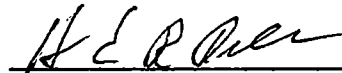


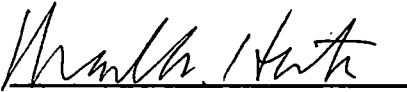
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Kurt D. Openlander entitled "Experiential Aspects of Neglect: A Phenomenological Inquiry." I have examined the final paper 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, Ph.D., Major Professor

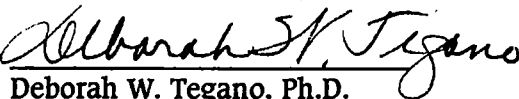
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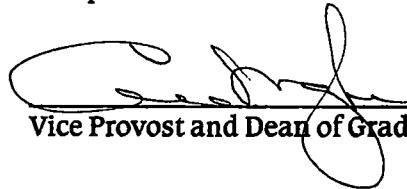


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**EXPERIENTIAL ASPECTS OF NEGLECT:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY**

A Dissertation Presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Kurt D. Openlander
December, 2001

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For Mitchell and for Samuel, my nephews

and

*For everyone who has been seriously hurt
by maltreatment*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How can one describe a life, except by acknowledging the contributions that others have made to oneself? For better or worse, this dissertation has been such a major part of my existence for so long that it is indeed a reflection of me, and I would be negligent not to thank the many others who have contributed to its completion.

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ABSTRACT

A review of the empirical literature on maltreatment points to the need for more knowledge about neglect, especially the subjective aspects of neglect. In order to gain information about this topic, twelve adult volunteers were interviewed in detail about various times in which they had experienced themselves as neglected. In accordance with the principles of existential phenomenology, a qualitative methodology for research within the social sciences, the transcribed interviews were thematized, in this case with the aid of a group of scholars trained in phenomenological interpretation. Three interrelated themes emerged against the ground of Interpersonal Relationships: *Feeling Alone*, *Feeling Invisible* and *Being Used*. A fourth related theme, *Being Affected*, emerged against the ground of The Self. Implications for conducting psychotherapy with those who have experienced themselves as neglected are addressed, as are suggestions for future research.

PREFACE

Within a short amount of time in the course of my clinical work, three of my patients made very similar rather startling statements along the lines of, "My father beat me unmercifully, but I know how much he loved me." I thus became increasingly aware of the human need to distance oneself from unpleasantness. Although I originally intended to conduct my doctoral research on psychological sense of community, I realized that it might be worthwhile to study something more negative in order to shine a light on it, as it were. Since I still retained my interest in human connection, I chose to examine an under-researched topic which was, in a way, an opposite of sense of community: the experience of neglect. The topic proved to be difficult to explore due to my own depression, but I nevertheless found it to be a rich and compelling subject which was indeed worthy of study. I can only hope that I have done it justice in this work.

This will probably be the last, at least in the foreseeable future, of a long line of phenomenological dissertations conducted by clinical psychology students at the University of Tennessee. Partly because of economic pressures in the marketplace, the clinical training program, which has a long history of emphasizing the development of clinical skills, has swung in the direction of quantitative research. This is an unfortunate development because phenomenological research is in many ways similar to the therapeutic endeavor; the two clearly have the potential to enrich each other in various practical ways. Conversely, quantitative research will likely not lead to enduring, profound understandings about the human condition; this is so because meaning is ultimately to be found within interpersonal relationships, not in biology or in decontextualized behavior. I therefore commend those

students and researchers who desire a deeper understanding of the human experience than is afforded by the positivist paradigm, and I encourage you never to give up what you believe in.

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One must have a mind of winter. . .

not to think

Of any misery in the sound of the wind. . .

For the listener. . . beholds

Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

—Wallace Stevens

“The Snow Man”

Chapter I

"Are you a happy kid?"

*-Edward L. Zuckerman
Clinician's Thesaurus*

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON NEGLECT AND OTHER FORMS OF MALTREATMENT

Many human phenomena are discomfiting to behold, and it would doubtless be easier to avert our eyes than to gaze fully upon the unpleasantness contained in them. What is the value, then, of examining these painful situations? Within the context of philosophical inquiry, the answer is so that we can understand them, for it is only by comprehending the world around us, after all, that we can grasp fully what it means to be human. Within clinical psychology, the answer to this question is less esoteric. We examine certain unpleasant phenomena so that we can help those who have been negatively affected by them. Because clinical psychology has taken up this challenge, many phenomena which otherwise might not have been considered in detail have been systematically investigated. There is, however, much which is hurtful that is yet to be explored.

One such phenomenon is that of neglect. Although a significant amount of research has examined the effects of extreme cases of neglect, there has been much less investigation of more modest cases, and almost no examination of experiential aspects of neglect. This is a bit surprising, as there is an implicit theme of emotional deprivation running through the relationally-oriented developmental literature concerning psychopathogenesis. Writers from such diverse schools of thought as interpersonal psychiatry (e.g., Sullivan, 1953), object relations (e.g., Winnicott, 1965), person-centered theory (e.g., Rogers, 1961) and self psychology (e.g., Kohut, 1971) have explicitly recognized the importance of the

interpersonal context in personality development and psychopathogenesis. From these perspectives, psychopathology is thought to develop largely as a result of experiencing non-optimal relationships during the formative years of early childhood. Despite this emphasis, none of these theorists has systematically explored the question "What is it like to feel neglected?"

Similarly, the empirical literature on neglect and other forms of maltreatment does not directly address the phenomenology of these experiences. This body of literature has been primarily concerned with functional sequelae of various types of mistreatment. Such a perspective is certainly sensible when one is predominately interested in community intervention strategies and public policy. Nonetheless, there remains a fundamental lack of knowledge concerning experiential aspects of neglect and of other possibly related types of maltreatment.

The vast preponderance of the psychological literature on maltreatment concerns maltreatment suffered during childhood. The reasons for this are self-evident, given the obvious physical vulnerability of the child relative to the adult. Those researchers who hold a developmentally-informed perspective would also doubtless maintain that children are extremely vulnerable to psychological and emotional harm (e.g., Erickson & Egeland, 1996). Although it is impossible to discern the extent to which findings on child neglect can be generalized to neglect experienced during other phases of the life-span, such findings undoubtedly have some degree of relevance to all types of neglect.

Spitz's (1945, 1946) studies of abandoned infants and toddlers institutionalized in a foundling home demonstrate that providing for such physical needs as food and clothing is insufficient to bring about the physical and emotional well-being of the young

child. With an infant-to-caregiver ratio of eight-to-one in the institutional nursery, pre-ambulatory infants were left to pass most of their time unengaged by caregivers. Even when they learned to walk, these babies were frequently confined to cribs and provided with little in the way of tactile, auditory or visual stimulation. Both as infants and as toddlers, these children manifested such serious problems as apparent melancholic reactions, increased susceptibility to life-threatening infections, and delayed verbal and motor development. In 1949, Bawkin first described failure-to-thrive syndrome, which he observed in emotionally deprived infants hospitalized for treatment. These infants showed severe growth delay and lack of weight-gain, abnormal persistence of infantile posture, minimal smiling, and general unresponsiveness to environmental stimuli.

In contrast, Burlingham and Freud (1944) found that orphaned and war-displaced infants and toddlers raised in more family-like circumstances in Britain appeared to achieve normal psychological adjustment despite the loss of parental interaction which they experienced. These children lived in small, close-knit nurseries, had the same caregivers on a consistent basis, and were given the opportunity to interact freely with their caregivers and with the other children in the nursery.

Harlow and Zimmerman (1959) studied relational capacities of rhesus monkeys separated from their mothers at birth. They found that as infants, these monkeys reacted with signs of disordered attachment when frightened. They did not seek comfort from artificial maternal figures constructed to feed them; rather, they attempted to soothe themselves by engaging in such eccentric behaviors as stereotypic rocking and self-holding. Another group of infant monkeys separated from their mothers at birth were provided with terry cloth-covered maternal surrogates which they could cling to, and this group

of monkeys sought the comfort of these surrogates when they were frightened. The latter group thus developed the ability to be comforted by another while the former group failed to establish this important relational capacity.

Such researcher-effected deprivation cannot, of course, be ethically imposed on human participants. To the extent that such findings can be generalized across the phylogenetic spectrum, however, they inform our understanding of the effects of socioemotional deprivation on human beings. Van der Kolk and Fislcr (1994) have summarized experimental research carried out on non-human primates in order to ascertain the effects of such deprivation. The persistence of socially deficient behavior patterns into the primates' adulthood is striking:

Starting with Harlow's work, a long series of experiments has documented the response of nonhuman primates to separation from mothers and peers, *demonstrating its remarkable similarities to the effects of neglect on human beings*. In both male and female monkeys, social isolation for various periods during the first year of life produces grossly abnormal social and sexual behavior. Isolated monkeys do not produce offspring, and artificially inseminated females will mutilate or kill their babies. Young monkeys who are separated from their mothers become socially withdrawn and unpredictably aggressive. They also develop self-destructive and self-stimulating behaviors, such as huddling, self-clasping, self-sucking, and biting. . . . They do not learn to discriminate such social stimuli as facial expressions. . . because they seem to lack the early experience of synchrony between mother and child and its associated expressions. Remnants of this deficit persist throughout their lives, even after later exposure to social situations. . . .

