor analytic method to determine the most commonly reported feelings associated with the experience of loneliness. They found four factors which they labelled: desperation, depression, impatient boredom and self-deprecation. The desperation feeling, which the authors likened to separation anxiety, was the most frequently reported. The investigators conceptualized the depression and self-deprecation factors as representing reactions to loneliness rather than aspects of the feeling of loneliness per se.

Loneliness and Anxiety

Although loneliness has been strongly linked with depression, other affective correlates have been considered. In particular, empirical research has suggested that people who tend to be lonely also experience

greater anxiety (Loucks, 1974; Peplau and Perlman, 1982). Psychodynamic models also suggest a connection between loneliness and anxiety.

Theory. Fromm-Reichmann (1959) points out the conceptual confusion between loneliness and anxiety. She notes that the terms loneliness, fear of loneliness and anxiety are sometimes used interchangeably in psychiatric thinking. The role of anxiety in the dynamics of mental disturbance has been the traditional focus of psychiatry. Fromm-Reichmann recommends that this one-sided focus be corrected by an increased attention to the significant role of loneliness. She also recommends that "the interrelation of loneliness and anxiety be thoroughly scrutinized, with the goal of accomplishing a new and more precise differentiation between the two dynamisms" (in Hartog, 1980, pg. 359). Although providing little information to make such a differentiation, she does note that the experience of real loneliness is so horrible that it "is beyond anxiety and tension.." and that "only as its all engulfing intensity decreases can the person utilize anxiety-provoking defenses against it" (in Hartog, 1980, pg. 348). This suggests that anxiety may constitute a last defense against the more fundamental dynamism of real loneliness and that the two states may be closely linked during periods of acute decompensation.

Sullivan (1953) also contends that the dynamism of loneliness is even more fundamental than anxiety. He claimed that "under loneliness, people seek companionship even though intensely anxious in the performance" and that "loneliness in itself is more terrible than anxiety" (1953, pg. 262). Horney (1937) disagrees and asserts that basic anxiety is the root of neurosis whereas loneliness is symptomatic of a type of neurotic adjustment. There is disagreement as to which psychological state represents the more fundamental dynamism. Despite such disagreement, it is clear that both anxiety and loneliness are figural experiences in mental disturbance when defenses against these experiences break-down.

Theoretical writings suggest a relationship between loneliness and separation anxiety. Bowlby (1960) points out that separation anxiety is developmentally related to the fear of losing the maternal object. He defines separation anxiety as "what each one of us experiences whenever our attachment behavior is elicited and we cannot find our mother figure, or whatever person or even institution has come in later years to stand in her place" (in Weiss, 1973, pg. 49). Bowlby identifies three stages of object loss: protest, despair, and detachment. Separation anxiety is experienced during the first phase in which one is anticipating losing the object. As previously discussed, certain types of loneliness have also been

linked to object loss (von Witzleben, 1958; Applebaum, 1978). These types of loneliness are more apt to represent the latter stages of object loss (i.e. despair and detachment). According to Bowlby, both excessive separation anxiety and excessive loneliness derive from early anxious attachments. Separation anxiety and loneliness may represent different stages of the same process of object loss and, thus, commonly occur together in the same individual.

Klein (1963) focuses on infantile anxieties as a source of the sense of loneliness. One source of loneliness is depressive anxiety which, like separation anxiety, is primarily related to the fear of object loss. Klein also proposes another type of loneliness based on an excess of paranoid anxiety. Here too, anxiety and loneliness are coexisting psychological states but the anxiety is of a different quality since paranoid anxiety is more related to concerns for the preservation of the self than for the preservation of the object. This suggests that phenomenologically distinct types of anxiety may be associated with different types of loneliness.

Guntrip's (1968) notion of pathological anxiety closely parallels what Klein calls paranoid anxiety since the primary focus of pathological anxiety is preservation of the ego. Guntrip notes that "in pathological anxiety the danger situation is an internal one, ultimately the

fear of ego-breakdown" (1968, pg. 87). Pathological anxiety provoked by early bad object relationships sets up a retreat from outer reality. Withdrawal from object-relationships subsequently leads to the experience of loneliness. Also, a chronic state of anxiety persists related to fears of being both with and without people. Guntrip remarks that the fear of losing one's objects and the fear of losing one's ego are inseparable since the ego only exists through object-relationships. Guntrip sees loneliness and anxiety as essentially interrelated features of the schizoid condition.

Empirical research. There is some empirical support for a connection between loneliness and anxiety. Loucks (1974), while administering the Bradley Loneliness Scale and the Profile of Mood States Scale to undergraduates, discovered that more lonely people also complained of greater anxiety. Moore and Schultz (1983) found a correlation of .48 between loneliness and state anxiety and .61 between loneliness and trait anxiety, in a sample of adolescents. Correlations of .56 (Hojat, 1983); .53 (Nerviano and Gross, 1976); .32 (Schill et al, 1981); and .45 (Jones et al, 1981) between loneliness and anxiety have also been obtained. Unfortunately, this research has not provided information regarding the qualitative aspects of the relationship between loneliness and anxiety.

The Development of Loneliness and the Capacity to be Alone

Psychodynamic theories emphasize the importance of early relationships in producing a predisposition to experiencing particular psychological states. These early relationships become part of one's personality and influence one's way of being-in-the-world. Adult loneliness is seen as originating from problematic childhood experiences.

Theory. Sullivan (1953) claims that "loneliness reaches its full significance in the preadolescent era, and goes on relatively unchanged from thenceforth throughout life" (1953, pg. 262). He admits that precursors of loneliness occur earlier, which precipitate later loneliness. For example, the lack of adult figures as observer-participants in the child's early play can lead to subsequent vulnerability to experiences of loneliness. Yet Sullivan claims that the actual experience of loneliness first emerges in preadolescence in response to an absence of intimate interaction with same sex peers (i.e. chums). The preadolescent experience of loneliness becomes the model upon which adult experiences of loneliness are constructed. For Sullivan, loneliness is one manifestation of a pathological development of the self-system based upon inadequate discharge of the need for interpersonal intimacy.

Ferreira (1962), like Sullivan, conceptualizes loneliness as brought about by a frustration of the basic human need for intimacy. Unlike Sullivan, however, he also ties loneliness more directly to the development of mental illness. Loneliness, the experiential correlate of the frustrated need for human contact, is seen as a core experience in most forms of mental illness. Ferreira notes that "loneliness announces the inner craving for intimacy and closeness.." and that this craving results from maternal absenteeism and emotional deprivation in childhood (1962, pg. 203). Ferreira remarks that the schizophrenic's basic need for intimacy is so frustrated that he is beyond experiencing loneliness. In fact, "the schizophrenic's aloneness is his main line of defense against loneliness" too painful to be tolerated (1962, pg. 205).

Bowlby (1977) also considers loneliness to be the product of problems in early attachment relationships. He observes a strong instinctually-based propensity for human beings to form affectional bonds; i.e., a basic need for intimacy. He notes that attachment behavior is first directed towards the maternal figure and this relationship becomes the model for later attachments. Maternal failure to provide a secure base for the child's exploration may lead to the child being anxiously attached to the mother. Bowlby maintains that the generalization of an early

anxious attachment to later relationships can lead to a variety of emotional disturbances, including loneliness.

Klein (1963) claims that a sense of loneliness derives from infantile psychotic anxieties. She distinguishes between two types of loneliness, one which develops earlier and one which develops later in the course of infancy. The earliest form of loneliness, the type found in schizophrenia, derives from a surplus of paranoid anxiety and is based on the primitive process of splitting and the projection of destructive impulses. Klein suggests that the schizophrenic experiences the world as hostile and fears self-fragmentation. The schizophrenic feels lonely because the failure to trust either himself or others leads to "a state of withdrawal which destroys his ability to make object relations" (in Hartog, 1980, pg. 366).

Klein discusses a later form of loneliness which is derived from depressive anxiety and is associated with manic-depressive illness. Such loneliness involves directing hostile feelings inward in order to preserve one's early object relationships. Depressive anxiety results when there is fear that protection of the object cannot be sufficiently achieved and the object will be lost. Klein points out that failure to navigate ambivalent feelings during the depressive phase of development can create a persistent problem of excessive depressive anxiety that interferes with object relationships and leads to

feelings of loneliness as well as depression in adulthood.

While presenting a more recent version of object relations theory, Guntrip (1968) focuses upon the schizoid problem as a developmental source of loneliness. The schizoid problem originates in the lack of internalization of a sufficiently good relationship with the maternal object at the earliest stages of development. The lack of a good object in the intrapsychic world of the infant causes an arrest in the development of the ego and leads to a condition Guntrip describes as basic ego weakness. Basic ego weakness produces both a fear of aloneness and a need to escape from what is perceived as a frightening world. Winnicott notes that "the capacity to be alone depends on the existence of a good object in the psychic reality of the individual" (1958, pg. 31) ... "One can only stand being alone in outer reality if one is never alone in inner reality" (Guntrip, 1968, pg. 226). It is precisely this inner relatedness that is lacking in the schizoid, and he is apt to be lonely when alone. For Guntrip, loneliness is one of the primary manifestations of the schizoid problem which is, in turn, the etiological core underlying all forms of psychopathology.

Winnicott (1958), in contrast to other psychodynamic theorists, focuses on the positive aspects of the capacity to be alone which he believes to be an important sign of emotional maturity. The developmental basis for the

capacity to be physically alone is the experience of being alone in the presence of someone. Specifically, Winnicott discusses the importance of the infant's experiences of being alone in the presence of the mother. An experience of ego-relatedness between mother and infant in these early experiences is necessary to facilitate the development of the infant's ability to tolerate being alone. Ego-relatedness refers to an experience where, despite the aloneness of individuals, the presence of each continues to be important to the other. The reliable and caring presence of the mother makes it possible for the infant to be alone and to enjoy being alone for limited periods of time. Good-enough mothering allows the infant to internalize a good object-relationship and to construct a belief in a benign environment. Positive internal relationships allow the person to feel content in the absence of external relationships as well as free from persecutory fears when alone.

Winnicott sums up his views on the development of the capacity to be alone as follows:

> Gradually, the ego supportive environment is introjected and built into the individual's personality, so that there comes about a capacity to be alone. Even so, theoretically, there is always someone present, someone who is equated ultimately and unconsciously with the mother, the person who, in the early days and weeks, was temporarily identified with her infant, and for the time being was interested in nothing else but the care of her own infant (Winnicott, 1958, pg. 36)

Thus, for Winnicott, the capacity to be alone without feeling lonely rests upon the internalization of satisfactory early relationships.

Empirical research. It has been suggested that the experiences of loneliness in adulthood may in some part be determined by the frustration of a basic need for intimacy in childhood. There is some empirical evidence to support this claim. In a study of Iranian college students, Hojat (1982) found that subjects who reported a lack of intimacy with their parents during childhood were more lonely as measured by the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Hojat also discovered that high loneliness subjects were more likely to report problems in getting along with peers during childhood, which may support Sullivan's notion of the importance of peer relationships in the development of loneliness.

In a large scale questionnaire study conducted by Rubenstein and Shaver (1979) the relationship between adult loneliness and childhood experiences of separation, loss and neglect was investigated. Results indicated that reported parental helpfulness, closeness and trust of parents during childhood was inversely related to adult loneliness; the absence of a parent during childhood was positively correlated with adult loneliness. They also found that the younger the child was when parental loss occurred, the greater was the current loneliness.

Rubenstein and Shaver interpreted these results as supporting a link between parental failure to provide intimate and secure attachment in childhood and the experience of loneliness in adults.

Hecht and Baum (1984), while administering the UCLA Loneliness Scale and an attachment questionnaire to young adults, investigated the relationship of early attachment patterns to adult loneliness. They discovered that although the quantity of previous separation experiences was not related to loneliness, the quality of previous attachments was. Lonely adults were found typically to experience anxious attachments during childhood (i.e. attachments dominated by the subjectively experienced threat of separation). These results support Bowlby's ideas stressing the deleterious consequences of early anxious attachments; in this case, leading to vulnerability to the experience of loneliness as an adult.

Feinberg (1985) performed a study in order to determine whether a tolerance for physical aloneness was positively correlated with relatively healthy and mature internal representations of self and others. She interviewed 56 adult outpatients regarding their tolerance of aloneness in order to select a high tolerance and low tolerance group. These two groups were then compared on a variety of projective data which yielded information regarding the subject's internal object representations.

Feinberg found partial empirical support for Winnicott's idea that a person with a more developmentally mature internal object representation had a greater capacity for tolerating aloneness.

A Sociological Perspective On Aloneness

From a sociological perspective, aloneness means being isolated within the context of the social world. Rather than focusing on the characterological aspects of aloneness, the person's detachment or separation from their social situation is emphasized. Weiss (1973) differentiates between the experiences of social and emotional isolation. Emotional isolation refers to the absence of an attachment figure whereas social isolation refers to the absence of an accessible social network. Although these two forms of isolation do not represent mutually exclusive experiences, their recognition suggests the importance of viewing the experience of aloneness as a social as well as an intrapsychic phenomenon.

Many researchers have identified trends in American society they deem responsible for an increasing prevalence of aloneness (Gordon, 1976; Bernikow, 1982). Their views have differed upon what particular social phenomena are most significant. In reviewing the body of literature taking a sociological perspective on aloneness, a number of

social processes emerged as potentially relevant. These processes have been grouped into three broad categories: The Loss of Community, Individualism, and The Loss of Personal Identity. These phenomena undoubtedly overlap and form dialectical patterns of interaction with one another. For the purposes of presentation each phenomena will be discussed independently while emphasizing their respective impact on the human experience of aloneness.

The Loss of Community

Several authors have cited the loss of community in modern American society as a major precipitant of experiences of isolation. As Packard (1973) notes regarding the severity of the problem:

> Personal isolation is becoming a major social fact of our time. A great many people are disturbed by the feeling that they are rootless or increasingly anonymous, that they are living in a continually changing environment where there is little sense of community. (pg. ix)

The loss of community refers to a generalized breakdown of social structures needed to provide an individual with stable and meaningful social relationships. Such a breakdown is likely to incur a deficit in social relationships and potentially severe isolation of the individual. The loss of community may be viewed as a byproduct of numerous social forces; what is of most interest here is the various forms it takes and how such losses have been viewed as facilitating loneliness in the

individual. Two forms of losing community seem most significant: geographic mobility and isolation of the nuclear family.

Geographic mobility. In his book A Nation of Strangers (1972), Packard describes the general malaise promoted by geographic mobility which has led to a profound and widespread sense of loneliness in our society. In 1976, Gordon reported that 40 million Americans change residence each year and that Americans average 14 moves per lifetime. Three important consequences of geographic mobility, relevant to aloneness, are the disruption of interpersonal ties, the lack of a sense of belonging, and an alteration in the typical style of relating to others.

With the disruption of primary interpersonal ties, the extended family is often left behind with a change of residence and tends to be visited only on special occasions, such as holidays (Bowman, 1955). There is a pervasive loss of external validators which are relied on to give meaning to the individual and to prevent the experience of loneliness (Cohen, 1980). In addition to losing touch with the extended family, one also often loses touch with significant friends (Gordon, 1976). These losses tend to put pressure on the dislocated family to be self-sufficient in providing interpersonal needs. Gordon describes the increasing demands that arise in marriages due to geographic mobility:

> In the past, husband and wife were to be "the one" for each other, the perfect companion. Now a woman or man must be not only confidant and lover, but family, community, friends- all things to one other man or woman. (1976, pg. 19)

Such demands may lead to increased marital stress, higher divorce rates and, thereby, even more loneliness (Packard, 1972).

Another consequence of geographic mobility is a lack of a "sense of belonging" to a community. Unfamiliarity breeds an atmosphere of anonymity and mistrust which undermines the process of integration into the new community. The incidence of friendly spontaneity is diminished in a nation of strangers (Bowman, 1955). There also have been changes in communities themselves which increasingly take on an impersonal air. The structures of modern urban and suburban communities are antagonistic to the sense of belonging. Finally, with geographic mobility, the kaleidoscope of faces that makes up the community changes so often that one feels that there is nothing substantial or permanent to belong to (Packard, 1972).

Another implication of high geographic mobility is that styles of interpersonal relating have changed. Packard (1972) notes an increase in hyperactive sociability in order to cope with a loss of community. He further comments that this is but a facade, behind which lie chronic feelings of loneliness. In contrast to a desperate heightening of involvement, there may be a marked decrease

of involvement. Bowman observes that "people who keep moving from place to place tend to develop a sense of detachment that is isolating" (1955, pg. 197). Lacking a sense of belonging, one is likely to withdraw into privacy. One of the most striking manifestations of the high mobility lifestyle has been the popular movement away from making interpersonal commitments. Keyes (1980) points out that "change" is the ultimate mobiocentric value. Thus, there is also a trend towards transient relationships which are well-suited for people apt to be here today and gone tomorrow.

In light of the lack of empirical research concerned with the societal roots of aloneness, the presence of two studies investigating the role of geographic mobility stands out. Both studies, however, found negative results in regards to this factor. Rubenstein and Shaver (1982) interviewed 50 Americans in different parts of the country to analyze their self-reported reasons for being lonely. They found no relationship between an individual's number of previous moves and their current loneliness and concluded that geographic mobility was unrelated to adult loneliness. An alternative explanation of their results is possible. Geographic mobility yields both the experiences of leaving and of being left. Being left behind may in some cases be an even more powerful precipitant of loneliness since the separation is less likely to be

experienced as a choice for the abandoned. Further, rapid changes in the membership composition of communities creates a form of relative movement wherein the individual may experience that he or she is living in a different place despite the absence of an actual change in geographic location.

Fischer and Phillips (1982), while interviewing 1050 adults in Northern California, found that although individuals tended to be more socially isolated immediately following a move they were able to reconstruct social networks within one year. They concluded that geographic mobility was not an important factor in producing chronic social isolation. As the authors themselves recognized, there is a fallacy in equating the quantity of interpersonal relationships with the experience of isolation. Maximizing ones social contacts does not necessarily allay aloneness. Packard's (1972) characterization of hyperactive sociability which masks the estrangement of the highly mobile individual may be relevant in understanding the quick "recovery" of subjects in this study.

Isolation of the nuclear family. Geographic mobility places unique strains on the nuclear family. Conger (1981) observes that in the past two to three decades the nuclear family has become increasingly isolated and estranged from other social institutions. He asserts this is due to a

sense of powerlessness in response to many overwhelming social forces. The nuclear family withdraws from the community and places pressure on itself to meet all of its members interpersonal needs. An empirical study by Lopata (1961) suggests the possible impact of isolating the nuclear family upon widows. She discovered that isolation and withdrawal from extended family and community was a major factor in accounting for the loneliness of some widows.

The modern nuclear family is predominantly the "community" for the child, and, increasingly, but to a lesser degree, for the adult as well. For this reason, its internal strife and subsequent breakdown is often felt most acutely by its children. Bronfenbrenner (1974) discusses the negative situation of the child's alienation within the family. Changes in family composition and structure occasioned by an increase in divorce, working mothers and single parent homes disrupts affectional bonds. The television or babysitter often becomes a maternal substitute. Greater age segregation has also been viewed as leading to the alienation of youths within the nuclear family (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Kenniston, 1965). The geographical layout of communities as well as the technological complexity of modern day occupations have severed the connection between the world of children and that of adults. In modern American society, more than

losing a sense of community, the child may be prevented from ever gaining one.

Individualism

Individualism has long been seen as a source of isolation in American culture. As early as the 1830's, the French social philosopher de Tocqueville commented that with democratic individualism "each man is forever thrown back on himself alone, and there is danger that he may be shut up in the solitude of his own heart" (1969, pg. 508). In his book The Pursuit of Loneliness (1970), Slater proposes that our commitment to individualism is at the root of loneliness in contemporary American society. He notes three fundamental desires frustrated by our individualistic orientation: the desires for community, engagement and dependency. Slater defines individualism as "the belief that everyone should pursue autonomously his own destiny" (1970, pg. 25). He argues that the trouble with individualism is that it represents an "attempt to deny the reality and importance of human interdependence" (1970, pg. 26).

In a more recent appraisal of the situation in American society, Bellah et al (1985) emphasize the continued impact of individualism. They note that "individualism lies at the very core of American culture" (1985, pg. 142). The emphasis on individualism in the American character is seen as undermining our capacity for

commitment to one another. They comment that it is hard to commit oneself to others when the attitude is that in the end one is really alone and has only oneself to answer to. Americans are seen as struggling to maintain a balance between private attachments and public involvement. Since we are more dependent on others than ever before, our individualistic orientation is seen as being even more destructive.

Social researchers and theorists have analyzed many manifestations of individualism. Four manifestations of individualism bearing most upon the experience of aloneness will be discussed: technology, competition, instrumentality, and the rapidly growing loneliness industry.

Technology. Slater (1970) contends that the boom of technology in America engendered widespread aloneness:

> One of the major goals of technology in America is to "free" us from the necessity of relating to, submitting to, depending upon, or controlling other people. Unfortunately, the more we have succeeded in doing this the more we have felt disconnected, bored, lonely, unprotected, unnecessary and unsafe. (1970, pg. 26)

In addition to becoming a slave to technology, we have erected a barrier between us and our fellow man. The emphasis upon convenience as opposed to contact serves to separate us by way of our dependency upon impersonal technological mechanisms. For example, we may be more apt to turn on the television set instead of visiting a friend.

Slater notes that "our economy depends upon our willingness to turn to things rather than people for gratification.." (1970, pg. 93). In fact, our interactions with people become increasingly dissatisfying since technology tends to produce a very impersonal manner of relating (Bowman, 1955). We often relate to each other as parts of a machine with specific functions rather than as persons.

Competition. Erich Fromm (1941, 1955) addressed the issue of how human relationships in modern capitalistic society have become increasingly competitive and alienating. Capitalism, as a form of economic liberalism, is an outgrowth of the philosophy of individualism. Human relationships are governed by competition for goods. As Fromm puts it "the method of production determines the social relations existing in a given society" (1955, pg. 80). In our contemporary American society, below the surface of superficial friendliness and cooperation, is an intense self-seeking competitiveness. Fromm remarks that man's "relationship to his fellow men, with everyone a potential competitor, has become hostile and estranged" (1941, pg. 62). Through competition, we have become alienated from one another. Given this state of affairs what is it that brings people together in a society dominated by an ideology of individualism?

Instrumentality. According to Fromm (1955), instrumentality, expressed as mutual competitive exploitation, becomes the basis of connection. Others become a means towards an end as well as commodities with exchange values. Fromm describes the situation as follows:

> What is modern man's relationship to his fellow men? It is one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other. The employer uses the one whom he employs; the salesman uses his customers. Everybody is to everybody else a commodity, always to be treated with a certain friendliness, because even if he is not of use now, he may be later. (1955, pg. 139)

People become more than competitors in the marketplace; they also are vehicles for each other on the road towards getting what one wants. Instrumentalizing each other in this manner leads to feelings of being exploited and mistrust, and becomes a basis for the experience of isolation.

It may be argued that Fromm's characterization of our tendency towards instrumentalization is dated in light of recent developments in our society. Lasch, in a more recent book The Culture of Narcissism (1978), assures us that individualism and instrumentality are alive and well:

> Americans have not really become more sociable and cooperative, as the theorists of other-direction and conformity would like us to believe; they have merely become more adept at exploiting the conventions of interpersonal relations for their own benefit. (1978, pg. 66)

Lasch (1978) views the exploitation of others for personal benefit as a manifestation of the emergence of

narcissism in our culture. With narcissism, the other comes to be seen as an extension of the self and a vehicle for gratification. This orientation certainly runs the risk of losing sight of the other's needs and, thereby, leaving the other unfulfilled. A person with a narcissistic orientation is easily dissatisfied by the imperfect empathy of the other, and is prone to narcissistic injury. Such phenomena are likely to provoke disruptions of relationships and increase the probability of feeling painfully alone.

Lasch (1978) asserts that the popular presence of instrumentality has extreme consequences regarding the quality of modern day interpersonal relationships. Skillful exploitation of the other is cultivated to the level of an art form, resulting in manipulatory and predatory sexual practices. This leads to unstable attachments, promiscuity and shallow, unfulfilling relationships. Despite taking a much more positive view of our contemporary society, Yankelovich (1982) points out some of the pitfalls of our tendency towards too much self-preoccupation. In the search for self-fulfillment, the cultivation of the self by way of the other fails to establish a basis of mutual caring in one's relationships and interpersonal bonds lacking such a foundation are apt to be alienating and dissatisfying.

Similar to Yankelovich, Bellah et al (1985) discuss how the current emphasis on "finding oneself" affects the way we view relationships. They comment that "a deeply ingrained individualism lies behind much contemporary understanding of love" (1985, pg. 108). A preoccupation with "finding oneself", which is a manifestation of individualism, represents a quest for self-fulfillment and personal growth. Not only are we unable to "find" ourselves without relating to others but it is our success in these interactions that becomes the measure of our personal development. One utilizes relationships with others in order to actualize oneself and, thus, treats others instrumentally. In modern relationships, which the authors liken to the therapy relationship, there is a mixture of both closeness and distance, both intimacy and instrumentality. There is a focus on communicating and becoming better communicators, yet the relationship is treated in a contractual way, weighing the costs and benefits. There is also a negative view of formal role expectations and obligations. Love and marriage are seen primarily in terms of psychological gratification, and fail to fulfill their former social function of providing people with stable, committed relationships that tie them to the larger society.

The "loneliness industry". Nowhere is the impact of individualism more evident than in the rapidly growing

loneliness industry. This industry is designed to profit from the needs of lonely people in American society. It includes singles bars and clubs, computerized dating services and singles apartment complexes. Gordon, calling this new industry the "loneliness business", explains its existence as follows:

> The conventional ways of forming relationships are no longer operative in contemporary urban society. To fill the void left by conventional methods of beginning and continuing relationships a new multibillion-dollar service industry has grown in America. (1976, pg. 197)

Unfortunately this service is doomed to perpetuate the loneliness it is supposed to cure. Gordon points out that the reason this business exists is not to solve the problem of loneliness but to cash in on it. She observes that "companionship is turned into a commodity" and that the "conditions favor the seller rather than the buyer" (1976, pg. 217). Obviously, it would not behoove such an industry to relieve loneliness too well since it is dependent upon lonely people for its profits.

The singles industry was promoted primarily through the media. Such promotion relied upon the popular myth that finding a mate would cure loneliness (Gordon, 1976). Along with this pursuit, it was necessary to glorify being single to attract people to singles bars and other singles activities. Thus, was born the myth of the swinging single. Gordon notes that this myth was first promoted in

Playboy magazine and later, for women, in Cosmopolitan. She explains the appeal of the Playboy ideology:

> The Playboy Philosophy of swinging liberation was quickly adopted by people who were no longer bound by family and community restrictions, and by an increasing population of divorced people whose painful experiences in bad marriages made the model of an unattached swinger seem particularly attractive. (1976, pg. 221)

The Playboy image of the swinging single is based upon the values of individualism and capitalism (Gordon, 1976). Sex is viewed by the swinging single as a highly competitive game in which he or she attempts to win. Winning is accomplished through "scoring", that is, by maximizing the quantity of transitory sexual contacts. Thus, the "game" does not have an ending such as finding a significant other. Finally, members of the opposite sex are seen by the swinging single as commodities which are to be treated instrumentally as interchangeable sex objects. By way of the swinging single image, the loneliness industry promotes, even flaunts, mutual exploitation of the opposite sex.

Viewing interpersonal relating as a game trivializes relationships (Gordon, 1976). The sought-after mate comes almost immediately to be devalued once conquered leading to an ongoing restless searching. One knows himself to be valued by the other as a simple commodity of lesser or greater value. Also, the atmosphere of superficial relating in the singles bar is in opposition to the

development of intimacy. Finally, in failing to "pick someone up" one is not only still lonely but now a failure as well; a lonely loser rather than a swinging single.

The Loss of Personal Identity

The loss of personal identity represents one of the more insidious trends in modern society. This trend is reflected in a change in social character commented on by many observers (Riesman, 1961; Wheelis, 1958; Becker, 1971; May, 1953; and Lasch, 1984). Personal identity includes one's sense of self and knowledge of one's self. The loss of personal identity is related to several other social changes, including the loss of community and the doctrine of individualism. Four aspects of the loss of personal identity will be discussed: loss of stable values, other-directedness, inner emptiness, and the fear of aloneness.

Loss of stable values. Wheelis (1958) describes a loss of secure and stable identity in American society. He contends that at the root of this loss is the fact that instrumental values, such as those represented in technology, are prevailing over institutional values, such as those represented in religion. The dominance of instrumental values leads to accelerated social change which, in turn, creates the need for a new type of identity preoccupied with flexibility and social adjustment. Wheelis claims that a loss of institutional values has led

to a decline in the formation of the superego and, thereby, a loss of a secure, stable sense of identity and self-direction.

Becker (1971) focuses upon the loss of a sense of personal meaning in the modern age. He blames our culture as failing to construct meaningful hero-systems for individuals. The primary sense of heroism which gives the individual an underlying sense of meaning and power is lost. According to Becker, this relates to our obsession with manipulating the visible world and to an associated decline in our interest in the invisible world where spiritual values and hero systems were previously found. There is a growing devaluation of private experience and this space has become empty and neglected. With both Wheelis and Becker, a loss of stable, shared cultural values brings a loss of personal identity.

Other-directedness. As Wheelis notes, one consequence of a loss of identity is a loss of a reliable sense of direction. Direction no longer comes from within, from a well-developed superego (Wheelis, 1958) or from an internalized hero system (Becker, 1971). Instead, direction must come from others. Hence, the emergence of the other-directed social character so aptly depicted by David Riesman (1961). Riesman describes the other-directed social character as follows:

> What is common to all the other-directed people is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual... This source is of course "internalized" in the sense that dependence on it for guidance in life is implanted early. The goals toward which the other-directed person strives shift with that guidance; it is only the process of striving itself and the process of paying close attention to the signals from others that remain unaltered throughout life. (1961, pg. 21)

Riesman (1961) describes a shift from inner-directed to other-directed and connects this to a greater need for interdependency because of overpopulation and the advancement of technology. These influences have led to an increase in emphasis on communication and trying to fit in. Absorption into the group by way of conformity becomes the ideal model of behavior. The other-directed person is particularly vulnerable to painful feelings of aloneness when the other's liking or approval is removed since they may experience both a loss of direction and a collapse of self-esteem.

Inner emptiness. May (1953) sees an inner sense of emptiness as the underlying problem which makes the contemporary person so vulnerable to loneliness. He explains the reason for the close association between loneliness and emptiness:

> When a person does not know with any inner conviction what he wants or what he feels; when, in a period of traumatic change, he becomes aware of the fact that the conventional desires and goals he has been taught to follow no longer bring him any security or give him any sense of direction, when, that is, he feels an inner void while he stands amid the outer confusion and upheaval of society, he senses danger; and his

> natural reaction is to look around for other people. They, he hopes, will give him some sense of direction, or at least some comfort in the knowledge that he is not alone in his fright. Emptiness and loneliness are thus two phases of the same basic experience of anxiety. (1953, pg. 27)

May (1953) traces the roots of an inner sense of emptiness to key losses in our society: the loss of the center of values; the loss of the sense of worth and dignity of the human being; the loss of the language for personal communication due to the disunity of meanings; the loss of a benign connection with nature and; finally, the loss of a sense of the tragic significance of human life. These losses culminate in the loss of personal identity reflected in an experience of inner emptiness.

In his book The Minimal Self (1984), Christopher Lasch discusses loss of identity in terms of the emergence of narcissism in our society. The narcissistic character is described as having a self which is poorly individuated and has a hard enough time merely maintaining a fragile existence. To survive, the narcissist engages in an ongoing attempt at trying to find a self by using the other as a mirror. Unfortunately, all that can be ultimately reflected back is one's own inner emptiness. Consequently, this new social character is prone to both loneliness and the fear of being alone. Lasch accounts for the emergence of the minimal self through several social factors including the lack of clear boundaries due to the egalitarian family, the collapse of traditional values, our

society's mass consumption orientation which reinforces dependency and the breakdown of the difference between illusion and reality. The result of these factors is an identity which is both attenuated and vulnerable.

Fear of aloneness. An important consequence of inner emptiness and the presence of a minimal self is the recent trend towards the fear of being alone. Fromm talked about this fear in his classic work Escape From Freedom (1941). His view was that modern man has the potential of experiencing greater freedom than ever before. Freedom, however, brings an increase in the awareness of aloneness. Fromm sees conformity as a panicky flight from freedom and from the awareness of aloneness. May (1953) makes clear the power of the fear of aloneness. He claims that "the loss of the other leaves an inner yawning void" (pg. 21) and that there is a fear of losing boundaries when alone. In sum, being alone has typically become a lethal experience to be avoided at all costs, including that of freedom.

The fear of aloneness leads to a devaluation of the experience of solitude which historically has held great value. We live in a society that is highly skeptical and critical of solitary experiences. Aloneness has become synonymous with loneliness. Gordon remarks that:

> The association between failure, loneliness and solitude is so strong in our culture that people often find it difficult to believe that there are some who

like being by themselves. (1976, pg. 33)

A person alone tends to be stigmatized as a "lonely loser" and we are aware that if we choose to be alone we will also be so labelled. Aloneness in the context of a diminished identity not only brings fear for immediate psychic survival but also fear of what others might think. Being labelled a "lonely loser" can only enhance ones experience of loneliness.

An empirical study by Parmelee and Warner (1978) investigated college students' stereotypes of people living alone. They found a significant tendency to stigmatize single dwellers as less friendly, less attractive and lonelier. Despite the swinging single image discussed in the previous section on individualism, it appears that persons living alone are more likely to be viewed as "lonely losers". The findings of this study reflect our societal fear and devaluation of aloneness, the core of which is the widespread loss of personal identity in contemporary American society.

An Existential Perspective On Aloneness

From an existential perspective, aloneness is viewed as a fact of human existence and separateness is seen as a fundamental condition. Rather than attempting to discover how to prevent or relieve loneliness, these experiences are accepted as a fact of life and the problem becomes one of

focusing on how people can live with their loneliness. With this frame of reference, existential thought often encourages people to overcome their fear of loneliness and to learn to use loneliness positively. Although the awareness of one's isolation may be painful, it is also seen as a productive and creative condition.

In contrast to the other viewpoints discussed, existential theory does not seek to find the developmental or social roots of loneliness and it is not particularly interested in factors which increase or decrease the likelihood of loneliness since it is a given of human existence. Existential thought has been concerned with other aspects of aloneness and loneliness. In the following discussion, existential ideas regarding the relationship between aloneness and the human condition; the possibility of transcending aloneness through relating to others; and the relative value and consequences of facing and fleeing the experience of aloneness will be presented. As in the previous section, it must be noted that these topics are overlapping and are separated primarily for the purposes of presentation.

Aloneness and the Human Condition

Tillich (1963) claims that the experience of aloneness is a central aspect of the human condition. Man is unique among organisms in that not only is he alone but also he knows that he is alone. Tillich states that it is the

destiny of man to both be alone and to be aware of it. He believes that we remain alone even in the most intimate interpersonal contacts. Tillich identifies two sides of man's aloneness: 1) loneliness, which represents "the pain of being alone" and 2) solitude, which represents "the glory of being alone" (Tillich, 1963, pg. 18). Loneliness may be triggered when others who help us forget our ultimate aloneness leave us or when we realize our ultimate isolation in the midst of a crowd. Tillich points out two forms of ultimate loneliness: the loneliness of guilt and the loneliness of death. The loneliness of guilt refers to our realizing our total responsibility for our life and the loneliness of death refers to our fate of having to anticipate our death and die alone.

Tillich asserts that "loneliness can be conquered only by those who can bear solitude" (1963, pg. 21). Solitude, is the source of creativity and religious experiences. Tillich believes that in the experience of solitude one is able to become more aware of one's self and to experience a connection with God and other people. For Tillich, loneliness and solitude represent the two possible experiences of our fundamental aloneness.

Sartre (1957), like Tillich, sees man's aloneness as inevitable. Our aloneness is characterized by a radical freedom and responsibility in which we are nothing else but what we make of ourselves. Freedom is something we cannot

help but have. Even if we do not realize it, our freedom is still there since we are free to either realize it or deny its presence. Freedom is the condition of mankind, it is his state of affairs rather than a class of so-called "free" actions.

Along with total freedom, Sartre sees total responsibility as intrinsic to our human condition. Sartre claims that a man is responsible for all men. By the individual choosing himself through his actions, he is said to choose for mankind. The individual creates his life and influences others through what he chooses to do and not do. Such pervasive responsibility produces an experience of aloneness similar to the loneliness of guilt discussed by Tillich (1963). Moreover, the aloneness Sartre discusses may be even more profound since one feels responsible for both one's own life and that of others.

Mijuskovic (1977) also claims that aloneness is intrinsic to the nature of man. He states that "not only are we alone in relation to others, but we are just as inevitably strangers to ourselves" (1977, pg. 90). Like Sartre, he asserts that our consciousness is a nothingness which not only exists but is reflexively aware of itself and its freedom. For Mijuskovic, loneliness is a symptom of this mode of being which he describes as reflexive self-consciousness.

Yalom (1980) claims that "the individual is inexorably alone" (pg. 353). He notes that the word exist, which means "to stand out", implies differentiation and separateness. Yalom labels the experience of this fundamental condition of man: existential isolation. He notes that "existential isolation refers to an unbridgeable gulf between oneself and any other being" (1980, pg. 355); as a "separation between the individual and the world" (1980, pg. 355). Yalom observes that the experience of existential isolation is often a culmination of an acute awareness of one's freedom and one's death. The experience of existential isolation involves such aspects as defamiliarization and rootlessness and may be described as uncanny, denoting the loss of the usual taken-for-granted mode of existence.

Most existentialists believe that the basic condition of man is aloneness. Buber (1970), however, argues for the primacy of human relationship over isolation. "In the beginning is the relationship" (1970, pg. 69). Buber labels I-You relationships those relationships which reflect our fundamental human condition. I and You are interconnected, interdependent beings and "the relation to the You is unmediated" (1970, pg. 62). I and You are fused and this fusion is essentially who we are. This is a far cry from other existentialists who would view such a close

relatedness between self and other as a way of coping with existential isolation.

Buber's ideas suggest that both the experiences of relatedness and aloneness may be inextricable from what it means to be human. It may be that man is both alone and at one with the world. While existentialists have tended to emphasize the fundamental condition of isolation, religion has tended to emphasize the interconnectedness of man with the God and nature. Buber, in taking both a existential and religious view, focuses upon the importance of the relational aspect of human existence.