Suomi and Harlow (1972) demonstrated that rearing separated monkeys with younger peers can provide a nurturing environment that eliminates most of the bizarre behavior caused by isolation. . . . However, this adaptation can be lost under stress, when complex social discriminations are required. . . . Heightened emotional or physical arousal causes previously separated animals to show inappropriate social behavior; they either become withdrawn or aggressive, and they display an increase in stereotyped activity. Even monkeys who recover in other respects may have persistent deficits in sexual behavior and continue to misperceive social cues; for example, they may fail to withdraw after a threat by a dominant animal (pp. 151-153, emphasis added).

Although there has long been a literature describing the debilitating effects of extreme psychological disengagement between caregiver and infant (e.g., Bawkin, 1949),

the topic of neglect has received relatively scant attention in the burgeoning child maltreatment literature that has appeared in the last thirty-five years (Wolock & Horowitz, 1984). As Kadushin (1988) writes, "Neglect was neglected in the past and is neglected in the present, despite the greater prevalence and incidence of neglect reports as compared to reports of other kinds of child maltreatment" (p. 148).

Many researchers in the field of child maltreatment have used physical abuse and, increasingly, sexual abuse as prototypes of maltreatment (e.g., Berger, 1985). One reason for the lack of attention toward neglect *per se* may be that the public's conception of child maltreatment grew out of the medical profession's increasing awareness of physical child abuse during the 1960's (Kadushin, 1988). Crittenden (1988) reports that the attention of both the popular media and government abuse-prevention agencies has been "consistently on the worst cases of individual aberration" (p. 162). Undoubtedly, severe physical abuse is more acutely dangerous and more figural than other types of maltreatment. The effects of more subtle forms of maltreatment such as neglect, by contrast, tend not to be immediately apparent. Nevertheless, some experts contend that neglect, especially emotional neglect, is a central feature in all types of maltreatment (e.g., Erickson *et al.*, 1996).

Many researchers argue that the insidious effects of chronic emotional neglect are likely to be at least as persistent and detrimental to one's quality of life as are those of abuse (e.g., Crittenden, 1988; Erickson *et al.*, 1996). Other researchers suggest that the chronicity of maltreatment, rather than the type or severity, may have the greatest impact on the child. For example, van der Kolk and Fisler (1994) write:

Our own research suggests that distinct, isolated incidents of trauma are likely to produce rather discrete conditioned biological and behavioral responses to reminders of the trauma [i.e., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder], without necessarily affecting the totality of a person's identity. *Chronic abuse and neglect, on the*

other hand, are likely to have a more pervasive effect on psychological and biological regulatory processes, without necessarily producing discrete conditioned responses (pp. 146-147, emphasis added).

Epidemiological Considerations

Many experts in child maltreatment believe that only a small proportion of cases which would qualify for protective services are reported to the appropriate authorities (e.g., Erickson *et al.*, 1996; Veltkamp & Miller, 1994). Identifying a child as "maltreated" implies identifying at least one caregiver as a perpetrator (Dubowitz, Black, Starr & Zuravin, 1993); to do so is not always easy in a nation founded on the ideals of individualism and freedom from governmental interference in private life (cf. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1985). In discussing the body of U.S. legal decisions regarding the rights of parents, Hart, Brassard and Karlson (1996) summarize the current state of affairs:

Parents have a fundamental right to raise their children without undue interference by the state. . . . A judge may not merely substitute his or her judgment for that of the parent. Courts may not dictate to parents how to raise their children without showing that the parents' methods seriously impair or threaten the children's physical or mental well-being (p. 80).

Even if only a small proportion of maltreatment cases are reported, the epidemiological figures pertaining to such cases are informative in their own right. Citing a fifty-state survey of child protective service agencies, Erickson and Egeland (1996) recount:

[A]n estimated 2.7 million children were reported as victims of child abuse and neglect in 1990. Of those, approximately 45% were reported for neglect, as compared to 25% for physical abuse, 16% for sexual abuse, 6% for emotional maltreatment (some of whom experience emotional neglect), and 8% for "other" forms of maltreatment. . . . Approximately 40% of reported neglect cases are substantiated.

Paget, Philp and Abramczyk (1993) discuss the findings of a study on the incidence and prevention of child maltreatment conducted by the Department of Health and Human Services in 1988. This study was intended to reflect the then-recent changes in public law pertaining to maltreatment, changes which tacitly reflected a growing cultural aware-

ness that neglect is a serious social problem. New laws had been enacted to provide protection not only for children harmed by maltreatment, but also for those *threatened* with harm. Sixty-three percent of cases under the expanded definition involved neglect while only forty-three percent involved abuse. Of the cases involving neglect, fifty-seven percent involved physical neglect, twenty-nine percent involved educational neglect, and twenty-two percent involved emotional neglect. The number of reported physically neglected children remained approximately the same after the law's expansion to include children threatened with harm; the number of emotionally neglected children, on the other hand, increased four-fold.

There is an additional significant point regarding the incidence of child maltreatment which is barely reflected in the above study. Ney, Fung and Wickett (1994) found that a mere five percent of reported cases of child maltreatment involve only one of the five "generally recognized" types of maltreatment (i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect). In the vast majority of cases, then, there are concurrent forms of maltreatment, suggesting that these phenomena may be different aspects of a more general phenomenon of child maltreatment.

Typologies of Neglect

Neglect is perhaps the most heterogenous category falling under the rubric of child maltreatment (Dubowitz *et al.*, 1993). Paget and her colleagues (1993) state:

Theorists, empiricists, and practitioners share a common conceptualization of child neglect, not as a unidimensional phenomenon but as a complex set of multiply-determined parental behaviors that result in diverse ways in which children receive inadequate care and protection (p. 124).

Various researchers have identified various subcategories of neglect, resulting in many different categorizations of these phenomena. Virtually all such classification

schemes include physical neglect, perhaps because it is the most easily perceived by the observer and the most acutely severe in its consequences (Erickson *et al.*, 1996). Hegar and Yungman (1989) describe this type of neglect as follows: "Physical neglect of children involves deprivation of basic necessities, including food, clothing, shelter, and hygiene" (p. 206). Many researchers' categorizations also include developmental neglect, of which Hegar and Yungman state: "[It] deprives children of experiences necessary for growth and development, including supervision and services or care to promote education, health, and mental health" (p. 210). Hegar and Yungman (1989) further include general emotional neglect within their classification scheme: "[It] refers to parental failure to meet children's needs for attention, security, self-esteem, and emotional nurturance" (p. 212). Kadushin (1988) describes several examples of this type of neglect:

Parents who withhold affection, who never praise or commend their children, who avoid contact with and rarely spontaneously talk with their youngsters, and who fail to exercise guidance or control over the child's activities are manifesting emotional neglect. Very permissive disciplinary approaches and overindulgences by parents can also be interpreted as neglect because they deny the child important controls (p. 155).

Erickson and Egeland (1996) note, "Most, if not all, children who are physically neglected are also emotionally neglected at least to some extent" (p. 9.) One could reasonably argue that emotional neglect is a component of all forms of neglect, particularly when the neglect is not solely the result of poverty. Despite its probable concurrence with other forms of neglect, emotional neglect has received less attention than physical or developmental neglect in the maltreatment literature.

Hegar and Yungman (1989) state that emotional neglect is the most difficult to define of all types of child maltreatment and, therefore, the most likely to arouse controversy. Nevertheless, the consequences of emotional neglect appear to be receiving more

attention currently than was previously the case. This is true both in public policy, via the expanded U.S. legal definition of child maltreatment to include potential for harm, and in the child maltreatment literature. In this latter regard, Erickson and Egeland (1996) state, "[M]any types of neglect, including emotional neglect, typically leave no physical marks. These less obvious forms of neglect nevertheless can have a devastating impact on the child's development" (p. 5).

As noted previously, van der Kolk and Fisler (1994) found that the psychological effects of neglect and abuse are, in practice, often difficult to distinguish from one another. Hart has frequently argued that psychological maltreatment, which would include emotional neglect, is the core issue of all types of child maltreatment. As Hart and Brassard (1987) state:

The strength of this position rests on the widely supported assumptions that (a) psychological maltreatment is inherent in all forms of child maltreatment; (b) the major negative effects of child maltreatment are generally psychological in nature, affecting the victim's view of self, others, human relationships, goals, and strategies for living; and (c) the concept clarifies and unifies the dynamics that underlie the destructive power of all forms of maltreatment (p. 161).

Hart, Brassard and Karlson (1996) call for investigating the psychological aspects of maltreatment separately from its physical aspects. They state:

The argument relevant to this point is that psychological maltreatment never will be clarified sufficiently or dealt with in practice until it is established in its own right as a primary factor [in childhood dysfunction] (p. 75).

Turgi and Hart (1988) identify seven different types of psychological maltreatment: rejection, degradation, terrorization, isolation, corruption, exploitation, and denial of emotional response to the child. Of those which have particular relevance to the phenomenon of neglect, the authors define psychological rejection as "An act which sends a child the message he [or she] is unwanted" (p. 298). Of isolation, they write:

Physical isolating occurs when the parent fails to provide or intentionally denies the child normal social relations. The child is deprived of the opportunity to develop social confidence and competence through. . . interaction with other children in normal situations (p. 299).

Concerning denial of emotional responsiveness, the authors state:

Also referred to as ignoring, [it] occurs when the parent becomes psychologically unavailable to the child. . . . Failing to provide emotional responsiveness can occur by failing to attend or react to an infant's spontaneous actions and vocalizations, failing to protect a school age child from sibling or peer threat, or by failing to exhibit interest in an adolescent's activities and concerns. . . .

Lack of emotional responsiveness is frequently found in cases in which attachment between mother and child [has] not occurred and in cases diagnosed as nonorganic failure to thrive (pp. 299-300).

Hart, Brassard and Karlson (1996) argue that psychological maltreatment conveys the message that the child is unloved, flawed, endangered, worthless or valuable only in meeting the needs of someone else. Turgi and Hart (1988) compare such a child's situation to that of a prisoner of war. Unlike POW's, however, psychologically maltreated children lack schemata of healthy relationships against which to compare and evaluate the disordered relationships that they experience. Instead, rejection and punitiveness are internalized as normal. As Erickson and Egeland (1996) state, "Because neglect is often chronic rather than episodic, these children. . . may grow up thinking this is the way life is, not realizing that their experience constitutes maltreatment" (p. 8). Such a perception of social reality is likely to result in self-devaluation, in consequent devaluation of others, and thus in general social discomfort. In a comparison of impoverished families, some maltreating and some psychologically healthier, Crittenden (1988) notes:

For all the measured differences between the adequate and maltreating families, the most outstanding difference was the warmth and pleasure which these [adequate] families exuded. They were happy; they looked forward to being together and with other people. All of us who worked with them felt welcome and felt their willingness to share their experience with us (pp. 178-179).

Etiological Considerations

Responsibility for child maltreatment has often been ascribed solely to the offending parental figure (Dubowitz *et al.*, 1993). This may reflect an emphasis on individual accountability within our society, the disturbing nature of the most visible cases of maltreatment, or the medicolegal context out of which public awareness of maltreatment has emerged. "Traditional conceptualizations of child neglect," state Paget and her colleagues (1993), "emphasize willfulness on the part of the perpetrator as an important ingredient in the identification and substantiation of cases" (p. 132).

Thus, there has been a great deal of research focusing on parental psychological factors as the major contributing component, if not the sole cause, of child maltreatment. For example, in studying psychological characteristics of Caucasian mothers, Polansky, Gaudin and Kilpatrick (1992b) found that neglecting mothers are differentially characterized from non-neglecting mothers by poorer ability to relate to others, poorer impulse control, lower self-confidence, and lower verbal accessibility to emotions. Drotar, Eckerle, Satola, Pallotta and Wyatt (1990) found that mothers of infants with nonorganic-failure-to-thrive tend to display more arbitrary terminations of feedings, less positive affective behavior and less adaptive social interaction than mothers of normal infants. Trickett and Susman (1988) found that maltreating parents tend to perceive child-rearing as less enjoyable and more difficult than do non-maltreating parents. Furthermore, such parents tend to be less satisfied with their children, to use more controlling disciplinary techniques, and to maintain high standards of achievement while discouraging autonomy in their children (Trickett, Aber, Carlson & Cicchetti, 1991).

Erickson and Egeland (1996) have found that maltreating parents' perceptions of their children are oversimplified, and such parents thus often seem unable to understand the intellectual and emotional limitations imposed by a child's level of development. These parents are also likely to have difficulty empathizing with the child; that is, to have difficulty in understanding the world from the child's point of view. Erickson and Egeland suggest that such parents seem to be perpetuating their own childhood experience in an effort to master unresolved psychological issues:

Parental development reflects the parents' own history of care, their struggles with issues of dependency and autonomy. . . . Parents with unresolved issues of trust, dependency, and autonomy are more likely to have difficulty understanding and meeting the demands of their children and may seek to meet their own needs through the parent-child relationship (pp. 13-14).

This view of recapitulation of traumatic relationships is supported by Egeland's (1988) and Egeland and Erickson's (1999) investigations of intergenerational patterns of maltreatment. The authors have consistently found three factors distinguishing mothers who break the cycle of maltreatment from those who do not. These include the presence, during the mother's childhood, of at least one loving adult who stood in contrast to the maltreating parent. A second factor is the presence of a supportive partner during the time that the mother becomes a parent. The final means of breaking the maltreatment cycle is therapeutic intervention which affords the mother some opportunity to achieve greater emotional maturity and stability.

Psychological factors within the parent(s) undeniably form part of the etiological matrix leading to child maltreatment. It is also useful to understand other factors, both intra- and extra-familial, that may contribute to family dysfunction and might be addressed through some form of intervention (Steinglass, 1987). Belsky (1980), for example, under-

stands child maltreatment as being multiply-determined by factors operating within the individual, the family, the community and the culture (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Cicchetti and Toth (1995) concisely describe such an "ecological" model of causation:

Four levels of analysis are addressed in this model: (1) *ontogenic* development, which includes factors within the individual that are associated with being a perpetrator of child maltreatment; (2) the *microsystem*, which includes factors within the family that contribute to the occurrence of child maltreatment; (3) the *exosystem*, which includes aspects of the communities in which families and individuals live that contribute to the perpetuation of child maltreatment; and (4) the *macrosystem*, which includes the beliefs and values of the culture that contribute to the perpetuation of child maltreatment (p. 545, emphasis original).

Many scholars have recognized the etiological importance of extra-ontogenic variables in contributing to child maltreatment. These factors include extreme socioeconomic stressors on the family (Hegar *et al.*, 1989), failure of local communities and social institutions to assume a leadership role in fostering adequate care for children living within the community (Kadushin, 1988), and conservative cultural and religious beliefs such as an emphasis on self-reliance and Biblically-based notions about corporal punishment (Dubowitz *et al.*, 1993).

Viewing the family as a system—that is, "a series of elements arranged in some consistent and enduring relationship with... each other" (Steinglass, 1987, pp. 34-35)—is a useful means by which to understand the interlocking matrix of factors contributing to familial dysfunction. Steinglass provides a description of the contextual, or interactionalist, perspective of causation utilized in many sociologically-framed family systems theories. In these theories, the role of parental psychopathology is de-emphasized:

Instead of seeing pathology as the result of a linear chain of cause-and-effect reactions, this second approach views pathology in terms of malfunctional interactions between factors or components within a system. The actual emergence of "pathology" according to this view, results from a *combination* of interacting elements that, when they interact in certain ways, *destabilize* a previously smoothly functioning system (p. 28, emphasis original).

Jacob (1987) likewise cautions against adopting oversimplified, unidirectional conceptualizations of causation within parent-child relationships characterized by maltreatment. Indeed, researchers have examined various extra-parental variables that appear to contribute to the maltreatment. Wahler and Dumas (1987), for example, have formulated a *coercion* model of neglect that locates the source of maltreatment within interpersonal relationships. This theory posits a bi-directional model of aversive attempts by parent and child to control each other. Such a pattern of interaction is thought to result in a general decrease in parent-child engagement and in the virtual absence of positive interaction within the dyad. Other researchers have focused on the role of the infant's temperament in cases of neglect (e.g., Vaughn *et al.*, 1992). Nevertheless, as Erickson and Egeland (1996) point out, "Although few would dispute that some children are more difficult to care for than others, there is strong evidence from observational studies that child characteristics alone do not account for maltreatment" (p. 14). Harrington, Black, Starr and Dubowitz (1998) examined disadvantaged mothers' *perceptions* of their infants and found that maternal reports of difficult child temperament predicted emotional neglect. By contrast, mothers with greater emotional support reported their children as being relatively easy to care for and they were less likely to neglect their children.

Still other researchers have focused on the role of synchrony between mother and child in the vicissitudes of attachment relationships (e.g., Isabella, Belsky & von Eye, 1989). In their discussion of parent-child interactional patterns, Paget and her colleagues (1993) note, "[A] disruption in the bonding process occurs early in the relationship between a neglecting mother and infant (although the actual causes of this disruption are not clear)" (p. 161). In describing the effects of asynchronous patterns of interaction between infant

and caregiver, however, van der Kolk and Fislir (1994) implicitly attribute asynchronicity to the caregiver:

Adequate attunement between caregivers and infants is necessary to help infants change their psychological state from distressed to contented. . . . [Maltreated] children are ill-equipped to modulate their arousal, but their mothers are unresponsive to their children's affective cues and do not adjust their stimulation according to the children's needs. The children react by averting their gaze and by terminating the interaction. A child is left to its own devices to find ways of calming itself, and the mother is left frustrated and ungratified. . . . This lack of attunement promotes dysregulated behavior in both child and caregiver (pp. 150-151).

In their review of etiological factors associated with child neglect, Hegar and Yungman (1989) conclude that physical neglect is largely related to social stressors associated with poverty whereas developmental neglect is frequently related to parents' lack of empathy and knowledge about child development. These authors also suggest that failure-to-thrive is associated with parental psychological factors such as depression, alcoholism, aggression and anti-social personality. Finally, Hegar and Yungman assert that any or all of the above factors, as well as family-role or family-relationship problems, contribute to general emotional neglect.

In a study of familial patterns of functioning among low-income maltreating families, Crittenden (1988) describes characteristics which she has typically observed within neglecting families. Her findings highlight many of the above-mentioned etiological issues relevant to child neglect:

Like abusing families, families who neglect but do not abuse their children were new families with only one or two young children. They differed, however, in almost every other respect from abusing families. Although neglecting mothers usually had a partner, this person was frequently the mother's own mother rather than the father of the children. This, in itself, suggested the mother's limited acceptance of the responsibilities of adulthood. Other information suggested the limited competence of neglecting mothers. . . . Most were living in the same economically and socially impoverished environments in which they themselves grew up. . . . [M]ost limited their social contacts to family members. . . .