The Possibility of Transcending Aloneness Through Relating

Although most existentialists accept aloneness as a basic condition of man, they differ somewhat in the degree to which they believe this painful experience may be transcended through human relating. Aloneness may be conceived both as being provoked and as being resolved by relating. Sartre (1975), like many existentialists, is skeptical of the potential of interpersonal relationships for transcending the human experience of aloneness. In fact, Sartre views such relating as the source of aloneness. He believes that we exist as a for-itself prior to our awareness of others. What this for-itself means is that we are pure subjectivity being aware of the world of objects. We are essentially nothing and do not feel alone. With the emergent awareness of others, we are no longer a

for-itself and we lose this lack of separation between self and other. For Sartre, with the awareness of the Other comes our awareness of our separateness and aloneness.

Sartre comments that "My original fall is the existence of the Other" (1975, pg. 352). With this fall, there becomes a self as looked at and the Other who is viewing the self. The Other is not simply an object for the person: rather, the meaning of the Other is that of a subjective viewpoint that one becomes aware of. Sartre claims that one becomes aware of the Other's subjective viewpoint through being looked at by the Other.

In Sartre's scheme of interpersonal relationships, we are, at any given time, either subject or object and not both. Buber (1970), in contrast to Sartre, considers other possibilities for relating which transcend the objectification of self and other. A subject-object relationship is merely one form of human relationship. It is equivalent to what Buber labels an I-It relationship. Buber also postulates an I-You relationship which is a relationship between one subjectivity and another subjectivity. Here, self and other are experienced as unique subjective viewpoints, able to become both subjects and objects for each other. Moreover, the distinction between subject and object breaks-down and becomes useless in an I-You relationship since I, as a whole human being, relates to you, as a whole human being.

Buber asserts that the person experiences himself differently depending upon his relationship to the Other. He states that: "The I of the basic word I-You is different from the I of the basic word I-It" (1970, pg. 111). When the person is the I of the I-It, they are an ego set apart from others; an isolated, detached I. The I of an I-It is always alone in a very essential way. The ego must always contend with its inability to bridge the gap between itself and other egos. For Buber, feeling alone requires the attitude of the I-It. In the I-You attitude, the person never feels alone. Buber points out that with the I-You attitude "even solitude cannot spell forsakeness, and when the human world falls silent for him, he hears his damonion say You" (1970, pg. 116).

Buber makes the point that the I-You and I-It attitudes are interrelated aspects of existence. He remarks that I-You and I-It are an ".. intricately entangled series of events.." (1970, pg. 69). If the It represents that fundamental separation between man and world, it would seem that although the experience of aloneness may be avoided temporarily, we must ultimately return to it. As Buber notes: "every You in the world is doomed by its nature to become a thing or at least to enter into thinghood again and again" (1970, pg. 69). Thus, even in relationships with a predominantly I-You attitude, existential aloneness cannot be completely avoided.

Like Buber, Fromm (1956) believes in the importance of overcoming our painful awareness of separateness through relating. He asserts that man's awareness of his essential aloneness ".. makes his separate disunited existence an unbearable prison" and that "he would become insane could he not liberate himself from this prison and reach out, unite himself in some form or other with men, with the world outside" (1956, pg. 8). Fromm discusses several historical attempts by society to overcome the experience of separateness such as through creativity, religion and conformity but claims that these attempts have fallen short. Love is our best way of dealing with aloneness; "the full answer lies in the achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in love" (1956, pg. 18).

Fromm differentiates between mature love and symbiotic union. Although in symbiotic union the person escapes the unbearable feeling of isolation and separateness, they fail to affirm themselves as an independent individual. In contrast, Fromm describes mature love as follows:

> .. mature love is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality. Love is an active power in man; a power which breaks through the walls which separate man from his fellow men, which unites him with others; love makes him overcome the sense of isolation and separateness, yet it permits him to be himself, to retain his integrity. In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two. (1956, pg. 21)

Fromm notes that love is a matter of giving more than receiving. He also states that love involves aspects of care, responsibility, respect and knowledge for the other person. To love means to be concerned for the life and growth of the other. One is also responsive to the needs of the other and respectful of their freedom and uniqueness. But one cannot fully respect and foster the other's growth without knowing that other deeply. True knowledge of the other, according to Fromm, is only possible when one transcends self-concern and sees the other person in his or her own terms. One needs to enter and become familiar with the subjective world of the other, to live in the other's life and sense the other's meanings and experiences. Only through achieving such need-free love is one able to transcend a sense of isolation and separateness. Fromm's notion of mature love is similar to the I-You relationship described by Buber.

Jaspers (1969) comments that "I cannot come to myself without entering into communication, and I cannot enter communication without being lonely" (pg. 56). The capacity for loneliness and the capacity for existential communication are inseparable. Existential communication refers to a way of relating very similar to that described by Buber as an I-You relationship and by Fromm as mature love. Loneliness and solitude (which Jaspers appears to use interchangeably) are the result of an experience of not

yet being able to be completely revealed and become one's self with the other along with a readiness to enter into existential communication. Even when existential communication occurs, loneliness is still possible, since it is always a "coming-to" rather than an "arrival at" self-being and, thus, selfhood remains incomplete. According to Jaspers, existential communication requires a willingness to experience loneliness and solitude. The communication of loneliness and solitude is essential since they are ultimate truths and only truth unites individuals.

Although several existential thinkers propose the possibility of transcending the experience of aloneness through relating to others, this possibility is presented with significant reservations. It is clear that although aloneness may be transcended for periods of time the tendency is to gravitate back to this experience. Human relating may not only remove one's experience of separateness, it also may lead to this very same experience through alienating interactions. From an existential point of view, the significance of relating to others for the experience of aloneness depends on the quality of those relationships.

Facing and Fleeing Aloneness

In Being and Time (1962), Heidegger distinguishes between two basic modes of being which relate to facing and fleeing one's fundamental aloneness. In what he labels the

"authentic" mode of existence, the person chooses and acts with the full awareness of their ultimate responsibility, inevitable death, and aloneness. In what Heidegger labels the "inauthentic" mode of existence, individuals flee an awareness of their human condition by allowing their existence to be shaped by others. The person denies existential aloneness by becoming absorbed into the group. With an inauthentic mode of existence one is seen as fleeing instead of facing their fundamental aloneness.

According to Sartre (1957), whether one actively participates in choosing or allows the world to choose, the underlying attitude which enters the process of choice is one of two kinds. First, one may embrace freedom and responsibility for decisions and thereby face one's aloneness. This is similar to the "authentic" mode of existence proposed by Heidegger. The second attitude is that which Sartre labels bad-faith. Here, one hides freedom from oneself. He dwells on restrictions and places power outside the self. The person exhibiting bad-faith does not take responsibility for all his actions but often selectively credits those he likes to himself and blames failures on others. Sartre views the attitude of bad-faith as a denial of one's fundamental condition of aloneness, freedom and responsibility. Bad-faith closely parallels that which Heidegger labels an "inauthentic" mode of existence.

Moustakas (1961, 1972) distinguishes between existential loneliness and loneliness anxiety. He seems to imply that loneliness represents an authentic mode of existence while loneliness anxiety represents an inauthentic mode of existence or bad-faith. Moustakas takes the view of insisting that we are ultimately alone and that loneliness is an inevitable human experience. He sees the experience of loneliness as normal and essential for human growth; he describes loneliness anxiety as an unhealthy defense mechanism.

According to Moustakas, loneliness anxiety is not true loneliness but rather ".. a defense that attempts to eliminate it by constantly seeking activity with others or by continually keeping busy to avoid facing the crucial questions of life and death" (1972, pg. 20). Loneliness anxiety warns us of impending loneliness and incites us to take defensive maneuvers to avoid this experience. It is considered to be a denial of our existential condition. Moustakas asserts that the fear, evasion, denial and accompanying attempts to escape the experience of being lonely will forever isolate the person from his own existence. By not allowing oneself the experience of loneliness the person leaves a significant aspect of being underdeveloped.

Moustakas claims that solitude is as much an intrinsic desire in man as is gregariousness. Solitude is viewed as

a return to oneself and as "a path to authenticity and self-renewal" (1972, pg. 42). In solitude, there is both an utter aloneness and a sense of fundamental relatedness to life, nature and the universe. According to Moustakas, only through this fundamental relatedness can the individual develop his own identity. The facing of one's ultimate isolation also allows one to develop a greater appreciation and sensitivity for the contrasting experience of companionship with others.

It must be noted that Moustakas uses the term existential loneliness to refer to both experiences of ".. the agony of being and dying as an isolated individual.." and experiences of knowing ".. the beauty and joy and wonder of being alive in solitude" (1972, pg. 20). Existential loneliness is seen to have two basic forms: the loneliness of solitude, which is a peaceful state of being alone, and the loneliness of a broken life, where one experiences the painful disruption of his or her interpersonal world. The term loneliness is employed ambiguously by Moustakas to refer both to pleasurable and painful experiences. Whereas Tillich uses the terms loneliness and solitude to refer to the two basic forms of aloneness, Moustakas identifies solitude as a type of loneliness.

Burton (1961) labels "the Dialogue" a dynamic balance between an awareness of self and other which makes relating

to others possible. The significance of loneliness for Burton is that it is the affirmation of one's selfhood through standing alone and facing one's self and one's life directly. In defining loneliness, he equates it with complete independence and unrelatedness to others and, thus, like Moustakas, appears to use this term to refer to both painful and pleasurable experiences of aloneness.

Burton discusses the positive aspects of loneliness for the schizophrenic. He claims that the schizophrenic is intensely lonely and that such loneliness represents an attempt to renounce a life that seems absurd because it lacks meaning. Burton states that:

> loneliness is the need for authentication, for meaning and unity, in a dehumanizing culture, and is the confirmation of the psychic aliveness of the individual. Loneliness in its various forms permits the establishment of the self so that the relationship with the "other" becomes possible. Without it, the self is deprived and cannot relate to the totality of things and thus find its continuity (1961, pg. 39).

It is clear that loneliness is valued by Burton because it demonstrates a sensitivity to one's existential condition and because it contains the possibility of self-transcendence. Similar to Moustakas, facing one's ultimate aloneness is viewed as a way of coming to know oneself and entering into a more authentic relatedness with others.

Hammer (1972) considers loneliness to be a distraction from the awareness of our essential aloneness. It represents the desire to flee the state of aloneness through finding a relationship. Like Sartre and

Mijuskovic, Hammer accepts the premise that the fundamental human condition is a state of nothingness. He maintains that loneliness is basically a problem of egoism, that is, identifying ourself with an illusion and covering up the fact that we are really no-thing. The egoist is unable to love because to love he must risk surrendering himself and experiencing his essential nothingness. Hammer concludes that ".. loneliness .. as a manifestation of the relatively exclusive living in the egoistic state, is a reflection of that person's inability to love" (1972, pg. 27). It appears that Hammer uses the term loneliness to refer to the experience that other existential writers, such as Moustakas, call loneliness anxiety or the fear of aloneness. Taking this into consideration, his ideas are generally consistent with theirs.

While Hammer viewed loneliness as an escape from our basic nothingness, Greenwald (1972) described loneliness as a denial of personal responsibility. Since, like Sartre and Tillich, he considers total responsibility for creating one's life an aspect of the existential condition, loneliness is seen as an unhealthy refusal to face reality. Hammer identified loneliness and solitude as the two opposite poles of a continuum of aloneness experiences. While in solitude, one feels more alive, aware and open to creative solutions to problems, in the experience of loneliness, one feels deprived of emotionally satisfying

relationships. Greenwald believes that loneliness is self-induced and that the person is responsible for creating and sustaining their loneliness. The lonely person does not accept responsibility, and seeks from others what he or she can only find in themselves.

As a final note, the importance of facing and experiencing aloneness has been an important theme for many existentially-oriented literary writers. Thoreau, in Walden (1950), describes his experiences of solitude. He writes that he finds the company of others "wearisome and dissipating", loves to be alone and ".. never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude" (1950, pg. 121). In solitude, Thoreau experienced a greater sense of connectedness with nature. Thomas Wolfe (1941) considered the experience of loneliness necessary for the creative process. A confrontation with one's existential condition through aloneness is viewed as a source of both pain and inspiration.

Existentialists in general see the value facing one's existential condition. To the extent that aloneness is viewed as intrinsic to the basic condition of man, existentialists consider facing up to this to produce a more authentic mode of existing. Fleeing aloneness, on the other hand is considered to be inauthentic and representative of an attitude of bad-faith. The more complex finding is that some existentialists see loneliness

as a facing of one's aloneness whereas others see it as a fleeing from one's aloneness. This discrepancy is due primarily to differing meanings of the term loneliness. When loneliness refers to an awareness of one's existential condition of being isolated and separate, it is thought of as a facing of one's aloneness. When loneliness refers to a preoccupation with needing to relate to others, it is thought of as fleeing one's aloneness. It is likely that both of these aspects may be present in an individual's experience of loneliness.

A Phenomenological Perspective On Aloneness

From a phenomenological perspective, the proper focus is on the experience of being alone, rather than on the causes or consequences of it. Sadler notes that many commentators on the experience of loneliness have tended to confuse "the experience itself with something that precedes or flows from it" (1978, pg. 160). Psychodynamic perspectives have focused on the developmental roots and psychological problems associated with loneliness. Sociological perspectives have attended primarily to the social factors which are seen as increasing the isolation, alienation and loneliness of the masses. Existential perspectives have been concerned with looking for the source of aloneness in the human condition, and with how people attempt to cope with the inevitability of this

experience. Very little has been clearly elucidated, however, about what the experience of aloneness is like from the personal perspective of a person experiencing aloneness.

A phenomenological perspective takes as its subject human experience, and attempts to understand the experience. There is an attempt to understand phenomena as they present themselves in experience rather than to rely on theoretical conceptualizations or speculations (Giorgi, 1984). Theories come from an observation and an understanding of experience, they are not imposed on the analysis of experience (Barrell and Barrell, 1975). Phenomenologically-oriented approaches to understanding the experience of aloneness have been focused on two major topics which will be discussed in the following: 1) the relationship of the experience of alienation from self and others to psychopathology and 2) the phenomenological dimensions of aloneness.

The Experience of Alienation from Self and Others in Psychopathology

Van den Berg (1972) discusses the relationship between mental illness and the experience of alienation from others. He labels psychopathology the science of loneliness. Of the mental patient, he asserts that "loneliness is the central core of his illness, no matter what his illness may be... loneliness is the nucleus of

psychiatry" (1972, pg. 105). Van den Berg claims that the essential difference between the healthy person and the mentally ill is that while the healthy person shares the same phenomenological world with others, the mentally ill person does not. The schizophrenic's delusions and hallucinations by definition are not shared by others and tend to isolate him. Van den Berg notes that the schizophrenic is so alienated that he is not aware of a distinction between his own reality and that of others and although extremely isolated, no longer feels lonely. Van den Berg concludes that loneliness is neither a cause nor effect but is intrinsic to most forms of psychopathology.

R.D. Laing (1965) describes mental illness as rooted in the experience of a divided self. Primary ontological insecurity, reflecting a lack of a sense of relatedness, leads to an attempt to preserve the self by developing a false self-system to present to others while keeping the real self hidden. The chasm between the false and real self leads to self-alienation and illness. Laing claims that an extreme form of a divided self is seen in schizophrenia, culminating in self-fragmentation and an inability to maintain a sense of connection to the world. Insanity, according to Laing, includes a sense of estrangement from both self and society; that is an experience of ultimate aloneness.

Rogers (1961) identifies two elements of the experience of loneliness: estrangement from self and estrangement from others. Self-estrangement involves distrust and disregard for one's own experience. Rogers points out that because we are conditioned by our parents to suppress feelings there develops a discrepancy between what we think we should feel and what we feel. Alienation from experience takes away the basis of relating and isolates one from others. Loneliness begins with self-alienation that leads to estrangement from others. As with Laing, loneliness for Rogers involves a division between a real and a false self and invariably is a sign of a pathological condition.

Phenomenological Dimensions of Aloneness

Sadler (1978) takes a phenomenological approach to studying the experience of loneliness. He excludes from his investigation the experience of solitude, which he notes "reverberates with pleasure and a sense of fulfillment rather than pain and deprivation" (1978, pg. 162). Sadler is unclear regarding the specific methodological procedure he utilized, other than calling it a phenomenological analysis and saying that he collected descriptive self-reports from a variety of sources, including interviews, workshops and literary works. The purpose of his study was to better understand universal features of the experience of loneliness as well as to

discover various experiential dimensions or ways people feel lonely.

In characterizing the experiential aspects of loneliness, Sadler notes a reflexive component where a person's focus is turned upon themselves. One feels that there is something wrong in the personal world. Loneliness is a form of self-perception and self-definition. It can also be considered a frustrated expectation where the person is lacking others. Sadler notes that:

> Lonely people often perceive themselves in terms of a void. The personal world of loneliness is characterized by emptiness rather than fullness, by absence rather than presence. Something vitally important is felt to be missing from one's world. (1978, pg. 165)

Loneliness, according to Sadler, is a painful form of self-awareness that communicates to a person a basic relationship in his world is deficient.

Sadler differentiates between five dimensions of loneliness: interpersonal, social, cultural, cosmic, and psychological. Each of these dimensions represent specific sources of distress for the individual. In the interpersonal dimension of loneliness, one perceives oneself to be separated from a significant other. Sadler notes that "the experience may be a general form of longing for companionship or love; or it can be a very specific longing for a particular individual, as in the experience of separation or grief" (1978, pg. 168). The social dimension involves perceiving oneself as separate from a

highly regarded group. In the cultural dimension of loneliness, one suffers a self-recognition of estrangement from a cultural home. This experience has been described as alienation and anomie. With the cosmic dimension of loneliness, there is an experience of emptiness that entails a suffering self-recognition of separateness from an ultimate source of meaning and life, such as God and nature. Finally, the psychological dimension of loneliness is a type of loneliness where one feels separated from what one regards to be the self. There is a sense of feeling divided and out of touch with oneself.

Sadler notes that the psychological dimension may pervade all the other dimensions and contributes to a lowering of self-esteem. He concludes that simple loneliness involving only one dimension is stressful; complex loneliness, involving more than one or all the dimensions, is particularly painful and destructive.

Sadler provides a typology of forms of loneliness based upon what a person experiences himself to be alone in relation to. The person may be alone in relation to specific others, groups of others, the culture, the cosmos or themselves. Sadler focuses more on the targets than on the meanings of loneliness, and his model is deterministic in that he focuses on how various environmental deficits impose deficiencies on the individual and lead directly to loneliness. He does not appear to emphasize how the

person's meanings and intentions create the experience of loneliness. In considering the ability of individuals to structure experience, one could better understand how the same environmental deficiencies could be experienced painfully, as loneliness, or enjoyably, as solitude. Studying pleasurable as well as painful experiences of aloneness may have provided Sadler with more insight into this phenomenon.

The dimensions of loneliness found by Sadler are similar to those developed by Gaev (1976). She also found five types of loneliness: loneliness of the inner self, physical loneliness, emotional loneliness, social loneliness, and spiritual loneliness. The loneliness of the inner self is close to Sadler's notion of the psychological dimension of loneliness. Here, too, loneliness is taken to be a feeling of estrangement from one's real feelings and desires. This experience of self-alienation is also similar to that discussed by Rogers and Laing as being intrinsic to mental illness. While inner loneliness is experienced as a sense of alienation from self coupled with a desire to be re-connected with oneself which brings a feeling of distress, whether one can call this experience loneliness is certainly debatable. The focus in the experience of self-alienation seems to be on wanting to be in touch with oneself, which seems fundamentally different from wanting to create a link

between oneself and others. Self-alienation may be more of an experience of being lost rather than being lonely, and referring to it as a type of loneliness may cloud this distinction.

The second classification is physical loneliness, which Gaev describes as "the feeling of frustration and longing for physical closeness, contact, and touch of significant others" (1976, pg. 9). Closely related to the desire for physical contact is emotional loneliness is characterized as "the feeling of sadness when our need for closeness of significant others is frustrated" (1976, pg. 10). In this way of feeling lonely, the need for emotional closeness and intimacy through communication is emphasized. With both physical and emotional closeness there is a longing for a significant other which is similar to the interpersonal dimension of loneliness described by Sadler.

Gaev describes social loneliness as the experience of not being able to find a place, a way of being, in the social context around oneself. This can take several forms, such as peer loneliness, lack of acceptance in a friendship group or with colleagues, the loneliness of those who cannot identify with a meaningful role in society, the loneliness of the prejudiced or outcast, and cultural loneliness, as with those who migrate from our country to another or from one region to another. This

form of loneliness appears to blend together the social and cultural dimensions of loneliness discussed by Sadler.

The last form of loneliness is spiritual loneliness. By this is meant the isolation or alienation which occurs when one is unable to find meaning in one's life. Spiritual loneliness is clearly equivalent to what Sadler labels the cosmic dimension of loneliness. Further, this form of loneliness also appears to be similar to the existential loneliness discussed by the existentialists.

Criticisms of Gaev's typology is similar to that of Sadler's since she, too, seems to emphasize situations rather than the meanings of loneliness. Both typologies also fail to provide an understanding of the relationship of loneliness to other painful non-lonely aloneness experiences and pleasurable aloneness.

Nisenbaum (1980) performed a study to construct a taxonomy of aloneness experiences, including both painful and pleasurable experiences of feeling alone. He notes that aloneness is a way of construing things where, paradoxically, there is both an experience of oneself without others and yet also an awareness of the others who are thought to be missing or inaccessible. One is also reflective about oneself being in relationship with others but only as a separate and distinct being.

Nisenbaum follows a research method developed by deRivera (1977, 1981) called the "conceptual encounter".

This method assumes that emotional experience is divided into four interrelated aspects termed the situation, the transformation, the instruction and the function. The situation refers to an awareness of one's relationship to others. The transformation refers to the process by which one comes to an assessment of oneself as feeling a certain way. Instruction consists of what the person is telling themselves to do or not do and function refers to the overall meaning or intention of the experience.

The conceptual encounter is an in-depth, structured, interview with a participant aimed at determining the nature of the situation, transformation, instruction and function for a given experience. Despite the use of descriptive self-reports, the structuring of interviews in the conceptual encounter to fill-in information regarding pre-determined categories or aspects of experience runs contrary to the phenomenological aim of the investigator maintaining an open, presuppositionless attitude. Although the method utilized was phenomenologically-oriented it also contained notable reductionistic tendencies.

The approach employed by Nisenbaum yielded nine varieties of aloneness, each with a distinct experiential structure. Nisenbaum numbers rather than labels these ways of feeling alone which are presented as follows:

Structure 1

Situation: You realize you lack connectedness with any important others.

Transformation: You experience yourself sinking inward and away from others.

Instruction: Don't merge.

Function: To prevent despair at the total loss of the possibility of meaning.

This is an extreme and overwhelming form of painful aloneness where one feels far away from and invisible to others.

Structure 2

Situation: You realize that closeness is warranted here with these others, but that would make you vulnerable and exposed as rejectable.

Transformation: You experience a shell forming around you.

Instruction: Don't come out- stay in the shell.

Function: To preserve safety.

Here, the person feels cut-off from others. He or she hides from others because of a fear of being rejected.

Structure 3

Situation: You realize no one shares the difficult choice of conduct you face. Only you can do it.

Transformation: You experience a steely core of resolve as the task looms large.

Instruction: Isolate yourself- don't be distracted.

Function: To preserve determination in facing the challenge and taking responsibility.

In this type of aloneness, one feels alone in having to face life's choices on one's own.

Structure 4

> Situation: You feel something is happening which calls for a particular other to be there.
>
> Transformation: You experience being held back from fully participating.
>
> Instruction: Wish they were here.
>
> Function: Don't give up- prevent separation and confirm yourself as a social being.

Here, one experiences the potential to enjoy a situation and wishes that a particular other was there to share it with them.

Structure 5

> Situation: You feel stranded and know that you ought to be in a familiar setting or with people who would make you feel secure.
>
> Transformation: You experience the restlessness of trying but being unable to reunite with the part of you that is still in its former surrounds.
>
> Instruction: Wish you were there, where they still are.
>
> Function: To replenish and renew yourself through a sense of belonging.

In this way of being alone, the person feels a sense of homesickness or longing to be in a familiar setting where others care about him or her.

Structure 6

> Situation: You are without the presence of a special other person, and you feel the need for his/her proximity.

Transformation: You experience the craving for closeness and intimacy.

Instruction: Reach out, draw him/her, convince him/her to be here.

Function: To love and feel loved.

The person misses the physical presence of a special other person and feels the need for physical proximity.

Structure 7

Situation: You feel the other does not acknowledge or confirm you and your intense neediness of him/her.

Transformation: You experience the pining, and there is a welling up of neediness.

Instruction: Show the world how desperately you need the other. Idealize and possess the other.

Function: To feel righteous, superior, and threatened by nothing else in the world save the other's rejection.

Here, the person experiences an intense neediness towards an other which is not acknowledged in return.

Structure 8

Situation: You feel comfort, serenity, and equanimity in your privacy.

Transformation: You experience the peace, totality, the unity.

Instruction: Be one with the world.

Function: To feel complete, secure, a part of everything.

With this type of aloneness, the person feels unique, self-contained and complete regardless of the presence or absence of others in their surroundings.

Structure 9

> Situation: You feel the absence of a human presence, a void of humanity out there where a person (or people) should be.
>
> Transformation: You experience the emptiness inside yourself and become incomplete, not present.
>
> Instruction: Fill the void by wishing for him/her/them to be here.
>
> Function: To prevent despair at the total loss of the possibility of meaning that would come if you accepted they were truly gone.

In experiencing the absence of a person they desire to be present, they become preoccupied with the void that surrounds them where the person ought to be and a sense of emptiness and incompleteness within themselves.

Nisenbaum proposes that "if one thinks of each experiential structure as an available option, then each person exercises a particular series of "choices" about how his or her experience is organized" (1980, pg. 798). Further, he suggests that combinations of the various structures are possible and that some of the structures represent antinomies. He notes that Structure 1 is the converse of Structure 9 since one is lost to significant others in the former and loses significant others in the latter. Similarly, Structure 4 and Structure 5 are opposites since in the former, one wishes others were here to share an experience, while in the latter, one wishes one were there where the others are sharing the experience.

The presence of antinomies among varieties of aloneness suggests that some ways of feeling alone may preclude others and, thus, not be found combined in the same experience.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Participants

The participants were 10 male and 10 female Caucasian adults with an average age of 36.6 and a median age of 35. Participants were all volunteers either from a local university, a local church study group, or a community singles group. All individuals agreed to participate in the study after its purpose, method, and provisions for confidentiality had been explained to them either as a group or individually.

Demographic data on the participants are presented in Table 1. This table indicates that the majority of the participants are college-educated, unmarried and have one or no children. Of the unmarried participants, the majority were divorced. This is probably a result of several volunteers being from local singles groups. The participants were either employed outside of the home, in graduate school, or were homemakers caring for children. All participants were from a middle-class socioeconomic bracket.

The only qualification for participation in this study was that individuals had experiences of feeling alone and were able to talk about them. This is consistent with the selection criteria proposed by Colaizzi (1978, pg. 58) for

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participant Population.

Category	Number of Participants	
	Male	Female
Age Interval		
20-29	3	1
30-39	4	5
40-49	2	3
50-59	1	1
Educational Level		
Vocational or Technical Degree	1	3
Bachelor's Degree	2	6
Master's Degree	5	1
Doctoral Degree	2	0
Marital Status		
Never Married	4	0
Married	2	4
Separated	0	1
Divorced	4	4
Widowed	0	1
Number of Children		
0	7	3
1	0	3
2	1	3
3	2	0
4	0	1
Occupation		
Homemaking	0	3
Graduate Training	5	0
Clerical	0	3
Teaching	0	1
Business or Administration	3	3
Engineering	2	0

participation in phenomenological research. According to Colaizzi, "Experience with the investigated topic and articulateness suffice as criteria for selecting subjects." All individuals who volunteered and were selected for participation in this study had experiences of feeling alone and demonstrated an ability to describe these experiences articulately in an interview format.

Instruments

Each participant took part in a semi-structured, open-ended interview and then was given an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the investigator's summarization of this interview at a later date.

Interview

An interview was the primary means of data collection. The goal was to collect detailed descriptions of feeling alone as they appear in ordinary experience. Interviews were consistent with aspects of the research interview described by Kvale (1983). Interviews were semi-structured and the researcher functioned as an "interview guide" by focusing interviewees on certain topics rather than asking specific questions. Interviews also were open-ended since it was the participant who selected specific experiences of feeling alone as well as aspects of these experiences to discuss. Appendix A presents guidelines used in conducting the interviews. A complete transcript

of one of the interviews is included as Appendix G, edited only to remove identifying information. This transcript will illustrate how the guidelines were utilized by the interviewer to elicit a complete description of the phenomenon from the participant.

Questions utilized by the researcher during the interview were restricted to those presented in the research guidelines. The absence of a standard set of questions directed at various aspects of a phenomenon being investigated is in contrast to several other phenomenological studies (Dapkus, 1982; Myers,1985; MacGillivray, 1986). Kvale (1983) claims that a presuppositionless attitude should be maintained by the interviewer during the research interview. He advocates the absence of ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation which would tend to constrain the interview. Utilizing a standard set of questions addressing certain aspects of a phenomenon presumes a knowledge of what these aspects are and which of these aspects are important. In maintaining an attitude of openness to how a phenomenon is presented on its own terms, a minimum of questions, which might constrain an interview to certain aspects of a phenomenon, would be optimal. The interview guidelines constructed in this study were designed to promote a maximum of flexibility and openness to what the participant felt was most important about his or her experience of

aloneness. The participant, and not the researcher, primarily structured the interview.

Each interview began with the same initial question: When are you most aware of feeling alone? This question was designed to elicit several situations of feeling alone. Sometimes, instead of recalling a specific event or incident, the participant mentioned a more general situation or type of situation, such as being at home and feeling alone. In this case, the person would be asked to try and think of a particular time when he or she was home and felt alone. Specific examples of events were asked for to avoid ambiguous descriptions and to facilitate the most detailed account of what it was like to feel alone in a given situation. If the person was unable to think of a specific example, the general situation, in the same manner as a specific situation, was taken as the subject of further inquiry.

After the participant had generated either general or specific situations, the interviewer followed-up each one of these with further questioning. The format of this questioning, which was the same for all participants, consisted of asking the participant what they were aware of in the given situation of feeling alone. Although responses by the participants included <u>what</u> they were aware of, they also included <u>how</u> they were aware of these targets, or their lived meanings (Barrell and Barrell,

1975; Barrell and Price, 1980). For example, a participant might both mention that they were aware of being in a room as well as how this room appeared to them. The experiential descriptions of a given situation elicited both the targets and meanings of the participant.

The interviewer aimed at obtaining detailed descriptions from the participant to facilitate an understanding of the experience. When a participant's description of a particular situation seemed incomplete, the investigator would ask the participant: "what else were you aware of?" In addition to a lack of information, ambiguity was dealt with on an on-line basis since the investigator sought clarification during the interview. When the participant mentioned concepts or terms that were unclear to the interviewer, he attempted to clarify them by asking the participant what the concept or term meant to him or her.

Sometimes, a participant would refer to a situation to which they had referred earlier and add, change or clarify descriptive information. Participants also would sometimes spontaneously engage in interpretations of the meanings of their experiences and this was not discouraged because it was seen as part of the process of furthering understanding.

When a participant completed his or her experiential description of a given situation, the researcher would then

refer the participant to the next situation mentioned and, following the interview guidelines, elicit an experiential description. Often, in the course of an interview, participants would think of new situations where they had felt alone, in addition to those already mentioned in response to the initial question. When all of situations or contexts of feeling alone mentioned by a participant were inquired into, the participant was then asked by the researcher if he or she could think of any other situations in which they felt alone. If participants came up with new situations, they were asked to describe what they were aware of in these situations. If participants could not think of any other situations, they were thanked for their participation and the interview was ended. During the interview, the researcher kept a list of situations mentioned by a given participant in order to ensure that all situations were properly investigated.

Participant Follow-up

From the participant's responses in the interview, feedback summary paragraphs were generated by the investigator during the data analysis part of the study. Each summary paragraph paraphrased an experiential description of a given situation in which the participant felt alone. Summary paragraphs were mailed to participants, along with a cover letter asking for comments, additions or changes. A copy of the cover letter

appears in Appendix B. The participant's responses to the feedback summary paragraphs served as an important validating step in the data analysis. Moreover, the final results were based upon the summary paragraphs as revised by participants.

Data Collection

The initial contact with a participant was conducted either individually or by visiting a church or community group. A handout, presented as Appendix C, was distributed containing information about the study. This handout provided the prospective participant with a description of the nature and purpose of the study, a description of provisions regarding confidentiality, and instructions that he or she might withdraw from the study at any time without question or penalty. Also included was the investigator's phone number so that the interested person could contact him and gain further information about the study and/or volunteer to participate. Some individuals expressed their interest and agreed to participate during the initial contact; others contacted the investigator by phone. Once a person agreed to participate, the time and place of the interview was scheduled.

All participants were interviewed at their convenience and at a place of their choosing; priority was placed on letting each participant control the setting for the

interview so as to be most comfortable. Seventeen participants chose to be interviewed at their home; three participants chose to be interviewed at the researcher's office at the University of Tennessee.

Before an interview was started, the participant was asked to read and sign the first Information and Consent Form which appears in Appendix D. The investigator also read aloud the Information and Consent Form and participants were encouraged to ask any questions related to involvement in the study. After insuring that participants adequately understood the study and their involvement in it, they were allowed to sign the Information and Consent Form. Participants then filled out a form assessing their demographic characteristics, which appears in Appendix E.

All interviews were audiotaped with a cassette tape recorder with the full knowledge and consent of the participants. Interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Following an interview, the participant was asked if he or she had any questions or comments that had not been covered either before or during the interview.

Anonymity was protected by assigning a code to each participant after obtaining informed consent. The participant's code number was the only means of identifying audio tape recordings of the interviews. There was only one master list of names and code numbers which was kept in

a secure place by the investigator. All data utilized only the participant's numerical code for the purposes of identification; this, too was kept in a safe place by the investigator. After research was completed, the master list of names and codes was destroyed and the interview audiotapes were erased. Interview transcripts and other written data continue to be stored in a safe place by the investigator.

The feedback summary paragraphs and cover letter were mailed to the participants approximately 2 to 4 months after the interview. A blank sheet and self-addressed, stamped envelope were provided for the participant's response.

A second consent form was obtained from the participant who agreed to let his verbatim transcript be reproduced for this study. This research participant was sent a copy of the transcript typed from his interview to read and edit in any manner he felt appropriate before deciding whether or not to sign the second consent form; this form appears in Appendix F. No changes were made by the participant.

Data Analysis

Once an interview was completed, a written transcript was made from the audio-tape of the interview. Interview statements were then summarized to provide succinct

descriptions of the person's experiences of feeling alone. These descriptions were then compared and contrasted with experiential descriptions produced by other participants. Descriptions of particular contexts were grouped to develop a number of themes that were related to each other so as to reveal a fundamental structure of the experience of feeling alone.

A phenomenological mode of data analysis was used. This mode of data analysis maintains an attitude of bracketing throughout, which refers to the researcher's attempt to suspend belief about a given phenomenon (Aanstoos, 1983). In other words, there was an attempt to set-aside preconceptions and to allow meanings to emerge from the data. Since a complete absence of presuppositions is difficult to achieve, bracketing refers to the investigator being aware of his assumptions, or of being without assumptions.

In the spirit of the phenomenological attitude of meeting the phenomenon on its own terms, the phenomenon itself should dictate the manner in which it is investigated (Keen, 1975). Thus, different topics may require different procedures of data analysis. Despite this, there are procedural norms in phenomenological research, even if these have sometimes been poorly delineated. Several schemes for dividing phenomenological data analysis into discrete operations or steps have been

proposed (Giorgi,1970, 1975; Colaizzi, 1978; Kruger, 1981; Wertz, 1983; Aanstoos, 1983; Jones, 1984). Data reduction procedures employed in this study were adapted primarily from Colaizzi (1978) and Kruger (1981) and include the following stages:

1. Obtain a Holistic Grasp of the Data
2. Organize Meaning Contexts by;
   a. Demarcating
   b. Dividing
   c. Condensing
   d. Grouping
   e. Combining
3. Formulate Meanings
4. Organize Meanings into Clusters of Themes
5. Refer Themes Back to the Original Protocols to Validate Them
6. Formulate a Comprehensive Description of the Fundamental Structure of the Phenomenon

A complete analysis of one interview is presented in Appendix G.

Stage 1: Obtain a Holistic Grasp of the Data

In analyzing the data, the investigator first read the interview transcript several times to get a sense of the experiences as they were lived by the participant. While

doing this, the investigator was careful to bracket his own preconceptions and judgments, thus, maintaining an attitude of openness to the data. Kruger (1981, p. 128) notes that "the repeated reading of the protocols in this early phase assists the researcher in retaining a sense of the wholeness of the data despite its dissection in the subsequent phases".

Stage 2: Organizing Meaning Contexts

Once the investigator achieved a holistic sense of the interview, he then went back over the transcript to extract and organize what has been variously termed natural meaning units (Giorgi, 1984; Kruger, 1981) or significant statements (Colaizzi, 1978). This step in the analysis differed somewhat from that described by Giorgi, Kruger and Colaizzi in that the process of condensing and summarizing the interview results in the production of units of meaning that are much closer to the actual words of participants. Colaizzi describes the process as a "general formulation" of the participant's responses. The approach taken in the present study is similar to that taken by Dapkus (1982) and MacGillivray (1986), producing statements that allow the participant's words and phrasings to be retained as much as possible.

The purpose of this phase of the analysis is to condense verbatim interviews into meaningful units. At this juncture a decision had to be made as to what

constituted a meaningful unit. One possible alternative was to consider each separate sentence spoken by the participant as the unit of interest. This alternative was rejected as it was felt to take statements, which were often not fully explained by the participant, out of context. Another alternative was to consider separate thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc. that a person mentioned as the units for later analysis. An attempt to do this resulted in fragments rather than units of meaning. By taking statements out of their context and, thus, removing the essential connection between these particular targets of awareness, there would be a failure to remain faithful to the phenomenon as it is lived. Finally, another alternative was to consider the answer to each question asked by the investigator as a meaningful unit. This was also rejected since participants would often change the topic, such as by talking about a different situation where they felt alone, when responding to a particular question. Participants would also sometimes elaborate on a particular topic or experience at different points in the interview, and dividing the data simply on the basis of questions would fail to meaningfully connect this data.

The meaning unit which was chosen was each discrete context or situation (or group of contexts or situations which the participant grouped together). In the interview,

the person was asked when they were most aware of feeling alone; each of these situations were inquired into further as to what the person was aware of in each. This process of interviewing facilitated the discussion of several situations or contexts by each participant. The contexts discussed by the participant included both specific events -- such as a particular time they went hiking -- as well as more general types of situations -- such as when they are driving. Some contexts represented a larger category of contexts or situations -- such as whenever the person felt lonely. Sometimes, individuals grouped together particular situations as exemplars of a larger context, such as two party situations as an example of feeling alone in a crowd. Included in a participant's discussion of a particular context was his or her meanings and what he or she was aware of in this context. To analyze these meanings and targets of awareness separately, would truly be taking the participants statements out of context. In contrast, utilizing the experiential description by the participant of a given context as the unit of analysis, retained the unity and interconnectedness of experience. The particular operations involved in arriving at these meaning contexts will now be described.

(a) Demarcating: The investigator read through the interview protocol slowly and carefully, noting and demarcating shifts of meaning in relation to the overall

topic. A shift of meaning was considered to occur when the person would begin to talk about a new situation or context in which they felt alone. The investigator made a slash mark (/) between sentences where a shift in meaning occurred.

(b) Dividing: The interview text was divided on the basis of the above described shifts of meaning. Each one of these units were numbered while preserving the order in which they appeared, and all of the original data in verbatim form with the exception of the interviewer's questions; these were paraphrased when needed for clarification of meaning. Each unit represented a distinct situation of feeling alone that the person talked about. Interviews yielded from 12 to 20 of these verbatim units. Appendix G shows the result of this step for the illustrative interview.

(c) Condensing: Each unit from the previous step was condensed in a manner that most concisely illuminated and summarized the meaning expressed while preserving as much as possible the words originally used. Statements of the participant were condensed to help clarify their meaning, while retaining information about the subtle nuances and details of the experience. Repetitions were left out and comments were excluded that upon query were not in the participant's mind related to feeling alone. Additionally,

in a technique similar to that used by Dapkus (1982), units were written as "I" statements (e.g. when I went home, I felt alone and far away from my mother) to preserve the immediate and personal quality of the participant's descriptions.

The techniques employed here represent a departure from Colaizzi's (1978) method of utilizing the interviewer's third-person descriptions of subject comments as significant statements. The result of this stage of data analysis was a list of preliminary meaning contexts for each participant, ranging in length from 1 to 8 sentences, which was equal in quantity and in the same order as the transcript from which they were derived. At this stage, units represented a reduction of a given protocol by approximately 1/3 of its original size. Appendix G presents a list of the preliminary meaning contexts at this stage for the illustrative interview.

(d) Grouping: The investigator read the list of preliminary meaning contexts for a given interview several times in order to find and group those which described the same context of feeling alone. This step is similar to the one adopted by MacGillivray (1986) of grouping similar material from different parts of an interview to form significant statements.

In the course of an interview, participants sometimes referred to a situation discussed earlier and now

elaborated the experience. Chronological segmentation of meaning units did not reflect these relationships between different portions of the protocol. In addition, participants sometimes offered descriptions of situations as specific examples of a more general context. For example, feeling alone while with one's spouse may be described in general followed by a description of a particular time when the participant experienced this. These two situations would be listed as separate units; in actuality they are part of the same meaning context for the participant. Thus, it became necessary to group together some preliminary meaning contexts which depicted either the same experience or experiences that were grouped together by the participant. The units were rearranged such that they were no longer necessarily in chronological order while maintaining the original number given for purposes of identification. The resultant groups, consisting of 1 to 4 preliminary meaning contexts, were given a letter label for purposes of identifying them and of distinguishing them from numbered units. The number of these groups ranged from 7 to 15 for each protocol.

The majority of preliminary meaning contexts did not need to be grouped or rearranged, making this step superfluous in many cases. Thus, generally, the units of this step were identical to the units of the previous step.

The results of this step for the illustrative interview is shown in Appendix G.

(e) Combining: In this step, each group of preliminary meaning contexts was formulated for a given individual in a manner that most concisely illuminated and summarized the meaning expressed by constituent units taken as a whole. In most cases, this was accomplished simply by combining units comprising a given group. Meaning contexts, which ranged in length from 2 to 10 sentences, represented the final form of this stage of analysis. Interviews ranged in length from 7 to 15 meaning contexts. Since the stage of grouping was unnecessary for the majority of meaning contexts, most were, again, identical to units of previous steps. The meaning contexts for the illustrative interview are listed in Appendix G.

As a check at this stage of data analysis, the investigator compared the meaning contexts for a given participant with the interview protocol from which they were derived. The purpose of this procedure was to make certain that no meaningful information regarding the individual's experience of feeling alone was left out of these meaning contexts. With few exceptions, the investigator found meaning contexts to retain the experiential descriptions of the participant.

Each meaning context represented a summarization of a person's experience of feeling alone in a particular

context. Taken together they represent the meaningful contexts of a given participant's experience of aloneness. The meaning context retained detailed, descriptive information regarding the experience of the participant and constituted the data upon which further data analysis as well as validity and reliability checks were based. The thematic structure of aloneness was derived from these meaning contexts. Each participant was mailed a copy of their summary paragraphs and asked to critique the accuracy of this data as a validity check. The meaning contexts, as revised by participants, also represented the data that was later scored by raters as a reliability check for the final results.

Stage 3: Formulating Meanings

After all meaning contexts had been determined, the researcher "formulated meanings" for each protocol. This stage is described by Colaizzi as a "precarious leap" where ".. the researcher must go beyond what is given in the original data and at the same time, stay with it." (1978, p. 59) In this study, meaning contexts were formulated prior to the researcher having any idea what the themes or structure of the experience of feeling alone would become. In this process, the investigator kept the entire interview in mind while describing the essence of a participant's account of a particular experience.

The procedure utilized in this study to formulate meanings differed somewhat from that described by Colaizzi in that the researcher attempted to maintain a more descriptive than interpretive approach to the data. There was an attempt to preserve the participant's words. The researcher selected words or phrases used by the participant which were judged to answer most directly the question of what feeling alone meant for this person in the particular situation being described. These words or phrases were then combined in a manner that attempted to concisely illuminate the participant's experience. Some meaning contexts were found to have the same formulated meaning while other meaning contexts were found to have more than one formulated meaning. The result of this stage of data analysis yielded a set of 4 to 9 formulated meanings for each participant. Formulated meanings for the illustrative interview are presented in Appendix G.

Stage 4: Organizing Formulated Meanings into Clusters of Themes

In this stage, formulated meanings were analyzed into clusters of themes. The investigator read the formulated meanings for a given participant while looking for similarities and differences concerning various meanings. The question was asked: "what is common and what is unique across these various meanings of feeling alone?" Similar formulated meanings were combined to develop a single theme

thereby reducing the total number of items for each individual. The result of this stage of analysis was a list of themes which could be stated in brief phrases aimed at explicating a single core or essential meaning of aloneness. At this stage, the first-person statement format as well as specific detailed information were omitted, since the intention was to achieve increased generality by comparing these themes across individuals. Theme clusters for each participant contained from 2 to 7 themes. Appendix G contains the clusters of themes obtained from the illustrative interview.

After themes had been obtained from each protocol, all themes from all protocols were collapsed into a tentative master list of themes. The total of all themes were analyzed for similarities and similar themes were grouped together to form single themes. The result was a list of themes which was further analyzed for similarities between items and collapsed to a shorter list. This was the tentative master list of themes. This list of themes was subsequently revised several times in further stages of analysis.

Stage 5: Referring Themes Back to the Original Protocols to Validate Them

The master list of themes was referred back to original protocols, through a process of repeated attempts to score meaning contexts according to the themes.

According to Colaizzi, this stage of analysis ".. can be achieved by asking whether there is anything contained in the original protocols that isn't accounted for in the clusters of themes, and whether the clusters of themes propose anything which isn't implied in the original protocols" (Colaizzi, 1978, p. 59). Thus, one attempts to determine if the master list contains either too much or too little information.

In scoring meaning contexts, the researcher both stayed with and went beyond the words of the participant. He attempted to keep an open mind as much as possible while allowing the words of the participant to speak to him and reveal their meaning. On the other hand, the problem of the same words having different meanings and different words having the same meanings was noted. Thus, it was also important to go beyond the words of the participant in trying to understand the meanings that the person was attempting to convey. It was sometimes useful for the investigator to attempt to relive experiences where he felt similarly to what the person was describing and to ask himself: what is feeling alone like for me in this situation, and what are the meanings involved? The investigator would then check back to see if these meanings appeared to be different or similar to those being described.

Attempts to score meaning contexts led to revisions of the master list of themes. Difficulties in scoring particular meaning contexts were usually due to themes which were too specific to include the unique meanings of feeling alone being described. In response to this problem, the investigator revised themes to increase the generality to a variety of meaning contexts. This resulted in the development of a theme that encompassed more than one theme previously listed. Consequently, through the process of scoring and revision, the master list of themes was progressively reduced in number. The decision to accept the final list of themes was made only after every meaning context from every protocol could be scored according to those themes.

Stage 6: Formulating a Comprehensive Description of the Fundamental Structure of the Phenomenon

Once the investigator was able to score every interview protocol according to themes appearing in the most recent (tentative) master list of themes, the list was accepted as representing the structure of the experience of feeling alone. Themes were then organized into a system of categories. This was accomplished by analyzing the list of themes for relationships between themes. It was found that certain themes, due to similarities of meaning, could be grouped together and given a single label. Themes that were grouped together became subthemes of a larger theme.

Other themes on the final master list were distinct and could not be grouped together. In fact, some were found to have more or less opposite meanings. Seeing these relationships between themes aided the researcher in describing the fundamental structure of aloneness. This final structure fulfilled the requirements of being both comprehensible and comprehensive. The structure was comprehensible by virtue of utilizing simple language close to the original words and experience of the participant as labels for the themes and subthemes. The structure was also comprehensive since it accounted for all specific examples.

Scoring the Interviews

After a comprehensive description of the fundamental structure of aloneness was accepted by the investigator, each protocol received a final scoring in relation to this system. Each meaning context received a score depending upon the themes that were present. There were a total of eight subthemes (i.e. two subthemes for each theme) and one or more subtheme could be scored as present in any given meaning context. Meaning contexts in the illustrative interview, appearing in Appendix G, are scored according to the thematic category system, with scores appearing above each item.

After all meaning contexts were scored, relationships between, among, and across themes were analyzed by reducing the data to percentages. The relative frequency of different themes and subthemes was considered both within and across individuals. Further, the relative frequency of various combinations of themes and subthemes was assessed.

The scored meaning contexts were grouped according to the various themes and subthemes they represented. The purpose of this grouping was to explore various ways in which a particular theme or subtheme was manifested in everyday experiencing. This analysis allowed the researcher to get a broader and more detailed understanding of the various meaning structures of aloneness. Each theme was found to have many variations in terms of a number of experiential aspects. Of particular interest were the different situations in which a given theme was found to appear. A characterization of such variability was incorporated into the final description of the fundamental structure of aloneness.

Post-hoc Analysis of Situations

After each meaning context was scored for themes, meaning contexts were further analyzed in terms of the situations they represented. Meaning contexts were grouped on the basis of describing similar situations in which participants experienced feeling alone. Through this

process of grouping meaning contexts, a classification system of situations was developed which accounted for much of the data. Meaning contexts constituting a given type of situation were compared in relation to the variety of themes they represented. Data regarding the interrelationship of themes and situations were incorporated into the final results of the study.

Reliability Check

Giorgi (1975) claims that a consensus among researchers over the conclusion to be made about a given datum is not an intrinsic demand of the phenomenological method. Rather, the essential claim, he asserts, is that "if any other researcher assumes the attitude described by the researcher, then he should be able to perceive and understand the same meaning.. One does not necessarily have to agree but one must understand what he is disagreeing about.." (Giorgi, 1975, p. 78) With the phenomenological method, reliability could only be meaningful if the researcher's perspective could be made explicit and shared by others. In this study there is an attempt to do just that. The purpose of a reliability check is to determine if the thematic category system used to describe the experience of feeling alone could be communicated to other people and, given this knowledge, if other people could

reliably score participants' descriptions according to this category system.

A Scoring Manual was constructed consisting of a description of the thematic category system as well as 16 scored meaning contexts provided as examples of subthemes. A copy of the Scoring Manual is presented as Appendix H. The reliability task consisted of two independent raters scoring 50 items. Each reliability item was a meaning context randomly selected except to ensure that at least two meaning contexts from each participant were included. The list of reliability items used in this study is shown in Appendix I.

Reliability raters, who were two graduate students in clinical psychology, were provided with a copy of the Scoring Manual. A meeting was held with raters after they had read the Scoring Manual in order to answer any question they had regarding the system. Feedback from raters was incorporated into the Scoring Manual in order to clarify the scoring of certain themes. Raters then scored reliability items. Results of this analysis were tabulated and percentages of agreement between the experimenter and the raters and between both raters were computed for each theme and subtheme.

Validity Check

Wertz proposes that the issue of validity in phenomenological research "has to do with the extent that the researcher actualizes the potential of her data for expressing the original organization of experience" (Wertz, 1984, p. 41) Thus, validity lies in the phenomenologist's actualizing his intention by producing results which are faithful to the phenomenon as it is lived. Checks to determine the validity of the findings were instituted at various stages of this research. A major source of validation was the written follow-up done with participants where they were sent the list of meaning contexts from their interview and asked to check the accuracy of these paragraphs in relation to their experiences. Revisions were made on the basis of participants' response. In addition, this data comprised the information upon which all further data analysis and the reliability check were performed.

In addition to checking feedback from participants, there was a continual checking back by the experimenter with the interview protocols to see if formulations were consistent with this data. If any formulation was not implicit or received counter-evidence in the original description, it was considered invalid. Wertz notes that "these criteria for validity are.. far more stringent than that of experimentally supported hypotheses since they

demand veridical reference to every actual subject, every bit of actual data and.. every possible.. manifestation of the phenomenon included in the scope of the formulation" (Wertz, 1984, p. 45).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The Thematic Structure of the Experience of Aloneness

There are a number of different ways of feeling alone; each different way of feeling alone is called a theme. Analysis of interview data produced a group of themes describing the structure of the experience of feeling alone. This structure was found to consist of 4 major themes and 2 minor or subthemes per theme:

(1) MISSING
  (a) Yearning
  (b) Emptiness

(2) BARRIER
  (a) Different
  (b) Indifferent

(3) VULNERABILITY
  (a) Unsupported
  (b) Exposed

(4) FREEDOM
  (a) Freedom To
  (b) Freedom From

The thematic categories were found to relate with one another in a way that can best be illustrated in the form of Figure 1. Each of the four major themes is at the four corners. The two subthemes of each theme are also at each corner. In parentheses at each corner are also the emotion found to be most related to each theme. The relative proximity of themes does not imply any special relationship

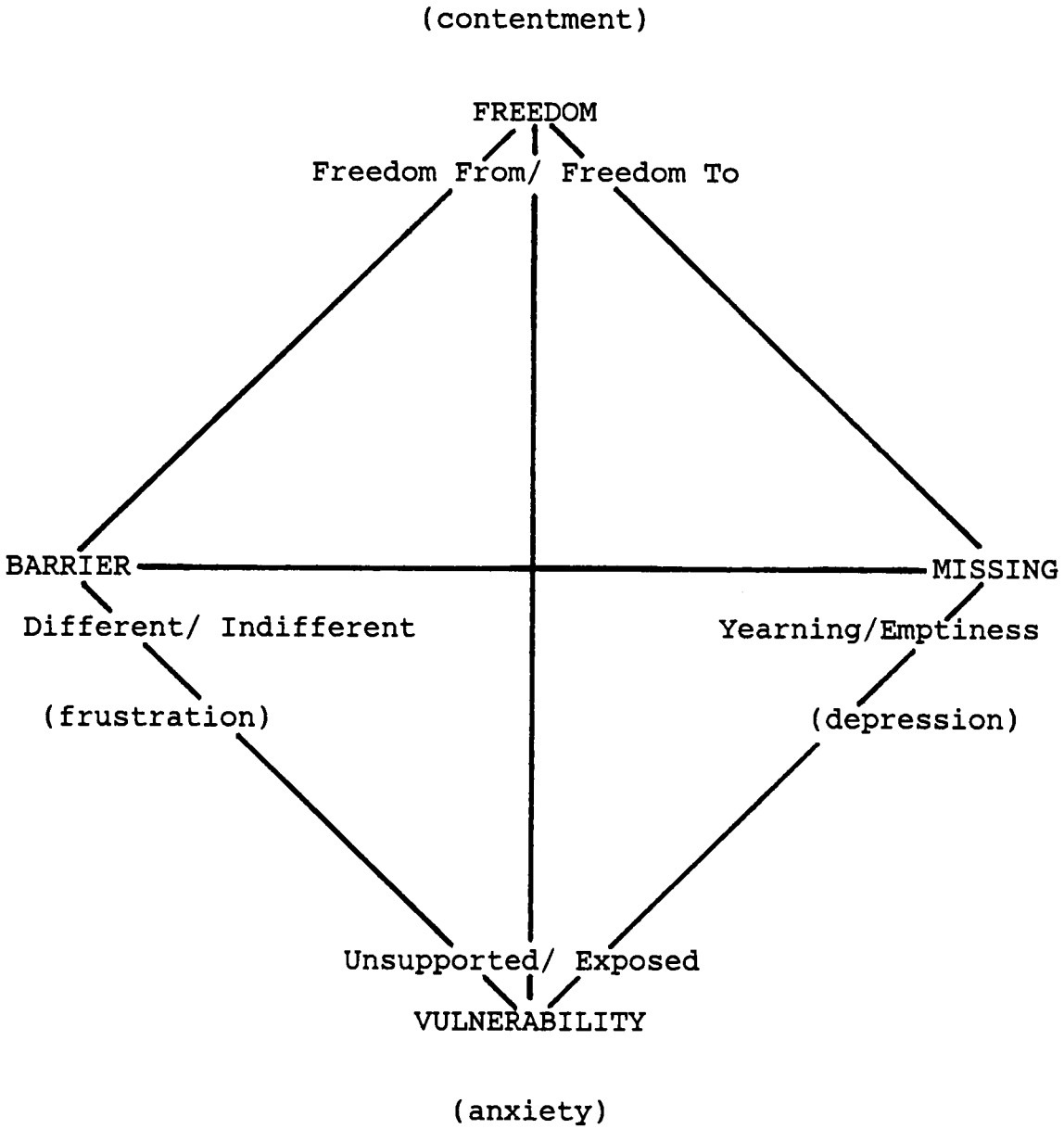


Figure 1. The thematic structure of the experience of aloneness.

between them. Rather, lines interconnecting themes are meant to convey the impression that each theme may be combined with any other theme in a given experience of feeling alone. Specific interrelationships and combinations of various thematic structures will be discussed later. A brief description of each theme, and its respective subthemes, is presented in the following pages.

The Theme of Missing

In the Missing theme, one wants but does not have a relationship that offers positive possibilities for oneself. One focuses on the absence of a relationship with another and misses this relationship. A description given by one participant provides a good example:

> When I see families that look happy and are interacting with each other like my husband and I did before he died, particularly with mothers and fathers around my age, I feel alone. I feel like a part of me is missing. Its like an amputation, like I'm not a whole person. I feel like my husband and I were one and now half of that is gone which makes a void there. I miss the companionship, laughter and intimacy that I had with my husband and I would like to have it again. I do not want to take anything away from the happy couples I see. I just wish I also had what they have.

In the Missing theme, it may be a particular other or others, or a type of relationship that is missed. Other people are usually, but not necessarily, physically absent. Often, the Missing theme involves grief or other loss situations; sometimes it concerns missed opportunities for relating. This type of aloneness was typically labelled

feeling lonely by participants and was found to be most strongly associated with a feeling of depression. The Missing theme was discovered to consist of two aspects or subthemes: Yearning and Emptiness.

Yearning subtheme. In the Yearning subtheme, the focus is on the other, or on a type of relationship that is absent, rather than the emptiness that is present. There is also a yearning (or pining) for the other or type of relationship that is not there. Memories or fantasies of the missed other may sometimes be triggered by one's surroundings, such as by objects or places. Yearning may also be triggered by seeing others in a relationship that one desires but does not have. The following description by a participant gives an example of the Yearning aspect of the Missing theme:

> I feel alone, lonely and melancholy when I am doing things alone that I enjoy and feel good about myself for doing, such as photography, but have a pining for someone to share these activities with. I want someone there to show my good thoughts to rather than feeling depressed and desparately seeking others to distract my mind from bad thoughts. Sharing my activities related to photography with others is made difficult by the necessity of being free from distractions in these activities and by other's lack of patience. I sometimes think about how nice it would be to find someone who would be company for me while photographing and fade away when I don't want company and need to concentrate on my work.

Emptiness subtheme. With the Emptiness subtheme, one focuses on the presence of an absence rather than on an other that is missing. One feels stuck in the emptiness of

the present without the other or others. A person may experience emptiness in a variety of experiential domains. One may feel lost, without a sense of purpose and incomplete, like a part of the self is missing. There may also be the experience of a hole or void within the body and a loss of interest in activities. The stillness, quietness and inactivity of one's surroundings may stand out. The following description by a participant provides an example of the Emptiness subtheme:

> I feel lost, and lonely when I am alone and don't know what to do and I think about how activities, like listening to music, playing the mandolin and sewing, that I usually enjoy feel uncomfortable or unbearable. When I try to do these activities, I become frustrated and lose interest. I am aware of the emptiness of my house and think about not having talked to anyone all night. My mood moves in and hangs over me like a cloud and I feel scared that there are no activities that can occupy my mind and help me get through this mood.

The Theme of Barrier

In the Barrier theme, one wants to relate to another person(s) and experiences a block or obstacle to this relating. The focus is on what stands in the way of relating to others; in other words, on the barrier to connection or relatedness rather than upon the absence of others. The following description by a participant in this study provides an example of this theme:

> When I went to the mountains with a woman I was dating and I was photographing, she did not complain and I felt close to her until we had a conversation and I found that she neither understood nor cared to try to understand what photography meant to me. I had

> a desire to be close and share that part of me with her and, with her reaction, I felt less close and more alone, like I am the only one that really understands what I am doing and this person has disappointed me because they don't even care to try to understand.

With the Barrier theme, one feels separate, disconnected and cut-off from others; as if there were a wall or distance between the self and others. The person may feel like an outsider; he or she may feel outside of the activities that others are engaged in. One may also feel caught on the inside where others have no access to their unique experiencing. Others are usually but not necessarily physically present in this way of feeling alone. Common situations in which participants experienced the Barrier theme included attempting to communicate with another, trying to belong to a group, and being in a crowd of strangers. Some of the labels used for this type of experience were feeling isolated, alienated or estranged. The Barrier theme was found to be associated with a feeling of frustration. This theme was also found to consist of two aspects or subthemes: Different and Indifferent.

Different subtheme. In the Different subtheme, the focus is on the difference or discrepancy between oneself and others; this difference is experienced as creating a barrier to relating. One may feel as if he or she does not fit in; he or she may also feel out-of-place in relation to a group of others. One may feel like he or she is on a different wavelength or in a different place in not being

understood by or in not understanding others. The following description provides an example:

> Being single, I feel like an outsider in the singles Sunday school class at church where all of the people are older than me, divorced and have children. I feel like they can't relate to me and are looking at me wondering what I am talking about. When, in this Sunday school class, we were talking about meeting single people, I felt like the others could not understand me because their family fills up their time and they do not have as strong a need to meet people as I do.

Indifferent subtheme. With the Indifferent subtheme, the focus is upon an attitude of indifference between self and others which is experienced as creating a barrier to relating. Others may be indifferent towards the person, such as when one is ignored or more actively excluded; alternatively, the person may be indifferent towards others, such as when making no attempt to engage with others or more actively withdrawing. The following description gives an example of this subtheme:

> In party situations or social gatherings, I sometimes lose interest in or become tired of keeping up social repartee and step out of the stream of ongoing conversation which leads to a sense of distance from others and aloneness in the crowd. When at a wedding reception, I sat down with others who were in the midst of a conversation, I felt alone, like I was hanging on the edge. I felt somewhat invisible, like I was small, easily overlooked and inconsequential. Although I was not being excluded by them in an active way, I was being left out in a neutral sense because they were making no effort to include me in their conversation, and I was keeping myself out on the edges and distant, being uninterested in what they were talking about.

The Theme of Vulnerability

In the Vulnerability theme, one has a desire to avoid threats to one's being (e.g. physical injury, loss of self-esteem) and becomes aware of the heightened possibility of these threats in being without support and exposed to danger. The individual focuses on his or her vulnerability in being on their own. The following description provides an example:

> I felt alone when I took the wrong airplane to the wrong place and was by myself with no money in the middle of the airport. I had all this baggage that was just ripping and all these things were falling all over the place. It was in the middle of the night and my boyfriend was supposed to be picking me up in an airport 10 hours from where I was. I stood in the middle of the airport and I cried, hoping that somebody would feel sorry for me and wondering what am I going to do now.

In the Vulnerability theme, being on one's own without support or protection is seen both as limiting one's ability to do and as exposing the person to possible negative consequences. One may feel overwhelmed, helpless or out of control. The focus is not on missing others or on a barrier to relating, rather it is upon the self, one's own limitations, and the vulnerability of one's projects in the world. Others may be physically present or absent with this theme. The experience was typically described as feeling alone rather than feeling lonely; it was found to be associated with emotions of fear and anxiety. The Vulnerability theme was also found to consist of two aspects or subthemes: Unsupported and Exposed.

Unsupported subtheme. With the Unsupported subtheme, the focus is on a lack of support or help from others. One worries about being able to realize projects without support and may feel overwhelmed by burdens and responsibilities. Supportive others may be unavailable or one may conceal responsibilities and burdens from them. The following description by a participant provides an example of the Unsupported subtheme:

> When I found leukemia in a patient's blood test, while working on the late shift at the hospital and, being the senior member of the staff with nobody there to refer her to, I had to take it all on myself to deal with the situation, I felt alone and drained. Although I did as much as I could, I felt inadequate to help this woman. I felt like crying but I realized I couldn't do a good job if I let myself get too emotionally upset, and I tried not to think about my feelings. When I went home, I got drunk, wanting to be numb for awhile.

Exposed subtheme. With the Exposed subtheme, the focus is on feeling unprotected and exposed to dangers or threats. Others, in addition to being unsupportive may become a source of threat. In this subtheme, one may feel vulnerable, unprotected and defenseless in relation to another person's possible negative appraisal. One also may feel exposed and highly visible to others, as reflected in phrases used by participants such as: feeling "on display", "on the spot", "in the spotlight" and "all eyes on me". Typical situations for the appearance of this subtheme include social gatherings, such as parties, and performance

situations, such as work and school. The following description by a participant provides an example:

> I feel alone when I feel on the spot. I feel on the spot when I am dancing and when I am interpreting for the deaf. I enjoy dancing as a self-expression and as a way of bypassing the awkwardness of talking to people. However, when people start watching me, I feel on the spot and uncomfortable. When I am on the spot, both in dancing and in interpreting, I am aware of the possibility of making a mistake, of wanting to avoid making a mistake and the importance of my actions. Sometimes, I freeze-up physically when I am on the spot.

The Theme of Freedom

With the Freedom theme, there is a desire to be and do what one wants without the interference of relating to others. There is also an awareness of how being disengaged from relating allows one to realize such a goal. The person focuses on his or her freedom in being by him or herself, without others. The following description provides an example of this way of feeling alone:

> When I go for a walk alone in the evening just to relax and not to deal with worries, I enjoy feeling alone. When I enjoy feeling alone, I am conscious of being alone and I feel good just to be away for awhile. I am free from having anything to worry about anyone pressuring me and responsibilities. I am able to relax and do what I want to and I am able to heal from whatever is happening, such as resting because of my disease or letting go of or becoming and expressing negative feelings I am having about stressful events.

In contrast to other themes, the Freedom theme expresses the positive possibilities and consequences of being alone. Others are usually, but not necessarily, physically absent in this theme. In being alone in this

way, one experiences a wholeness and open field of possibilities rather than an emptiness. In being disengaged from others that are present, the barrier or separation becomes a protection or sanctuary within which one feels free. Common situations for the appearance of this form of aloneness include being alone at home or in nature and engaging in activities that are made difficult by the presence of others. Solitude is an appropriate label for this experience which is generally termed being alone instead of feeling alone. The Freedom theme was found to be associated with positive emotions such as contentment and relief. This theme was also found to consist of two aspects or subthemes: Freedom To and Freedom From.

Freedom To subtheme. In the Freedom To subtheme, one focuses on choices and possibilities in being alone. One experiences the freedom to do and be what one wants and there may be a sense of wholeness and connection with oneself. The following is a description by a participant which provides an example of the Freedom To subtheme:

> I am aware of feeling alone when I return to where I live and when I wake-up in the morning. In being by myself where I live, I find enjoyment in looking at my pleasant surroundings and in being able to do what I want to do after not being able to do so previously. I experience a feeling of intimacy with myself and a nurturant feeling which is difficult to put into words.

Freedom From subtheme. In the Freedom From subtheme, one focuses on the absence of limits and constraints in being alone. Others are viewed as a limit to one's freedom and not relating to them is experienced as freeing oneself from these limits. One experiences a freedom from the distractions, demands, interferences and intrusions of others. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of the Freedom From subtheme:

> I am very busy with responsibilities during the week and look forward to having time alone to myself during the weekends when I don't feel cramped by responsibilities or disturbed by other people's problems. When my kids were young and away for the weekend, I looked forward to Saturdays to myself where I did not have worries, interrruptions or have to do things that weren't in my plans.

The Scoring Manual

A Scoring Manual was constructed in this study for the purposes of teaching raters how to use the thematic category system. This manual consisted of a detailed description of each theme (and associated subthemes) as well as 16 scored meaning contexts provided as examples of the various subthemes. The Scoring Manual represents the most comprehensive description of the themes and subthemes and it is considered to be one of the final products of the research. Taken as a whole, it represents an exhaustive description of the fundamental structure of the experience of feeling alone. The Scoring Manual, which is presented in Appendix H, should be consulted for more detailed

information regarding the particular thematic structures discovered in this investigation.

In the scoring manual, all themes and subthemes were given a code to facilitate scoring. These codes, which were also utilized in the tables presenting the results of this study, are listed as follows:

Themes:

M - Missing
B - Barrier
V - Vulnerability
F - Freedom

Subthemes:

M/Y - Yearning
M/E - Emptiness

B/D - Different
B/I - Indifferent

V/U - Unsupported
V/E - Exposed

F/T - Freedom To
F/F - Freedom From

Scoring Meaning Contexts

All meaning contexts were scored by the investigator in terms of the thematic structure described. Each meaning context received scores at both thematic and subthematic levels. Since a given scoring of a theme included scorings of either one or both of its subthemes, the total number of scorings for the themes and the combined total number of scorings for its respective subthemes were not equal.

Tables 2 and 3 show the relative frequency of themes and subthemes found in this study. The Barrier theme was found to be the one most commonly reported by participants while the Freedom theme was the least commonly reported. At the subtheme level, Barrier/Different was most common and Freedom/From was least common. General patterns of theme and subtheme prevalence for individual participants will be discussed later in this chapter.

A small number of meaning contexts could not be scored according to the thematic category system developed. The 10 meaning contexts designated as "unscorable" appear in Appendix J. Unscorable meaning contexts were of two types. In the first type, the person talked about feeling alone in general without clearly mentioning what it meant to them. The following is an unscorable meaning context of this type:

> Feeling lonely and feeling alone are the same for me. I seldom feel alone or lonely except for incidents that come up and I mostly feel happy with my life situation and fine about being alone.

In the second type of unscorable meaning context, the person did not provide enough information about his or her experience in a particular situation of feeling alone to determine which of the themes and subthemes were present. The following is an unscorable meaning context of this type:

> When I was 14, my father had died and my mother had gone back to work and I never saw her because

Table 2. Frequency of Theme Scores for Participants

	Themes				
	Missing	Barrier	Vulner-ability	Freedom	Total
Participant					
1	7	3	0	0	10
2	4	9	5	4	22
3	1	2	4	3	10
4	2	4	1	3	10
5	4	1	0	1	6
6	6	4	0	1	11
7	2	3	5	1	11
8	6	2	2	3	13
9	5	3	7	1	16
10	4	3	2	1	10
11	0	9	1	2	12
12	2	9	3	1	15
13	9	7	2	0	18
14	3	10	4	2	19
15	4	8	6	1	19
16	2	6	3	0	11
17	3	5	4	0	12
18	3	2	4	4	13
19	1	7	1	1	11
20	6	1	1	7	15
Total	74	99	55	36	264
Percent	28.0	37.5	20.9	13.6	100

Table 3. Frequency of Subtheme Scores for Participants

	Subthemes							
	M/Y	M/E	B/D	B/I	V/U	V/E	F/T	F/F
Participants								
1	4	5	3	0	0	0	0	0
2	3	3	8	4	1	5	3	3
3	0	1	2	0	4	0	3	0
4	2	0	3	2	0	1	1	2
5	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	0
6	5	2	3	1	0	0	0	1
7	1	1	2	1	5	0	1	1
8	6	1	2	0	1	1	2	3
9	4	4	3	0	4	5	1	1
10	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1
11	0	0	9	2	1	1	2	1
12	2	1	9	2	2	1	1	1
13	8	1	6	1	2	1	0	0
14	2	2	9	3	3	3	2	1
15	1	3	7	4	6	0	1	1
16	2	2	3	3	3	1	0	0
17	1	2	3	3	4	2	0	0
18	1	3	2	0	2	2	4	2
19	1	0	4	5	1	1	1	1
20	3	4	1	0	1	0	7	3
Total	49	40	82	32	41	25	32	22
Percent	15.2	12.4	25.4	9.9	12.7	7.7	9.9	6.8

her work schedule, I felt alone and confused and I got sick.

Rather than invalidating the thematic structure by suggesting new meanings of feeling alone which were not encompassed by it, unscorable meaning contexts were viewed as statements by participants where no meanings, or ambiguous meanings, of feeling alone were expressed.

Reliability Check

The reliability task involved two independent raters and the investigator (i.e. third rater) scoring 50 items. These items were meaning contexts randomly selected from transcripts. All meaning contexts were scored for all four themes and eight subthemes. An agreement for a given theme or subtheme was considered to have occurred when both raters scoring of a particular item included that theme or subtheme. A disagreement was considered to occur when one rater's scoring of a particular item included a given theme or subtheme that the other rater's scoring did not. Since each item could receive multiple scores, there could be more than one agreement or disagreement per item. For example, an item scored by one rater as M/Y,E and by another rater as M/Y would include one agreement at the theme level (M) and one agreement (Y) and one disagreement (E) at the subtheme level (i.e. 100% agreement at the theme level and 50% agreement at the subtheme level between raters). In this manner, percentages of agreement between

the investigator and the raters, and between both raters, were computed. Reliability levels for each theme and subtheme, and between raters are presented in Table 4.

Agreement with the investigator across all themes was .92 for Rater 1 and .91 for Rater 2 while agreement with the investigator across all the aloneness subthemes was .88 for Rater 1 and .84 for Rater 2. Agreement levels between the two raters were fairly consistent with the investigator, although even higher. These agreement levels were .95 across all themes and .92 across all subthemes.

Agreement levels for individual themes ranged from .79 to 1.00; agreement levels for individual subthemes ranged from .70 to 1.00. The theme with the lowest average agreement across raters was Vulnerability at .88. The subtheme with the lowest average agreement across raters was Emptiness at .78. Overall, the percent of agreement for themes was 93 while the percent of agreement for subthemes was 88.

In the scoring of a particular item there were three possibilities: 1) all three scorers could agree that a given theme or subtheme was present, 2) two of three scorers could agree that the theme or subtheme was present and 3) only one of the scorers note the presence of the theme or subtheme. The relative percentages of these three possibilities were tabulated for the various themes and

Table 4. Interrater Agreement Levels

	Percent Agreement			
	Researcher/ Rater 1	Researcher/ Rater 2	Rater 1/ Rater 2	Average Agreement
Theme				
M	94	94	87	91
B	96	90	96	94
V	79	86	100	88
F	100	100	100	100
Total	92	91	95	93
Subtheme				
M/Y	100	82	88	90
M/E	82	70	82	78
B/D	86	77	89	84
B/I	85	83	91	86
V/U	89	89	100	92
V/E	71	86	100	86
F/T	100	100	100	100
F/F	100	100	100	100
Total	88	84	92	88

subthemes and are presented in Table 5.

All three raters agreed on the scoring of a particular theme in 90% of the cases where a theme was scored; at least two of the three raters agreed on the scoring of a theme 98% of the time. All three raters agreed on the scoring of a particular subtheme in 82% of the cases where a subtheme was scored, while at least two of the three raters agreed on the scoring of a subtheme 94% of the time.

The scoring of a particular item by two raters, could be characterized as a total agreement, partial agreement or total disagreement. Since, as noted earlier, multiple scorings were possible for items, these scores were sometimes found to overlap with one another. For example, scores of M/Y;B/D and V/U;B/D have both themes and subthemes in common as well as different themes and subthemes. In the case where scores given by raters for a particular item overlap, there would be a partial agreement at the theme and/or subtheme level. Total agreement refers to the case where there is an identical scoring of items at the theme and/or subtheme level while total disagreement refers to scorings with no overlap at the theme and/or subtheme level. The relative percentages of total disagreement, partial agreement and total disagreement between raters at the theme and subtheme levels are presented in Table 6.

Table 5. Percentage of Agreements Across Themes and Subthemes

	Percent		
	All Agree	Two Agree	None Agree
Theme			
M	87	13	0
B	93	4	4
V	86	14	0
F	100	0	0
Total	90	8	2
Subtheme			
M/Y	88	13	0
M/E	73	27	0
B/D	71	14	14
B/I	91	0	9
V/U	80	10	10
V/E	86	14	0
F/T	100	0	0
F/F	100	0	0
Total	82	11	6

Table 6. Percentages of Agreement for Theme and Subtheme Levels

Raters	Percent		
	Total Agreement	Partial Agreement	Total Disagreement
Theme Level			
Researcher/ Rater 1	90	10	0
Researcher/ Rater 2	88	10	2
Rater 1/ Rater 2	92	6	2
Total	90	9	1
Subtheme Level			
Researcher/ Rater 1	84	16	0
Researcher/ Rater 2	80	18	2
Rater 1/ Rater 2	88	10	2
Total	84	15	1

Total agreement between two raters at the theme level was found to occur 90% of the time while total agreement at the subtheme level occurred 84% of the time. In 99% of the cases, two raters exhibited at least partial agreement in their scoring of themes. At least partial agreement in scoring subthemes was demonstrated 99% of the time.