Neglecting parents tended to cope with the complexities and problems of their lives by withdrawing from and ignoring them. Experience had taught them that some problems will disappear if ignored long enough. . . . Others will be solved by someone who feels sorry for the family. In fact, whenever possible neglecting parents deferred both authority and responsibility to someone else. Although this strategy reduced the stress of feeling responsible for solving problems, it gave the parent no experience from which to learn to cope more successfully in the future.

Unlike abusing parents, neglecting parents had few or very vague expectations of either their children or themselves. . . . Instead, they seemed to exist from day to day without plans or efforts directed toward ensuring that their or their children's needs would be met.

Whereas abusing parents tended to be interfering and hostile with their children, neglecting parents were unresponsive and withdrawn. . . . They responded to few of their children's overtures when interacting with them and initiated almost no activity. In the home, they ignored most infant behavior and provided basic caregiving when they happened to think of it rather than when their children signaled a need (pp. 171-173).

Methodological Considerations

In the past, many researchers confounded abuse with neglect in the child maltreatment literature (e.g., Ammerman, Cassisi, Hersen & Van Hasselt, 1986; Kaleita, 1990); some went so far as to generalize findings from abused populations to neglected ones (e.g., Green, 1993). Many states continue to define both child abuse and neglect under the general legal rubric of maltreatment (Erickson *et al.*, 1996). This perhaps reflects the fact that types of maltreatment tend to occur in combination (Ney *et al.*, 1994) and the fact that the differential effects of abuse and neglect are, in practice, often difficult to distinguish from one another (van der Kolk *et al.*, 1994).

Within the last fifteen years, however, researchers have begun to conceptualize neglect as a different phenomenon from abuse and to investigate it in its own right (Paget *et al.*, 1993). Some recent research has attempted to examine the differential effects of various forms of maltreatment although such an approach remains relatively rare. Lipschitz, Winegar, Nicolaou and Hartnick (1999) studied the relationship between self-reports

of maltreatment and self-destructive behavior among adolescents hospitalized in a psychiatric ward. They found that self-reported emotional neglect was correlated with suicide attempts, suicidal ideation and self-mutilation, and they suggest that emotional neglect may be a better predictor of suicidal behavior in adolescents than physical abuse, emotional abuse or physical neglect. Brunner, Parzer, Schuld and Resch (2000) found that self-reported emotional neglect was a better predictor of dissociative experiences in a group of adolescent German psychiatric in- and outpatients than was self-reported sexual abuse, physical abuse or stressful life events.

Talbott (2000) examined how physical abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and multiple forms of maltreatment differentially affected personality development in a sample of children who had been removed from their parents' homes due to maltreatment. She found that all of the maltreated children tended to exhibit deficits in interpreting interpersonal situations and behaving adaptively in them. Both the physically neglected and the emotionally neglected subjects, however, exhibited more difficulty in controlling and expressing their emotions than did physically abused, emotionally abused, multiply maltreated or control subjects.

In a community-based longitudinal study examining the relationship of childhood neglect to personality disorders in adolescents and adults, Johnson, Smailes, Cohen, Brown and Bernstein (2000) found that emotional neglect was correlated with later avoidant and paranoid personality disorders, physical neglect was correlated with subsequent schizotypal personality disorder, and lack of supervision during childhood was associated with borderline, paranoid and passive-aggressive personality disorders in adolescents and adults. In a study of the relationships between personality disorders in adults and

retrospective self-reports of maltreatment during childhood, Hogue (1999) found that avoidant behavior was related to reports of emotional neglect and emotional abuse, paranoid personality disorder was related to reports of maternal emotional abuse, and schizotypal personality disorder was related to reports of paternal emotional abuse.

Such increased precision in the literature is extremely useful if we are to arrive at a methodologically pure set of findings regarding various types of maltreatment. The high degree of overlap between incidences of abuse and neglect as they occur in families (Ney *et al.*, 1994), however, suggests that abuse and neglect are not necessarily discrete categories of mistreatment. Furthermore, there are no standard operational definitions of the various types of maltreatment to which researchers might adhere (Paget *et al.*, 1993); it is thus not clear that the same constructs are being explored in studies which examine the same forms of maltreatment. In their review of the relatively small amount of research done specifically on child neglect, Crouch and Milner (1993) took a great deal of care to tease out sequelae of neglect from those involving other forms of maltreatment. Nevertheless, one is unsure what to conclude from the studies reviewed because Crouch and Milner did not systematically describe the operational definitions of neglect which were used in the studies, nor did they compare and attempt to integrate the various classification schemes. Until more research is conducted which examines the differential effects of standardly defined types of neglect, Crouch and Milner's (1993) concluding assessment of the empirical literature on neglect will remain valid: "The developmental [impact] of experiences of neglect remain poorly understood, despite data that suggest that neglect is the most frequently reported category of maltreatment in the United States" (p. 63).

Polansky, Gaudin and Kilpatrick (1992a) point out that research participants in studies of both contributing factors and sequelae of maltreatment tend to be drawn from cases of maltreatment reported to child-protective service agencies. In addition to raising questions of generalizability, these authors point to a serious methodological flaw engendered by overuse of this subject pool: Such families have a disproportionate tendency to be economically deprived and many researchers do not control for the effects of poverty. Polansky and colleagues further argue that though poverty may be a contributing factor in cases of child maltreatment, it is neither a necessary nor sufficient variable to account for it. Every major form of child maltreatment has in fact been shown to occur across all demographic and socioeconomic variables (Veltkamp *et al.*, 1994).

Another problem in the maltreatment literature is the difficulty in establishing causal relationships between maltreatment and impairment. Since few studies examine maltreating families before maltreatment first occurs, it is difficult to establish that maltreatment causes the subsequent dysfunction in survivors. Nevertheless, many researchers speak of "consequences" of maltreatment in correlational studies where cause was not in fact determined (Conaway & Hansen, 1989). Many researchers alternatively choose the term *sequelae*, which, although it also denotes a cause-and-effect relationship, may have less obvious connotations of methodological inexactitude. One study that would largely seem to bypass the problem of establishing causal relationships in the cycle of maltreatment is the Minnesota Mother-Child Project. Erickson and Egeland (1996) describe this study as follows:

[It is] a prospective, longitudinal study designed to follow the development of a sample of 267 children born to first-time mothers identified as being at risk for parenting problems due to poverty, youth, low education, lack of support, and unstable life circumstances (p. 11).

As these children grow into latency and adolescence, it should be informative to learn about the vicissitudes of their development.

The difficulty in establishing causality persists in research that examines relationships between purported maltreatment and such problems in adolescence as low self-esteem (e.g., Moran & Eckenrode, 1992) and juvenile delinquency (e.g., Walsh, 1992). Because of the greater timespan involved, it would seem even more problematic to examine the link between retrospectively reported childhood maltreatment and problems in adult adjustment; nevertheless, a causal relationship is often implied. Retrospective reports of childhood maltreatment have been related to such diverse problems during adulthood as chronic mental illness (Muenzenmaier, Meyer, Struening & Ferber, 1993), male mid-life crisis (Braverman & Paris, 1993) and self-destructive behavior (van der Kolk, Perry & Herman, 1991). The National Research Council's Panel for Research on Child Abuse and Neglect (1993) states, "Memories of abusive experiences change during one's lifetime, and thus retrospective studies cannot guarantee the validity of information about childhood victimization" (p. 225). In response to this problem, Brière (1992) suggests including measures of report bias in studies of the correlates of retrospectively reported childhood maltreatment; to date, however, few such measures have been included.

In summary, it is evident that there has been little controlled, longitudinal and systematic research that focuses on the development of maltreated children (Conaway *et al.*, 1989). This problem highlights the complexity of the contextual, definitional and ethicolegal issues involved in working with maltreating families and in attempting to establish causal relationships between types of maltreatment and their apparent consequences. It seems that, due to the unavoidable use of non-discrete categories of maltreat-

ment, the many operational definitions of neglect used in the literature, and the difficulty inherent in establishing causality in this domain, one cannot arrive at a systematic meta-analysis of the consequences of neglect. The overall body of research, however, indicates that there is a strong relationship between perceptions of childhood maltreatment and both concurrent and subsequent problems in adjustment.

Empirical Findings

Researchers investigating child maltreatment initially tended to group children of various ages together in studies of the correlates of maltreatment; more recently, researchers have assumed a more developmental perspective (Erickson *et al.*, 1996). From this viewpoint, the child's age at the time of the maltreatment is significant in terms of both the affected domain(s) and the magnitude of subsequent impairment. Cicchetti and Toth (1995) elaborate this point:

[I]ndividuals will experience the same events differently depending on their level of functioning across all domains of psychological and biological development. Accordingly, various maltreatment experiences will have different meanings for an individual depending on both [the] nature and the timing of the experience (p. 542). . . .

Development occurs as a progression of qualitative reorganizations within and among the biological, emotional, cognitive, representational, and linguistic systems proceeding through differentiation and subsequent hierarchical integration. . . .

A hierarchical picture of adaptation emerges in which the successful resolution of an early stage-salient issue increases the probability of subsequent successful adjustment. . . . Each stage-salient issue also entails reciprocal roles for caregivers, so parental influence can either enhance or hamper a child's successful negotiation of stage-salient issues (p. 546).