For 41 of 50 reliability items, there was total agreement among all three raters on the complete score. For 46 items, at least two of these raters completely agreed. There was only one case in which the scorings of all three raters did not overlap to some extent (i.e. have either a theme or subtheme score in common), and this was due to one of the raters being unable to score an item. On this item, the investigator and remaining rater had complete agreement.

Among the three raters, Rater 1 and Rater 2 tended to be more conservative in their scoring than the investigator. As noted earlier, these two raters tended to be slightly more consistent with each other than with the investigator. More detailed and different scoring may be due to the investigator's greater familiarity with the data and the topic which allowed him to read more into a particular item than the raters. Nevertheless, the reliability levels were considered sufficient to allow for a confident analysis of the data on the basis of the thematic structure.

Validity Check

One source of validation of results offered in this study concerned the written follow-ups sent to participants. In these communications, participants were sent a list of meaning contexts derived from their interview and asked to check the accuracy of these paragraphs in relation to their experience. Eighteen of the 20 participants responded to the feedback letter by returning the form enclosed for comments and additions. Fifteen of the 18 participants who responded indicated no changes. Thirteen participants made comments that indicated the accuracy of meaning contexts. Their comments ranged from "nothing to add" to "pretty accurate" to "very accurate." Three participants suggested changes and/or additions to their meaning contexts; these were incorporated into the later stages of data analysis.

In order for the structure of the experience of feeling alone found to be considered valid, it must be able to account for every particular incidence of feeling alone described by participants. The results of the reliability check suggest that the investigator's scoring of meaning contexts was adequately communicable to other individuals reading the present summarized protocols. Thus, the investigator's ability to score each and every meaning context according to the thematic category system developed

provides a check on the validity of final results. As noted earlier, only 10 of a total of 200 meaning contexts could not be scored. These meaning contexts were unscorable due to ambiguity or lack of information in the participant's description rather than because of counter-evidence invalidating the thematic structure obtained.

Interrelationships of Themes and Situations

Participants reported feeling alone in a variety of situations and settings. Situations described by participants were of two general types: 1) alone and 2) with others. Although being alone and being with others are mutually exclusive situations at any given moment, the meaning contexts described by participants often represented the unfolding of events over time or a grouping together of several particular situations and, for this reason, sometimes included both being alone and being with others. In some cases, the situation of the participant was unspecified, such as when feeling alone or feeling lonely was talked about in general.

The general situations of feeling alone were further divided into six settings. These settings refer to the immediate interpersonal and physical situations of the participant. Two settings were found for being alone: 1) at home and 2) outdoors; four settings were found for being with others: 1) one-to-one interaction, 2) social

gatherings, 3) work and school, and 4) crowds. Most meaning contexts could be categorized into one or more of these settings. Some examples of being alone and/or being with others were not further classifiable into settings since these were not further specified by the participant. The relative frequency each of the themes and subthemes occurred in the two types of situations and six types of settings is presented in Tables 7 and 8. Since, as noted earlier, a given scoring of a theme included scorings of either one or both of its subthemes, the total number of scorings for a theme and the combined total number of scorings for its respective subthemes, in a particular situation category, were not equal.

Overall, participants reported more examples of feeling alone in the presence of others than feeling alone when physically alone. One need not be alone to feel alone and feeling alone may actually be enhanced by being with others. Different themes also were found to occur more frequently in different situations. Whereas the Missing and Freedom themes occurred predominantly when one was physically alone, the Barrier and Vulnerability themes occurred primarily when one was in the presence of others. Despite these trends, all themes, with the exception of the Barrier theme, were found to occur in both situations. These results suggest both a relationship between themes and situations as well as a certain flexibility where the

Table 7. Frequency of Themes for Situations and Settings

	Themes				
	Missing	Barrier	Vulner-ability	Freedom	Total
Situations					
Being Alone	43	0	9	26	78
Being With Others	15	72	32	7	126
Settings					
Being Alone:					
At Home	24	0	7	9	40
Outdoors	5	0	0	12	17
Being With Others:					
One-to-one Interaction	0	28	12	0	40
Social Gatherings	8	20	6	3	37
Work and School	0	13	8	0	21
Crowds	5	8	5	3	21

Table 8. Frequency of Subthemes for Situations and Settings

	Subthemes							
	M/Y	M/E	B/D	B/I	V/U	V/E	F/T	F/F
Situations								
Being Alone	31	26	0	0	6	4	23	20
Being With Others	13	8	62	24	22	15	4	4
Settings								
Being Alone:								
At Home	17	18	0	0	6	4	9	6
Outdoors	5	5	0	0	0	0	11	11
Being With Others:								
One-to-one Interaction	0	0	23	12	10	3	0	0
Social Gatherings	6	2	17	7	1	5	2	1
Work and School	0	0	12	2	7	2	0	0
Crowds	4	2	7	3	3	4	2	2

same situation may have different meanings, and different situations may have the same meaning. In the following, each of the major settings will be discussed in detail as to the themes or meanings of feeling alone found to be present in each.

Being Alone at Home

This setting was the one most commonly reported by participants. Further, the Missing and Freedom themes occurred most frequently in the setting of being home alone. Twenty-four examples of Missing and 9 examples of Freedom were found. Seven examples of Vulnerability were also found. Since the Barrier theme did not occur in this setting, nor in the situation of being alone in general, it appears that the experience of wanting to relate to others but feeling blocked by an obstacle or barrier is much more likely to occur in the presence of others.

Missing. When one is home alone and experiences the Missing theme, there is a desire for the physical presence of an other or for a type of relationship that is experienced as offering positive possibilities for oneself. There is also an awareness of the lack (or absence) of the other in one's living space. The other is missed and/or experienced as missing, and one feels depressed and lonely. This way of feeling alone at home was reported by participants as occuring in the wake of a divorce, death or

other type of end of a relationship. Within these situations, other people who used to be present in one's home are now absent and missed. In general, while being home alone and missing others, there is a tendency to see everyone except oneself as having someone to be with. The person may reject offers to do things with others because he or she wants only to be with the special someone that is missed. In staying home alone, one may feel closer to the special other by getting lost in memories and fantasies about them. These thoughts stand in painful contrast to the unavoidable reality of the other's present absence. In being overwhelmed by the immediacy of this absence, the person may experience the house as empty of activity and filled with quietness. There may also be a feeling of boredom in being unable to occupy oneself with activities at home. Finally, memories of missed others may be triggered by objects in the room that used to belong to them, or by T.V. shows depicting relationships similar to that once enjoyed. The following is a description that gives an example of the experience of missing while being alone at home:

> I feel lonely when I am spending time alone at home without anything to do or anyone to do anything with, such as on holidays, other special occasions or sundays, and I begin to miss my kids, remembering what we used to do together and realizing that we no longer spend much time together and that they have outgrown the things we used to do. Often memories of my kids and feeling lonely will be triggered by a television program about a sad event in a family, such as parents

losing a child, and I begin to think about what if I lost one of my kids.

Vulnerability. When one is home alone and experiences Vulnerability, there is a desire to avoid the possible negative consequences of being home alone. By being without others, the person feels exposed to certain dangers or threats and wants to escape this predicament. There is a desire for others to support the person or protect them from danger. Vulnerability arises with the realization that helpful protectors are not available and this realization may lead to a sense of anxiety and panic. Such individuals may feel trapped or caged in their house, unable to reach supportive others for a variety of reasons. Perhaps, others are occupied with their own problems or maybe there are no supportive others for them.

In being burdened with one's own problems and responsibilities, the person may feel overwhelmed and wonder what to do. There may be a sense of loss of control experienced bodily as a racing heart beat, or manifested behaviorally as an agitated pacing back and forth. Cognitively, one may be gripped by an inability to concentrate and exhibit confused thinking. In contrast to the Missing theme, one's house tends to be experienced as full of possibilities and not as empty. In contrast to the Freedom theme, these possibilities are negative, not positive. The experience is also one of being lost and

disoriented in one's familiar surroundings rather than being preoccupied with the void of sameness left in the aftermath of interpersonal loss.

The following description by a participant gives an example of the experience of vulnerability while alone at home:

> At bedtime, I suffer from anxiety and panic attacks and feel alone because it is nothing anyone can experience with me at the time. Even if others understand what I am going through, it is still scary to me. I am aware that everyone else in the world is asleep and that I am all alone. It is like everyone else vanishes and I am the only one. I start getting hyper, my heart beating faster, so I try to concentrate on calming down but I become more anxious. I feel like I am moving at warp speed inside which means that my thoughts are real fast, jumbled and confused, like a movie that has been speeded up, and it feels like you can see this externally although you can't. Sometimes, I feel like I can't swallow. I can't control my body. I feel trapped and caged in and I pace alot. Although logically I know I am not going to die, I feel afraid of dying alone. The difference between feeling anxious at night, where I feel alone, and in the daytime, where I don't, is that at night, I don't want to call my friends up whereas in the daytime, I can calm down and not feel alone because I realize there are others available to be with and do things with.

Freedom. When one is home alone and experiences Freedom, there is a desire to be alone so that one can do and be what one wants away from the interferences, demands and intrusions of others. One is aware of realizing these goals by being home alone and experiences satisfaction, contentment and relief. In contrast to the Missing and Vulnerability themes, being home alone is experienced as an actualization rather than as a deprivation or as a threat

to one's desires and goals. Often, the appearance of the Freedom theme in this setting involves the situation of living with others, such as a spouse or children, and having looked forward to time alone. Also discussed were situations where a person comes home from a busy day interacting with others, is tired, and wants to relax. Here, being alone is experienced as providing space to relax and do nothing or to do what one wants instead of what one should do such as when fulfilling a role (e.g. mother, husband, employer) for others.

In being without others, there is a greater sense of being closer and connected with one's self. As in the Missing theme, one may be aware of the quietness of the room; this is experienced as a peacefulness and not an emptiness. One may also become lost in thoughts but enjoy the freedom to think about what one wants to rather than to become preoccupied with a sad yearning for another person. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of freedom while being home alone:

> Aloneness that I enjoy involves being alone and nobody interfering with my thought processes or interrupting my activities unless I choose to let them (e.g. answering a phone). When I was home alone last night and sitting on the deck, I was aware of the quiet and that I had a chance to think and that the presence of my husband would have interfered with this. In being alone at home, I can play with myself and be as vain as I want to in my activities because I am free from the criticism of my husband. I also feel free to call and tell my friends things that I wouldn't want my husband to overhear.

Being Alone Outdoors

Being alone outdoors refers to situations of going for walks, hiking and camping without others present. The Freedom theme occurred most frequently in the setting of being alone outdoors. Twelve examples of the Freedom theme, together with 5 examples of the Missing theme were found. Neither the Barrier nor the Vulnerability themes were found in this setting.

Missing. When alone outdoors and experiencing the Missing theme, one wants someone to share their positive experiences with but is aware of the other's absence. The person may be engaged in activities that already were experienced as enjoyable, but the focus is now upon how the present enjoyment would be enhanced by the presence and participation of the other. The person may be engaged in appreciating his surroundings, such as the beauty of a sunset, and wish that there was someone there with whom to share the experience. Positive experiences take on a negative quality if they make more figural a sense of incompleteness in not being able to share these experiences with someone. One may experience a yearning or pining for the presence and companionship of another while feeling lonely and depressed. The following is a description by a participant which provides an example of the experience of missing while alone outdoors:

> I went on a five week photographic excursion by myself and before I left, I was in a period where I didn't feel lonely and enjoyed solitude which was productive time. However, once I was in the middle of nowhere without family or friends, I became desperately lonely. I wanted somebody else to enjoy the beautiful things I was seeing with. I tried to be satisfied with making a photograph of it and planning to show my photographs to others later but this did not work and I drove a great distance just to have some company.. somebody to talk to. I wanted to end my photography trip but I knew that if I did, I would be giving up on myself and would hate myself for it so I overcame my loneliness through writing and having conversations in my mind where I would talk to myself pretending as if I were talking to another person. I feel a conflict between rarely enjoying or feeling completely comfortable with being alone and doing photography which requires being alone.

Freedom. When alone outdoors and experiencing the Freedom theme, there is a desire to be alone so that one can do what one wants and be how one wants. One may also experience being free of limits upon oneself that others represent.

In contrast to the Missing theme, others are viewed as potentially limiting one's ability to experience and interact with one's self and surroundings rather than as potentially enhancing. Being alone outdoors is experienced as a satisfaction rather than as a deprivation of one's desires; in this setting, the person enjoys the solitude instead of feeling depressed. The absence of others in this situation means a freedom from feeling disconnected from others, needing others and worrying about how one appears to them. One feels more whole, connected with oneself and embodied in one's subjective viewpoint and,

since one feels whole and complete, there is no one that is missed or yearned for.

In addition to feeling more connected with oneself, the person may also feel more connected his or her surroundings. One may feel like a part of nature which stands in contrast to a sense of a barrier between self and others that was experienced in the social world. There may also be a feeling of being in harmony with the tempo of natural processes as well as a sense of power in connecting with natural forces. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of experiencing freedom while being alone outdoors:

> When I was backpacking alone for 5 days, I enjoyed being alone. There was a sense of adventure, accomplishment and self- suffiency in not needing any people. Time seemed endless as there were no hours and the days were defined simply by the sun coming up and going down. I usually carry around an image in the back of my mind of how I look from the outside and wonder how others will evaluate my appearance but without others around to evaluate me, I no longer evaluated myself which was wonderful. I felt very much at home inside myself and embodied, looking from the inside out, rather than floating around in somebody elses eyes looking at and evaluating me. I felt good and whole in being alone, no longer missing or yearning for a connection with others.

<u>One-to-One Interaction</u>

One-to-one interaction refers to the situation of interacting with one particular other where other people are either physically absent or omitted as figural components of the setting. This setting was the second most commonly reported by participants. The Barrier theme

was the dominant theme found in this setting; there were 28 examples. The only other theme that occurred in this setting was Vulnerability, of which there were 12 examples. It appears that one-to-one interactions exert a particular pressure for the emergence of the Barrier theme of feeling alone. Although, the experience of a barrier may be found in other settings, the setting of the one-to-one interaction appears to yield the prototypical case for the emergence of this theme.

Barrier. When a person is engaged in a one-to-one interaction and experiences the Barrier theme, they desire to relate to the other and become aware of an obstacle or block to this relating. The person feels alone and frustrated and may experience a wall or distance between the self and the other whom they desire to feel close to.

Others that participants talked about experiencing a barrier with in this setting included spouses, children, parents, friends and strangers. The interactions that people described typically involved verbal communication. One is engaged in a conversation with the other and wants to communicate. Barriers to this communication are experienced as not being understood by the other, not understanding the other, or both. With this setting, two persons cannot empathize with each other and/or share the same experience. They are "on a different wavelength" or "in different places" subjectively. The source of this

lack of understanding could be experienced as differences between the self and other which make understanding very difficult, if not impossible. Differences of age, past experiences, personality and being male and female were cited as leading to a barrier of not understanding.

The source of the barrier could also be experienced as the other not caring, such as manifested in the other not trying to understand or make themselves known. The other may ignore the person's attempts to communicate or be more actively rejecting. Also, fear of being exposed and rejected may limit one's self-disclosure, as in the case where the person keeps him or herself hidden from the view of the other. The following description by a participant provides an example of experiencing a barrier while in a in one-to-one interaction:

> When I have a problem and I want to tell someone I feel close to about it but I can't because I am afraid that they may stop caring about me if I do, I feel alone, like there is an absence from that person and a wall has been put between us until the problem is resolved or does not matter to me anymore. When as a child, I did something bad and wished I could tell my mother but was afraid of her punishing me, I felt alone, wondering how I would tell her, and there was a wall between us. When I told her, I felt better, even though I was punished. For example, as a minor, I had a citation from the police for possession of alcohol which I had to give to my parents because they had to meet with a probation officer. When I went home with the citation and had to tell my mother, I felt alone and far away from her, like there was the citation between us. I couldn't keep a conversation with her going because what we were talking about seemed trivial in comparison to what I had to tell her. Once I told her, she was less angry than I expected and I felt better.

Vulnerability. When a person is engaged in one-to-one interaction and experiences vulnerability, he or she desires to have the other provide help and support. In this setting the person becomes aware that the other is not doing this. Others that were mentioned as appearing unsupportive included parents, children and friends. In this setting, what the other does (or does not do) is just as important as what they say and, thus, the conversation itself may be less figural than with the Barrier theme. Rather than a barrier to understanding, one focuses on the lack of support. Although support may be offered verbally, it may be offered through other forms of interaction such as by fixing a meal for someone.

With the Vulnerability theme, people are involved in tasks they fear may exceed their capacities to accomplish. Such individuals focus on the vulnerability of their projects in the world whether these projects are maintaining a house or taking care of ill parents. One feels overburdened by problems and tasks that he or she experiences as more easily accomplished with the assistance of another. While engaged in a one-to-one interaction with another, the need for their help or support emerges. One may express his or her need to the other; the other may refuse them or the person may hide his or her burdens from the other considering the other has enough problems of their own. The person may be left supporting other people

but receiving no support in return. Such individuals may feel resentful of the other and may worry about their predicament.

The following description by a participant gives an example of experiencing a lack of support while engaged in a one-to-one interaction:

> I am most aware of feeling alone when I have alot of things that I am responsible for doing. When I don't have alot of responsibilities, I get depressed, so I choose to have them. I felt alone when my son would not help me work in the yard while I was trying to take care of my responsibilities in maintaining the house and, all of a sudden, I realized that I had many responsibilities that nobody in the world, including my son was aware of, because I don't tell him or others about them. I felt frustrated and resentful towards my son for complaining about his problems and not helping me with mine.

Social Gatherings

Social gatherings refer to settings where individuals come together for the primary purpose of socializing and interacting rather than for work or education. Social gatherings include social events, such as parties, as well as organized groups, such as church singles groups. They may be large or small, formal or informal, occur regularly or irregularly, and include familiar others or strangers. Examples of all themes were found to occur in social gatherings. The Barrier theme occurred with the greatest frequency appearing in 20 examples. Eight examples of the Missing theme, 6 of the Vulnerability theme and 3 of the Freedom theme also were found.

Social gatherings appear to have a great deal of flexibility in relation to the way in which one might feel alone. The relative ambiguity of social gatherings may increase the diversity of ways in which these situations are made meaningful. In addition to producing the greatest variation in ways of feeling alone, this setting, like the setting of one-to-one interaction, produced one of the largest number of examples of feeling alone. Interestingly, it is in situations that are the most overtly directed towards social interaction, communication and togetherness that also can be the most empty, alienating and anxiety-provoking. It appears that feeling alone may be intensified by an opportunity that raises the expectations of feeling together and then fails to meet these expectations.

Missing. When one is at a social gathering and experiences the Missing theme, one desires a relationship with another that offers positive possibilities for involvement but is aware that such a relationship is absent. Although others are present, the particular other (or kind of other) that would fulfill one's need is not present. Participants experienced this way of feeling alone while at church and at family reunions. In these situations, they yearned for their spouse who had either died or refused to accompany them. Since they were in family-oriented settings, the absence of their spouse was

made more figural. The observation of positive interactions between couples and families in these types of situations may remind one of the positive interactions one once had with the person that is missed. The person tends to notice other people that are in the type of relationship that one yearns for rather than people who are negatively interacting or alone. In not having the other, the person may feel incomplete, as if not a whole person without the other. The following description by a participant provides an example of the experience of missing while at a social gathering:

> When at church after my husband had died, even with my children sitting beside me, I felt painfully alone. My husband and I had never gone to church without each other and it felt like part of me was missing. Most of the people did not know me or my husband and so they did not know what had happened and were not looking at me any differently than before. Singing in the choir helped decrease my painful alone feeling because you are not expected to sit with your mate in the choir whereas you are out in the congregation.

Barrier. When one is at a social gathering and experiences a Barrier theme, one wants to relate to the others present but experiences a block or obstacle to such relating. Participants experienced this way of feeling alone at parties, social clubs or groups, and other social events. With a group of others, the desire to relate is often experienced as a desire to belong to the group. However, instead of feeling as if they belong, people feel

as if they are out-of-place. One feels uncomfortable and awkward as well as frustrated.

Differences between the self and others are experienced as creating a barrier to the sense of belonging. Such differences may include different life situations, such as being older, more educated, single instead of being in a couple, or of different backgrounds, interests or values. At social gatherings, one may feel as if he or she is being treated differently or are not understood because of differences with others. By focusing on differences between the self and others, the person feels like an outsider in relation to group members who are viewed as similar. One tends to overlook differences among others, viewing them as a homogeneous mass; this heightens the contrast between oneself and increases ones aloneness.

People at the social gathering may also be seen as liking each other better than they like oneself, and one may feel ignored by these others. The person experiences others as not making an effort to include him or her in the conversation and when the person tries to break into the conversation, others do not appear to respond. The person may eventually withdraw while taking an observer role. Alternatively, in persisting to interact and blend in with the people, the person may put on a mask of behaving differently than he or she feels. Although one may feign a certain display of connection with others, aloneness may

persist as a realization that one is really hidden from the other's awareness. The wearing of interpersonal masks at social gatherings may facilitate feeling alone since it creates the external impression of people enjoying close relating with each other; this impression stands in contrast and accentuates one's experience of feeling different and isolated. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of experiencing a barrier to relating while at a social gathering:

> When I was at a party with the social group that, prior to my divorce, I felt like I belonged to, I felt alone, like I didn't belong to this group anymore because I was no longer in a couple. I felt like the others treated me differently than before (i.e. like a person from outer space or a strange object) and I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere (i.e. like a fifth wheel). I was also aware of how different my life experience was than theirs since I had been divorced and they hadn't. I felt depressed around them and left the situation to be alone in order to avoid the discomfort of feeling the opposite of those around me.

Vulnerability. When at a social gathering and experiencing the Vulnerability theme, one wants to avoid being judged negatively by others and feels exposed to possible negative evaluations of others present. Participants talked about feeling vulnerable and alone at parties and family reunions. In these settings, the person felt acutely conscious of being observed by others. The self-conscious person sees him or her self through the eyes of others rather than from a personal point of view. One's sense of self-worth becomes invested in what others think

of him or her; for this reason, the person engages in attempting to manage the impression made on people around him or her. In focusing on the possibility of making a negative impression, one prefers not to be noticed.

Instead of disliking being ignored by others (and feeling invisible such as with the Barrier theme) one is disturbed by feeling exposed and highly visible. The person's high visibility and experience of being critically observed by others is reflected in phrases such as feeling "on display", "on the spot" and "in the spotlight." One focuses on the possible negative consequences of being focally observed by others, such as being rejected, rather than upon possible positive consequences, such as being admired.

The experience of being observed critically leads to discomfort and anxiety. The person may worry about making a mistake, such as doing or saying something that the other people might view as stupid. In a conversation, although the person might attempt to look happy by presenting a social facade, he or she fears that others can see through this mask to what is "really" being felt. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of experiencing vulnerability and exposure while at a social gathering:

> When I went to parties and was single, I felt alone, like I was in the spotlight. When I laughed or said something, people turned around and looked at me with disapproval like I was flirting. I felt that

> women particularly were cold towards me and judged me negatively and felt threatened by my talking to men at the party.

Freedom. When at a social gathering and experiencing the Freedom theme, one wants to feel whole, together and free from the distractions of others and is aware of being able to do this in the midst of people. Such experiences are characterized as rare events which tend to surprise the individual. Such experiences may be accompanied by intense positive emotion. The person enters a trance-like state in which he or she is lost in thoughts or wholly in the moment -- consumed with sensory awareness. Despite being surrounded by others, the person may become completely oblivious to the fact that there is anyone else present. Instead of the visibility or invisibility of self, one experiences the invisibility of others. While others fade out of the picture, the self becomes figural, and one may have a sense of wholeness and completeness. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of experiencing freedom while at a social gathering:

> When my wife and I were dancing at our high school reunion, at one point, with my eyes closed during a slow dance, I felt like nobody else was there, possibly not even her, and I felt happy and whole, like things were good and right, and there were no distractions.

Work and School

This setting refers to group situations having a vocational rather than a recreational orientation.

Thirteen examples of feeling alone at work and 7 examples of feeling alone at school were given. As with the other settings of being with others, the Barrier theme was the most prevalent way of feeling alone. There were 13 examples of the Barrier theme and 8 examples of the Vulnerability theme. No examples of the Missing or Freedom themes were found. It appears that groups oriented towards play are more likely to involve interactions between individuals that trigger memories and yearnings for missed relationships. Also, the freedom experience of aloneness occurs only rarely in the context of being with others.

Barrier. When at work or school and experiencing the Barrier theme, one wants to feel connected to others in a meaningful way but is aware of an obstacle to this sense of relatedness. A discrepancy between what the person is doing and what others are doing may emerge. The person may fail to live up to his or her own expectations and the expectations others have of them. One's performance may be experienced as not being up to certain standards required for membership in the group. The person may feel inadequate, such as in not being able to understand a lecture or complete a project. He or she may feel as if falling behind in class or not part of the team at work.

In addition to a lack of performance, high achievement can isolate the individual. For example, doing better than others at school can lead to being labelled as different

and lead to the experience of being avoided. One may also not fit into groups at work or school because of other differences, such as different beliefs, values or interests. A lack of communication and closeness can also be experienced as alienating in these settings.

A setting which focuses on productivity and achievement, is apt to foster competition instead of cooperation and communication among peers. An institutionalized attitude of indifference toward the individual may prevail and one may feel isolated and inconsequential while being treated as a replaceable functionary rather than as a unique person who is a meaningful part of the group. The following description by a participant gives an example of experiencing a barrier to relating while at work:

> At work, I feel alone but not lonely when I am conscious of how different I am than everyone that I work with in ways that I do not want to change (i.e. dressing-up more and socializing more than them). I perceive a discrepancy between what I should be doing (i.e. what the others are doing and expect me to do) and what I am doing and I feel like I am not part of the team, sometimes feeling guilty, although this guilt is lessened by the others coming to talk with me.

Vulnerability. When experiencing the Vulnerability theme, one wants to avoid making mistakes and is aware of the possible negative consequences of making a mistake. In being the responsible agent for one's actions, the person experiences the vulnerability of his or her projects

in the world. In contrast to the Barrier theme, the concern is more with job survival and success than with feeling close to others.

One may experience vulnerability due to supportive others being unavailable in a work or school situation. The lack of support may be something built into ones job such as when, through promotions, one takes on more responsibilities that cannot be shared. The person may rise above their level of competency; finding oneself depended upon to do things that one feels incapable of accomplishing. In some cases, support that is normally available on a job may be temporarily absent and one must take it all on oneself to do what is needed while, at the same time, covering for others. In making mistakes at work or school, there is a tendency to lose self-confidence and fear further failure. After having one's shortcomings exposed to others, one may feel humiliated, inadequate and vulnerable to further criticism and withdraw to protect oneself. The following is a description by a participant which provides an example of experiencing vulnerability at school:

> In a class situation, if others are able to answer a professor's question that I have not been able to answer or find holes or problems in the arguments that I put forward, I feel inadequate and incompetent which leads to a sense of being alone and distanced from the others who appear as smarter, quicker or better than me. When, in a class, the professor put a question before us, I offered an argument that he rejected and a younger student offered an opposite argument which he agreed with, I

felt humiliated and inadequate, like the professor had flatly rejected me for this younger fellow. I pulled back physically and emotionally, like an animal that is wounded or caught in a storm and makes itself small, curls up and puts its back to the storm. I was sensitive, like I had been emotionally stung (i.e. feeling rejected as inadequate) and I wanted to pull back since, having taken a chance and gotten stung, I was left that much more vulnerable to being stung again if I stayed engaged with others. I felt distant from the class in general and from the professor and the other student in particular. I was quiet and hoped no one directed attention to me because if they did I would have to present a social facade, not wanting to show them that I am feeling hurt, sensitive and shook up. I did not want to be noticed while I was licking my wounds.

Crowds

In this setting the individual is surrounded by a multitude of unfamiliar others. One feels alone in a crowd of strangers. With a crowd -- unlike a social gathering, work or school -- others are physically proximal without the purpose of interacting socially or of accomplishing tasks and without the expectation of future contact. Other people happen to be in the same place at the same time, such as at an airport, street corner or shopping mall. Purposes of the crowd, if present, often involve entertainment, such as at a movie theater or sporting event, wherein the aim is to focus individuals on something other than one another.

Although feeling alone in a crowd of strangers was reported in this study with relative infrequency, all themes were represented in this setting. Eight examples of the Barrier theme, 5 of the Missing theme, 5 of the

Vulnerability theme and 3 of the Freedom theme were found. The crowd, like the social gathering, is a relatively ambiguous social situation that lends itself to a variety of ways in which individuals make it meaningful. The lack of a strong expectation for interpersonal closeness in crowds may make the experience of feeling alone in this situation less problematic and figural.

Missing. When in a crowd and experiencing the Missing theme, one wants to have a relationship with one or more others that offers certain positive possibilities; the person is aware that he or she does not have this type of relationship. A shopping mall, theater, zoo and ice show were mentioned as places where this way of feeling alone occurred. Others that were yearned for and missed in these settings included spouses and children. As in social gatherings, the person observes others in the crowd as engaged in the type of relationship that is desired and this triggers memories for the missed others. For example, seeing couples in a theatre reminded one participant of what he lacked by being single; seeing families at a zoo triggered another participant's memories and yearning for a husband. Often, one previously had the relationship that is longed for and so, in addition to missing and yearning, one also has an experience of loss. In these situations, one feels as if everyone in the crowd has someone except the person and focusing upon what others have

interpersonally makes more figural what the person lacks. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of missing others while in a crowd:

> I felt lonely while shopping by myself in a crowded mall during the holidays, when I was aware of everyone else being there with someone and families interacting and rushing around, particularly buying gifts for their children which reminded me of when my kids were young. I was having a hard time enjoying buying presents for my kids because I expected I would not be able to spend much time with them during the holidays. I was not having a good time and left.

Barrier. When in a crowd and experiencing the Barrier theme, one wants to feel related but, instead, feels isolated and disconnected. Shopping malls and sporting events were mentioned as places where participants felt alone in this way. In crowds, one may become aware of being an individual apart from the mass of strangers while feeling disconnected, rootless and "thrown into contrast" with others. Differences between the self and others, such as different physical appearances or opposite attitudes, stand out and one feels out of place. One may also focus on the apparent ties between individuals within the crowd; instead of triggering a yearning for missed others, this may make figural one's lack of connectedness with the people present. In some cases, the crowd may appear as a frenzy of disorganized activity, consisting of an undifferentiated mass of bodies and faces running past the person. The person may feel invisible and meaningless as a flood of people rush by without noticing them.

In moving to a new city, one may feel like a foreigner in relation to a crowd of hometown residents. The following is a description by a participant which provides an example of experiencing a barrier to connectedness with others while in a crowd of strangers:

> I am most aware of feeling alone in crowds of people. When I first came to this city and was walking around campus, I didn't have a purpose, role or identity and didn't know many people, and I felt apart from crowds of others. I was aware of the ties present in other groups of people and that I lacked this sense of connectedness with others. The place seemed like a foreign culture to me, very different from and larger than the university I had attended previously. I did not have common experiences with others yet, I lacked a way of meeting people and establishing relationships, and was prevented from finding a job.

Vulnerability. When in a crowd and experiencing the Vulnerability theme, one wants to avoid the negative consequences of being on one's own without support and exposed to dangers. This includes the criticism of others, and vulnerability in relation to such negative consequences. Participants gave examples of experiencing vulnerability while feeling alone at an airport, shopping mall, bar and rock concert. In being lost at the wrong airport, one participant felt out of contact with supportive others, out of control, and unable to get help. Another participant described the vulnerability of feeling intruded upon by lights, sounds and colors while at a crowded shopping mall. Another participant felt exposed to men who were staring at her while she was at a bar and did

not want to deal with them trying to pick her up. Finally, a participant felt exposed to criticism as he refused to perform in front of an audience opposing his views. The anonymity of crowds appears likely to foster both the inaccessibility of support and an exposure to critical objectification by others. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of experiencing vulnerability while in a crowd:

> When in political groups where my views are contrary to the majority of others, and as a representative of my group, am put on the spot by a crowd of non-believers, I feel isolated. When I was waiting to perform at an air band contest and the audience knew me and was excitedly awaiting my performance, I backed out of my obligation to perform, despite pressure from others who were counting on me, because the act prior to mine was doing things on stage that I disapproved of and found immoral (i.e. dragging a woman by her hair on stage). I felt put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and others came to me and said they agreed. I was nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do and I was afraid of how others would respond. Later, I wrote a letter to the newspaper about why I didn't perform and was uncertain whether this would alienate others further or win them over and make them understand what I did and why.

Freedom. When in a crowd and experiencing the Freedom theme, one wants to be engaged in observing one's surroundings; one is free from the distractions of having to interact with others and is aware of being able to achieve these goals. Participants gave examples of experiencing freedom while feeling alone at a fair, in a restaurant and at a movie. The person is interested and

entertained by their surroundings and enjoys people-watching. Instead of becoming an object for others, others become an object for the person. A distance and lack of relating with others is seen as providing a clear view of what is going on rather than forming a barrier to connection. Detachment from one-to-one interaction allows a wider vantage point from which to observe others. One enjoys what is present in one's surroundings rather than focusing upon what is lacking; the environment is experienced as full of activity rather than as empty. Although a lack of social expectations for interacting in some crowds may facilitate freeing oneself to be more attentive to what is going on around, it is clear that this was not an altogether common experience for participants. The following is a description by a participant which provides an example of experiencing freedom while in a crowd:

> When I was at the world's fair with a group of people, I enjoyed feeling alone and watching people. One old lady who was dressed in red and looked like she was having a ball particularly stood out. Sometimes, I like being alone in a crowd because I can see alot more, such as people and their expressions.

Interrelationships Between Thematic Structures

Results were analyzed in order to understand relationships between the themes and between the subthemes. Often participants described more than one meaning of feeling alone in a given meaning context. Different themes

and subthemes were sometimes experienced together in the same situation or emerged at different times during the unfolding of an event(s). Participants also compared and contrasted different themes and subthemes by discussing together different situations of feeling alone. The frequency of co-occurrence for the themes and subthemes was calculated and is presented in Tables 9 and 10.

The most commonly occurring theme combination was Barrier and Vulnerability while the least commonly occurring combination was Vulnerability and Freedom. The Missing and Vulnerability themes co-occurred most frequently with the Barrier theme. The Barrier theme was found most often with the Vulnerability theme and the Freedom theme was combined most often with the Missing theme.

As expected, the most frequently co-occurring subthemes were the subtheme pairs. Beyond this no consistent patterns of co-occurrence between subthemes were discovered. Finally, the fact that almost every possible combination of themes and subthemes was found in this study suggests both the interrelatedness as well as relative independence of these thematic structures; it also reflects the variety of ways in which individuals make feeling alone meaningful. In the following, each of the theme combinations mentioned by participants will be described.

Table 9. Frequency of Theme Combinations

Theme Combination	Frequency
1. Barrier/ Vulnerability	20
2. Missing/ Barrier	13
3. Missing/ Freedom	7
4. Missing/ Barrier/ Vulnerability	6
5. Missing/ Vulnerability	4
6. Barrier/ Freedom	3
7. Vulnerability/ Freedom	2
Total	55

Table 10. Frequency of Co-occurrence for Subthemes

	Subthemes						
Subthemes	M/Y	M/E	B/D	B/I	V/U	V/E	F/T
F/F	5	1	1	1	1	0	17
F/T	8	1	4	0	0	0	
V/E	4	3	12	3	14		
V/U	3	7	12	7			
B/I	4	4	18				
B/D	13	9					
M/E	15						

Barrier and Vulnerability

As noted, Barrier and Vulnerability were the two themes most frequently found together in the same experience. There were 20 examples of this combination. When these meanings of feeling alone occur together, one wants both to relate to others as well as to avoid threats to one's being. The presence of both obstacles or barriers to relating and threats to one's being or projects in the world become figural aspects of the experience.

Two major variations of the Barrier/Vulnerability theme combination were discovered. In the first variation, which typically occurs at a social gathering, work or school, the person both wants to feel connected and relate to others as well as to avoid being judged negatively by them. The person becomes aware of not being able to fit-in with the group, and feels that other people are looking at them critically. The person feels distant and different from the others as well as exposed to negative evaluation; thus, the Different and Exposed subthemes are both present.

There is also the experience that one's differences are highlighted by others and one is treated like an outcast. The person is self-conscious and preoccupied with self or, specifically, with the way he or she appears to others; this feeling may interfere with the ability to relate. For example, the fear of making a mistake and looking foolish may lead to withdrawing from interaction.

Although one may withdraw, one still does not feel safe. Despite attempts to isolate and insulate oneself from others, one remains hyper-alert and sensitive. One is left both alone and distant from the group as well as vulnerable. For instance, one may wear a mask trying to hide the way one feels but experience that others can see through their mask or that their mask keeps slipping down. When the Exposed and Different subthemes are combined, the person is caught in a dilemma since they both want to relate but feel that if they reveal too much of themselves, others will reject them thereby damaging their self-esteem. One feels cut-off from others who are experienced as threatening. The following description by a participant gives an example of this way of feeling alone:

> When I was at a party with my classmates, I felt uncomfortable and when I got stoned, I felt very paranoid, alert to every sight and sound, and alone, distant from everybody there. Not only was there no ground for relating but there was a sense of danger and vulnerability, like if I didn't leave the situation something bad would happen such as I would make a fool of myself by doing something stupid. I left the party early because I would rather be alone than feel alone, vulnerable and frightened.

In the second variation of the Barrier/Vulnerability combination, the Indifferent and Unsupported subthemes are present. One wants to feel connected to and supported by one's interpersonal and non-interpersonal world but experiences being disconnected from the world and without supports. This experience of feeling alone typically reaches existential proportions when the person reflects on

the relation of their personal existence to the larger scheme of things; at this time one experiences him or herself as small and insignificant from the perspective of a vast and indifferent universe.