Effects of Maltreatment on Attachment

Attachment theory "proposes that the infant's relationships with primary caregivers are the prototypes for subsequent relationships" (Erickson *et al.*, 1996, p. 15; cf. Bowlby, 1969). Many studies have shown that maltreated children are much more likely than

non-maltreated children to form insecure attachments (Cicchetti *et al.*, 1995). Estimates of the prevalence of insecure attachment in maltreated children range from seventy to one-hundred percent (Hart *et al.*, 1996). Van der Kolk and Fisler (1994) assert, "These children learn that their mothers' responses will not provide them with comfortable physiological states, and they react accordingly" (pp. 150-151).

Many researchers have discerned a behavior pattern, now referred to as "disorganized/disoriented," among maltreated children (e.g., Main & Solomon, 1990). This pattern does not fit smoothly into the traditional classification categories of the Strange Situation (Cicchetti *et al.*, 1995; cf. Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969). Children falling into this category exhibit conflicting characteristics of both anxious-resistant and anxious-avoidant attachment styles in addition to several unique qualities suggestive of fear. Such children tend to show not only moderate-to-high proximity-seeking behavior, but also avoidant and resistant actions toward caregivers. Furthermore, they demonstrate a lack of organized strategies for managing separations and reunions from caregivers. In fact, upon reunion these toddlers tend to display such dissociative symptoms as interrupted movements, frozen expressions, and a dazed appearance. Additionally, they seem apprehensive at all times (Cicchetti *et al.*).

Carlson, Cicchetti, Barnett and Braunwald (1989) found that more than eighty percent of the maltreated infants in their study showed behavior characteristic of disorganized/disoriented attachment, compared to less than twenty percent of infants in a control group. Congruent with this trend, Lynch and Cicchetti (1991) found extremely ambivalent patterns of relatedness in thirty percent of a sample of maltreated seven-to-thirteen-year-olds, a higher proportion than would be expected by chance. Among mothers

who reported maltreatment experiences during their own early childhoods, Main and Goldwyn (1984) generally found ambivalent attachments to their children and a recapitulation of negative parenting practices. "Thus," as Cicchetti and Toth (1995) state, "taken as a whole, research on the attachment relationships of individuals who have experienced maltreatment during childhood suggests a potentially life-long pattern of maladaptive interpersonal relationships" (p. 549).

Effects of Maltreatment on Affect Regulation and Self-Regulation

Cicchetti and Toth (1995) define affect regulation as "[T]he intra- and extra-organismic factors by which affect arousal is redirected, controlled, modulated, and modified to enable an individual to function adaptively in emotionally arousing situations" (p. 546). These authors believe that insecure attachment does not afford a satisfactory context for a child to develop or internalize adequate regulation of affect. They further believe that such a capacity is essential to one's ability to develop effective peer relationships during childhood and later in life.

Signs of disordered affect and affective dysregulation are apparent even in infancy among maltreated children. Gaensbauer, Mrazek and Harmon (1981) discerned four primary modes of affect in maltreated infants, all of which they characterized as pathological. These consisted of depression, anger, a pattern of both ambivalence and affective lability, and, finally, affective blunting concurrent with developmental delay. Gaensbauer and Hiatt (1984) found that infants who had been physically abused showed high levels of negative affect and little positive affect; emotionally neglected infants, by contrast, tended to be emotionally blunted.

Maltreated children generally appear to have more negative affective states toward themselves than do non-maltreated children. For example, maltreated toddlers have been shown to react neutrally or negatively to their reflections in a mirror while toddlers in a control group reacted positively (Schneider-Rosen & Cicchetti, 1984, 1991). Nevertheless, non-maltreated toddlers tend to use words more frequently to express unpleasant feelings (e.g., hate, anger and disgust) than do maltreated toddlers. Non-maltreated toddlers also are more likely to articulate such uncomfortable physiological states as hunger, thirst and sleepiness (Beeghly & Cicchetti, 1994). It is as if language does not, for maltreated children, acquire the symbolic capacity to express and thereby modify personal reality. Boyer (1989) posits that without an ability to use language to mediate experience, an individual is vulnerable to chronic intensive affective states which in turn result in impulsive or internalizing behaviors.

Cicchetti and Toth (1995) interpret inexpressiveness in maltreated children as a defense against overwhelming anxiety. Such intolerable affect is thought to be generated by the primary caregiver's negative responses to the child's self-expression, particularly that of negative affect. Van der Kolk and Fisler (1994) note that both maltreated children and traumatized adults have difficulty in differentiating (i.e., identifying) and expressing conflictual emotions such as anger. In individuals with normal developmental histories, by contrast, such emotions are integrated into the personality (Johnson, 1994) and are believed to function as guides for appropriate behavior within interpersonal contexts (Krystal, 1978). In considering individuals who experienced maltreatment as children, van der Kolk and Fisler theorize:

Fear [or anxiety] must be tamed for [these individuals] to be able to think and articulate their needs. . . . The availability of words will help these patients start

making the necessary connections between their current affective dysregulation and their past history of abuse and neglect. Words may allow them to make a distinction between past helplessness and current access to ways of coping that were not available when their lives were controlled by people who were unable to respond to their needs (pp. 162-163).

Affect regulation conceptually falls under the broader rubric of self-regulation, and this latter concept refers to the general development of the self. Van der Kolk and Fislser (1994) summarize some of the research on the manifestations of underdeveloped self-regulation in maltreated children:

It is thought that the lack of development of self-regulatory processes in [maltreated] children leads to an impaired capacity to develop proper definitions of the self, as reflected by: (1) disturbances in the sense of self, such as a sense of separateness. . . a loss of autobiographical memories. . . and disturbances of body image. . . (2) poorly modulated affect and impulse control, including aggression against self and others. . . and (3) insecurity in relationships, such as distrust. . . suspiciousness. . . lack of intimacy. . . and isolation. . . (p. 146).

Effects of Maltreatment on Social and Academic Functioning

Several researchers have observed decreased peer interaction, as well as general passivity and helplessness, among both pre-school and school-age neglected children (e.g., Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989). Erickson and Egeland (1996) state:

Neglected children, if they survive physically, often fail to develop the confidence, concentration, and social skills that would enable them to succeed in school and in relationships. The behavior they bring to the classroom sets them up for a continuing cycle of failure and disappointment unless something happens to make a difference. . . .

Emotionally neglected children expect not to get what they need from others, and so they do not even try to solicit care and warmth. They expect not to be effective and successful in tasks, and so they do not try to succeed. *Or perhaps. . . these children's dependence needs are so overwhelming that they are barely able to concern themselves with being motivated and task oriented* (p. 15; emphasis added).

This seemingly self-defeating behavior pattern has also been conceptualized as intentional withdrawal and active avoidance of interpersonal contact. Wolf (1988) writes:

In contact shunning personalities, the intensity of their need for others is exceeded only by their sensitivity to the expected rejection. Therefore, isolating defenses

come prominently into the foreground—not as symptomatic of lack of interest but, to the contrary, as symptoms of the widely excessive need. The two major defensive constellations here are schizoid or paranoid in appearance.

Schizoid defenses withdraw and hide the vulnerable self from the feared vicissitudes of social intercourse. Alternatively, paranoid defenses may surround the vulnerable self with such an aura of suspicion and hostility that potentially dangerous intruding selfobjects are held off at a safe distance (p. 74).

A study conducted by Smetana, Kelly and Twentyman (1984) supports the theory that neglected children possess intense dependency needs. These researchers found that neglected preschoolers' ability to empathize, or appreciate the subjective experience of others, was less than that of both physically abused and non-maltreated peers. The neglected children tended to think it always unfair for themselves to receive fewer snacks and toys than their peers, regardless of extenuating circumstances.

As one might expect, the angry, acting-out behaviors typical of abused children often lead to rejection by teachers and peers. However, so do the most frequent behavioral patterns found in emotionally neglected children: passivity and high dependency on the one hand and withdrawal and avoidance on the other (Cicchetti *et al.*, 1995). Such problems in relating to others compound the difficulty maltreated children have in succeeding at school. That is, the interpersonal rejection commonly experienced by these children is thought to engender a cycle of low self-esteem and such maladaptive behaviors as poor academic performance (Erickson *et al.*, 1996). While it is true that delayed cognitive development has long been associated with extreme developmental neglect and socioeconomic deprivation (e.g., Crittenden, 1987, 1988), maltreated children perform even worse academically than would be expected based on intelligence levels alone (Salter, Richardson & Kairys, 1985).

Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl and Egolf (1994) examined the relationship between maltreatment during childhood and academic performance in adolescence. These researchers reported that among this group of adolescents, successful academic performance, while rare, was linked to several factors. These included average and above-average intellectual capacity; relative absence of physical abuse; parental expectations of high academic performance; and, most importantly, the stable presence and emotional availability, throughout childhood and into adolescence, of at least one adult figure. In the absence of these factors, it was difficult for the maltreated child to succeed in school and thereby break the characteristic cycle of failure and diminished self-regard.

Childhood Maltreatment and Problems in Living During Adulthood

As discussed above, there are methodological problems in assuming that retrospectively reported maltreatment during childhood "causes" later dysfunction. Nevertheless, a wide variety of life problems and psychopathology in adults has been correlated with such reports. For example, Loos and Alexander (1997) examined the relationship between retrospectively reported maltreatment and current anger, loneliness and low self-esteem in undergraduate college students. They found that reported emotional neglect predicted current loneliness and social isolation, while reported physical and verbal abuse predicted current anger.

Helfer (1978), on the basis of clinical observation, connected adults' self-reports of childhood neglect and other forms of maltreatment to such problems as low self-esteem, unresolved anger, substance abuse and self-perceptions of powerlessness. Further apparent effects of childhood maltreatment manifested during adulthood include difficulty in trusting others, inability to form close relationships, inability to play, and a general lack of parenting

skills. Finally, Helfer believes that there is a link between childhood maltreatment and both verbal inaccessibility and lowered intelligence in adulthood.

Helfer (1978) stresses that adults who report maltreatment during childhood have particular difficulty in social and emotional functioning. Specifically, they often do not seem to know how to get their interpersonal needs met appropriately, how to delay gratification, how to make personal decisions, how to take responsibility for their actions, or how to resolve painful feeling states other than by acting impulsively to discharge them. In a review of existing research on the apparent residual effects of childhood maltreatment, Tower (1993) likewise points to the relational difficulties which adult survivors of childhood neglect and other types of maltreatment frequently experience. Tower draws the conclusion that adults who report having been neglected or otherwise maltreated as children frequently have difficulty trusting themselves, trusting others, and trusting in a benign general social environment. Such adults also have been shown to have difficulty either sublimating their anger or expressing it appropriately by self-assertion. They also have frequently been found to form dissatisfying intimate relationships with other emotionally-deprived individuals. Finally, the research included in Tower's (1993) literature review suggests that adults maltreated as children have rarely learned how to successfully negotiate with others, how to compromise, or how to otherwise solve problems cooperatively within interpersonal contexts.

In an interview-based study of French adults who had spent at least five years of childhood in foster care, Dumaret, Coppel-Batsch and Couraud (1997) found that although fifty-six percent of the subjects were "well-integrated" socially and had achieved normal adjustment, the remainder were less-than-ideally integrated into society and had

not achieved financial, relational or other social success; ten percent enjoyed almost no supportive relationships with others.

Many conventional categories of psychopathology in adults have been positively correlated with retrospective reports of childhood neglect and other types of maltreatment. For example, van der Kolk and Fisler (1994) state that adults who were exposed to interpersonal trauma at an early age are more susceptible than other adults to developing dissociative disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder brought on by recent acute trauma. Such adults also appear to be more vulnerable to developing self-destructive disorders such as substance abuse (van der Kolk *et al.*). In a meta-analysis of studies of major depression, Bemporad and Romano (1992) found that patients diagnosed with unipolar depression tend to report significantly more childhood neglect and other maltreatment than do controls and patients with other psychiatric diagnoses.

One cannot definitively conclude that such problems in adulthood result directly from childhood maltreatment, including neglect. Nevertheless, much of the empirical literature demonstrates strong correlations between perceived forms of childhood maltreatment and both concurrent and subsequent difficulty in a variety of psychological domains. Because it has not been definitively established that childhood neglect and other forms of maltreatment cause psychological difficulties in adulthood, one could assume that adults who retrospectively report childhood maltreatment might receive some type of emotional gratification or other secondary gain from doing so. Veltkamp and Miller (1994), however, note that upwards of two million children are seriously neglected and otherwise maltreated in the U.S. each year. It would therefore be reasonable to accept the likelihood that those who claim to have been maltreated as children often were maltreated, and, moreover, that

adolescent and adult survivors of maltreatment frequently suffer detrimental consequences. From the perspective of developmental theory (e.g., Winnicott, 1965), it would be extraordinary if significant childhood neglect and other maltreatment did not frequently have a considerable negative impact on its victims.

Conclusion

The empirical literature on child neglect and other forms of maltreatment highlights the potentially devastating impact of these phenomena. It is true that this literature tends to focus on the most severe cases of maltreatment and the present literature review inevitably reflects that bias. Furthermore, one must keep in mind what, for the purposes of the present research, is perhaps the most significant finding of this review: There is little research dealing with neglect either in absolute terms or relative to other types of maltreatment. On the other hand, the phenomenon of neglect is not entirely distinct from other kinds of mistreatment. When attempting to draw specific conclusions about neglect, one must thus keep these obfuscating factors in mind.

The literature on child neglect and other forms of maltreatment points to the significance of the interpersonal domain relative to one's psychosocial functioning. Based upon such considerations, it seems likely that to experience oneself as neglected would have significant implications for the ways in which one experiences both self and others. Until we elicit and come to understand the personal meanings which stem from this phenomenon, however, we will not be able to appreciate what it is like to feel neglected in the lived world (cf. Kvale, 1996).

Chapter II

And he went back to meet the fox.

"Goodbye," he said.

"Goodbye," said the fox. "And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."

"What is essential is invisible to the eye," the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.

*—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
The Little Prince*

PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

AND PROCEDURES USED IN THE STUDY

In asking a question such as "What do we know about human experience, and how do we know it?" critical issues concerning the meaning and value of differing types of knowledge are raised (Kvale, 1996). Within American psychology, it will probably be forever debatable as to what constitutes valid knowledge and legitimate means of inquiry (cf. Orange, 1995). The predominant Boulder model of clinical training, with its mandate that clinicians be trained as "scientist-practitioners," betrays a fear that clinical psychology, and by extension all psychology, will be perceived as non-rigorous if "objective" methodology is not emphasized as fundamental to the discipline. Hence, the thesis that objectivity is impossible in any scientific endeavor, first popularized by Kuhn (1962), seems to have had little impact on the way in which psychology has typically been conceptualized and practiced within academia. Natural science methodology continues to occupy a dominant position within the discipline (e.g., Morris, 1993; cf. Robins, Gosling & Craik, 1999), and epistemologies other than logical positivism tend to be devalued (Kvale, 1996).

The scientific enterprise and its resultant technologies have vastly improved the quality of human life over the course of recorded history; in modern times, the U.S. often

seems to have led the way in terms of scientific innovation and material progress. It is thus unsurprising that science is idealized in our culture. There are, however, problems caused by this idealization, the most obvious being dangerous unintended consequences of technology (e.g., pollution) that might have been better predicted if one were operating in a purely rational mode. While it is beyond the scope of the present work to enter into a full-fledged critique of the scientific enterprise as it exists within psychology, it should be noted that an uncritical adherence to the scientific method has led to a discipline which has frequently been far-removed from its logical subject matter (Giorgi, 1970). At best, such significant but non-systematically observable human phenomena as love, joy, despair, choice and freedom can be studied only when they are operationally defined and thus pre-interpreted by the researcher (Valle, King & Halling, 1989).

Within academia, the word *psychology* has often been defined in a way that reflects a bias in favor of logical positivism. Although its current lexical definition is "The science of the nature, functions, and the phenomena of the human mind" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. XII, p. 766), many academic psychologists have traditionally defined their discipline as "[T]he scientific study of behavior" (e.g., Parham, 1988, p. 4). On the other hand, there is some evidence that academic psychologists have responded belatedly to Kuhn (1962) and to other more recent postmodern epistemological critiques such as those of Gergen (1992) and Schneider (1998). Several recent introductory psychology textbooks have defined *psychology* as "The scientific study of behavior *and mental processes*" (e.g., Morris & Maisto, 1998, p. 647; Santrock, 1997, p. 4; emphasis added) or in relatively complex ways such as "The scientific study of the interactions between the behavior of organisms and the environment in which it occurs" (Schlinger & Poling, 1998, p. 362).

The fact nevertheless remains that researchers have traditionally been reductionistic, typically considering observable behavior to be legitimate subject matter but not emotional experience or inner life (e.g., Morris *et al.*, 1998). In recent years, many psychologists have increasingly moved away from radical behaviorism toward more complex types of reductionism, especially evolutionary psychology but also cognitive science (Robins *et al.*, 1999). From the latter viewpoint, the mind, virtually synonymous with the brain, exists to the extent that it is a bio-physical entity devoid of personal meaning. Thus, the 1990's were declared the "decade of the brain," psychological disorders such as depression have become commonly labeled as "brain disorders," and many problems in living are assumed to be largely determined by genetics.

It is not clear that natural science methodology offers the best means of studying psychological subject matter. Given that quantitative psychological research tends to have a low rate of reproducibility (Lounsbury, 1993), one could argue that psychology has not been particularly successful as a natural science. Furthermore, from a contemporary philosophical perspective, logical positivism is shown to be poorly suited to studying those psychological phenomena that are grounded in the social world (Gergen, 1994). Philosophers of the social sciences increasingly view social phenomena not as naturally occurring entities but as societal constructions of "reality" (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1992, 1994). From this viewpoint, it is not possible for researchers to maintain a perspective of objective detachment in relation to psychosocial phenomena. Rather, the researcher is part of the context that grounds the phenomenon of interest as it unfolds in the moment; he or she therefore is assumed to influence the way in which the phenomenon is experienced and perceived (e.g., van den Berg, 1961).

Continental scholars have traditionally accepted the validity of a social science epistemology which diverges from the logical positivism of the natural sciences. As Orange (1995) states:

[In 1883, the German philosopher] Dilthey distinguished the *Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences) from the *Geisteswissenschaften* (cultural sciences), among which he included law, economics, literature, art, philosophy, and psychology. These [latter] disciplines require understanding from within, understanding through flexible categories drawn from the personal lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of interaction in a social milieu. Understanding means the use of such categories to penetrate beyond the obvious into the life of a person, the inner spirit of historical epochs, and the meanings and purposes expressed by law, economics, or historical events. . . . We can explain nature, identify causes of observed effects, but we seek to *understand* human beings. Understanding consists of re-experiencing or sharing the experience of the world as another experiences it (pp. 14-15, emphasis original; cf. Dilthey, 1883/1989).