Similar to the previous variation discussed, one takes an outer view of oneself but here sees oneself as somewhat invisible rather than highly visible to others. For example, one participant commented on feeling like a speck of dust in a vast, endless universe. There is also an experience of being disconnected from one's surroundings. One may feel like there is nothing to hang onto and nowhere to belong. The familiar is unfamiliar and everyone becomes a stranger, possibly even oneself.

In being disconnected from the world, one is without supports and experiences the vulnerability of being on one's own. There may be an experience of total responsibility for one's life combined with a sense of being unable to shoulder this responsibility. There is no one to help and no one to share the same experience and feelings of being overwhelmed; intense panic may be present. The following is an description by a participant which illustrates this way of feeling alone:

> When I wonder what my future will be like and the purpose of life, I feel alone. I feel scared when I think about how small and worthless life seems in comparison to the destruction of a nuclear war. When I think about having total responsibility for my life, this feels oppressive to me, like the weight of the world on my shoulders. No one can help me, its all my own doing and I suffer the consequences which is scary

> to me. The longer I think about it the worse I feel until something distracts me. I want to be a part of and any hope of this is destroyed and, additionally, it seems impossible to share the same experience with another which makes me feel isolated.

Missing and Barrier

The Missing and Barrier themes are easily distinguishable forms of aloneness. While the experience of missing refers to wanting but not having a relationship with another, the experience of barrier refers to feeling blocked in an attempt to relate to others. One participant clearly distinguishes the Missing and Barrier themes as follows:

> When I feel lonely, I want another person (i.e. either a fantasy person or a previous good relationship) to be there and they are not whereas when I feel alone a person can be there but there is a chasm or gulf between our views of our self and each other and, thereby, a feeling of not being understood. With loneliness, there is a gap or hole in the self like someone has taken out your heart, while with aloneness, there is a gulf between people, like the umbilical chord has been cut.

Although this participant used different labels (i.e. feeling lonely and feeling alone) for the two themes, it must be noted that such labels were used inconsistently by participants.

Despite clear differences between the Barrier and Missing themes, these meanings of feeling alone were found to co-occur in the same experience in 13 examples. They were the second most frequently combined themes. When the Barrier and Missing themes are combined, the person wants

both to relate to others that are present and to have a particular other that is absent to be present. The person experiences an obstacle to relating with the others around them as well as missing the absent person. For example, when one is single and around others who are in couples, one may feel like a "third wheel", being left out of the interaction. While observing the couples interact, the person may be reminded of when he or she was in a couple, and begin to miss the other person. Not only does one experience the loss of an other but in not having the type of relationship that one used to, he or she is not now able to connect with people around. In this way of feeling alone, there may be the experience of everyone else having someone. One may feel depressed and angry at others for depriving and frustrating their attempts to interact. The preoccupation with someone who is absent may itself isolate the person from the immediate social situation, such as when the person drifts off into fantasies about the other. In grieving the death of a loved one, one may feel both the barrier of being unable to communicate feelings to others as well as experience an empty hole or persisting void left by this loss. The following description by a participant gives an example of experiencing both the Missing and Barrier themes:

> When I am with good friends who are married and they need their privacy, I feel like an extra (i.e. the third wheel syndrome), alone, lonely and uncomfortable. When at a small gathering on a holiday

> with two couples, one single guy and myself, at the end of the evening, the couples paired off and started making out which made more focal for me my being alone, and I felt alone and lonely. I also felt uncomfortable, not knowing what to do, which made the situation more aversive than being alone by myself and I wanted to leave the situation. Before the couples paired off, I was engaged, intermingling with them and having a good time. I was not thinking about myself or feeling lonely. Now that the couples paired off, I had thoughts about good times during the holidays when I was with my girlfriend and I started missing her. I also started thinking about myself, and became more inward and withdrawn, like, suddenly, my self goes right into myself, into the cavity of my abdomen, and there is a barrier between myself and the rest of the world that was not there before.

Missing and Freedom

There were 7 examples of the Missing and Freedom themes being combined in a particular meaning context. Some examples involved participants attempting to contrast these two ways of feeling alone. One participant contrasted the Missing and Freedom themes as follows:

> Feeling alone and feeling lonely may occur together but they are very separate and distinct. When I feel alone, I am focused on me rather than others. At the ends of the continuum: 1) emptiness (i.e. nothing out there) and 2) being all-together and whole, the focus is on me. I think of alone as one; one whole or one void. Between the ends of the continuum, where pieces are either falling apart or coming together, external relationships are involved and I may feel lonely. When I feel lonely, I may feel empty and not-whole but the key difference from feeling alone is that I focus upon the absence of a relationship with an other, rather than focusing on myself, and I miss them.

In the Missing theme, one focuses on the absence of others and experiences emptiness; in the Freedom theme, one focuses on the presence of oneself and experiences

wholeness. When experiencing the Missing theme one wants but does not have a relationship with an other that offers positive possibilities for oneself. In the Freedom theme, one wants to be and do what one wants, and others are viewed as an impediment. One feels depressed about being alone in the Missing theme and enjoys being alone in the Freedom theme. When these two themes are in contrast for the individual, one feels ambivalent about being without others. The experience of missing pushes one to seek others whereas the experience of freedom leads to a contentment with being by oneself.

Participants talked about having needs for both intimacy with others and intimacy with themselves. They discussed attempting to balance these needs which inevitably came into conflict. Individuals discussed the difficulty of balancing needs for solitude and relationship with others while being single or living alone. Particular situations were also mentioned as bringing the Missing and Freedom themes into a problematic juxtaposition, such as when one is outdoors and enjoying the solitude but begins to wish that someone was present with whom to share the beautiful sights with.

Another example is when one is alone in the midst of others and enjoying the freedom to observe without distractions but then feels lonely for the type of relationship that is being observed. Although it appears

that the Missing and Freedom meanings are so different that they are not typically experienced at the same time, they do tend to emerge in contrast to one another at different times during the same experience or on different occasions in the same situation. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example in which both the Freedom and Missing themes are included:

> I feel good about being alone when I elect to involve myself in accomplishing things that require being alone (i.e. photography) so that I can share with others later. Here, I am patient to share myself later whereas when I am impatient to share myself, I feel desperate for others and lonely, which is the difference between feeling alone and feeling lonely. When I feel good about being alone, I also feel like good company for myself and do not have a strong desire for the company of others.

Missing and Vulnerability

There were 4 examples of this combination. When the Missing and Vulnerability themes co-occur in the same experience, the relationship that is missed is the one that previously provided the support that one now needs. One wants both to have a relationship and to be supported by this relationship against possible negative consequences. Participants reported a feeling of emptiness since there was no one around who cared about them or wanted to help them. Without help, they were exposed to danger. One participant reported that he felt like he was falling into a pit with no ledges to grab onto. There was a sense of a loss of relationship with others and with oneself. One

loses the support of a stable identity to fall back on.

This experience is similar to the existential aloneness of the Barrier/Vulnerability combination but the emphasis is on the absence of others and a profound sense of emptiness rather than on a barrier to connection or relatedness. The following description by a participant provides an example of an experience in which both the Missing and Vulnerability themes are present:

> After my husband died, I was at a lawyer's office getting ready to close a sale on our property when the lawyer said that he had understood that my husband and I were not legally married. I felt alone, like my whole world had just crushed right there. I was not anticipating him saying that and it was an emotional shock. The impact was intensified by my knowing my husband as an honest man. It was like there was nobody else around, no one who cared that I could lean on. I went into hysterics, left the lawyer's office crying and drove straight to the cemetery. I was reaching out for something that wasn't there. I was emotionally hurt. There was a ringing all around and it was like I was in a vacuum. There was just space out there and yet it was a closed-in feeling like I was in some kind of chute.

Barrier and Freedom

There were 3 examples where the Barrier and Freedom themes co-occurred. In this way of feeling alone, the person wants to relate to others but there is an experience of obstacles to this relating and, rather than fight through these barriers, the person chooses to withdraw from interacting. In withdrawing from others, the person experiences the freedom of being able to do what he or she wants without having to coordinate personal needs with

others. Although the person may enjoy the solitude for awhile, when prolonged, such withdrawal results in feelings of loneliness in being cut-off from others. As with the Missing and Freedom combination, a barrier between the self and others can be experienced ambivalently as either an obstacle to relating or as a protection of one's autonomy. The following description by a participant gives an example of the Barrier/Freedom combination:

> When I was at a staff meeting where we had gone into it with the understanding that we were going to consider some changes and the whole meeting ended up being conducted in a manner of why we can't make the changes, I felt alone because I was the only one who proposed that we try. I was apart from everybody else, like we were on different mesas with valleys running between us and I was the only one standing on mine. I found myself withdrawing and drifting off, day-dreaming about what it would be like if some of the changes were adopted. Although initially I was frustrated, I locked into feeling positive about what could be and I left the meeting feeling good.

Vulnerability and Freedom

Only 2 examples of the Vulnerability/Freedom theme combination were found. With the Vulnerability theme one focuses on the negative consequences of being on one's own; in the Freedom theme one focuses on the positive consequences of being on one's own. In the examples given by participants, they did not experience these two meanings of feeling alone at the same time but rather at different stages (i.e. during and after) in a relationship. Vulnerability was experienced during the relationship when the other would or could not help. When the relationship

ended, the person began to focus on the positive possibilities of being on their own without the constraints of depending on an unreliable other to gratify their needs. They felt stronger, more independent and able to do what they wanted to. The following is a description by a participant illustrating this theme combination:

> In a recent relationship with a woman, I felt more alone in the relationship than out of it because in the relationship there was conflict and a lack of support created by both of us trying to get needs filled by the other that they could not satisfy and could only be provided by ourselves, whereas, when I am alone, I generally have less conflict with myself and have only myself to blame for my happiness or unhappiness.

Multiple Theme Combinations

Only one type of multiple theme combination was found: Missing, Barrier and Vulnerability, and there were 6 examples of this combination. These examples represented complex experiences of aloneness in which the participant reported several different meanings. One participant described wanting to relate to others at a party but becoming self-conscious, fearing others would not like him, and withdrawing. In seeing that, unlike him, most of the others were coupled, he felt different from the group and was reminded of past relationships that he now missed.

Another participant, in grieving the death of a loved one, felt unable to communicate the empty feeling left by this loss or to get any support for what they were going through. Yet another participant yearned for someone to

relate to and, while attempting to communicate with her husband, became aware that they were not a part of each other's lives and that there was no one to help her cope with her illness. Such experiences of feeling alone may be the most painful since one feels alone in just about every painful way possible. These experiences also attest to the ultimate interrelatedness of the thematic structures found. The following is a description by a participant which gives an example of feeling alone while experiencing the Missing, Barrier and Vulnerability themes:

> During the 2 year period of depression, on the weekends before I had started working at the radio station and I had nothing to do and didn't want to do my homework, I felt alone, it was like a vast emptiness, there was lack of purpose. I hated that I was withdrawn from all my friends but I didn't want to be around them any longer. I had a sense of not being a part of. I didn't have any common ties with anybody because I did not want to do what they were doing (i.e. getting drunk and acting in a way that I find disgusting). My friends were busy with activities or other relationships so I felt cut-off from them and ruminated about my situation. Religious beliefs that I had in high school, had drained away leaving a vast emptiness, which was experienced as a sense of incompleteness, like something is missing and I don't know what it is (also involves not being a part of, and alienation). I thought about my despair, lack of purpose, and the pointlessness of existence. I reevaluated my goals for the future and felt like I was drifting along, not knowing where I was going. I felt like I was the only one who was treading water and lacked a purpose. I felt like I was drowning because of my poor grades and was in a sink or swim situation where it was taking all my energy just to get myself to got to classes and try to grab onto something, which I eventually did in philosophy which restored my sense of purpose.

Participant Characteristics and the Themes

Gender Differences

During the interviews, the participants talked about experiences of feeling alone throughout the lifespan. Age, marital status, occupation and other demographic characteristics at the time of the experience of feeling alone being discussed was often different from the participant's demographic characteristics at the time of the interview. Relating a participant's current demographic characteristics to experiences in the past might lead to erroneous conclusions. For this reason, only the sex of the participant could be validly related to the frequency with which the various themes were represented in a participant's interview. Further, since the study was descriptive in purpose and did not meet the sampling requirements necessary to perform statistical procedures, only tentative formulations regarding sex differences are offered.

The relative frequency of themes for males and females is presented in Table 11. Males tended to give more examples of the Missing theme while females tended to emphasize the theme of Vulnerability. The representation of the Barrier and Freedom themes in the interviews of males and females was approximately equal.

Table 11. Theme Scores: Gender Differences

	Theme							
	Total Scores				Percent Scores			
Sex	M	B	V	F	M	B	V	F
Males (n= 10)	48	48	16	22	36	36	12	16
Females (n= 10)	26	51	39	14	20	39	30	11

The Distribution of Themes Across Participants

Table 2 on page 132 shows the frequency of theme scores for all participants. Themes were widely distributed across the participants. All themes were reported by the majority of participants. Thirteen of the 20 participants gave at least one example of all four themes. In terms of each thematic structure, all participants produced at least one example of the Barrier theme, all but one produced an example of the Missing theme, three did not report the Vulnerability theme and four did not report the Freedom theme. Overall, these results indicate the generality of themes for participants and suggest that most individuals have the capacity to experience these various ways of feeling alone.

Theme Prevalence for Individual Participants

Despite the wide distribution of the themes across participants, individual participants tended to discuss a particular way of feeling alone in their interview. Some themes or meanings of feeling alone may be more likely for different individuals. The assumption here is that themes more frequently mentioned by a participant in the course of an interview may indicate that this theme is more significant or figural for them. Given this assumption, results suggest that different ways of feeling alone are dominant for different individuals. In the following

discussion, cases where each of the four major themes were most prevalent for a participant will be discussed.

Missing. Six participants (five male and one female) most frequently reported experiences of feeling alone which involved the Missing theme. Two of these participants were single and three were divorced. For three of the participants (all male), the Missing theme constituted over 50% of the theme scores given to their interview. With these participants, feeling alone was primarily an experience of wanting but not having a relationship with an other. They tended to discuss several incidents of feeling lonely and depressed. They also tended to produce a relative paucity of incidents representing the Freedom and Vulnerability themes. In situations which could evoke a variety of possible meanings, such as social gatherings, they tended to focus on the absence of an other and missed them. Feeling alone also became most figural for them in situations which tended to involve the Missing theme, such as being alone at home. These participants were more likely to feel alone when physically alone than when they were with others.

Barrier. Eight participants (5 females and 3 males) most frequently reported experiences of feeling alone which involved the Barrier theme. Four participants were married, two were divorced, one was separated and one was

single. For 5 of these participants (3 females and 2 males), the Barrier theme accounted for over 50% of the theme scores given to their interview. For these individuals, feeling alone was mainly an experience of wanting but feeling blocked from relating to others; they often felt frustrated when feeling alone. Feeling alone became more figural for them in situations which tended to evoke the Barrier theme, such as one-to-one interaction. They were more likely to feel alone when they were with others than when they were physically alone. When they were physically alone, they were more likely to not feel alone or experience freedom.

Vulnerability. Three participants (all females) most frequently reported experiences involving the Vulnerability theme. Two participants were married and one was single. Although the Vulnerability theme was scored more frequently than the other themes in their protocols, in no cases did it account for over 50% of a participant's theme scores. Participants for whom this way of feeling alone was prevalent also tended to experience several other meanings of feeling alone as well. They tended to feel unsupported when others were absent and exposed to negative evaluation when others were present. They also frequently reported feeling anxious when feeling alone.

Freedom. Only one participant, a married male, most frequently reported experiences of feeling alone which involved the Freedom theme. The Freedom theme did not constitute over 50% of his theme scores since the Missing theme was also prevalent in his protocol. For this participant, feeling alone primarily meant either being free from having to interact with others and free to do and be what he wanted, or missing an other that he wanted to be with. He talked about several situations where he felt alone and free both with and without others present. In these situations, he focused on himself while feeling good and whole. He also talked about situations where he focused on the absence of others and felt empty. Even when positive experiences of aloneness were prevalent for participants in this study, negative experiences of feeling alone also were frequently reported.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the experience of feeling alone. A variety of ways of feeling alone were discovered. In the following, the implications and relevance of the final results of this study will be discussed. First, the major theoretical and empirical perspectives on aloneness will be viewed in relation to the thematic structure found. Second, a refined understanding of the relationship between aloneness and affect, and between aloneness and psychopathology will be presented. Next, the implications of the results of this study for the therapeutic alleviation of painful aloneness will be discussed. Finally, suggestions will be made regarding future research.

The Relationship of the Thematic Structure of Aloneness to Previous Theory and Research

Previous research and theorizing, although sometimes differentiating between various forms of loneliness, has failed to base this differentiation on a rigorous empirical approach to studying the experience of individuals. The current study addresses the need for empirical data related to the human experience of feeling alone. The discovery of

4 major meaning structures (or themes) each with 2 subthematic variations, suggests that there a number of diverse experiences of feeling alone. Types of loneliness and aloneness discussed in the literature can be related to the various themes found in this study. Many theoretical perspectives can be seen as illuminating and emphasizing particular aspects of the structure of feeling alone discovered. In the following, theoretical views and empirical understandings concerning aloneness will be considered in relation to the final results of this study.

The Thematic Structure of Aloneness and the Psychodynamic Perspective

The psychodynamic perspective tends to focus on painful experiences of aloneness. The Missing, Barrier and Vulnerability themes represent the painful experiences of aloneness found in this study. Psychodynamically-oriented theorists and researchers tend to equate loneliness with painful aloneness. Results of the current study suggest that painful aloneness and loneliness are not necessarily synonymous. Forms of painful aloneness were found that individuals did not always label "feeling lonely". With the Barrier and Vulnerability themes, some participants stated that they felt painfully alone but not lonely. In contrast, experiences involving the Missing theme were almost always labelled "feeling lonely". By concentrating primarily on the experience of loneliness,

psychodynamically-oriented thinkers may tend to emphasize the Missing theme found in this study.

Although the Missing theme may be emphasized in the psychodynamic literature, other ways of feeling painfully alone are also represented. In an empirical study, it was shown that individuals, when asked about their experience of loneliness, discussed a variety of ways of feeling lonely, some of which appear to be similar to the Barrier and Vulnerability themes found in the current study (Loucks, 1974). Although an inquiry into the experience of loneliness may produce more descriptions involving the Missing theme, other types of meanings may be present as well. In the current study, where the experience of feeling alone was investigated, the Barrier theme received the greatest emphasis, although, again, several other meanings of feeling alone were also found. Different meanings of the labels "feeling alone" and "feeling lonely" for individuals may be reflected in the differing emphases on similar aspects of aloneness found in these studies.

Several psychodynamic theorists distinguish between two major forms of loneliness. Fromm-Reichmann (1959) distinguishes between real loneliness and loneliness related to object loss. Von Witzleben (1958) distinguishes between primary and secondary loneliness. Klein (1963) distinguishes between schizophrenic and depressive loneliness. In each of these typologies, one form of

loneliness is more descriptive of the Barrier experience of feeling alone and the other form of loneliness is more descriptive of the Missing experience of feeling alone. While real loneliness, primary loneliness and schizophrenic loneliness are best represented by the Barrier theme, loneliness related to object loss, secondary loneliness and depressive loneliness are best represented by the Barrier theme. The Vulnerability theme, in contrast, appears to be involved to a lesser and relatively equal extent in all of these forms of loneliness.

As an exception to the almost total neglect of positive forms of aloneness in the psychodynamic literature, Winnicott (1958) focuses on the capacity to be alone. The capacity to be alone may be seen as the explanatory concept underlying the Freedom theme. Experiences of freedom and contentment in solitude are explained in terms of developmental factors by Winnicott. It is interesting to note that several of the participants in this study commented on having an increased capacity to experience a sense of freedom and enjoyment in being alone when they were aware of having a supportive and intimate relationship in the background. Times of aloneness tended to be well-tolerated when experienced as temporary. Further, the horizonal sense of companionship may have, as Winnicott argued, sustained the sense of well-being in periods of being alone.

The Thematic Structure of Aloneness and the Sociological Perspective

The sociological perspective focuses on trends or forces in society that increase the prevalence and severity of painful aloneness for individuals. As with the psychodynamic perspective, painful experiences of aloneness are discussed and, thus, the Missing, Barrier and Vulnerability themes are included and the Freedom theme is relatively neglected. Social isolation and alienation, more than loneliness, are emphasized in the sociological literature. In the present study, the labels "feeling isolated" and "feeling alienated" tended to be applied to examples of the Barrier theme by participants. The discussion of isolation and alienation in the sociological perspective suggests that the Barrier theme may receive greater attention in this context.

Although the Barrier theme may be emphasized, the Vulnerability and Missing themes are also represented in the sociological literature. Three major social factors which promote the experience of painful aloneness are discussed in this literature: the loss of community, individualism and loss of personal identity. Each of these social factors has a special relation to the themes found in this study.

The loss of community appears to be related to both the Barrier and Missing themes. Geographic mobility leads

to the disruption of interpersonal ties and missing significant relationships as well as to a lack of a sense of belonging and feeling estranged in a new community (Packard, 1972). The isolation of the nuclear family, both in relation to society and to itself, would seem to relate to a sense of alienation and withdrawal and, thus, represent the Barrier theme.

Individualism most clearly relates to the Barrier theme of aloneness. Although aimed at instilling a greater sense of personal freedom, individualism is seen as creating a barrier between the self and others (Bellah, et al, 1985; Slater, 1970). Hostile and competitive relationships in the context of an indifferent and impersonal technological society are considered to generate a sense of isolation and alienation for the individual.

The loss of personal identity, through changes in the external conditions of society and related changes in social character, is more related to the Vulnerability theme. Here, one feels insecure and unstable and attempts to cling to the social group in search of an identity (Fromm, 1941; May, 1953; Riesman, 1961). By being dependent on others for support, direction and approval, one experiences painful feelings of aloneness and vulnerability when support is withdrawn or when exposed to criticism. One's inner sense of vulnerability is also seen

as making the enjoyment of freedom in aloneness more problematic (Fromm, 1941). The results of the current study would concur that the Freedom and Vulnerability themes are seldom experienced together.

The Thematic Structure of Aloneness and the Existential Perspective

The existential perspective considers the experience of aloneness to be intrinsic to what it means to be human. Both painful and pleasurable experiences of feeling alone are discussed, but poorly differentiated. Although most of the themes of feeling alone may be represented in this approach, they are rarely distinguished from one another. Terms like loneliness, loneliness anxiety, solitude, aloneness and fear of aloneness are used vaguely and differently by different authors. Although, the use of these terms suggests that aloneness is considered from a broader perspective and within a wider context, the lack of a phenomenological understanding of how forms of aloneness are different leads to a confusing mixture of non-empirical ideas on this topic.

Although existentialists use the term loneliness, it is often used to refer to both positive and negative forms of aloneness. Thus, one confronts the situation where feeling alone representing the Freedom theme is labelled "feeling lonely". A return to the experience of the individual reveals the ambiguity of using such a label for

the Freedom experience. The existential literature is replete with such undifferentiated use of language. Specific labels appear to be selected for purposes of supporting one's argument rather than with the aim of accurately representing experience.

It may be that different themes found in this study reflect different aspects of what has been seen as the fundamental human condition. In this case, all of the different ways of feeling alone could be considered unavoidable and inevitable aspects of human existence. For example, it has been commented that we face the situation that all our relationships must end. Such a situation would lead inevitably to the experience of the Missing theme. Further, having to face the condition of never being able to completely share the same experience as another (e.g. having to die alone) could be viewed as an ultimate source of the Barrier theme. Existentialists typically claim that we are ultimately responsible for making our lives and, at the same time, are limited in our ability to "do" or protect ourselves. This situation can be seen as making the Vulnerability theme inevitable. In being fundamentally free to choose and create our lives, we always have the potential of realizing the Freedom theme of aloneness.

The findings of the present study would partially support the claim that each theme is an inevitable human

experience since all themes were found to be represented by each participant except for the Freedom theme. The Freedom theme, unlike the others, may require a higher level of psychological development. Existentialists seem to imply that the experience of freedom in aloneness may be more accessible to someone who has attained greater self-awareness (Moustakas, 1961, 1972) or an authentic mode of existence (Heidegger, 1962). This may explain the less frequent appearance of this theme in the present data. Another explanation may be that positive experiences of aloneness, often labelled solitude, are less likely to be labelled feeling alone and, thus, less likely reported by participants questioned about feeling alone.

A Comparison With Other Phenomenological Research on Aloneness

Sadler (1978) and Gaev (1976) attempt to specify the phenomenological dimensions of loneliness. The psychological, interpersonal and cosmic dimensions proposed by Sadler and the physical, emotional, inner and spiritual types of loneliness described by Gaev appear to be most strongly related to the Missing theme found in this study. Sadler's social and cultural dimensions of loneliness and Gaev's social type of loneliness appear to more closely related to the Barrier theme. These relationships remain unclear, however, since Sadler and Gaev differentiate forms of loneliness on the basis of what the person is alone in

relation to rather than in terms of the qualitative aspects of this experience (i.e. what the separateness from or lack of the other means to them) as in the present study.

The results of the current investigation were found to be both consistent with as well as more comprehensive than results described by Nisenbaum (1980). Nisenbaum did not mention any form of aloneness that was not also described in the present study. Although it was found that all major themes in the current study were reflected to some extent in the structures described by Nisenbaum, many of the subthemes were not. For example, the Freedom From subtheme was not described by Nisenbaum. Although aspects of many subthemes were mentioned, they were seldom differentiated from one another. For example, the Different and Indifferent subthemes were apparent as aspects of his first structure but were not distinguished, there or elsewhere. In the current study, these two subthemes were found to occur both separately and together in different experiences. Finally, although suggesting some interrelationships between varieties of aloneness, Nisenbaum did not find many of the combinations of thematic structures discovered in the current study.

Differences between Nisenbaum's results and those of the current study may have been contributed to by methodological differences. In contrast to the present study, Nisenbaum brought an "a priori" categorization of

experience to the research topic rather than letting the significant dimensions or meanings of the experience of aloneness emerge only from the data. This approach may have constrained or influenced the results found by Nisenbaum and may account for some of the differences from the results of the current investigation.

It should be noted that the topic of investigation was defined differently in the various phenomenological studies discussed. Whereas the current study investigated the experience of feeling alone, Nisenbaum investigated the experience of being alone, and Gaev and Sadler investigated the experience of loneliness. Although these labels may refer to ranges of experiences which overlap, differences in their meanings for the research participants may have led to dissimilar types of experiences being described and, in turn, may account for some of the discrepancies in the findings.

Comments and Conclusion

Theoretical perspectives on aloneness were discussed in relation to the thematic structure found in this study. The relative emphases of themes for various perspectives may reflect their overall orientation. The psychodynamic perspective is concerned with developmental factors and, thus, pays close attention to the "past" of the individual. In the experience of Missing, it is the "past" that is most figural for the individual. The psychodynamic perspective

is also most concerned with the "internal" world of the person and, again, with the Missing theme, one is often preoccupied with their internal world. In contrast, a sociological perspective focuses upon how one's external, social context promotes aloneness. The Barrier theme relates most directly to situations where a person feels separated from the social context and, thus, it is not surprising that this theme receives more attention by sociologists. Finally, the existential perspective tends to emphasize the themes of Freedom and Vulnerability moreso than other perspectives. In viewing man's relation to the forces of nature, life and death, we are seen both as a free-agent and as small and vulnerable in relation to these powerful external forces.

In conclusion, previous theoretical and empirical literature related to the topic of loneliness were found to illuminate only certain aspects of aloneness. Various theories pertain to different aspects of the thematic structure and the structure encompasses the various theories. The ability of the final results of this study to account for the various ways of feeling alone and lonely discussed by other researchers provides a further check on the validity of the findings. Current results also represent a more differentiated and comprehensive view of aloneness experiences which, in turn, provide a more sound,

phenomenologically-based foundation for future research, theorizing and clinical intervention.

Clinical Implications

The Relationship of the Thematic Structure of Aloneness to Affect

An important finding in this study was that different emotions were associated with different ways of feeling alone. While the Missing theme was most commonly accompanied by feelings of depression, the Barrier theme was most related to feelings of frustration and anger, the Vulnerability with feelings of anxiety, and the Freedom theme with more positive emotions such as contentment.

The Missing theme involves wanting but not having a positive relationship with another. Since there is often a desire for the immediate presence of someone who is absent, one is often gripped by a sense of the impossibility of getting what is wanted. The desire for a positive goal along with low expectations of achieving it has been shown to be necessary and sufficient for the experience of depression (Price, Barrell, and Barrell, 1985). The Barrier theme involves trying but feeling blocked from relating. Such attempts to act but feeling blocked from acting have been discovered to be necessary and sufficient for the experience of anger and frustration (Price, Barrell and Barrell, 1985). The Vulnerability theme involves

wanting to avoid threats to oneself but feeling uncertain about being able to avoid these threats. The desire to avoid negative outcomes accompanied by an uncertain expectation of doing this has been found to be necessary and sufficient for the experience of anxiety (Price, Barrell and Barrell, 1985). Finally, the Freedom theme involves both wanting and having the freedom to do what one wants and to be free from the constraints of interacting with others. Unlike the other themes, one is able to achieve their goals and desires. Positive outcomes or high expectations of positive outcomes, which are experienced as significant, have been discovered to be both necessary and sufficient for positive affects, such as contentment, satisfaction and excitement (Price, Barrell and Barrell, 1985). The four themes in addition to representing different meaning structures of feeling alone also represent different structures of emotional experience.

In both the empirical and theoretical literature, loneliness has been most consistently and strongly associated with the affect of depression (Bragg, 1979; Peplau and Perlman, 1982; Leiderman, 1969). As noted, the Missing theme was most commonly labelled "feeling lonely" by participants in this study and was the one most frequently associated with depression. Experiences of loss, which have been traditionally recognized as central to most forms of depression, were frequently reported with

the Missing theme. It appears that depression is most prominent for the experience of feeling lonely and missing others. Nevertheless, the Missing theme refers to only one particular way of feeling alone and depression is but one of the many affects of aloneness.

Although loneliness has been most strongly linked to depression, other affective correlates have also been found such as anxiety, tension, anger and frustration (Loucks, 1974; Peplau and Perlman, 1982). Different ways of feeling lonely and alone may be correlated with different sorts of affects. Specifically, the results of the current study suggest that correlations with anger and frustration may reflect aloneness involving the Barrier theme while correlations with anxiety and tension may reflect aloneness involving the Vulnerability theme. Correlations with positive affects were probably not found in previous studies, perhaps because the focus was on painful forms of aloneness.

The Relationship of the Thematic Structure of Aloneness to Psychopathology

As noted earlier, theorists have associated loneliness with a wide variety of forms of psychopathology, including schizophrenia (Fromm-Reichmann, 1959), depression (von Witzleben, 1958), narcissism (Zilboorg, 1938) and neurosis (Horney, 1937). There has been much disagreement regarding with which psychological disorder loneliness is "most"

associated, and several theorists have proposed that different forms of loneliness are related to different disorders. Some authors have even suggested that loneliness is central to all forms of psychopathology since with mental illness one is by definition psychologically separated from others (van den Berg, 1972; Laing, 1965). Overall, there is a confusing array of ideas regarding the relationship of loneliness to forms of psychopathology.

Although highly speculative, the results of the current study suggest some possible relationships between the ways of feeling alone found and various forms of psychopathology. The experience of feeling alone in psychological disorders may represent an extreme manifestation of ways of feeling alone found in normal individuals. The Missing theme, which is linked to the affect of depression and the experience of loss, may represent the way of feeling alone most related to clinical depression. The Barrier theme, which involves an inability to relate to others and is intensified by withdrawal, may in its extreme cases represent a schizoid problem or potentially schizophrenia. The Vulnerability theme, which involves feeling anxious and threatened, sometimes by others, may be more evident in anxiety disorders or paranoid states. Although these ideas are speculative, they may help explain why loneliness has been related to various psychological disorders in the literature.

Another possible relationship between psychopathology and the thematic structure of feeling alone, is that mental illness may reflect the presence of complex combinations of the various ways of feeling alone. The psychologically destructive consequences of complex forms of loneliness has been commented on by Sadler (1978). He notes that when separation and loss occur for a person in a number of spheres of interpersonal activity, this represents a situation of extreme psychological distress. In the present study, several examples were given where a participant simultaneously experienced all of the themes of painful aloneness. The overwhelming and psychologically incapacitating quality of these experiences was commented on by participants. It may be that extremely disturbed psychological states involve complex combinations of the different meanings or themes of aloneness. The presence of complex forms of feeling alone in psychopathology may help explain some of the difficulty distinguishing between various ways of feeling lonely found in the psychodynamic literature.

Implications for Psychological Treatment

There has been a recent growth and development of strategies for the psychological treatment of lonely people (Rook, 1984; Natale, 1986). Most of these interventions focus on promoting the social bonding of people suffering from loneliness. Various specific means of promoting

social bonding have been presented including improving social skills, modifying dysfunctional beliefs, improving self-esteem, and providing opportunities for social contacts and enjoyable activities. Cognitive-behavioral strategies have been utilized (Young, 1982) as well as therapy approaches focusing on "working-through" difficulties in the relationship between therapist and client (Gerardi, 1986). Therapy approaches which attempt to resolve the client's religious issues (Parsons and Wicks, 1986; Paloutzian and Janigian, 1986) and develop their tolerance for time alone (Young, 1982; Rook and Peplau, 1982) also have been proposed. Overall, these treatment strategies have in common that they focus on helping individuals cope with loneliness and do not discuss the treatment of non-lonely but painful forms of aloneness.

The variety of forms of aloneness discovered in this study suggest different treatment strategies for their resolution. For example, with the Missing theme, one may need to be in contact with more people in order to fill an interpersonal void. With the Barrier theme, being around others might only heighten one's sense of alienation and aloneness and, thus, one needs to be taught how to relate more effectively to others and bridge the gap that isolates oneself. With the Vulnerability theme, one might be offered support or taught to function with more effectiveness autonomously. Since the forms of aloneness

involve distinct personal meanings, different changes in one's attitude and life situation are required to effectively alter these meanings.

The findings of this study suggest that treatment strategies for loneliness proposed in the literature may be effective for certain forms of aloneness and ineffective for others. For example, providing opportunities for social contact and enjoyable activities may be most effective for treating aloneness related to the Missing theme, teaching social skills may be most appropriate for treating aloneness related to the Barrier theme, and improving self-esteem may be most useful for alleviating vulnerability. Applying treatment techniques "across the board", without distinguishing among different forms of painful aloneness, is likely to reduce the effectiveness of these interventions. It may be more desirable to design treatment approaches which are consistent with the type or types of aloneness experienced by the client.

One of the findings of the current study was that individuals experience more than one way of feeling alone at the same time and in different situations. Applying a treatment strategy for alleviating one type of aloneness may do nothing for, or even aggravate, another way that a particular client feels alone. The complexity of the problem for some individuals must be appreciated by both

therapists and clients and an overly simplistic view of treatment solutions should be avoided.

Essential to designing treatment approaches is a careful interviewing of the client regarding aloneness experiencing. The therapist's questions should be aimed at eliciting descriptions of what the client's feeling alone is like. It is not enough to know that someone feels alone, one must also know "how" they feel alone and what it means. Only through a consideration of the experience and meanings of feeling alone for a particular individual will one be able to understand that person's aloneness and develop a treatment strategy to accommodate their needs.

A phenomenologically-oriented approach to the treatment of painful aloneness would focus on changing the experienced meanings rather than on changing the external situations of individuals. Results of the present study suggest certain ways that painful experiences of aloneness may be transformed into enjoyable forms of aloneness. Each of the themes of feeling alone which involve negative affect may be altered such that one experiences the Freedom theme. For instance, one may transform an experience of the Missing theme by focusing on the presence of oneself instead of on the absence of an other. One can also transform an experience of the Barrier theme by viewing a separation from others as a sanctuary or protection as opposed to an obstacle to relating. Finally, the

experience of the Vulnerability theme may be transformed by focusing on what one can do instead of what one may not be able to do in being on one's own. Although, such transformations may be difficult, exploring other ways of making situations meaningful is intrinsic to the process of psychological growth from the phenomenological viewpoint.

Suggestions for Future Research

The current study represented an exploratory study of the experience of feeling alone. Participants with a wide range of demographic characteristics were included in order to discover different ways of feeling alone which would be common to individuals of various ages and life situations. The attempt to gain an understanding of the broader context of aloneness experiencing was deemed appropriate considering the relative paucity of research in this area. Further, it was hoped that an exploratory phenomenological investigation would help provide a foundation of experiential understanding from which more specific research projects investigating the experience of feeling alone could be developed.

A phenomenological research method is considered most practicable and productive for studying human experience. It is suggested that a similar research method to the one utilized in this study be applied to more specific topics related to the experience of aloneness. Some

possibilities for future research which emerge from the findings of this study will be mentioned below.

There was the suggestion that three of the major themes found may each be most related to particular forms of psychopathology. The relationship between the thematic structures of aloneness and forms of psychopathology could be investigated by comparing the experiences of aloneness for individuals suffering from different psychological disorders. Such research may enhance our understanding of both the experience of aloneness and psychopathology.

Another finding of the current study was that different forms of aloneness are related to situational factors. The relationship of the thematic structures of aloneness to different life situations might be investigated. For example, individuals who are grieving or who are suffering from physical illness may be interviewed regarding their experience of aloneness. The experience of persons at different ages or developmental stages, who thereby represent different life situations, may also be investigated.

The present study revealed an important theme of aloneness which represented a positive experience of freedom. Although solitude and pleasurable aloneness has been commented on in the literature, there has been very little empirical research related to this topic. Even in the current investigation, the Freedom theme was least

exemplified by participants. Further investigation into pleasurable experiences of aloneness is needed. Of particular interest would be the process by which individuals transform painful experiences of aloneness into pleasurable ones. An investigation of positive forms of aloneness may reveal a more detailed and differentiated understanding of aloneness in general.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW

I= Investigator

P= Participant

X,Y,Z,ZZ= General Situations

----= Experiential Description

I: When are you most aware of feeling alone?

P: X,Y,Z.

I: Can you think of a particular situation when you were feeling alone while X?

P: Yes.

I: What were you aware of (in this particular situation of X)?

or

P: No.

I: What are you aware of while X?

Then,

P: ----.

I: What else were you aware of while X (in particular or general situation)?

P: ----.

Continue with same format for Y and Z.

That is,

I: Can you think of a particular situation when you were feeling alone while Y?
etc.

Then,

I: Can you think of any other particular situations when you are aware of feeling alone?

P: Yes. ZZ.

I: What were you aware of while ZZ?

P: ----.

I: What else were you aware of while ZZ?

P: ----.

or,

P: No.

End Interview.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT FOLLOW-UP COVER LETTER

(Date)

Dear (Participant's Name),

On the basis of our interview a few months ago, I have formed some tentative impressions about your experience of feeling alone and I would like to get some feedback from you to see if you think these impressions are accurate. Attached to this letter is a list of statements which summarize your experience of feeling alone as I understood it on the basis of our interview. Please read the summary statements and make any additions or changes on the enclosed blank sheet of paper that follows these statements. I have also enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for you to return your comments to me in and, due to my time constraints, I would greatly appreciate receiving this information no later than one month from the date at the top of this letter. Please return the enclosed response sheet whether you have anything to add or not. You can keep the summary statements if you like. As indicated before, I will be sending you written information regarding the final results of the study. Please write or call me if you have any questions.

Thankyou very much for your cooperation and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

James Barrell
1611 Laurel Ave. Apt. 1212
Knoxville, TN 37916
phone: (home) 522-4088
(office) 974-6060

APPENDIX C

ALONENESS HANDOUT

I am now collecting data for my doctoral research in psychology on the experience of aloneness. The purpose of my study is to gain a better understanding of aloneness by interviewing people about what it is like for them to feel alone. The importance of this study is that although there have been theoretical ideas and research related to this topic, there is very little information about how people experience being alone.

Your participation in this study, if you agree, will include an interview which will take about 1 to 1 and 1/2 hours and will be audiotaped. In the interview, I would be asking you about your experiences of feeling alone. Afterwards, I would be mailing you a summarization of what I learned from the interview and ask you to return to me any comments, additions or changes you feel would make my understanding of your experience of aloneness more accurate. Finally, at the end of the study, I would be sending you written information regarding the final results.

During the interview, you would be able to select what personal experiences of aloneness you wish to talk about and how much or how little you cared to disclose about these experiences. You would be encouraged to inform me if you did not wish to talk about any aspect of your experience of aloneness and you would be able to end the interview at any time if you did not wish to continue for any reason.

It is my intention that a participant would find involvement in this study both interesting and beneficial. Many participants in similar studies have reported that they have learned things about themselves. I would hope that participation in this study would increase your understanding of your experience of aloneness.

The information obtained in this study will be held in the strictest confidence. All audiotapes, transcripts, and any other data will be coded by number only, and will be identifiable only through a master list. The master list will be kept in a secure place to which only the researcher will have access. After completion of the study, the master list and any identifying information will be destroyed and the audiotapes of the interviews will be erased.

If you are interested in participating in this study and/or have any questions about it, please call me, Jim Barrell at:

(home) 522-4088 wednesday, friday, weekends and evenings.
(office) 974-6060 wednesday, friday.
(office) 637-9711 monday, tuesday and thursday.

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I am now collecting data for my doctoral research in psychology on the experience of aloneness. The purpose of my study is to gain a better understanding of aloneness by interviewing people about what it is like for them to feel alone. The importance of this study is that although there have been theoretical ideas and research related to this topic, there is very little information about how people experience being alone.

Your participation in this study, if you agree, will include an interview which will take about 1 to 1 and 1/2 hours and will be audiotaped. In the interview, I will be asking you about your experiences of feeling alone. Afterwards, I will mail you a summarization of what I learned from the interview and ask you to return to me any comments, additions or changes you feel would make my understanding of your experience of aloneness more accurate. Finally, at the end of the study, I will be sending you written information regarding the final results.

During the interview, you will be able to select what personal experiences of aloneness you wish to talk about and how much or how little you care to disclose about these experiences. Please feel free to inform me if you do not wish to talk about any aspect of your experience of aloneness. Also, please feel free to end the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue for any reason. Sometimes talking about personal matters such as experiences of feeling alone can result in feelings of discomfort and upset. If this should happen either during or after the interview, I hope you would be able to let me know and discuss them with me.

It is my intention that you find participation in this study both interesting and beneficial. Many participants in similar studies have reported that they have learned things about themselves. I hope that participation in this study will improve your understanding of your experience of aloneness.

The information obtained in this study will be held in the strictest confidence. All audiotapes, transcripts, and any other data will be coded by number only, and will be identifiable only through a master list. The master list will be kept in a secure place to which only the researcher

will have access. After completion of the study, the master list and any identifying information will be destroyed and the audiotapes of the interviews will be erased.

If you have any questions at this point, or at any point later on in the study, please do not hesitate to ask. You will be given a copy of this information and consent form to keep, should you wish to contact me at any time about this research project.

James Barrell
Psychology Department
Austin Peay Building
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37916

Telephone: (office) 974-6060
(home) 522-4088

I have read the above information and consent form and agree to participate in this project.

Signature _____ Date _____

Please Print Your Name _____

Local Address _____ Telephone _____

_____ Zip Code _____

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Name _____

Background Information:

Sex _____ Marital Status _____

Age _____ Number of Children _____

Occupation _____ Education Level _____

_____ _____

APPENDIX F

SECOND INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

As I mentioned to you earlier, I am interested in including a verbatim transcript of our interview as an appendix in my dissertation. My purpose for doing this is to provide the reader with an illustrative example of how interviews were conducted and the way that experiences of feeling alone were talked about by participants.

Enclosed is a typed transcript of our interview, with some potentially identifying information deleted. Please look over this transcript and make a mark through any words or sections that you prefer were omitted if published in my dissertation. Also, please feel free to write down any further comments you have on the interview transcript.

If after reading the transcript of our interview, you consent to its publication as an appendix in my dissertation, please sign this form in the space provided below. Any reproduction of your interview is strictly subject to your prior approval and will only be reproduced in the approved form. Please return the corrected interview transcript and signed consent form in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. An additional copy of this Information and Consent Form is provided so that you may retain it for your own records.

If after looking over the transcript you decide for any reason that you do not wish to give approval for its reproduction, please feel free to inform me of this decision.

Finally, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number listed below. Again, thankyou for your assistance in my research.

James Barrell
Psychology Department
Austin Peay Building
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN 37916

Telephone: (office) 974-6060
(home) 522-4088

I have read the above Information and Consent Form and agree to the reproduction of the verbatim transcript in Mr. Barrell's dissertation on the experience of feeling alone.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX G

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

I: Investigator

P: Participant

I: When are you most aware of feeling alone?

P: I guess for me in crowds since I'm new here and I don't really know many people. In a movie theater. I guess anywhere where there is a crowd of people.

I: Can you think of a particular time when you felt alone while you were in a crowd?

P: Just when I first came here. When I was walking around campus trying to find where the various buildings were. I didn't have a purpose, so to speak. I wasn't a student and I wasn't an employee. I didn't have a role I guess is what I'm trying to say. I didn't know anyone except my brother who I didn't see very much. So that was alot of feeling alone. Just feeling apart from this.

I: What were you aware of while you were walking around campus and feeling alone?

P: Mostly just other groups of people, I guess. There ties and this and that. What I seem to be lacking in that sense. Maybe, I remember having a sense of a lack of identity during that period of time. Didn't have much to do really. I was going to look for a job.

I: What does a lack of identity mean for you?

P: A lack of some kind of connectedness. It reminds me kind of like of a foreign culture. Everything seems real different from the smaller university I went to before which was about half the size of this. Didn't know anyone except my brother and I didn't see him. Didn't really have any way of meeting people. Had no common experiences with them as yet. I didn't have a job opportunity. I was more or less prevented from being able to find a job. It was hard for me to develop any relationships at all.

I: Can you think of other sorts of crowds where you have felt alone?

P: Yeah. Crowds of people that have just seemingly completely opposite views of life and a different background in the past. Like when I was a freshman and undergraduate. I went to football games and I didn't like it just because I am not violent and completely disapprove of violence. To be in a crowd of people.. well, they were all drunk, first of all. I'm not a tea-totaler but I don't like the way people behave when they get drunk in crowds. So the whole situation was real aversive to me. I have been in political groups where my views seemingly run contrary to the main stream. That's a real feeling of isolation to be confronted by a crowd of non-believers. I have been part of a group and found out it wasn't the right thing which was like the football game. I've been in a group and, as a known representative of this group, been put on the spot by a large group of people who don't have the same ideas.

I: What is that like for you, being put on the spot?

P: I'll use an example. Our school every year had an air band contest. So this past year there was a nationwide students against multiple sclerosis event and we got the campus to have the event. So there was a rock performance. There were people from the campus who got people to sponsor them and we all got to perform.. pantomime sort of. So I was David Bern of the Talking Heads and as I was performing or as I was waiting to perform, there was this other group who was not a part of the necessarily.. just a part of the air band. The people who made the event.. there was a guy who won for our region who was portraying Billy Idol and there was me who.. I was a celebrity because I worked at the student radio station. Not that I was popular but I had performed a year before so people knew me and they were expecting me and they were excited and I was going to do it.. produce. So I was gonna perform and there was this band on the stage. They were doing some things on stage that I didn't approve of. They were dragging around a girl on stage by her hair. We have a real problem with rape on our campus so I just thought it was completely wrong. I decided I wouldn't do it so I had to back out of my obligation gracefully which involved a good deal of pressure from people who were counting on me to be there. They should have understood why it was a moral judgement and not stagefright. That's one example of for political reasons being put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. That's more difficult to deal with it.

I: Was that an alone feeling for you at the time?

P: I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and some people came to me and said they did agree. But in the experience, it was aloneness.

I: What else were you aware of when you were feeling alone in that situation?

P: Aside from being really nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do.. Just because I have a real strong sense of duty that's been instilled in me for years. Fear of what other people.. how they would respond. I didn't want to overreact and sound like a fanatic. I had just wrote a letter to this paper. I have a habit of writing letters to the school newspaper about social issues so everyone knew them and knew who I was and I was very sarcastic. So I ended up writing a letter about why I didn't perform, to explain. Finally, people came around and agreed and disagreed. It was over with and there was nothing I could do about it. That was a difficult thing for me to do. I couldn't decide whether or not to send the letter in and alienate them further or win them over.. make them understand what I've done and why I've done it. When I quit my job at the radio station, that was a real alone feeling as well because I couldn't really describe to anyone else why I was quitting other than I just felt the boss.. I think he liked me.. He was constantly... I can deal with people who like me consistently or don't like me consistently but people who change radically in the period of a conversation from one to the other.. I can't read them at all.. I have no idea how to take what he said. Maybe he was just teasing with all of his political comments. That was an alone feeling because I couldn't really explain to him. So, I don't think anyone really ever understood why I quit.

I: Did you have an alone feeling while you were talking with him?

P: Yeah. It involved alot of frustration. I couldn't understand what to expect.. what was going on.. you know, was this a joke? Is this an underhanded complement? Or is this pure criticism? Or what are we dealing with here? Later on, people understood him for what he was and is and understood a little more. After I dropped out, I think things are fine between us now. I think we understand each other now.

I: What were you aware of after you quit and you felt alone?

P: I had first become involved as a volunteer there but after I quit I realized that it was a big part of my identity. People would call up the station and talk to me and I met alot of my friends that way. Incredible source of relationships for me. So after that was done, I didn't have a real contact.. a real outlet as such.

I: One of the situations that you mentioned earlier was that you sometimes feel alone in a movie theater. What are you aware of in this situation?

P: Yeah. Especially here but not so much at home because I could usually find somebody to go with. Here, I don't know people yet. I see some individuals but usually there are couples or groups. That just makes me realize what I lack.. what I don't have. I realize that will take time to develop.

I: What else are you aware of when you are feeling alone in a movie theater?

P: Don't have anybody to talk to and don't have anything to do so I am just usually sitting around soaking up the atmosphere. I just like to.. I like art. I like to absorb whatever is in the building.. get familiar with the environment. So, I guess I spend alot of time doing that. Consequently, I am looking around and I guess alot of people are talking. I spend my time doing, I guess, antisocial behaviors.

I: What do you mean by antisocial behaviors?

P: Maybe I shouldn't say "anti" because I'm not antisocial. I'm just not social yet. Things that don't involve another self.. another person. Things that I can do alone.

I: Can you think of any other situations where you were aware of feeling alone?

P: I was depressed for about 2 years. That was an intense alone there. Don't ever want to do that again. That about ruined my undergraduate career. I was originally a chemistry major. One semester I got a 1.8 and the other semester I got a 1.9. That was pretty bad. I'm not used to getting D's or failing courses. So that's not so much the aloneness. I would go to classes anyway. I didn't feel like going but I would go and try to study because I couldn't understand what was going on. I always liked chemistry but for some reason I couldn't concentrate. So I would go and say "I got to do this... I got to pull out of this slump". So I'd go and do it and the whole time my mind wouldn't be there for the most part. I'd see the

professor and see him move his lips and I'd hear him talking but I couldn't tell you a thing about the lecture after it was over. I would take notes but I wasn't thinking along his chain of thought. That was a really weird time because, in that period of time, I did not feel a part of whatever was going on around me. I was not sure I wanted to be a part of it. I was pretty sure I didn't want to take part in it. That's one of the pretty big changes in the way I look at life. In a way its good. I'm really glad that I went through it. I'm glad that I dealt with all the things that I did. I've learned alot about myself and other people. I consciously wanted to cut myself off, I think, because I didn't like what I saw in people around me. Not all people and its not that I didn't like the people themselves but I didn't like the things they did. I wished they would just try to be different anyway. At least make the efforts to be honorable. So, I got more into a subculture lifestyle. Getting more involved in more political things.. more social things. Speaking.. things that I've never done before. I became very vocal about my views. It was a strange situation. I guess I turned inward alot during being depressed. I sort of cut myself off because I really didn't like what other people did to other people; how they treated them; what was first on their mind; what made people tick. Maybe it was conscious. Maybe I really did want to be different. I always felt different but I think this time maybe I really wanted to do it.

I: During that 2 year period at what times, in what situations were you most aware of feeling alone?

P: The weekends were notoriously bad for me until I started working at the radio station because I had nothing to do and I didn't want to do my homework. It was like a vast emptiness. I had a lack of purpose, maybe. I tend to lose myself in actions and just get completely involved so that I don't have time to think about where I'm going and just feel my life go along. I like to be busy and have my time filled up. At that time, I was so withdrawn and that was the weirdest thing. I hated that I was withdrawn from all my friends but I didn't want to be around them any longer. I didn't want to be a part. Not that they were bad. They were all my friends still. I guess I just needed some time alone.

I: What are you aware of when you feel withdrawn?

P: Have a sense of not being a part of. I think that has alot to do with it. On the weekends, it was right to go out and celebrate and the weekends start on thursday night were I lived and ended on monday morning, if even then.

Its a notorious party school. So that was a long time.. that was most of the days of a week. I really didn't have much to do on the weekends because I really didn't like to go out and get drunk and just be drunk with people and watch them be rude and crude and disgusting.. animals, really. People really become savages in that town when they become drunk.. disgusting drunken behavior. So, I didn't have any common ties with anybody because I didn't want to do what they were doing and that was what everybody was doing for the most part. The friends that I did have were usually busy at work or they were older students and were busy with their schoolwork or they had friends or boyfriends or something. The people that were my age, some of them were art students so they were busy doing creative arts like painting. So they all had something to do and I was not doing anything so I was ruminating, I guess is the word, about my situation. I guess I felt cut-off in a way. I had gone through high school and went through a very religious period, I guess. That sort of left. It just sort of drained away and there was this vast emptiness left from it. The subculture people that I started to hang around with were more into existentialism as its commonly used and their views were pointlessness, purposelessness.. alot of cheerful, happy thoughts. Probably, I shouldn't have been exposed to it at the time. So, thinking about things like that.. that took up alot of my time.. alot of my energy. I layed around and didn't do much. I thought about despair and a lack of some purpose. The pointlessness of existence was the big thing. That was the time I was making a change in my curriculum. I was thinking about what I wanted to be and why I wanted to do it. I had been wanting to become a doctor and had a romantic notion about what that would be like. I decided that maybe I was seeing things in terms of the ideal of what it is and not the reality. It was at that point that I had to reevaluate my goals. At that point there, I didn't have a focal point. I didn't know where I was going. I was drifting along. All the other years, I knew I wanted to be a doctor. I felt like I was the only one who was treading water. Everyone else had a purpose which I guess is the recurring theme.

I: What does treading water mean for you?

P: Its just all the emotional upheaval and trying to push all these things aside and say it doesn't matter. Its just sink or swim. I'm drowning because I knew what was happening to my grades. I better watch out because I won't be able to do any of this. So, I won't have to make the decision.. I won't be able to make the decision if I don't do something quickly. So it was taking all of my energy to just get myself to go to classes and try to grab onto

something. Then philosophy came along and brought me to here and the thoughts were similar to what I had been thinking and I found that it restored a sense of purpose.. some purpose to sit around and think about.. try to find an answer to something.. try to find a better life.. what does it all means? Those are the kinds of things I was thinking about anyway.

I: You used the phrase earlier "vast emptiness". What is this like for you?

P: A feeling of incompleteness. Something is missing. In fact, I was telling my psychologist.. I walked into her office and said "I need something". I was joking and she knew what I meant but taken out of context it didn't make any sense. But at the time, I didn't know what it is. I still don't know what it is. I felt like I wasn't complete in some way and I think that has alot to do with the emptiness. Just not having a purpose... a want of something whatever it is. Maybe its some fusion with some ideal.. love, anything. Trying to think of how to describe it. Not being a part of is involved in that too. Alienation is another word.

I: Can you think of a particular time when you were aware of that incompleteness feeling?

P: Well, I've never had strong relationships with men in any of my relations. I think its hardest for me to deal with men. I have never felt a part of what they were doing. I'm not always sure I want to be a part of what they are doing. I don't understand the normal male contempt for women. I have always felt like that was what I was missing. I don't understand why when I get around a bunch of men, a woman walking by is a piece of meat. I don't have that.. I don't feel apart of them. I think that has alot to do with my emptiness because I am not a part of that crowd.. that half of the species... in a way.. in another way I am. With women, I can talk. Things are just fine and there are no expectations. I don't have to do anything. I don't talk down to them. I just don't find the same things come up in conversation or action with women as they do with men. Invariably, with men, sex always comes up and degrading always come up. So, to counter that, I guess maybe I'm a feminist. I wrote alot of the letters about rape in the school newspaper. Got up on my soapbox. So I think overall, I relate to women easier because I don't have to prove anything. I don't have to compete. Now that I am as far along as I am, I don't think that I have to compete with men. Cause I'm not violent, I don't do many things that men are supposed to do, I guess.

I: Can you think of any other situations where you feel alone?

P: Common everyday experiences.. haven't touched on many of them yet. There has been a bunch of those. Alot of them have been here just because this is unfamiliar. I notice everything. Everything is more pronounced to me. If I look at someone on the street and smile and they just give me a blank stare that's just like "am I here?.. did they see me?" That bothers me because I just wonder what's wrong.. can't be that bad. When I was in my old school, this happened to me two times and I can't figure out why. I had to walk through the bar district to get to my house. I was walking home one evening and this girl walked up to me and she was drunk out of her mind. She walked up to me and looked right into my eye and she said "you have cancer" and walked on. I was blown away. I didn't say anything. I didn't know what to do. I don't know why that was an alone experience for me but I just felt like I was defenseless because I wasn't expecting it.. I had no idea. I should have laughed or cried and said how did you know. But the same.. almost the exact quote happened to me earlier when a carload of guys drove by me that summer. Again, that time too, I was speechless.. just stunned. I have no idea why people would joke about something like that.

I: What else were you aware of?

P: Anger that they would joke about such a serious disease. That was the first time that I was even aware that any men even looked at me. Other than my friends, I never thought that anyone even noticed my presence. I used to be really wierd as far as appearance is concerned. So, that was unusual because I wasn't dressed oddly that day. I was surprised that they noticed me at all and then to sabotage any contact with a rude interjection like that just scared me alot. I try to be friendly with people. I usually don't talk to people I don't know but I usually smile, especially to familiar faces. People I pass 2 or 3 times a week, I usually smile. I notice people. I notice faces. I don't remember names real well. Usually, if I see a person once or twice, I remember the face. I would think they would be aware of other people on the street. Maybe I'm wrong. I always watch people. Just not to notice is a real identity scare. Men don't look at men and women do look at each other. That was my first experience of being examined by men for any reason at all. I just thought it was amazing. Maybe I just pay too much attention to what is going around me. Maybe most people don't have time for that. I don't know. Maybe that's why dwell on the fact

that I'm not noticed or when I'm noticed it catches me off guard. But I do spend alot of time examining environments.. looking at people and watching them interact. I notice interactions alot more than I guess I should. Lack of comraderie in classes has disturbed me. Its better now because I'm getting used to what goes on in a large university. Like my German class. I went through a whole quarter with people in that German class and no one ever spoke. God, this is really wierd. We are in the same class every day. Why doesn't anyone speak? I get up early in the morning and sit outside because I like to be in the morning air. I see people outside walking and I smile trying to be friendly and they look like they don't know me and just don't have anything in common. That's an alone feeling.

I: Can you think of any other situations when you feel alone?

P: Yeah. Sometimes I enjoy feeling alone.. not feeling lonely.. being by myself and getting away for awhile. Like in the evenings, I'll go for a walk not to visit any people or be with any people but just to relax. Not to deal with any worries really. That's probably contrary to all my beliefs about being involved and paying attention to what's going on around me. I think that if you don't have time alone, you burn out. I can't lose myself completely in whatever is going on around me because I'll just wear myself out. When I enjoy feeling alone, I am conscious of being alone and I feel good just to be away for awhile. I turn on the stereo and listen to a record where I don't have to be anything for awhile. Just relax and not have any pressure from anyone to do anything. Not that anyone pressures me anyway.

I: What do you mean by not having to be anything?

P: I don't have to worry. I can close the door. I could lay there naked if I wanted to.. not that I want to but I could. I don't have any expectations. I have no responsibilities. No parent responsibilities, anyway. I don't have any role that I need to worry about. Its just a rest period.

I: What else are you aware of when you enjoy feeling alone?

P: I guess just being free for awhile. Not having anything to worry about. Just a feeling of relaxing. Having time to heal pretty much. Heal from whatever is happening, stress or whatever.

I: What does healing mean for you?

P: I mean it in two ways: literally and figuratively. I have a disease so I have to rest several times a day. The other way is just that something that's been stress like any relationship that isn't happening that I thought would have by now or any hostility that I feel. I just need time to let it run rampant. Need time to put on loud music and just be frustration for awhile. Catharsis is what I'm talking about. Or just time to relax and let it go away.. don't worry about it because its really not important and there is nothing else I can do about it.

I: Can you think of any other ways that you feel alone that you haven't mentioned?

P: Just looking into the future and wondering where I'll be. Where am I gonna turn up? What am I gonna do with my life? Things like that. Its sort of like treading water again but its not as intense. Land is within reach. Things like that. I still wonder about the purpose: what does it all mean? If I think about nuclear war, which is one of the groups I used to be involved in, life seems so small.. almost worthless.. in comparison to the kinds of destruction people are talking about. That's really scary coupled with wondering about the point of existence. It tends to make you feel alone. Like what Sartre talks about with the total responsibility of a human being. If they are going to make their world, they have to be responsible for it. That's oppressive if you think about it too much. The weight of the world on your shoulders. Its kind of egoistic if you think about it. That is such an alone feeling if I think about it too much because that is what its all about: individual responsibility. No one that can help you. Its all your own doing and you suffer the consequences. Its just scary to me.. it really is. And that certainly makes me feel cut off. In a time like that, there is no one else to lend a hand. The longer I think about it the worse it gets until something distracts me. That's the biggest one because that ties in everything. For me, I want to be a part of and when I think about that, it destroys any hope of being a part of. Your alone kid. Do it yourself. It seems like its virtually impossible to share an experience with someone else other than to have a common experience but its gonna be different no matter what and that tends to make me feel isolated.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

ORGANIZING MEANING CONTEXTS/ DIVIDING

1. I: When are you most aware of feeling alone? P: I guess for me in crowds since I'm new here and I don't really know many people. In a movie theater. I guess anywhere where there is a crowd of people.

2. I: Can you think of a particular time when you felt alone while you were in a crowd? P: Just when I first came here. When I was walking around campus trying to find where the various buildings were. I didn't have a purpose, so to speak. I wasn't a student and I wasn't an employee. I didn't have a role I guess is what I'm trying to say. I didn't know anyone except my brother who I didn't see very much. So that was alot of feeling alone. Just feeling apart from this. I: What were you aware of while you were walking around campus and feeling alone? P: Mostly just other groups of people, I guess. There ties and this and that. What I seem to be lacking in that sense. Maybe, I remember having a sense of a lack of identity during that period of time. Didn't have much to do really. I was going to look for a job. I: What does a lack of identity mean for you? P: A lack of some kind of connectedness. It reminds me kind of like of a foreign culture. Everything seems real different from the smaller university I went to before which was about half the size of this. Didn't know anyone except my brother and I didn't see him. Didn't really have any way of meeting people. Had no common experiences with them as yet. I didn't have a job opportunity. I was more or less prevented from being able to find a job. It was hard for me to develop any relationships at all.

3. I: Can you think of other sorts of crowds where you have felt alone? P: Yeah. Crowds of people that have just seemingly completely opposite views of life and a different background in the past. Like when I was a freshman and undergraduate. I went to football games and I didn't like it just because I am not violent and completely disapprove of violence. To be in a crowd of people.. well, they were all drunk, first of all. I'm not a tea-totaler but I don't like the way people behave when they get drunk in crowds. So the whole situation was real aversive to me.

4. I have been in political groups where my views seemingly run contrary to the main stream. That's a real feeling of isolation to be confronted by a crowd of non-believers. I have been part of a group and found out it wasn't the right

thing which was like the football game. I've been in a group and, as a known representative of this group, been put on the spot by a large group of people who don't have the same ideas.

5. I: What is that like for you, being put on the spot? P: I'll use an example. Our school every year had an air band contest. So this past year there was a nationwide students against multiple sclerosis event and we got the campus to have the event. So there was a rock performance. There were people from the campus who got people to sponsor them and we all got to perform.. pantomime sort of. So I was David Bern of the Talking Heads and as I was performing or as I was waiting to perform, there was this other group who was not a part of the necessarily.. just a part of the air band. The people who made the event.. there was a guy who won for our region who was portraying Billy Idol and there was me who.. I was a celebrity because I worked at the student radio station. Not that I was popular but I had performed a year before so people knew me and they were expecting me and they were excited and I was going to do it.. produce. So I was gonna perform and there was this band on the stage. They were doing some things on stage that I didn't approve of. They were dragging around a girl on stage by her hair. We have a real problem with rape on our campus so I just thought it was completely wrong. I decided I wouldn't do it so I had to back out of my obligation gracefully which involved a good deal of pressure from people who were counting on me to be there. They should have understood why it was a moral judgement and not stagefright. That's one example of for political reasons being put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. That's more difficult to deal with it. I: Was that an alone feeling for you at the time? P: I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and some people came to me and said they did agree. But in the experience, it was aloneness. I: What else were you aware of when you were feeling alone in that situation? P: Aside from being really nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do.. Just because I have a real strong sense of duty that's been instilled in me for years. Fear of what other people.. how they would respond. I didn't want to overreact and sound like a fanatic. I had just wrote a letter to this paper. I have a habit of writing letters to the school newspaper about social issues so everyone knew them and knew who I was and I was very sarcastic. So I ended up writing a letter about why I didn't perform, to explain. Finally, people came around and agreed and disagreed. It was over with and there was nothing I could do about it. That was a difficult thing for me to do. I couldn't decide whether or not to send the letter in and

alienate them further or win them over.. make them understand what I've done and why I've done it.

6. When I quit my job at the radio station, that was a real alone feeling as well because I couldn't really describe to anyone else why I was quitting other than I just felt the boss.. I think he liked me.. He was constantly... I can deal with people who like me consistently or don't like me consistently but people who change radically in the period of a conversation from one to the other.. I can't read them at all.. I have no idea how to take what he said. Maybe he was just teasing with all of his political comments. That was an alone feeling because I couldn't really explain to him. So, I don't think anyone really ever understood why I quit. I: Did you have an alone feeling while you were talking with him? P: Yeah. It involved alot of frustration. I couldn't understand what to expect.. what was going on.. you know, was this a joke? Is this an underhanded complement? Or is this pure criticism? Or what are we dealing with here? Later on, people understood him for what he was and is and understood a little more. After I dropped out, I think things are fine between us now. I think we understand each other now.

7. I: What were you aware of after you quit and you felt alone? P: I had first become involved as a volunteer there but after I quit I realized that it was a big part of my identity. People would call up the station and talk to me and I met alot of my friends that way. Incredible source of relationships for me. So after that was done, I didn't have a real contact.. a real outlet as such.

8. I: One of the situations that you mentioned earlier was that you sometimes feel alone in a movie theater. What are you aware of in this situation? P: Yeah. Especially here but not so much at home because I could usually find somebody to go with. Here, I don't know people yet. I see some individuals but usually there are couples or groups. That just makes me realize what I lack.. what I don't have. I realize that will take time to develop. I: What else are you aware of when you are feeling alone in a movie theater? P: Don't have anybody to talk to and don't have anything to do so I am just usually sitting around soaking up the atmosphere. I just like to.. I like art. I like to absorb whatever is in the building.. get familiar with the environment. So, I guess I spend alot of time doing that. Consequently, I am looking around and I guess alot of people are talking. I spend my time doing, I guess, antisocial behaviors. I: What do you mean by antisocial behaviors? P: Maybe I shouldn't say "anti" because I'm not antisocial. I'm just not social yet. Things that don't

involve another self.. another person. Things that I can do alone.

9. I: Can you think of any other situations where you were aware of feeling alone? P: I was depressed for about 2 years. That was an intense alone there. Don't ever want to do that again. That about ruined my undergraduate career. I was originally a chemistry major. One semester I got a 1.8 and the other semester I got a 1.9. That was pretty bad. I'm not used to getting D's or failing courses. So that's not so much the aloneness. I would go to classes anyway. I didn't feel like going but I would go and try to study because I couldn't understand what was going on. I always liked chemistry but for some reason I couldn't concentrate. So I would go and say "I got to do this... I got to pull out of this slump". So I'd go and do it and the whole time my mind wouldn't be there for the most part. I'd see the professor and see him move his lips and I'd hear him talking but I couldn't tell you a thing about the lecture after it was over. I would take notes but I wasn't thinking along his chain of thought.

10. That was a really weird time because, in that period of time, I did not feel a part of whatever was going on around me. I was not sure I wanted to be a part of it. I was pretty sure I didn't want to take part in it. That's one of the pretty big changes in the way I look at life. In a way its good. I'm really glad that I went through it. I'm glad that I dealt with all the things that I did. I've learned alot about myself and other people. I consciously wanted to cut myself off, I think, because I didn't like what I saw in people around me. Not all people and its not that I didn't like the people themselves but I didn't like the things they did. I wished they would just try to be different anyway. At least make the efforts to be honorable. So, I got more into a subculture lifestyle. Getting more involved in more political things.. more social things. Speaking.. things that I've never done before. I became very vocal about my views. It was a strange situation. I guess I turned inward alot during being depressed. I sort of cut myself off because I really didn't like what other people did to other people; how they treated them; what was first on their mind; what made people tick. Maybe it was conscious. Maybe I really did want to be different. I always felt different but I think this time maybe I really wanted to do it.

11. I: During that 2 year period at what times, in what situations were you most aware of feeling alone? P: The weekends were notoriously bad for me until I started working at the radio station because I had nothing to do and I didn't want to do my homework. It was like a vast

emptiness. I had a lack of purpose, maybe. I tend to lose myself in actions and just get completely involved so that I don't have time to think about where I'm going and just feel my life go along. I like to be busy and have my time filled up. At that time, I was so withdrawn and that was the weirdest thing. I hated that I was withdrawn from all my friends but I didn't want to be around them any longer. I didn't want to be a part. Not that they were bad. They were all my friends still. I guess I just needed some time alone. I: What are you aware of when you feel withdrawn? P: Have a sense of not being a part of. I think that has alot to do with it. On the weekends, it was right to go out and celebrate and the weekends start on thursday night were I lived and ended on monday morning, if even then. Its a notorious party school. So that was a long time.. that was most of the days of a week. I really didn't have much to do on the weekends because I really didn't like to go out and get drunk and just be drunk with people and watch them be rude and crude and disgusting.. animals, really. People really become savages in that town when they become drunk.. disgusting drunken behavior. So, I didn't have any common ties with anybody because I didn't want to do what they were doing and that was what everybody was doing for the most part. The friends that I did have were usually busy at work or they were older students and were busy with their schoolwork or they had friends or boyfriends or something. The people that were my age, some of them were art students so they were busy doing creative arts like painting. So they all had something to do and I was not doing anything so I was ruminating, I guess is the word, about my situation. I guess I felt cut-off in a way. I had gone through high school and went through a very religious period, I guess. That sort of left. It just sort of drained away and there was this vast emptiness left from it. The subculture people that I started to hang around with were more into existentialism as its commonly used and their views were pointlessness, purposelessness.. alot of cheerful, happy thoughts. Probably, I shouldn't have been exposed to it at the time. So, thinking about things like that.. that took up alot of my time.. alot of my energy. I layed around and didn't do much. I thought about despair and a lack of some purpose. The pointlessness of existence was the big thing. That was the time I was making a change in my curriculum. I was thinking about what I wanted to be and why I wanted to do it. I had been wanting to become a doctor and had a romantic notion about what that would be like. I decided that maybe I was seeing things in terms of the ideal of what it is and not the reality. It was at that point that I had to reevaluate my goals. At that point there, I didn't have a focal point. I didn't know where I was going. I was drifting along. All the other years, I knew

I wanted to be a doctor. I felt like I was the only one who was treading water. Everyone else had a purpose which I guess is the recurring theme. I: What does treading water mean for you? P: Its just all the emotional upheaval and trying to push all these things aside and say it doesn't matter. Its just sink or swim. I'm drowning because I knew what was happening to my grades. I better watch out because I won't be able to do any of this. So, I won't have to make the decision.. I won't be able to make the decision if I don't do something quickly. So it was taking all of my energy to just get myself to go to classes and try to grab onto something. Then philosophy came along and brought me to here and the thoughts were similar to what I had been thinking and I found that it restored a sense of purpose.. some purpose to sit around and think about.. try to find an answer to something.. try to find a better life.. what does it all means? Those are the kinds of things I was thinking about anyway. I: You used the phrase earlier "vast emptiness". What is this like for you? P: A feeling of incompleteness. Something is missing. In fact, I was telling my psychologist.. I walked into her office and said "I need something". I was joking and she knew what I meant but taken out of context it didn't make any sense. But at the time, I didn't know what it is. I still don't know what it is. I felt like I wasn't complete in some way and I think that has alot to do with the emptiness. Just not having a purpose... a want of something whatever it is. Maybe its some fusion with some ideal.. love, anything. Trying to think of how to describe it. Not being a part of is involved in that too. Alienation is another word.

12. I: Can you think of a particular time when you were aware of that incompleteness feeling? P: Well, I've never had strong relationships with men in any of my relations. I think its hardest for me to deal with men. I have never felt a part of what they were doing. I'm not always sure I want to be a part of what they are doing. I don't understand the normal male contempt for women. I have always felt like that was what I was missing. I don't understand why when I get around a bunch of men, a woman walking by is a piece of meat. I don't have that.. I don't feel a part of them. I think that has alot to do with my emptiness because I am not a part of that crowd.. that half of the species... in a way.. in another way I am. With women, I can talk. Things are just fine and there are no expectations. I don't have to do anything. I don't talk down to them. I just don't find the same things come up in conversation or action with women as they do with men. Invariably, with men, sex always comes up and degrading always come up. So, to counter that, I guess maybe I'm a feminist. I wrote alot of the letters about rape in the

school newspaper. Got up on my soapbox. So I think overall, I relate to women easier because I don't have to prove anything. I don't have to compete. Now that I am as far along as I am, I don't think that I have to compete with men. Cause I'm not violent, I don't do many things that men are supposed to do, I guess.

13. I: Can you think of any other situations where you feel alone? P: Common everyday experiences.. haven't touched on many of them yet. There has been a bunch of those. Alot of them have been here just because this is unfamiliar. I notice everything. Everything is more pronounced to me. If I look at someone on the street and smile and they just give me a blank stare that's just like "am I here?.. did they see me?" That bothers me because I just wonder what's wrong.. can't be that bad.

14. When I was in my old school, this happened to me two times and I can't figure out why. I had to walk through the bar district to get to my house. I was walking home one evening and this girl walked up to me and she was drunk out of her mind. She walked up to me and looked right into my eye and she said "you have cancer" and walked on. I was blown away. I didn't say anything. I didn't know what to do. I don't know why that was an alone experience for me but I just felt like I was defenseless because I wasn't expecting it.. I had no idea. I should have laughed or cried and said how did you know.

15. But the same.. almost the exact quote happened to me earlier when a carload of guys drove by me that summer. Again, that time too, I was speechless.. just stunned. I have no idea why people would joke about something like that. I: What else were you aware of? P: Anger that they would joke about such a serious disease. That was the first time that I was even aware that any men even looked at me. Other than my friends, I never thought that anyone even noticed my presence. I used to be really wierd as far as appearance is concerned. So, that was unusual because I wasn't dressed oddly that day. I was surprised that they noticed me at all and then to sabotage any contact with a rude interjection like that just scared me alot. I try to be friendly with people. I usually don't talk to people I don't know but I usually smile, especially to familiar faces. People I pass 2 or 3 times a week, I usually smile. I notice people. I notice faces. I don't remember names real well. Usually, if I see a person once or twice, I remember the face. I would think they would be aware of other people on the street. Maybe I'm wrong. I always watch people. Just not to notice is a real identity scare. Men don't look at men and women do look at each other. That was my first experience of being examined by men for

any reason at all. I just thought it was amazing. Maybe I just pay too much attention to what is going around me. Maybe most people don't have time for that. I don't know. Maybe that's why I dwell on the fact that I'm not noticed or when I'm noticed it catches me off guard. But I do spend alot of time examining environments.. looking at people and watching them interact. I notice interactions alot more than I guess I should.

16. Lack of comraderie in classes has disturbed me. Its better now because I'm getting used to what goes on in a large university. Like my German class. I went through a whole quarter with people in that German class and no one ever spoke. God, this is really wierd. We are in the same class every day. Why doesn't anyone speak?

17. I get up early in the morning and sit outside because I like to be in the morning air. I see people outside walking and I smile trying to be friendly and they look like they don't know me and just don't have anything in common. That's an alone feeling.