Here it becomes clear that *knowing about* a phenomenon, which is based upon external observation and belongs to the domain of the natural sciences, is quite different from *knowing* a phenomenon, which has subjective experiential dimensions. The age-old Western recognition of these differing types of knowledge is reflected in the fact that the Romance languages have separate words for different ways of knowing; in French, for example, *savoir* means "to know [information]" and refers to an intellectual phenomenon, while *connaître* means "to know [people, places or things]" and has experiential connotations. If a scholar is interested in studying the richness of life-in-the-world, it might be useful to conceptualize suitable psychological phenomena as *lived experiences* with *felt*, or *apprehended*, meanings (Polkinghorne, 1989; cf. Gendlin, 1996). To begin to explore such phenomena, one might pose such infrequently asked questions as "What is [a particular phenomenon] like for those who experience it?" and "What does having this experience mean to them?" (Kvale, 1996).

Existential Phenomenology

Existential phenomenology can be defined as “[T]hat philosophical discipline which seeks to understand the events of human existence in a way that is free of the presuppositions of our cultural heritage, especially philosophical dualism and technologism” (Valle *et al.*, 1989, p. 6; cf. Gadamer, 1976). Rooted in both existentialism and phenomenology, it offers an alternative to logical positivism for psychological investigation conducted from an experiential perspective. Existentialism is a philosophy developed by Kierkegaard (e.g., 1844/1980) that is concerned with the experience of the individual in the face of universal human struggles (Valle *et al.*). Phenomenology, a philosophical methodology which was established by Husserl (1913/1931) and further developed by such philosophers as Heidegger (1927/1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962), can be defined as “[T]he rigorous and unbiased study of things *as they appear* so that one might come to an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience” (Valle *et al.*, p. 6, emphasis original).

These philosophical foundations provide the basis of a psychology relevant to human existence: an epistemologically defensible methodology utilized in the service of articulating personal experience. Unlike logical positivism, the aim of existential phenomenology is neither to *delineate* cause-and-effect relationships nor to *explain* phenomena, but simply to *describe* vital aspects of experience within a systematic structure (Valle *et al.*, 1989). In other words, the purpose of existential phenomenology is to determine those personal aspects of a meaningful event which identify it as a particular type of human experience. As Valle, King and Halling (1989) state, “Recalling that structure is made present to us as *meaning*, one can now rephrase the task of the existential-phenomenological psycholo-

gist as one of disclosing the nature of structure in the form of meaning" (p. 14, emphasis original).

Research Design and Investigative Procedures

The Question

A mildly problematic issue in the present study was how to frame the basic research question, which was "What is it like to experience neglect?" I decided not to ask participants the phenomenological question that would have perhaps been the most obvious and straightforward: "Think about some times you were neglected, and tell me what you were aware of." Instead, I decided to use a question that was intended to elicit less intellectual, more experience-near responses: "Think about some times you felt neglected, and tell me what they were like for you."

The Participants

To obtain participants for the study, I ran an advertisement in two issues of *Metro-pulse*, a free weekly "alternative" newspaper in Knoxville, and in six non-consecutive issues of *The Daily Beacon*, the student newspaper at the University of Tennessee. The advertisements explained that volunteers were being recruited to talk about their experiences of neglect. I received one phone call from someone willing to anonymously answer questions over the telephone, but none from individuals who were willing to undergo a personal interview that would be recorded and transcribed. I then presented my research prospectus to two undergraduate psychology classes at the University of Tennessee and solicited participation in the study, but none of the students contacted me to take part in the project. I began to realize that people might either have an aversion to considering themselves neglected, find the subject difficult to talk about, or simply not have experienced themselves

as neglected. By comparison, an acquaintance of mine who had done a phenomenological study on the experience of having an abortion had gotten many offers of participation when she ran an advertisement in only one issue of *The Daily Beacon* (Rea, 1997).

Realizing the value, and in this case the apparent necessity, of offering some form of compensation in exchange for participation in the study, I decided to bestow, by means of a policy within the University's Psychology Department, extra credit to undergraduate students in exchange for their participation in the study. Through this method, I obtained nine interviews which I judged to be of good quality. I decided against using two interviews obtained in this manner because one participant lacked the introspective capacity to articulate her experience sufficiently and one could not list any neglectful experiences, but seemed to be participating only to receive extra credit. I also obtained three high-quality interviews from participants who had heard of the study by word-of-mouth, for a total of twelve; please see Appendix A for demographic information about the research participants. In retrospect, twelve was a more-than-sufficient number of interviews and made the analysis rather complicated because of the sheer volume of material disclosed by the participants. There is no standard number of interviews used in phenomenology. Rather, the researcher will know he or she has a sufficient number of interviews when the themes that appeared in the first interviews also emerge in later interviews, and when there are enough examples of each theme to allow for a clear understanding of it. Pollio, Henley and Thompson (1997) write:

[T]he situational diversity necessary for identifying thematic patterns is often provided by three to five interview transcripts. . . .

With this number of interviews, give or take a few, the interpreter begins to develop a sense of descriptive patterns and relations characterizing the various interviews. This is not to imply that the interpretive process is closed. On the contrary, the

researcher. . . continually assesses how the developing thematic understanding fits each successive transcript (pp. 51-52).

The Interviews

An unstructured personal interview is the preferred method for obtaining data in phenomenological research because of the freedom conveyed by its openness and flexibility (Polkinghorne, 1989) and because of its intimacy. When participants arrived for individual appointments, I explained to them that they would be participating in an open-ended interview in which they would be asked to describe some times when they were aware of feeling neglected. Several participants wished to be provided with my definition of neglect. I empathized with their concern about the lack of structure in the interview and proceeded to explain that they could talk about anything they had experienced as neglectful.

After explaining the nature of the interview, I presented participants with a copy of an informed consent document explaining the risks and possible benefits of participating in the study. I further told them that I would answer any questions raised by the form; none of the participants, however, asked questions. Participants were asked to sign the document if they wished to participate in the interview, which they all did, and then they each were given a copy for future reference. After each interview was completed, the participant was asked for a mailing address if he or she wished to have a copy of the interview sent after it was transcribed. Seven elected to receive copies while five declined, perhaps a reflection of discomfort generated by the interviews. All participants were told to feel free to contact me if they had questions or concerns subsequent to the interview but none did so.

As soon as each participant signed the consent form, I began recording the interview. Each participant was asked the same opening question, with slight variation in the phrasing: "I'd like you to think of some times when you were aware of feeling neglected, and, in as much detail as you can, I'd like you to tell me what that was like for you."

Polkinghorne (1989) states, "Rather than seeking general opinions, the interview focuses on specific situations and action sequences that are instances of the theme under investigation so that the essence or structure of the theme will emerge and show itself" (p. 49). To help participants articulate and elaborate aspects of their experience relevant to the research question, I relied heavily on the technique of asking "What was that like for you?" I also frequently repeated back words which seemed to be significant to participants. Both dialogic techniques are highlighted in the opening section of an interview:

Interviewer: Okay. Well, I'd like you to think of a time or some times when you've been aware of feeling neglected, and in as much detail as you can, I'd like you to tell me what that was like for you.

Participant: Okay. Well, probably the biggest time I felt neglected was, I guess it was kind of like, not an awkward stage in life, but I guess it was between my 7th and 8th Grade year in junior high. And I'm real close to my dad, real close: He's like my best friend. But he moved away for the summer, for like an internship-type job-thing for our church, and he went and was in charge of the camp up in [small town,] and I'm from [city]. And it wasn't far, but I couldn't drive at the time, so I couldn't go see him. And my sister was off at college, and my mom was working two jobs 'cause my dad was doing that; so I kind of felt neglected because there was no one there and I was stuck at home all the time, and so. . .

I: *What was it like for you?*

P: *It was hard.* At first it was kind of like, not-I kind of was, like, mad. Not necessarily, I mean, more mad than I was upset, 'cause it was kind of like I was stuck at home and I had to rely on, like, my friends and everyone else to do stuff for me, and I was kind of-At the time, I couldn't understand why he would just go off and do that, but now that I look back, it was good for him. Like, he needed that, he needed to go, and to do it, and not to necessarily get away; but it helped my parents out: *They were at a hard time; so that was hard, too.* I was kind of

upset about that, the fact that there was a lot of fighting going on; but everything's fine now, so. . .

I: *It does sound like it was a pretty hard time for you.*

P: Yeah; it was emotional. I'd get upset a lot, or I'd take a lot of things out on my mom. When she'd come home, she'd be tired and we'd argue a lot; and I'd call Dad, or he'd call home. He'd call home every day, but a lot of times I wouldn't be there; I'd be out at a friend's house. I stayed away from home a lot when I could, 'cause I didn't—I mean, sitting at home by yourself isn't a lot of fun.

Some participants did not respond as readily to techniques intended to elicit experiential responses to the question; rather, they seemed most comfortable describing their experience in a relatively undirected narrative. The opening segment of another interview demonstrates the importance of knowing when to allow participants adequate space to tell their stories; this in itself is a form of empathy, and thus a means of connecting (Orange, 1995). The abundance of compelling personal detail in the participant's first and last statements, in comparison to his short responses to my more directive questions, stands out:

I: [I would like] you to think of a time that you were aware of feeling neglected, and tell me in as much detail as you can what that was like for you.