18. I: Can you think of any other situations when you feel alone? P: Yeah. Sometimes I enjoy feeling alone.. not feeling lonely.. being by myself and getting away for awhile. Like in the evenings, I'll go for a walk not to visit any people or be with any people but just to relax. Not to deal with any worries really. That's probably contrary to all my beliefs about being involved and paying attention to what's going on around me. I think that if you don't have time alone, you burn out. I can't lose myself completely in whatever is going on around me because I'll just wear myself out. When I enjoy feeling alone, I am conscious of being alone and I feel good just to be away for awhile. I turn on the stereo and listen to a record where I don't have to be anything for awhile. Just relax and not have any pressure from anyone to do anything. Not that anyone pressures me anyway. I: What do you mean by not having to be anything? P: I don't have to worry. I can close the door. I could lay there naked if I wanted to.. not that I want to but I could. I don't have any expectations. I have no responsibilities. No parent responsibilities, anyway. I don't have any role that I need to worry about. Its just a rest period. I: What else are you aware of when you enjoy feeling alone? P: I guess just being free for awhile. Not having anything to worry about. Just a feeling of relaxing. Having time to heal pretty much. Heal from whatever is happening, stress or whatever. I: What does healing mean for you? P: I mean it in two ways: literally and figuratively. I have a disease so I have to rest several times a day. The other way is just that something that's been stress like any

relationship that isn't happening that I thought would have by now or any hostility that I feel. I just need time to let it run rampant. Need time to put on loud music and just be frustration for awhile. Catharsis is what I'm talking about. Or just time to relax and let it go away.. don't worry about it because its really not important and there is nothing else I can do about it.

19. I: Can you think of any other ways that you feel alone that you haven't mentioned? P: Just looking into the future and wondering where I'll be. Where am I gonna turn up? What am I gonna do with my life? Things like that. Its sort of like treading water again but its not as intense. Land is within reach. Things like that. I still wonder about the purpose: what does it all mean? If I think about nuclear war, which is one of the groups I used to be involved in, life seems so small.. almost worthless.. in comparison to the kinds of destruction people are talking about. That's really scary coupled with wondering about the point of existence. It tends to make you feel alone. Like what Sartre talks about with the total responsibility of a human being. If they are going to make their world, they have to be responsible for it. That's oppressive if you think about it too much. The weight of the world on your shoulders. Its kind of egoistic if you think about it. That is such an alone feeling if I think about it too much because that is what its all about: individual responsibility. No one that can help you. Its all your own doing and you suffer the consequences. Its just scary to me.. it really is. And that certainly makes me feel cut off. In a time like that, there is no one else to lend a hand. The longer I think about it the worse it gets until something distracts me. That's the biggest one because that ties in everything. For me, I want to be a part of and when I think about that, it destroys any hope of being a part of. Your alone kid. Do it yourself. It seems like its virtually impossible to share an experience with someone else other than to have a common experience but its gonna be different no matter what and that tends to make me feel isolated.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

ORGANIZING MEANING CONTEXTS/ CONDENSING

1. I am most aware of feeling alone in crowds of people.

2. When I first came to this city and was walking around campus, I didn't have a purpose, role or identity and didn't know many people, and I felt apart from crowds of others. I was aware of the ties present in other groups of people and that I lacked this sense of connectedness with others. The place seemed like a foreign culture to me, very different from and larger than the university I had attended previously. I did not have common experiences with others yet, I lacked a way of meeting people and establishing relationships, and was prevented from finding a job.

3. When in a crowd of people with opposite views of life and a different background in the past, such as at a football game, I feel alone. When I went to football games as a freshman and undergraduate, I didn't like the violence and the behavior of people who were drinking in the crowd, so the whole situation was aversive to me.

4. When in political groups where my views are contrary to the majority of others, and as a representative of my group, am put on the spot by a crowd of non-believers, I feel isolated.

5. When I was waiting to perform at an air band contest and the audience knew me and was excitedly awaiting my performance, I backed out of my obligation to perform, despite pressure from others who were counting on me, because the act prior to mine was doing things on stage that I disapproved of and found immoral (i.e. dragging a woman by her hair on stage). I felt put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and others came to me and said they agreed. I was nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do and I was afraid of how others would respond. Later, I wrote a letter to the newspaper about why I didn't preform and was uncertain whether this would alienate others further or win them over and make them understand what I did and why.

6. When I quit my job at the radio station, I felt alone because I was unable to explain to anyone, including my boss, why I quit. In relating to my boss, I was unable to

understand the meaning of his comments (e.g. whether he was joking with me or criticizing me) and felt frustrated.

7. After I quit my job at the radio station, I realized that it had been a big part of my identity and way of meeting others which I now lacked.

8. Sometimes, when I go to a movie alone and am in the movie theater, I see couples or groups of individuals which makes me realize what I lack and I feel alone. Since I don't have anybody to talk to, I like looking around and getting familiar with my environment (i.e. soaking up the atmosphere, absorbing whatever is in the building) while others are talking. I spend my time doing things that don't involve another person and that I can do alone.

9. During a period of 2 years where I was depressed and felt intensely alone, I had problems academically and when I would go to classes, I could not concentrate or understand what was going on. I would see the professor, see him move his lips and hear what he was saying, but I did not understand or remember anything. I would take notes but I wasn't thinking along his chain of thought.

10. During the 2 year period of depression, I did not feel a part of whatever was going on around me and I did not want to take part in it. I turned inward and consciously wanted to cut myself off from others because I did not like how people treated each other and what made them tick (i.e. what was first on their mind). I got more into a subculture lifestyle, into political things and became very vocal about my views. I had always felt different but, during this time, I really wanted to be different.

11. During that 2 year period of depression, on the weekends before I had started working at the radio station and I had nothing to do and didn't want to do my homework, I felt alone, it was like a vast emptiness, there was lack of purpose. I hated that I was withdrawn from all my friends but I didn't want to be around them any longer. I had a sense of not being a part of. I didn't have any common ties with anybody because I did not want to do what they were doing (i.e. getting drunk and acting in a way that I find disgusting). My friends were busy with activities or other relationships so I felt cut-off from them and ruminated about my situation. Religious beliefs that I had in high school, had drained away leaving a vast emptiness, which was experienced as a sense of incompleteness, like something is missing and I don't know what it is (also involves not being a part of, and alienation). I thought about my despair, lack of purpose, and the pointlessness of existence. I reevaluated my goals

for the future and felt like I was drifting along, not knowing where I was going. I felt like I was the only one who was treading water and lacked a purpose. I felt like I was drowning because of my poor grades and was in a sink or swim situation where it was taking all my energy just to get myself to got to classes and try to grab onto something, which I eventually did in philosophy which restored my sense of purpose.

12. In my relationships with men, I feel a sense of incompleteness and emptiness over not being part of this crowd (i.e. males). I don't understand and am missing the normal male contempt for women and because I am nonviolent, I don't do many of the things that men are supposed to do.

13. When I look at someone on the street and smile and they just give me a blank stare, I wonder if I am here, if they saw me and what is wrong. It bothers me and I feel alone.

14. When I was walking through the bar district to my house and a girl who was drunk walked up to me and said "you have cancer" and walked on, I was defenseless because I wasn't expecting it and I didn't say anything or know what to do. I felt alone.

15. When a carload of guys drove by me and said "you have cancer", I was speechless, stunned, felt alone and felt angry that they would joke about such a serious disease. It was my first experience of being examined by men and I was surprised that they noticed me at all. I was frightened by their rude interjection which sabotaged any contact. I attempt to be friendly and observant of others but don't expect others to notice me and, although not being noticed is an identity scare, being noticed catches me off guard.

16. When I went through a whole quarter with people in a German class and no one ever spoke, I felt disturbed by the lack of comraderie and felt alone.

17. When sitting outside in the morning, I smile trying to be friendly to people walking by and they look like they don't know me and don't have anything in common, I feel alone.

18. When I go for a walk alone in the evening just to relax and not to deal with worries, I enjoy feeling alone. When I enjoy feeling alone, I am conscious of being alone and I feel good just to be away for awhile. I am free from having anything to worry about, anyone pressuring me, and responsibilities. I am able to relax and do what I want to and I am able to heal from whatever is happening, such as

resting because of my disease or letting go of or becoming and expressing negative feelings I am having about stressful events.

19. When I wonder what my future will be like and the purpose of life, I feel alone. I feel scared when I think about how small and worthless life seems in comparison to the destruction of a nuclear war. When I think about having total responsibility for my life, this feels oppressive to me, like the weight of the world on my shoulders. No one can help me, its all my own doing and I suffer the consequences which is scary to me. The longer I think about it the worse I feel until something distracts me. I want to be a part of and any hope of this is destroyed and, additionally, it seems impossible to share the same experience with another which makes me feel isolated.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

ORGANIZING MEANING CONTEXTS/ GROUPING

A:

1. I am most aware of feeling alone in crowds of people.

2. When I first came to this city and was walking around campus, I didn't have a purpose, role or identity and didn't know many people, and I felt apart from others. I was aware of the ties present in other groups of people and that I lacked this sense of connectedness with others. The place seemed like a foreign culture to me, very different from and larger than the university I had attended previously. I did not have common experiences with others yet, I lacked a way of meeting people and establishing relationships, and was prevented from finding a job.

B:

3. When in a crowd of people with opposite views of life and a different background in the past, such as at a football game, I feel alone. When I went to football games as a freshman and undergraduate, I didn't like the violence and the behavior of people who were drinking in the crowd, so the whole situation was aversive to me.

C:

4. When in political groups where my views are contrary to the majority of others, and as a representative of my group, am put on the spot by a crowd of non-believers, I feel isolated.

5. When I was waiting to perform at an air band contest and the audience knew me and was excitedly awaiting my performance, I backed out of my obligation to perform, despite pressure from others who were counting on me, because the act prior to mine was doing things on stage that I disapproved of and found immoral (i.e. dragging a woman by her hair on stage). I felt put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and others came to me and said they agreed. I was nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do and I was afraid of how others would respond. Later, I wrote a letter to the newspaper about why I didn't preform and was uncertain whether this

would alienate others further or win them over and make them understand what I did and why.

D:

6. When I quit my job at the radio station, I felt alone because I was unable to explain to anyone, including my boss, why I quit. In relating to my boss, I was unable to understand the meaning of his comments (e.g. whether he was joking with me or criticizing me) and felt frustrated.

7. After I quit my job at the radio station, I realized that it had been a big part of my identity and way of meeting others which I now lacked.

E:

8. Sometimes, when I go to a movie alone and am in the movie theater, I see couples or groups of individuals which makes me realize what I lack and I feel alone. Since I don't have anybody to talk to, I like looking around and getting familiar with my environment (i.e. soaking up the atmosphere, absorbing whatever is in the building) while others are talking. I spend my time doing things that don't involve another person and that I can do alone.

F:

9. During a period of 2 years where I was depressed and felt intensely alone, I had problems academically and when I would go to classes, I could not concentrate or understand what was going on. I would see the professor, see him move his lips and hear what he was saying, but I did not understand or remember anything. I would take notes but I wasn't thinking along his chain of thought.

G:

10. During the 2 year period of depression, I did not feel a part of whatever was going on around me and I did not want to take part in it. I turned inward and consciously wanted to cut myself off from others because I did not like how people treated each other and what made them tick (i.e. what was first on their mind). I got more into a subculture lifestyle, into political things and became very vocal about my views. I had always felt different but, during this time, I really wanted to be different.

H:

11. During that 2 year period of depression, on the weekends before I had started working at the radio station and I had nothing to do and didn't want to do my homework, I felt alone, it was like a vast emptiness, there was lack of purpose. I hated that I was withdrawn from all my friends but I didn't want to be around them any longer. I had a sense of not being a part of. I didn't have any common ties with anybody because I did not want to do what they were doing (i.e. getting drunk and acting in a way that I find disgusting). My friends were busy with activities or other relationships so I felt cut-off from them and ruminated about my situation. Religious beliefs that I had in high school, had drained away leaving a vast emptiness, which was experienced as a sense of incompleteness, like something is missing and I don't know what it is (also involves not being a part of, and alienation). I thought about my despair, lack of purpose, and the pointlessness of existence. I reevaluated my goals for the future and felt like I was drifting along, not knowing where I was going. I felt like I was the only one who was treading water and lacked a purpose. I felt like I was drowning because of my poor grades and was in a sink or swim situation where it was taking all my energy just to get myself to got to classes and try to grab onto something, which I eventually did in philosophy which restored my sense of purpose.

I:

12. In my relationships with men, I feel a sense of incompleteness and emptiness over not being part of this crowd (i.e. males). I don't understand and am missing the normal male contempt for women and because I am nonviolent, I don't do many of the things that men are supposed to do.

J:

13. When I look at someone on the street and smile and they just give me a blank stare, I wonder if I am here, if they saw me and what is wrong. It bothers me and I feel alone.

17. When sitting outside in the morning, I smile trying to be friendly to people walking by and they look like they don't know me and don't have anything in common, I feel alone.

K:

14. When I was walking through the bar district to my house and a girl who was drunk walked up to me and said "you have cancer" and walked on, I was defenseless because I wasn't expecting it and I didn't say anything or know what to do. I felt alone.

15. When a carload of guys drove by me and said "you have cancer", I was speechless, stunned, felt alone and felt angry that they would joke about such a serious disease. It was my first experience of being examined by men and I was surprised that they noticed me at all. I was frightened by their rude interjection which sabotaged any contact. I attempt to be friendly and observant of others but don't expect others to notice me and, although not being noticed is an identity scare, being noticed catches me off guard.

L:

16. When I went through a whole quarter with people in a German class and no one ever spoke, I felt disturbed by the lack of comraderie and felt alone.

M:

18. When I go for a walk alone in the evening just to relax and not to deal with worries, I enjoy feeling alone. When I enjoy feeling alone, I am conscious of being alone and I feel good just to be away for awhile. I am free from having anything to worry about, anyone pressuring me, and responsibilities. I am able to relax and do what I want to and I am able to heal from whatever is happening, such as resting because of my disease or letting go of or becoming and expressing negative feelings I am having about stressful events.

N:

19. When I wonder what my future will be like and the purpose of life, I feel alone. I feel scared when I think about how small and worthless life seems in comparison to the destruction of a nuclear war. When I think about having total responsibility for my life, this feels oppressive to me, like the weight of the world on my shoulders. No one can help me, its all my own doing and I suffer the consequences which is scary to me. The longer I think about it the worse I feel until something distracts

me. I want to be a part of and any hope of this is destroyed and, additionally, it seems impossible to share the same experience with another which makes me feel isolated.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

MEANING CONTEXTS

A: Barrier (different).

I am most aware of feeling alone in crowds of people. When I first came to this city and was walking around campus, I didn't have a purpose, role or identity and didn't know many people, and I felt apart from crowds of others. I was aware of the ties present in other groups of people and that I lacked this sense of connectedness with others. The place seemed like a foreign culture to me, very different from and larger than the university I had attended previously. I did not have common experiences with others yet, I lacked a way of meeting people and establishing relationships, and was prevented from finding a job.

B: Barrier (different).

When in a crowd of people with opposite views of life and a different background in the past, such as at a football game, I feel alone. When I went to football games as a freshman and undergraduate, I didn't like the violence and the behavior of people who were drinking in the crowd, so the whole situation was aversive to me.

C: Vulnerability (unsupported, exposed).

When in political groups where my views are contrary to the majority of others, and as a representative of my group, am put on the spot by a crowd of non-believers, I feel isolated. When I was waiting to perform at an air band contest and the audience knew me and was excitedly awaiting my performance, I backed out of my obligation to perform, despite pressure from others who were counting on me, because the act prior to mine was doing things on stage that I disapproved of and found immoral (i.e. dragging a woman by her hair on stage). I felt put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and others came to me and said they agreed. I was nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do and I was afraid of how others would respond. Later, I wrote a letter to the newspaper about why I didn't perform and was uncertain whether this would alienate others further or win them over and make them understand what I did and why.

D: Barrier (different).

When I quit my job at the radio station, I felt alone because I was unable to explain to anyone, including my boss, why I quit. In relating to my boss, I was unable to understand the meaning of his comments (e.g. whether he was joking with me or criticizing me) and felt frustrated. After I quit my job at the radio station, I realized that it had been a big part of my identity and way of meeting others which I now lacked.

E: Missing (yearning), Freedom (to).

Sometimes, when I go to a movie alone and am in the movie theater, I see couples or groups of individuals which makes me realize what I lack and I feel alone. Since I don't have anybody to talk to, I like looking around and getting familiar with my environment (i.e. soaking up the atmosphere, absorbing whatever is in the building) while others are talking. I spend my time doing things that don't involve another person and that I can do alone.

F: Barrier (different).

During a period of 2 years where I was depressed and felt intensely alone, I had problems academically and when I would go to classes, I could not concentrate or understand what was going on. I would see the professor, see him move his lips and hear what he was saying, but I did not understand or remember anything. I would take notes but I wasn't thinking along his chain of thought.

G: Barrier (different, indifferent).

During the 2 year period of depression, I did not feel a part of whatever was going on around me and I did not want to take part in it. I turned inward and consciously wanted to cut myself off from others because I did not like how people treated each other and what made them tick (i.e. what was first on their mind). I got more into a subculture lifestyle, into political things and became very vocal about my views. I had always felt different but, during this time, I really wanted to be different.

H: Missing (emptiness, yearning); Barrier (different, indifferent); Vulnerability (unsupported, exposed).

During the 2 year period of depression, on the weekends before I had started working at the radio station and I had nothing to do and didn't want to do my homework, I felt alone, it was like a vast emptiness, there was lack of purpose. I hated that I was withdrawn from all my friends but I didn't want to be around them any longer. I had a sense of not being a part of. I didn't have any common ties with anybody because I did not want to do what they were doing (i.e. getting drunk and acting in a way that I find disgusting). My friends were busy with activities or other relationships so I felt cut-off from them and ruminated about my situation. Religious beliefs that I had in high school, had drained away leaving a vast emptiness, which was experienced as a sense of incompleteness, like something is missing and I don't know what it is (also involves not being a part of, and alienation). I thought about my despair, lack of purpose, and the pointlessness of existence. I reevaluated my goals for the future and felt like I was drifting along, not knowing where I was going. I felt like I was the only one who was treading water and lacked a purpose. I felt like I was drowning because of my poor grades and was in a sink or swim situation where it was taking all my energy just to get myself to got to classes and try to grab onto something, which I eventually did in philosophy which restored my sense of purpose.

I: Missing (emptiness), Barrier (different).

In my relationships with men, I feel a sense of incompleteness and emptiness over not being part of this crowd (i.e. males). I don't understand and am missing the normal male contempt for women and because I am nonviolent, I don't do many of the things that men are supposed to do.

J: Barrier (indifferent).

When I smile and try to be friendly to people walking by on the street and they just give me a blank stare like they don't know me and don't have anything in common, I wonder if I am here, if they saw me and what is wrong. It bothers me and I feel alone.

K: Vulnerability (exposed).

When I was walking through the bar district to my house and a girl who was drunk walked up to me and said

"you have cancer" and walked on, I was defenseless because I wasn't expecting it and I didn't say anything or know what to do. I felt alone. When, at an earlier time, a carload of guys drove by me and said the same thing, I was also speechless, stunned, felt alone and I felt angry that they would joke about such a serious disease. It was my first experience of being examined by men and I was surprised that they noticed me at all. I was frightened by their rude interjection which sabotaged any contact. I attempt to be friendly and observant of others but don't expect them to notice me and, although not being noticed is an identity scare, being noticed catches me off guard.

L: Barrier (different).

When I went through a whole quarter with people in a German class and no one ever spoke, I did not understand and felt disturbed by the lack of comraderie and felt alone.

M: Freedom (from, to).

When I go for a walk alone in the evening just to relax and not to deal with worries, I enjoy feeling alone. When I enjoy feeling alone, I am conscious of being alone and I feel good just to be away for awhile. I am free from having anything to worry about, anyone pressuring me, and responsibilities. I am able to relax and do what I want to and I am able to heal from whatever is happening, such as resting because of my disease or letting go of or becoming and expressing negative feelings I am having about stressful events.

N: Vulnerability (unsupported), Barrier (different).

When I wonder what my future will be like and the purpose of life, I feel alone. I feel scared when I think about how small and worthless life seems in comparison to the destruction of a nuclear war. When I think about having total responsibility for my life, this feels oppressive to me, like the weight of the world on my shoulders. No one can help me, its all my own doing and I suffer the consequences which is scary to me. The longer I think about it the worse I feel until something distracts me. I want to be a part of and any hope of this is destroyed and, additionally, it seems impossible to share the same experience with another which makes me feel isolated.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

FORMULATED MEANINGS

(1) I have lacked a sense of connection with others who I may or may not perceive as having a connection with each other.

(2) I have felt alone when my views stand in opposition to others around me and may feel put on the spot by these others.

(3) I have felt alone in not understanding and/or not being understood by others.

(4) In cutting-myself off from others who I wanted to be different from, I was left feeling incomplete, empty and sometimes without a sense of purpose in my life.

(5) I feel a sense of incompleteness and emptiness in not being part of a group of others.

(6) I have felt alone in being ignored by others.

(7) In being noticed unexpectedly and critically by others, I felt alone and defenseless.

(8) In being alone, I have been free from worries and able to relax, heal and do what I want.

(9) I have realized my total responsibility for my life and felt helpless and isolated from others.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW

CLUSTERS OF THEMES

(1) Lacking a sense of connectedness with others.

(2) Being noticed critically by others.

(3) Feeling incomplete and empty.

(4) Being ignored by others.

(5) Being free from worries and able to be and do what one wants.

(6) Not understanding or being understood by others.

(7) Feeling helpless.

APPENDIX H

SCORING MANUAL

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to describe and illustrate several themes or categories that I have devised of the individual's experience of aloneness. The themes were formulated through a process of analyzing individual taped interviews for common meanings, and then progressively comparing the meanings to find the four major themes. This manual will be used by two reliability raters in a reliability task. The purpose of the task is to determine if other people can reliably score paragraph-length excerpts from the interviews according to the same thematic category system that I have devised.

Directions

The reliability task consists of 50 paragraphs randomly selected from the interview transcripts. Your task is to write a score for each paragraph, according to the scoring system outlined below. Each paragraph has been typed with a space underneath for you to write the score. You will have an unlimited amount of time to score the paragraphs and you may go back and review or change scores as you wish. Also, please feel free to refer to the Scoring Manual as often as you like.

There are four major scores or themes which describe the individual's experience of aloneness. These major scores or themes are:

1) "M" -- which is an abbreviation for the theme labelled "Missing".
2) "B" -- which is an abbreviation for the theme labelled "Barrier".
3) "V" -- which is an abbreviation for the theme labelled "Vulnerability".
4) "F" -- which is an abbreviation for the theme labelled "Freedom".

Each of the four major scores or themes are divided into two minor scores or subthemes. For the Absence theme, the minor scores or subthemes are:

1) "Y" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Yearning".
2) "E" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Emptiness".

For the Barrier theme, the minor scores or subthemes are:

1) "D" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Different".
2) "I" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Indifferent".

For the Vulnerability theme, the minor scores or subthemes are:

1) "E" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Exposed".

2) "U" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Unsupported".

For the Freedom theme, the minor scores or subthemes are:

1) "T" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Freedom to".

2) "F" -- which is an abbreviation for the subtheme labelled "Freedom from".

When scoring a paragraph, include both the major score of the theme present along with the minor score of the subtheme present for this theme. List the major and minor scores together in the following manner: major score/minor score. For example, a score that represented the major theme of Vulnerability and the subtheme of Exposure would be written as:

V/E

Note that there are only two possible minor scores that go with any given major score. However, it is possible that both subthemes of a given theme are present in a paragraph in which case both minor scores would be listed together along with the major score in the following manner: major score/ minor score, minor score. For example, if both the Exposed and Unsupported subthemes were present in a given paragraph, the score would be written as:

V/E,U

Attempt in all cases to provide the minor score or scores of a given major score. However, if you are unable to determine this, follow the major score by a "?". For example, if you detect the theme of Vulnerability in a given paragraph but are unable to determine which subthemes are present, the score should be written as:

V/?

It is possible for a given paragraph to represent more than one of the themes. In such cases, each theme along with their respective subtheme(s) will be scored in the following manner: major score/ minor score(s); major score/ minor score(s) etc. For example, if the theme/subtheme of Vulnerability/Exposed were combined with the theme/subtheme of Barrier/Different, the score would be written as:

V/E; B/D

Finally, if you are unable to discern any of the themes listed above in a given paragraph, score it as a "?". If you have difficulty with a paragraph, please try to explain the nature of the difficulty in the space provided beneath it. This will be helpful in making final revisions of the thematic categories.

A way of visualizing the thematic category system is in the form of a diamond (see figure 1 on the next page), with the four major themes being at the four corners. At each corner, is also the two subthemes of the given theme.

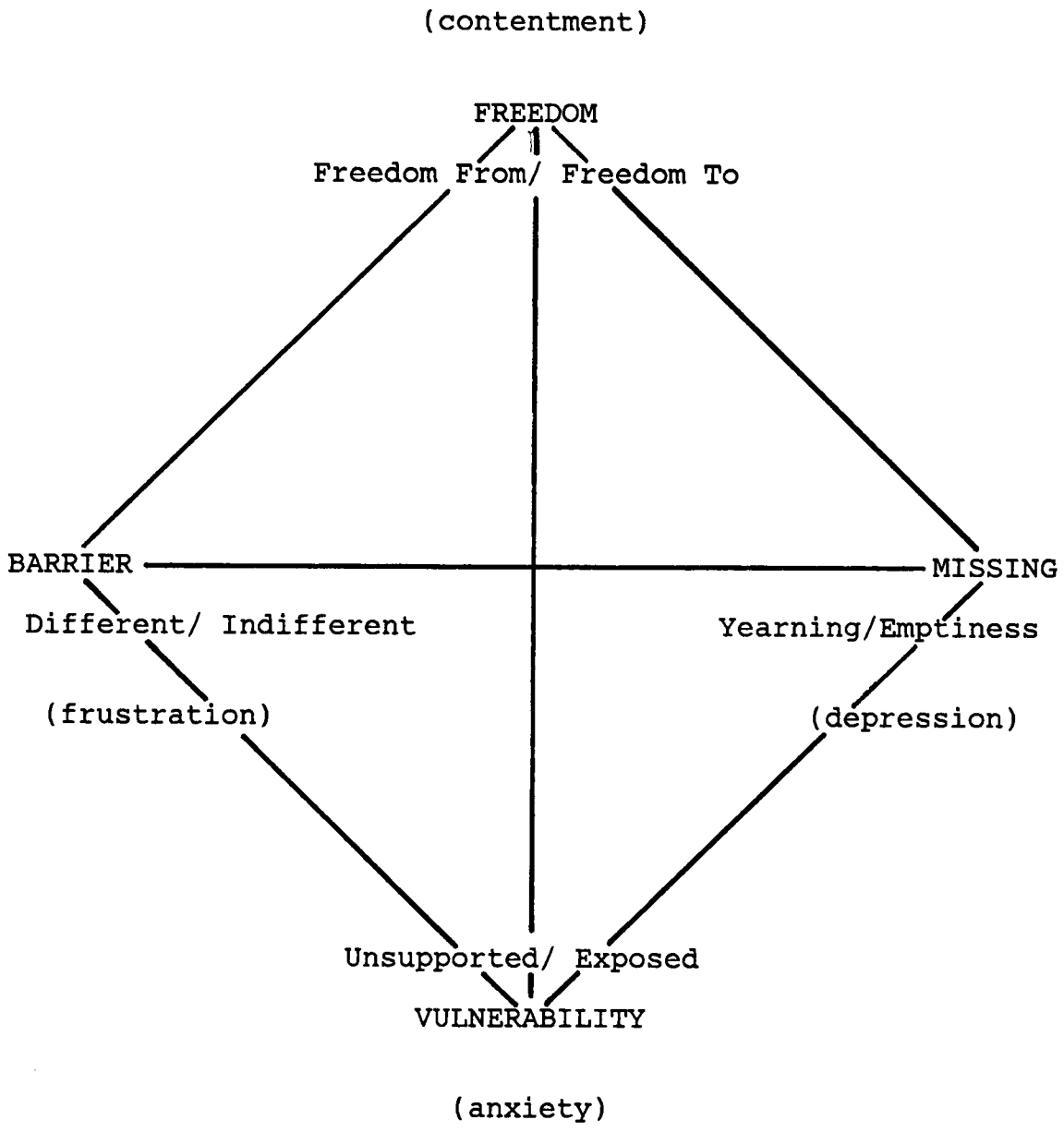


Figure 1. The thematic structure of the experience of aloneness.

Also, lines connect each corner with every other corner, which represents the inevitable overlap and combining of individual themes.

Each of the paragraphs to be scored represents an individual's description of their experience of feeling alone. The paragraphs vary from comments on aloneness in general to descriptions of particular incidents where the person felt alone. In reading and attempting to score these paragraphs, it is important to keep an open mind as much as possible and not allow your own preconceptions or beliefs about aloneness to bias how you score them. Allow the meanings that the person is attempting to convey in language to emerge for you by using your ability to empathically understand their experience. It may be useful to attempt to relive experiences where you felt similarly to what the person is describing and ask yourself: what is feeling alone like for me in this situation and what are the meanings involved? Then check back to see how your own meanings appear to be different or similar to what the person is describing. In this process, you use the person's words as a way of entering the world of their experience. Once you have a feeling for what the person is experiencing, review the thematic category system described in this manual and ask yourself what theme(s) and subtheme(s) best represents the meaning(s) of aloneness that the person is describing. Allow the person's words,

your own experiencing and your understanding of the themes and subthemes to guide your scoring.

The remainder of this manual is a description of the four themes and eight subthemes of the thematic category system. Please read the following descriptions at least once before beginning to score the paragraphs.

(1) Theme: Missing -- Score as: "M"

Subthemes: Yearning -- Score as: "M/Y"

Emptiness -- Score as: "M/E"

This theme refers to the individual's experience of feeling alone where they focus upon the absence of a relationship with an other and they miss this relationship. In short, feeling alone can mean missing an other or others. One feels lonely for the other that is missing. A variety of types of others may be missed. One may miss a particular person such as in the situation where one is separated from them or the relationship has ended. Situations of loss or grief often involve feeling alone and missing a particular other. One may miss more than one particular other, such as in the situation where one moves away from a hometown and friends. In addition to missing a particular others, one may miss others in general or a particular kind of relationship. If one is completely isolated, he or she may miss people in general. Further, a type of relationship may be missed or felt to be missing

such as an intimate heterosexual relationship or close family ties. The missing of others is not dependent on the other's actual presence or absence. For example, the other who is absent may not be missed and it is possible to miss an other when he or she is present, such as when I miss previous good relationships with my family while I am with them. Finally, the emotion most strongly associated with this theme is depression.

In this theme, what is missed is always a positive relationship with the other. One wants but does not have this relationship. The relationship may be a particular one in the past or a possible relationship in the future. One misses the relationship of the past or feels the possible relationship to be missing. The focus is upon the absence of this relationship. However, the experience of an absence always involves a presence. When my friend gets up out of a chair and leaves my house, I experience his absence when I look at the chair. On the one hand, as I look at the chair, I am aware of its emptiness as it lacks my friend sitting on it. On the other hand, the presence of my chair calls forth the image of my friend and memories of our conversation which I recognize as no longer present. The absence within my chair involves the previous presence of my friend while the absence of my friend involves the lingering presence of my chair. If I wish my friend were still here, I may miss my friend and feel alone. This

example points out the two aspects or subthemes of the Missing theme: 1) Emptiness or presence of an absence and 2) Yearning or absence of a presence. When I am missing a relationship with an other and focus upon my present situation, I experience an emptiness. When I focus upon the relationship that I am lacking, such as by remembering the past or imagining future possibilities, I experience a yearning or pining for the other. Further, it must be noted that due to the close relationship of these two subthemes, they are often found together in the same experience. The two subthemes of the Missing theme will now be described in detail.

(a) Subtheme: Yearning -- Score as "M/Y"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "M/Y":

6A:

I feel lonely when I am spending time alone without anything to do or anyone to do anything with, such as on holidays, other special occasions or sundays, and I begin to miss my kids, remembering what we used to do together and realizing that we no longer spend much time together and that they have outgrown the things we used to do. Often memories of my kids and feeling lonely will be triggered by a television program about a sad event in a family, such as parents losing a child, and I begin to think about what if I lost one of my kids.

8B:

I feel alone, lonely and melancholy when I am doing things alone that I enjoy and feel good about myself for doing (i.e. photography) but have a pining for someone to share these activities with. I want someone there to show

my good thoughts to rather than feeling depressed and desperately seeking others to distract my mind from bad thoughts. Sharing my activities related to photography with others is made difficult by the necessity of being free from distractions in these activities and by other's lack of patience. I sometimes think about how nice it would be to find someone who would be company for me while photographing and fade away when I don't want company and need to concentrate on my work.

In this subtheme, the focus is upon the absence of a presence. It is the presence of the other that is missed and yearned for to fill the emptiness of ones current life situation. The other may represent a past relationship in which case I focus upon memories of good times I have spent with this person and what they were like. Many things may trigger these memories of the other such as being at places we used to go together or seeing objects that used to belong to them. Memories of the person may also be triggered by seeing others that remind me that I am without them. For example, I may miss a person with which I used to be a couple when viewing other couples. In addition to being a past relationship, the other that is missed and yearned for may represent an imagined possible relationship and one may focus on the absence of this presence. For instance, one may feel a pining for a close friend or a sister that one never had. There is a sense of something missing in ones life and, possibly, of having missed certain opportunities for relating, and one imagines what it would be like to have the relationship that one is missing. In this subtheme, one remembers or imagines an

other and yearns for their presence and the focus is upon the other that is absent rather than the emptiness which is present.

(b) Subtheme: Emptiness -- Score as: "M/E"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "M/E":

9B:

I feel lost, and lonely when I am alone and don't know what to do and I think about how activities (e.g. listening to music, playing the mandolin, sewing) that I usually enjoy feel uncomfortable or unbearable. When I try to do these activities, I become frustrated and lose interest. I am aware of the emptiness of my house and think about not having talked to anyone all night. My mood moves in and hangs over me like a cloud and I feel scared that there are no activities that can occupy my mind and help me get through this mood.

20G:

When my brother died and I was standing over the coffin looking at him, there was nothing there, not in me or him, only emptiness. I wondered what I could have done to prevent his death but there was no answer and there was no coming together. I felt the pieces falling apart and going away and when they were gone, I could not cry or do anything. Wholeness is reached through a process of coming together while emptiness is reached through a process of the pieces going away.

In this subtheme, the focus is upon the presence of an absence. Rather than focusing upon what or who is missing, the missing is experienced more directly and immediately as a present situation which is devoid of meaning. In other words, instead of focusing on past relationships or possible future ones which are absent, one is stuck in the

emptiness of the present. The experience of emptiness may take place in several experiential domains including ones self, body and world. I may feel lost, without a purpose, and like a part of me is missing. I may also experience the emptiness as a hole or void within my body. The world may become uninteresting to me, with activities losing their appeal. What stands out about my surroundings may be things like the quietness and stillness. In extreme cases, a sense of nothingness may pervade my entire life. Although in the background there is a sense that what I am lacking and missing is the relationship with an other, the focus in this subtheme is on the present emptiness left in the wake of the other's absence.

(2) Theme: Barrier -- Score as: "B"

Subthemes: Different -- Score as: "B/D"

Indifferent -- Score as: "B/I"

This theme refers to the individual's experience of feeling alone where they focus on what stands in the way to their relating with others. There is an experience of feeling separate and unable to relate. Others with which I may experience a barrier may include one person or several, familiar persons or strangers, or others in general. Labels that would apply to this type of experience include feeling isolated, alienated and estranged. The experience of a barrier refers to a block or obstacle to engagement

with the other. There may be an experience of a wall or a gap between us and a feeling of being cut-off from the person. I may feel on the outside of other's activities which surround me or I may feel caught on the inside, within my unique experience of the world where others have no access to me. In any case, there is an experience of a psychological distance which may stand in sharp contrast to my physical proximity with others. One does not have to be alone to feel alone. With the barrier experience, one feels alone despite the presence of others. However, one may also focus upon a barrier to relatedness with others that are physically absent, such as when one is physically separated from a loved one and focuses upon how this leads to both person's being cut-off from the other's world. In contrast to the missing theme, where the absence of the other is focused upon, with the barrier theme, the focus is upon a lack of connection or relatedness with the other. Finally, the emotion most strongly associated with this theme is frustration.

In this theme, a barrier is experienced to relating with an other or others. One wants to but does not feel close, connected, understood or related to others. One instead feels distant, disconnected, misunderstood and cut-off. It is the lack of relatedness or how one fails to connect with others that stands out for the person. In short, the focus is on the barrier between us. This

barrier may be experienced as differences between us or our indifference in relation to each other. In comparing myself with others, I may focus upon differences between us which interfere with our being able to relate to each other. For example, I may focus on differences between my interests and those of other members of a group and feel alone. In this case, feeling different means not fitting-in with this group. A barrier to relatedness may also be experienced as an attitude of indifference which separates me from others. This attitude involves a not caring about others or not being cared about by them which is experienced as standing in the way of our relating. For example, I may feel alienated from a group of others where they are indifferent to me and I am indifferent to them. Thus, a barrier may represent a situation where a person becomes too distinct and different, lacking the similarities needed to relate to others, or becomes too undifferentiated, slipping into the background, such that there is no interest in relating or in being related to. These possibilities represent the two aspects or subthemes of the Barrier theme: 1) Different and 2) Indifferent, which will now be described in detail.

(a) Subtheme: Different -- Score as: "B/D"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "B/D":

3H:

I felt alone and disappointed when I tried to relate my feelings about an experience (i.e. being raped) to my husband and he did not ad could not understand me by virtue of being male. I wanted something from him and didn't know what I wanted (similar to when grieving my brother's death) and, intellectually, thought that this was unfair to him but, emotionally, felt sad and that he had let me down. I was also aware of being alone in that, ultimately, one can never share the same experience even if they had encountered the same situation (e.g. were raped) because their own feelings and interpretations of the situation would be different.

9H:

Being single, I feel like an outsider in the singles sundays school class at church where all of the people are older than me, divorced and have children. I feel like they can't relate to me and are looking at me wondering what I am talking about. When, in this sunday school class, we were talking about meeting single people, I felt like the others could not understand me because their family fills up there time and they do not have as strong a need to meet people as I do.

In this subtheme, the focus is on differences between myself and others which interferes with our relating. In comparing myself with others, I experience a discrepancy or contrast between us. I may focus upon how others are different from me or how I am different from them. This subtheme may be experienced, depending on the situation, as not belonging or not understanding. With not belonging, I experience a difference between myself and a group of others. When this is a group of individuals that I experience as being connected with or relating to one another, such as at a party or workplace, then I may feel out-of-place, like I don't fit-in or am not part of the

team. Others are together on one side of the barrier while the self is an outsider, alone on the other side. Examples of differences which may separate a person from others are not being in a couple, or differences in background, values, life situation or abilities.

With the barrier of not understanding, I also become aware of a difference between myself and others that interferes with our relating. I want an other to understand or know me but they do not or I want to understand or know them but I do not. The other may be a friend, spouse, child or other family member that I am attempting to communicate with but experience a barrier or wall to this communication and closeness with them. They cannot empathize with me or share my experiences. I also may not be able to understand them. We are on a different wavelength or in different places. I may be unable to reveal something to the other for fear they will not understand and empathize with me and this secret stands between us, keeping me from being known and I become someone different than they believe I am. On the other hand, I may reveal the secret and the other fails to understand or disagrees with what I am attempting to convey, highlighting the differences between us. Also, not understanding may be experienced along with a sense of not belonging, such as in a crowd of strangers where one feels disconnected, rootless and unknown. Finally, whether in a

situation of not understanding, not belonging or both, this subtheme involves the recognition of differences between oneself and others which are experienced as a barrier to intimacy and relatedness.

(b) Subtheme: Indifferent -- Score as "B/I"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "B/I":

16I:

When I went out to bars with my husband and other couples, I felt awful and alone. I realized that the other couples were having a good time and my husband was having a good time relating to the other men but there was no closeness between us (e.g. he might not speak to me the whole time we were gone). I became aware that to him I was as much a fixture as the car or the house.

19D:

In party situations or social gatherings, I sometimes lose interest in or become tired of keeping up social repartee and step out of the stream of ongoing conversation which leads to a sense of distance from others and aloneness in the crowd. When at a wedding reception, I sat down with others who were in the midst of a conversation, I felt alone, like I was hanging on the edge. I felt somewhat invisible, like I was small, easily overlooked and inconsequential. Although I was not being excluded by them in an active way, I was being left out in a neutral sense because they were making no effort to include me in their conversation, and I was keeping myself out on the edges and distant, being uninterested in what they were talking about.

In this subtheme, the focus is upon an attitude of indifference between myself and others that interferes with our relating. There is a feeling of either not being cared about by others, not caring about others or both. In the

experience of not being cared about by others, the other's indifference towards me is experienced as a barrier to our relating. I may notice the engagement of others around me and that I am being left out and, in approaching others, I notice that they do not respond. I may feel distant from others and invisible to them. The other is seen as creating the barrier. This may be viewed as an active exclusion of me, such as when others push me away, rejecting my attempts to be close to them, or it may be viewed as a more passive exclusion of me, such as when others simply ignore me and treat me as inconsequential or insignificant. In other words, others may exclude me or simply make no attempt to include me. In both cases, the other's lack of a caring, receptive and interested attitude towards me, stands in the way of our feeling close.

The indifference of the self towards others may be experienced as a barrier to engagement with them. One experiences a lack of caring or interest directed towards others and disengages from interaction with them. In this experience, I feel remote and isolated from others who I view as inconsequential and insignificant to me. The world which I am shutting-out may appear to me as distant and undifferentiated. The self is experienced as creating a barrier to relating. Again, this may be experienced as a more active or passive process. I may experience myself as actively withdrawing, tuning others out and keeping myself

out from interacting with them, or I may simply make no attempt to engage with them. In either case, it is my lack of caring or interest for others that is the barrier to interacting with them. With the Indifference subtheme in general, the insignificance of others for me or me for others creates a barrier between us, which stands in the way of our having a meaningful and positive interaction. In seeing the other with the attitude of indifference, we exclude them from becoming a meaningful aspect of our social world.

(3) Theme: Vulnerability -- Score as: "V"

Subthemes: Unsupported -- Score as: "V/U"

Exposed -- Score as: "V/E"

This theme refers to the individual's experience of feeling alone where they focus on their vulnerability in being on their own. The person focuses upon themselves and their projects in the world. Projects in this sense refers to any doings, such as surviving, keeping bad things from happening, impressing others or fulfilling various responsibilities. One recognizes their independence and separateness from others in performing these actions. One perceives that it is up to them to perform the action and experience its consequences. Thus, there is a sense of being on my own and it being my responsibility to do what is needed. Being on my own could be associated with a

positive feeling if I were to focus upon the choices that are available to me and the possible positive consequences of my acts. However, with the theme of Vulnerability, the focus is upon how being on my own, without support or protection, limits my ability to do and exposes me to possible negative consequences. I experience the world as holding potential dangers and filled with difficulties and burdens that I must shoulder. I may feel overwhelmed, helpless or out of control. With this theme, the focus is not on missing others or a barrier to relating with others but rather upon the self and ones own limitations and the vulnerability of ones projects. Others may be absent, but even if they are present, one still feels vulnerable. Finally, the emotion most strongly associated with this theme is anxiety.

In this theme, one focuses upon the possible negative consequences of functioning autonomously. I focus upon what I cannot do, in short, my limitations. The person may adopt a more active or passive stance in relation to their doing in the world. With a more active stance, they may attempt to work to fulfill certain goals or responsibilities. With a more passive stance, the person may attempt to defend and protect themselves against dangers and threats. When feeling alone, vulnerable and taking a more active stance, I experience the lack of support of others in helping me actualize my projects. I

am on my own without support. When feeling alone, vulnerable and taking a more passive or defensive stance, I experience an exposure to dangers or threats in the world, including others. I am on my own without protection. Not only are others not supportive but they can become the source of danger. For example, when giving a talk before a class, I can experience that I must do this on my own without the help of others. I can also experience the other class members as threatening in that my abilities are exposed to them and they may criticize my performance. Here, it being all up to me to perform well has both the meaning of a lack of support and a lack of protection. These meanings represent the two aspects or subthemes of the Vulnerability theme: 1) Unsupported and 2) Exposed, which will now be described in detail.

(a) Subtheme: Unsupported -- Score as: "V/U"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "V/U":

7A:

I am most aware of feeling alone when I have alot of things that I am responsible for doing. When I don't have alot of responsibilities, I get depressed, so I choose to have them. I felt alone when my son would not help me work in the yard while I was trying to take care of my responsibilities in maintaining the house and, all of a sudden, I realized that I had many responsibilities that nobody in the world, including my son was aware of, because I don't tell him or others about them. I felt frustrated and resentful towards my son for complaining about his problems and not helping me with mine.

15L:

When I found leukemia in a patient's blood test, while working on the late shift at the hospital and, being the senior member of the staff with nobody there to refer her to, I had to take it all on myself to deal with the situation, I felt alone and drained. Although I did as much as I could, I felt inadequate to help this woman. I felt like crying but I realized I couldn't do a good job if I let myself get too emotionally upset, and I tried not to think about my feelings. When I went home, I got drunk, wanting to be numb for awhile.

In this subtheme, the focus is upon a lack of support of others for my projects. I am on my own without support or help. I have to do it all on my own. I become aware of my limitations and my need for the support of others. I focus on what others could give to me in relation to my projects and am aware of the absence of such support. I may feel weak, powerless, overwhelmed or a loss of control. I worry about being unable to actualize my project in the world without the other's help and I and my projects, thereby, become vulnerable. This subtheme may take a variety of forms. Supportive others may be unavailable such as when one is lost in a strange place. Others may fail to provide support such as when others are not interested in ones projects. Also, one may conceal their need for support from others and feel burdened with responsibilities nobody knows about. Finally, others may be depending upon the person and, thus, not be in the position to provide them with support. In all of these

situations, one feels alone, unsupported and vulnerable.

(b) Subtheme: Exposed -- Score as: "V/E"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "V/E":

4C:

I feel alone and uncomfortable in a group situation that I am expected to be a part of (e.g. a party) when I am aware of being observed by others that I don't know and these others are expecting me to do things that I am not willing to do, such as talking to them. I feel self-conscious, like I am on display, and I worry about the way I appear to others. In failing to meet their expectations by talking, silences seem interminable and I am aware of the other's discomfort. My own discomfort, self-consciousness, and need to try and meet other's expectations in such situations has lessened over the years.

10F:

I feel alone when I feel on the spot. I feel on the spot when I am dancing and when I am interpreting for the deaf. I enjoy dancing as a self-expression and as a way of bypassing the awkwardness of talking to people. However, when people start watching me, I feel on the spot and uncomfortable. When I am on the spot, both in dancing and in interpreting, I am aware of the possibility of making a mistake, of wanting to avoid making a mistake and the importance of my actions. Sometimes, I freeze-up physically when I am on the spot.

In this subtheme, the focus is upon feeling unprotected and exposed to dangers or threats. In acting on ones own, one can be exposed to certain dangers which may or may not have as their source other people. Others, in addition to being unsupportive, can actually become the source of the threat which the person is seeking to protect

themselves from. This may occur when one feels exposed to the possible negative evaluations of others. In group situations, such as at a party, family gathering or in a classroom, one may become acutely conscious of being observed by others. The person feels highly visible to others which is reflected in phrases such as feeling "on display", "on the spot", "in the spotlight" and that "all eyes on me". This visibility could be experienced positively if, for example, one focused on the possibility of being evaluated favorably by others as in showing off or feeling prideful. However, with this subtheme, one focuses upon the possibility of being judged critically by others and feels vulnerable to this criticism. The person focuses upon being revealed to others in a way that they do not want to be revealed. They fear their limitations will be exposed. One feels unprotected and defenseless in relation to the other's negative appraisal and may seek to hide themselves by trying not to be noticed or putting on an act to please others. They see themselves through the other's eyes while feeling uncomfortable and self-conscious. The person feels alone, exposed and vulnerable.

(4) Theme: Freedom -- Score as: "F"

Subthemes: Freedom to -- Score as: "F/T"

Freedom from -- Score as: "F/F"

This theme refers to the individual's experience of being alone where they focus on their freedom in being by themselves without others. Solitude may be an appropriate label for this meaning of aloneness. The experience is typically described as being alone rather than feeling alone even though it may take place with or without the physical proximity of others. In being physically alone, instead of an emptiness or missing, one experiences a wholeness and an open field of possibilities. For example, the space created by a loss may be seen as making room for new opportunities. In being with but disengaged from relating to others, the barrier or separation becomes a protection or sanctuary within which the self feels free. Here, one is free to become an observer or immersed in thoughts or sensations despite the presence of others. In contrast to the other themes, with the Freedom theme one experiences positive rather than negative possibilities and consequences in being alone. One may feel like they are on their own and things are all up to them but, unlike the Vulnerability theme, the focus is upon choices rather than limits in functioning autonomously and one may enjoy a sense of independence and self-sufficiency. Others, instead of being seen as a potential source of support or intimacy, are viewed as a source of constraints and limits on the self, a hindrance to ones being and doing in the world and in being disengaged from these others, one feels

free. Emotions associated with this theme are contentment and relief.

In this theme, one experiences the positive consequences of being or feeling alone. In experiencing freedom in being by oneself, there are two aspects or types of meanings that a person can focus on. First, a person can focus on what they are able to do and be in aloneness that they cannot while in the presence of and/or interacting with others. Second, a person can focus on what they now do not have to do in being alone that they have to when engaged with others. In the first or more active aspect, one focuses on the presence of choices in being alone while in the second or more passive aspect, one focuses on the absence of limits or constraints in being without others. Since the self is seen a storehouse of positive possibilities, making the space for self-expression means a freedom to be and do what I want. Moreover, since others are seen as putting constraints on oneself such as demands and intrusions, disengagement from them means a freeing from these limits. These aspects represent the two subthemes of the Freedom theme: 1) Freedom To and 2) Freedom From, which will now be described.

(a) Subtheme: Freedom To -- Score as "F/T"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored "F/T":

3G:

When I am home alone, I can allow myself to sing in a serious way and my voice sounds better to me, whereas, when I am around others, I sing only playfully or do not sing at all because I feel I have a terrible voice. I am also free to choose the music I want to listen to and listening to this music brings back memories.

10A:

I am aware of feeling alone when I return to where I live and when I wake-up in the morning. In being by myself where I live, I find enjoyment in looking at my pleasant surroundings and in being able to do what I want to do after not being able to do so previously. I experience a feeling of intimacy with myself and a nurturant feeling which is difficult to put into words.

In this subtheme, one focuses upon their choices and possibilities in being alone. Others may be physically present or absent. The person attends to what they can do in their aloneness that they cannot do when around and/or interacting with others. In this experience, I am free to do what I want rather than having to do what others want me to. I may engage in activities which would be made difficult by interaction with others, such as people-watching, reading or thinking. I am able to feel a sense of control in making choices about what I want to do and when. I can enjoy the quiet and relax. Not only is there freedom regarding what to do but there is also the freedom to simply be with oneself. In the absence of a connection with others, there can be an increased sense of connection with oneself. Here, the self is experienced as whole and powerful instead of divided and weak. Also, the world is

experienced as full instead of empty and one may feel more connected with ones environment, such as in feeling a part of nature. One experiences the freedom to be oneself, not trying to impress others, and to be with oneself, ceasing to yearn for a relatedness with others. Feelings such as peace, contentment and excitement may be found in this subtheme.

(b) Subtheme: Freedom From -- Score as: "F/F"

The following are examples of paragraphs that would be scored as "F/F":

2G:

Sometimes, when I go home alone after feeling alone and uncomfortable around others, I feel relieved at being free from other's potential negative evaluation of me and although I still feel alone while berating myself for being unable to tolerate being with others, this self-criticism allows me a sense of distance and control in relation to my problems which is absent when I am in the midst of feeling alone and uncomfortable.

7B:

I am very busy with responsibilities during the week and look forward to having time alone to myself during the weekends when I don't feel cramped by responsibilities or disturbed by other people's problems. When my kids were young and away for the weekend, I looked forward to Saturdays to myself where I did not have worries, interruptions or have to do things that weren't in my plans.

In this subtheme, one focuses upon the absence of limits or constraints in being alone. Again, others may be physically present or absent. Others are viewed as a limit

to ones freedom and not relating to them is experienced as freeing oneself from these limits. In the presence of others, this could mean being able to tune-out their intrusions on my thoughts, such as their negativity. In being and feeling alone, I may experience a freedom from the intrusions, demands, distractions and interferences of others. I do not have to coordinate my needs with theirs and am free from conflict with them. I may also feel a freedom from the self-consciousness that I experience around others. With this subtheme, the individual focuses on the negative aspects of relating to others which he or she is liberated from in aloneness. A feeling of relief is sometimes associated with this subtheme.

*** Before you start, please re-read the directions at the beginning of this manual.

APPENDIX I

RELIABILITY ITEMS

1. 18G: Missing (yearning, emptiness).

When I see families that look happy (i.e. interacting with each other like my husband and I did), particularly with mothers and fathers around my age, I feel alone. It is like I felt in church: a part of me is missing. Its like an amputation, like I'm not a whole person. I feel like my husband and I were one and now half of that is gone which makes a void there. I miss the companionship, laughter and intimacy that I had with my husband and I would like to have it again. I do not want to take anything away from the happy couples I see. I just wish I also had what they have.

2. 12D: Missing (yearning), Barrier (indifferent).

When there is nobody available to talk to or do things with and I wish I had a close friend, such as when my family is out with their friends and I am home alone and I feel like alot of the things I have been doing for my family have gone unappreciated and they are not spending enough time with me, I feel sorry for myself and feel alone and lonely. I have no close friends now and feel like it is my own fault because I don't make the efforts necessary. I feel like everything I do is for others but I am not interacting with them on a deep level where I can talk about how I feel and I wish there was someone that I really knew and really knew me.

3. 11G: Freedom (to, from).

Aloneness that I enjoy involves being alone and nobody interfering with my thought processes or interrupting my activities unless I choose to let them (e.g. answering a phone). When I was home alone last night and sitting on the deck, I was aware of the quiet and that I had a chance to think and that the presence of my husband would have interfered with this. In being alone at home, I can play with myself and be as vain as I want to in my activities because I am free from the criticism of my husband. I also feel free to call and tell my friends things that I wouldn't want my husband to overhear.

4. 10E: Missing (emptiness), Barrier (indifferent).

When I feel lonely, I feel like no one cares about me or is interested in me. Sharp pains of feeling lonely arise when I feel that no one loves me very much or very deeply and are experienced bodily as a void or, more exactly, as a lump. Sharp pains of feeling lonely may arise when I become aware of the finality of the end to a relationship (e.g. my divorce) and may include the experience that others do not know what I have been going through. Sharp pains of feeling lonely may involve feelings of depression, suicidality and anger that I should not have to experience and deal with feeling alone.

5. 9K: Vulnerability (exposed), Barrier (different).

When I used to live in the top part of my house and was more visible to my neighbors, I felt very exposed to everyone's view and felt like an outcast where the whole neighborhood judged my singles lifestyle very critically. When I walk in my neighborhood, I feel like others who are in a married lifestyle look at me with both envy and a sense of mystery because they don't understand and wonder what it would like to be single just as I wondered what it would be like to be married and so we are both a mystery to each other and there is a gap between us.

6. 13B: Missing (yearning).

When a girl I had been dating graduated and left town, I stayed home and thought about her and doing something with her rather than settling for something less by going out and doing things with others and I felt alone. I was aware of her absence. I intended to study but ended up vegetating which means that I would just lay around or do activities, such as listening to music, that require little thought and allowed my mind to wander to times when I enjoyed and felt close to my girlfriend. I felt depressed and sorry for myself that I could not be with who I wanted to (i.e. like the deprived lover). It felt good that I could feel her absence and I found myself caring about and appreciating her more, which brought back romantic feelings and I was reminded of romantic movies where the male was separated from the female.

7. 20E: Freedom (to, from).

When my wife and I were dancing at our high school reunion, at one point, with my eyes closed during a slow dance, I felt like nobody else was there, possibly not even her, and I felt happy and whole, like things were good and right, and there were no distractions.

8. 14N: Vulnerability (unsupported), Barrier (different).

When I wonder what my future will be like and the purpose of life, I feel alone. I feel scared when I think about how small and worthless life seems in comparison to the destruction of a nuclear war. When I think about having total responsibility for my life, this feels oppressive to me, like the weight of the world on my shoulders. No one can help me, its all my own doing and I suffer the consequences which is scary to me. The longer I think about it the worse I feel until something distracts me. I want to be a part of and any hope of this is destroyed and, additionally, it seems impossible to share the same experience with another which makes me feel isolated.

9. 8C: Barrier (different, indifferent).

When I went to the mountains with a woman I was dating and I was photographing, she did not complain and I felt close to her until we had a conversation on the way back where I found that she neither understood nor cared to try to understand what photography meant to me. I had a desire to be close and share that part of me with her and, with her reaction, I felt less close and more alone, like I am the only one that really understands what I am doing and this person has disappointed me because they don't even care to try to understand.

10. 6H: Barrier (different).

Ever since high school, I have not had close male friends nor fit into groups of males because of their involvement with activities that I don't approve of (e.g. drinking). In high school, I felt stuck in the middle, fitting into neither of the two groups available and I used to feel lonely about not doing things with males when I knew they were having a good time together. During my marriage, I didn't feel lonely about not doing things with males because I was used to my situation.

11. 15J: Vulnerability (unsupported).

When I got sick, my husband had two jobs, we had two children and we needed alot of help because I was disabled in a wheelchair, with problems in coordination and balance, I became aware of how isolated we were with no friends or family to call on. My husband's family is far away and mine doesn't want to be around him because they don't understand him and think he is weird.

12. 20A: Freedom (to, from).

When I feel alone and feel good, I experience a coming together or unifying of myself and a sense of peace and exhilaration. When some friends and I were at the beach, standing out in the ocean and being pulled by tremendous waves just prior to a storm coming up, I was experiencing the power of the water and wind, the other people faded out of the picture and I came together in the sense that there were no distractions such as thoughts about others. I felt a part of what was going on and although rationally I seemed insignificant in relation to the storm I did not feel this way. While sitting on the beach alone, the wind was blowing sand hard against my legs, it reminded me of how, like insignificant bits of sand coming together can make an impact, in my coming together I make an impact, and how, despite the power of the storm, I was still sitting there which made me feel strong and powerful.

13. 14G: Barrier (different, indifferent).

During the 2 year period of depression, I did not feel a part of whatever was going on around me and I did not want to take part in it. I turned inward and consciously wanted to cut myself off from others because I did not like how people treated each other and what made them tick (i.e. what was first on their mind). I got more into a subculture lifestyle, into political things and became very vocal about my views. I had always felt different but, during this time, I really wanted to be different.

14. 19E: Barrier (indifferent).

Sometimes, at parties or social gatherings, when a group of others are having a conversation and I am trying to get the attention of a woman in that group while someone else is getting more attention from her, I feel alone and socially slighted, like I am losing out and I don't want to play anymore.

15. 14I: Missing (emptiness), Barrier (different).

In my relationships with men, I feel a sense of incompleteness and emptiness over not being part of this crowd (i.e. males). I don't understand and am missing the normal male contempt for women and because I am nonviolent, I don't do many of the things that men are supposed to do.

16. 4B: Barrier (different).

I feel that even in the most intimate moments, the other's actual personhood is always inaccessible to me and

all people are inevitably alone because their senses provide a barrier to each other as they actually are.

17. 15E: Barrier (different).

When in a women's support group where members were of a lower socioeconomic class and had less education, I felt alone, like I did not have much in common with them and my ways of being and thinking were different than theirs.

18. 20L: Freedom (to).

I climbed up a bluff alone and while I sat there looking over the valley and mountains, I felt alone and it felt good. I had a sense of power looking down on a hawk flying below and I didn't want to come down.

19. 10H: Barrier (different).

I feel alone, different and like an outsider when others do not understand me because of differences in our situations, attitudes or personalities or because of false assumptions made about me. I feel painfully alone at times, when I want to be understood and the other cannot understand me.

20. 5F: Barrier (different).

When I was at a party with the social group that, prior to my divorce, I felt like I belonged to, I felt alone, like I didn't belong to this group anymore because I was no longer in a couple. I felt like the others treated me differently than before (i.e. like a person from outer space or a strange object) and I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere (i.e. like a fifth wheel). I was also aware of how different my life experience was than theirs since I had been divorced and they hadn't. I felt depressed around them and left the situation to be alone in order to avoid the discomfort of feeling the opposite of those around me.

21. 16H: Barrier (different).

I want others to understand how I feel and care about me when I feel alone. When they just give me advice, I become aware that they don't understand and I feel worse.

22. 1H: Missing (yearning).

Sometimes, I feel lonely for a brother, which I don't have, and there is the sense of a missed opportunity because I will never have a brother and I think about what it would have been like to have one.

23. 13F: Barrier (different).

When unresolved conflicts come up with people I feel close to, I am tense because I don't like the separation and I talk it out with them, solving the conflict, because I want to be close to them. With a roommate who has opposing political views from me, sometimes, when we don't talk about are views, I feel tense and separated from that person. Once we argue about or discuss the issue, I feel closer because we've resolved the conflict between us.

24. 2H: Freedom (to, from).

Sometimes, when hiking alone in the mountains, I feel a pleasant aloneness or solitude. I know there are no people around but I feel connected with myself and with nature, like there is a kind of big, enveloping feeling where I am a part of nature and really belong there. I am no longer being misunderstood nor needing anything that I am not getting. Everything is in tune and there is a rhythm to my walking along.

25. 8G: Missing (yearning).

I grew up wanting my family to be close, loving and open like a family next door that I became involved with and I have since desperately searched for this close-knit family situation through developing my relationships with women. When my last relationship broke-up, I had a sense of failure and disappointment and missed the potential for a close-knit family situation rather than what this woman represented personally, which I disliked.

26. 18B: Freedom (to, from).

After I've been around alot of people for awhile, I like having time alone which I need to recharge (i.e. rebuild my energy after having energy taken away by activities and the demands of people). I enjoy reading a book or watching t.v. and resent intrusions, such as the telephone ringing. I am more in touch with myself when I am alone, which means I can get lost in my own thoughts or a t.v. program without interruptions, such as demands from others, and there is nobody arguing with me and telling me what to do. I look forward to my daughters moving out and me being alone. I have been a mother for so long that I am looking for some time for me where I don't have to anticipate what my daughters are going to do, work around their schedules and concern myself with their problems.

27. 3B: Missing (emptiness), Barrier (different).

I feel most alone in grief situations. My brother's death involved very private, personal feelings that could not be accurately conveyed in words to others so I have chosen to stay mostly silent about my feelings and deal with the pain on my own. After his death, I was also aware of an empty hole or persisting void and that my knowledge of how to help others who were grieving did little to ease my suffering.

28. 1G: Missing (yearning, emptiness), Barrier (different).

When I feel lonely, I want another person (i.e. either a fantasy person or a previous good relationship) to be there and they are not whereas when I feel alone a person can be there but there is a chasm or gulf between our views of our self and each other and, thereby, a feeling of not being understood. With loneliness, there is a gap or hole in the self like someone has taken out your heart, while with aloneness, there is a gulf between people, like the umbilical chord has been cut.

29. 13D: Missing (yearning).

When I was out with a group of friends, and I thought about wanting to be with my girlfriend doing something else, I felt alone and lonely. I was having such great thoughts about her that when people would talk to me, I would say something then drift off, thinking about my absent girlfriend. It did not matter what others were doing or saying because I was feeling alone and wanted to be doing something else. I wanted to get away from the crowd and free from others intruding on my thoughts and feelings of aloneness.

30. 2F: Barrier (different, indifferent).

When I went out to get a drink with a couple of my friends and they seemed to be getting along well while I could not relate to them, I felt alone, like the "odd man out". I felt that they liked each other better than they liked me. I also felt that I was making a bad impression by my negative, withdrawn behavior, which I would not have made had I been home alone. I started inwardly berating myself and eventually left early and went back to my apartment.

31. 7E: Vulnerability (unsupported), Barrier (indifferent).

I feel lonely in situations where the other person (e.g. my ex-husband, my son) does not get involved and is not interested in the projects that are the most important to me and, thus, I am unable to share doing these things with them. I am responsible for this person and so I am taking care of them while they are off doing their projects. I would like their help with my projects and I feel lonely.

32. 3C: Vulnerability (unsupported).

I feel alone when I recognize that I must do something that is difficult for me to do and that no one else can do it for me (e.g. telling my mother that my brother had died).

33. 13E: Barrier (different).

When I have a problem and I want to tell someone I feel close to about it but I can't because I am afraid that they may stop caring about me if I do, I feel alone, like there is an absence from that person and a wall has been put between us until the problem is resolved or does not matter to me anymore. When as a child, I did something bad and wished I could tell my mother but was afraid of her punishing me, I felt alone, wondering how I would tell her, and there was a wall between us. When I told her, I felt better, even though I was punished. For example, as a minor, I had a citation from the police for possession of alcohol which I had to give to my parents because they had to meet with a probation officer. When I went home with the citation and had to tell my mother, I felt alone and far away from her, like there was the citation between us. I couldn't keep a conversation with her going because what we were talking about seemed trivial in comparison to what I had to tell her. Once I told her, she was less angry than I expected and I felt better.

34. 20J: Missing (emptiness).

When my dog died, after fifteen years of being there as a good friend and protector, I was aware that everybody else was present except that face and activity that I had become so accustomed to. I missed my dog and felt lonely, though I neither was nor felt alone.

35. 19I: Barrier (indifferent).

When I put out alot of effort, think I do a good job, and feel unappreciated on either of my two jobs, I feel alone. On one of my jobs, I am sure that regardless of the quality of my work I would not be differentially recognized or appreciated for what I am doing, and I feel distant, inconsequential and alone. With the other job, being a rather large institution and the work by its nature needing to be kept secret, others don't know my work in any particulars and I feel lost in the bureaucracy, like a cog in the machine. I feel unappreciated, inconsequential, invisible, distant and alone. I have a fatalistic or resigned feeling in that the other is not excluding me and I am not excluding myself but this is just the way it is to work in modern society.

36. 15F: Vulnerability (unsupported, exposed).

When we got an eviction notice from the apartment manager, I felt alone, like I didn't have anyone to turn to or ask for help. I felt alot of emotions, including shame. I thought we were alone because we had been rejected by everyone and that there must be something bad about us so that people don't like us and are not interested in us.

37. 12I: Barrier (different).

When I am aware that my children and I do not understand each other or do or like the same things because we are of two different generations, I feel alone and lonely. When my son wanted to do something and I told him he could not, he did not understand me and thought I was being mean. I felt lonely because I like to be liked and I began to doubt my decision. I feel frustrated in being unable to help prevent my kids from making mistakes because they don't respect my opinion and feel lonely because I may have to wait a few years before they decide that maybe I knew what I was talking about after all.

38. 1E: Barrier (different, indifferent).

When I am with good friends who are married and they need their privacy, I feel like an extra (i.e. the third syndrome), alone, lonely and uncomfortable. When at a small gathering on a holiday with two couples, one single guy and myself, at the end of the evening, the couples paired off and started making out which made more focal for me my being alone, and I felt alone and lonely. I also felt uncomfortable, not knowing what to do, which made the situation more aversive than being alone by myself and I wanted to leave the situation. Before the couples paired

off, I was engaged, intermingling with them and having a good time. I was not thinking about myself or feeling lonely. Now that the couples paired off, thoughts about good times during the holidays when I was with my girlfriend became focal. I also started thinking about myself, and became more inward and withdrawn, like, suddenly, my self goes right into myself, into the cavity of my abdomen, and there is a barrier between myself and the rest of the world that was not there before.

39. 3E: Vulnerability (unsupported).

I felt alone when I was stranded at the wrong airport and was out of contact with anyone who knew me and cared about me and felt a loss of control over my situation including not knowing what to do and difficulty getting the help I needed from others. I ceased feeling alone when I could anticipate making contact with a familiar and caring other. I avoid situations where I might lose control.

40. 18D: Missing (emptiness).

When at church after my husband had died, even with my children sitting beside me, I felt painfully alone. My husband and I had never gone to church without each other and it felt like part of me was missing. Most of the people did not know me or my husband and so they did not know what had happened and were not looking at me any differently than before. Singing in the choir helped decrease my painful alone feeling because you are not expected to sit with your mate in the choir whereas you are out in the congregation.

41. 17B: Missing (emptiness).

When doing family type things with my son, such as going to "disney on ice" or the zoo, I see families there together and I feel sad and alone. I feel guilty over my son not having two parents which he deserves.

42. 2C: Vulnerability (exposed), Barrier (different).

When I went for a walk alone, I felt real alone. Everything (e.g. colors, shapes, people) started to look different and unfamiliar. I was not able to sense any firm ground under my feet. Everything was so shaky and I felt panicky. As I returned to my usually safe and familiar apartment, again, everything looked different and even here I did not know where I was. However, what really got me panicky was when my own feeling about myself started to get so shaky that I did not know who I was, like I was a different person and there was nothing to hang onto. I was

also scared that my reality could not be shared with others because it was so unique. It was like I was losing my marbles, a very intense panicky alone feeling. I started trying to call people because I wanted to feel like there was something familiar to hang onto. I talked to my dad on the phone and did not feel alone anymore because he could understand what I was experiencing and this gave me a sense that I was going to survive the experience.

43. 11E: Barrier (different).

At work, I feel alone but not lonely when I am conscious of how different I am than everyone that I work with in ways that I do not want to change (i.e. dressing-up more and socializing more than them). I perceive a discrepancy between what I should be doing (i.e. what the others are doing and expect me to do) and what I am doing and I feel like I am not part of the team, sometimes feeling guilty, although this guilt is lessened by the others coming to talk with me.

44. 19C: Barrier (different), Vulnerability (unsupported, exposed).

In a class situation, if others are able to answer a professor's question that I have not been able to answer or find holes or problems in the arguments that I put forward, I feel inadequate and incompetent which leads to a sense of being alone and distanced from the others who appear as smarter, quicker or better than me. When, in a class, the professor put a question before us, I offered an argument that he rejected and a younger student offered an opposite argument which he agreed with, I felt humiliated and inadequate, like the professor had flatly rejected me for this younger fellow. I pulled back physically and emotionally, like an animal that is wounded or caught in a storm and makes itself small, curls up and puts its back to the storm. I was sensitive, like I had been emotionally stung (i.e. feeling rejected as inadequate) and I wanted to pull back since, having taken a chance and gotten stung, I was left that much more vulnerable to being stung again if I stayed engaged with others. I felt distant from the class in general and from the professor and the other student in particular. I was quiet and hoped no one directed attention to me because if they did I would have to present a social facade, not wanting to show them that I am feeling hurt, sensitive and shook up. I did not want to be noticed while I was licking my wounds.

45. 1A: Missing (yearning, emptiness).

I am most aware of feeling lonely when I am not going out with a woman at times, such as friday or saturday nights or special holidays, where it is culturally expected that I should be going out with someone. It seems like the rest of the world is coupled up and having a good time. Even though I have alot of friends, I do not have an intimate lover type of relationship and I feel like I am missing out on this opportunity. I feel like I am not special to someone and I need another to let me know who I am. There is a sense of emptiness in my chest area, like a hole inside of me, and a sense of waiting, that are almost painful. The world around me, including possibilities of doing things, appear as without attractiveness or interest for me and I wallow in self-pity.

46. 7C: Missing (emptiness).

I feel lonely when I have nothing to do or look forward to doing. For example, I feel lonely during the summer months when I go for several days without any responsibilities or commitments that involve other people. The days seem long. I usually keep myself busy at home and get together with people to prevent this from happening.

47. 20F: Vulnerability (unsupported), Missing (emptiness).

With situations of stress in Viet Nam, I felt alone, like I was falling apart and there was nothing out there to help me. I could not even find my self. I did not know who I was anymore. Its a very empty feeling. Its like I fall into a pit where there are no ledges to grab onto. In finding myself doing things totally contrary to my ideals, such as killing, I felt alone in the sense that I betrayed and was disloyal to both myself and others, thereby losing the linkage (i.e. relationship) with others and with my self (i.e. unable to reconcile what I am doing with who I am).

48. 6F: Barrier (indifferent).

I was not alone physically in my marriage but I felt lonely in not having the companionship of a wife (e.g. lacking communication and physical contact). I felt rejected by my wife and felt hostility towards her for physically neglecting me and for her hostility towards me when I would try to talk to her.

49. 14K: Vulnerability (exposed).

When I was walking through the bar district to my house and a girl who was drunk walked up to me and said "you have cancer" and walked on, I was defenseless because I wasn't expecting it and I didn't say anything or know what to do. I felt alone. When, at an earlier time, a carload of guys drove by me and said the same thing, I was also speechless, stunned, felt alone and I felt angry that they would joke about such a serious disease. It was my first experience of being examined by men and I was surprised that they noticed me at all. I was frightened by their rude interjection which sabotaged any contact. I attempt to be friendly and observant of others but don't expect them to notice me and, although not being noticed is an identity scare, being noticed catches me off guard.

50. 14C: Vulnerability (unsupported, exposed).

When in political groups where my views are contrary to the majority of others, and as a representative of my group, am put on the spot by a crowd of non-believers, I feel isolated. When I was waiting to perform at an air band contest and the audience knew me and was excitedly awaiting my performance, I backed out of my obligation to perform, despite pressure from others who were counting on me, because the act prior to mine was doing things on stage that I disapproved of and found immoral (i.e. dragging a woman by her hair on stage). I felt put on the spot by a crowd of people who oppose my point of view. I felt like I had to stand alone until it was over and others came to me and said they agreed. I was nervous and frustrated because I wasn't sure what to do and I was afraid of how others would respond. Later, I wrote a letter to the newspaper about why I didn't perform and was uncertain whether this would alienate others further or win them over and make them understand what I did and why.

APPENDIX J

UNSCORABLE ITEMS

3I: No score.

Feeling lonely and feeling alone are the same for me. I seldom feel alone or lonely except for incidents that come up and I mostly feel happy with my life situation and fine about being alone.

4E: No score.

Having an ongoing relationship which provides me with the possibility of intimate contact allows me to feel alone without feeling lonely and time alone becomes more comfortable and seems temporary, whereas when no such possibility for intimate contact exists, time alone can become interminable, uncomfortable and lonely, particularly when I run out of ways to entertain myself.

4F: No score.

I attempt to balance my needs for solitude (i.e. being alone) with my needs for intimacy by spending both time alone and time with others (i.e. through an ongoing intimate relationship and other social interactions). It is a balancing act which is impossible to perform to perfection.

5D: No score.

I seek out activities and companionship to fight feeling alone but these solutions are limited and, sometimes, there is a conflict between being too tired to go anywhere and not wanting to be alone. I am getting tired of fighting feeling alone and a reason why I want to get married is not to have to fight this feeling anymore.

5E: No score.

In contrast to the way I feel now which is that I feel alone everyday when I eat or spend hours alone, I did not feel alone before or during my marriage. Before my marriage, I did not spend much time alone and did not have being married to compare my situation to as I do now, whereas, during my marriage, time spent alone doing activities was made enjoyable by knowing that my wife was close by and our time apart would be temporary. Therefore,

feeling alone is a new feeling to me which I've had to find ways to combat.

5G: No score.

Feeling alone means being alone without anyone to talk to or do things with. Thus, feeling alone means being alone and cannot be accurately described in any other way.

6B: No score.

I try to keep from being by myself and feeling lonely by staying busy doing activities with people and, thus, not give myself time to be alone. Although generally successful, I am unable to completely avoid being by myself, inactive and, consequently, I feel lonely, particularly on holidays.

15N: No score.

When I was 14, my father had died and my mother had gone back to work and I never saw her because of her work schedule, I felt alone and confused and I got sick.

18E: No score.

When my husband became ill and I spent several days waiting alone in a strange hospital, in a strange city and state where I knew almost no one, I felt alone. I did some pretty clear thinking and made all the funeral arrangements by the time he died. I was never given any hope that he would live and I was afraid.

19G: No score.

When I am reading, writing, working with my computer or hiking alone, I feel occupied with a solitary activity, I do not necessarily feel alone and it does not matter to me whether or not others are present. I understand feeling alone as a dysphoric mood so in being alone and content, I cannot feel alone. Sometimes when I am involved in reading or writing, I am so caught up in the work that I am not particularly aware of being alone but, at other times, such as with hiking, I am peripherally aware of feeling alone in a factual sense (i.e. being alone) as a noticeable part of the background and feel O.K., although not happy, about this.

VITA

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