P: Okay. There was a—I guess I was 8 years old, and my mother took me and my brother to a church outing, and there were hundreds of people—it was in [city]—and there were a bunch of things going on. And I was depressed anyway about something, and she just kind of took off. And I didn't know any of the people there, really, and my brother was off somewhere else, and I just went off and climbed a tree and just sat there, I guess. And she never came looking for me. She—I guess I wanted her to come looking for me, I wanted her to pay some attention to me, but she didn't, and I felt kind of sad. Yeah, I was sad.

I: Were you aware of anything else, any other feelings?

P: I just felt that she didn't care about me. She had separated from my father when I was three, so I was forever wondering what he was up to, and I felt he didn't care about me because he was never around. And, you know, Mom had a habit of doing this stuff.

I: She had a habit of doing it?

P: Yeah. This church thing really made me keenly aware of how I felt about my mother: I wasn't terribly happy with her.

I: Was that like a turning point for you, was that the first time you were aware of feeling something different toward her?

P: It's the first thing that comes to mind when you ask me about feeling neglected. That's probably the springboard.

I: *Can you tell me a little more about what happened?*

P: At that specific event? Well, we got there, and she started—we got to this church function, and she started socializing or whatever, and just kind of left me there. I guess she felt that I'd be looked after, or whatever. I just took off: I went away from the entire group of people. I really didn't know anybody, didn't know where my brother was, went off and climbed a tree, and sat there. And I don't remember if I cried—I think I may have cried; I did that regularly as a kid. But I sat off in the tree, and just felt really unwanted, and almost abandoned.

An interview was concluded when the participant had described several specific instances of feeling neglected and I believed that I had a good understanding of the major themes of the participant's experience. Interviews ranged in length from thirty-nine minutes to an hour and forty-eight minutes, with a mean of sixty-seven minutes and a median of one hour. At the end of each interview, I attempted to summarize the prominent themes I had heard so that the participant could elaborate or otherwise comment upon my understanding of what was articulated. This method of concluding the interview is illustrated, albeit not particularly well, in the closing section of one of the first interviews I completed:

I: Well, you've talked about—I think a lot about—sort of being aware of boundaries and how they shifted, and you talked about not feeling safe a lot of the time, and... I don't think I'm very good at summarizing all the themes, but is there anything else you feel like was sort of thematic in your experience?

P: I think the anger's got to be in there somewhere.

I: Anger—that was important?

P: That was really important: I mean, I think the anger was what got me through it, you know?

I: Yeah, you used it: You channeled it to help yourself.

P: If I'd just been sad and isolated and lonely and helpless and depressed, I don't know what I'd have done, you know? But when you can kind of grab hold of some anger, it can get--That was what got me through it, I think.

I: How did it do that? Did you just sort of. . .

P: Yeah, I felt righteous indignation, by God: I thought, "You just should not be acting this way. Any reasonable person would tell you that you should not be acting this way." And it was fairly elusive, 'cause I felt guilty, I felt like I ought to be taking care of her, I felt like I ought to cut her more slack; but there were times when I could really grab a hold of that and say, "No, this is not okay for you to be doing this: This is horrible, and you just need to cut it out. And if you're not going to cut it out, then I need to find some way to tolerate it, or I need to leave."

I: So you really said that to her, or was it saying it to yourself?

P: I think more I said it to myself. But I can remember screaming at her at times and just saying, "You're a horrible mother," and just saying, "You just need to get your head out of your ass; you need to quit acting like this!" So she'd yell back at me, or she'd cry--if she'd cry, then I'd usually feel bad and quit it. But, yeah.

I: Well, definitely your anger allowed you to get yourself out of the situation; and also, it sounds like in some ways it did impact your mother and made things better some of the time.

P: A little bit, yeah; 'cause that was what would usually be the--me getting angry and threatening her that I'm leaving, and then she'd do something.

I: Yeah, yeah, 'cause you were important to her, apparently.

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so. . . But that's it: I think you pretty much hit the other major ones.

I: All right. Is there anything else at all that you want to say about feeling neglected?

P: Just that I don't think I would have coped as well with feeling neglected later on if I hadn't felt like I was cared for early on. I think that not being neglected early on was what gave me whatever it was that I needed to get through the later stuff.

I: A sense of self, in some ways?

P: Maybe, yeah. Some sort of faith that somewhere, there was something predictable enough that I could get through it. But that's it.

I: Thank you very much.

P: You're welcome.

After an interview was completed, I transcribed it and checked it against the recording. This helped not only to ensure content validity (Kvale, 1996) but provided an additional opportunity for me to take in the nuances of each interview as spoken dialogue.

Thematic Analysis

The process of discerning the nature of an experiential phenomenon is multi-layered. Kvale (1996) describes several possible levels of analysis of the phenomenological interview, four of which are particularly relevant to the present study:

A first step is when *subjects describe* their lived world during the interview. They spontaneously tell what they experience, feel, and do in relation to a topic. There is little interpretation or explanation from either the interviewees or the interviewer (p. 189, emphasis original).

An example of this occurred early in one interview when the participant described something of her experience of her mother:

I: That's your first memory, your earliest memory: Her not being there?

P: Her not being there. Other things: When I was about 13, she—My parents have always said they had joint custody, but we would only stay with my mother two days during the week, and she would always work. And I was responsible of taking care of my sisters; and, let's see, I think, if I recall, I was 8 and my other sister was 6, and then we had two twins and they were 4 and 4. So we were all two years apart, and I would be responsible for doing the laundry and cooking and cleaning while she slept during the day, because she worked at night. And when she worked at night, we would go and stay with our dad; so our dad—I'd say that my dad raised us, because we didn't see her as often. And she always put her job before us, and that hurt, because I felt that I—I mean that I feel I'm partially responsible for raising my sisters, because she wasn't there. So I've talked to her about this, and I've confronted her about her working too much, and she's always said that she did it for us, that she worked because she had to, to make money and to have what she wanted. But essentially, it was just because of what, exactly what she said: She did it because of exactly what she wanted; she wanted a house and a car and all the materialistic things that—And to me, she felt that those were more important than us. And I've confronted her about them, and she denies that she did it for herself: She thinks it was for us, so. . .

Kvale (1996) continues:

A second step would be that the *subjects themselves discover* new relationships during the interview, see new meanings in what they experience and do. . . . The interviewees themselves start to see new connections in their life worlds on the basis of their spontaneous descriptions, free of interpretation by the interviewer (p.189, emphasis original).

An example of this can be seen early in an interview:

I know that I had had, I had a really hard time as a child, and I'm not sure [unintelligible phrase]. I was odd for the place where I was raised: I was raised in a little farm town, I didn't seem to like to do the things other children liked to do, my parents are—*My parents are actually quite social—and, gee, that was some type of variable—and that was part of the problem—My mother didn't know what to do with me.*

Kvale (1996) continues:

In a third step, the *interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets* the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and “sends” the meaning back. The interviewee then has the opportunity to reply, for example, “I did not mean that” or “That was precisely what I was trying to say”. . . . This form of interviewing implies an ongoing [online interpretation] with the possibility of an “on-the-spot” confirmation or disconfirmation of the interviewer’s interpretations. The result can then be a “self-correcting” interview (p.189, emphasis original).

In one interview we find an example of an indirect misinterpretation on my part which gives the participant the opportunity to provide additional details about how he experienced the incident just described:

P: Well, I knew my mother was somewhere in the area: I figured she hadn't taken off on me, But, I mean, you leave an 8-year-old with hundreds of people, a lot of them strangers—I mean, most of them strangers, in fact—you know, that's not responsible.

I: Right. *I would have been scared, I think.*

P: *I don't know if I was scared as much as just wanting to be acknowledged, really—maybe I was looking for attention.* Mom had a habit of doing this: Mom worked. She'd leave me and my brother, who was six, at the apartment—she felt that I could take care of myself.

Kvale (1996) concludes:

In a fourth step, the *transcribed interview is interpreted by the interviewer*, either alone or with other researchers. . . . The *analysis proper* involves developing the meanings of the interviews, bringing the subjects' own understanding into the light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher on the phenomenon (pp. 189-190, emphasis original).

In this step, the process of interpretation becomes a type of literary analysis. I was fortunate to have had training in literary criticism in addition to clinical psychology, as this undoubtedly aided me in the individual analysis of interview transcripts. Perhaps more helpfully, however, the phenomenological research laboratory which I was a part of at the University of Tennessee analyzed major segments of the richest interviews. Thus, I was exposed to a wide variety of scholarly viewpoints as to what specific material was thematic and which themes were articulated.

Polkinghorne (1989) has identified three steps researchers frequently use when interpreting phenomenological interviews. These steps consist of dividing the text into units of meaning, of explicating these units to identify the essential themes of the experience, and of synthesizing the themes into a coherent structure. Because the entire phenomenological process is dialectical, however, there is not necessarily a unidirectional progression through the steps.

Because no experience can be completely shared and because intersubjectivity is never absolute in dialogue, the words of one individual must always be interpreted by the other to some degree (Linge, 1976). Thus, hermeneutics, the art and philosophy of interpretation, is an important aspect of apprehending and articulating the essential structure of a phenomenon (Kvale, 1996). Indeed, the process of textual interpretation is often referred to as "the hermeneutic circle," (e.g., Bleicher, 1980) and can be conceptualized as a dialogic process between the scholar and the material which results in a continu-

ally evolving understanding of the phenomenological structure as the material is processed in greater detail and at greater depth. Hence, the boundaries of meaning units shift, they leap from one theme to another, and the themes themselves are progressively refined as more distinct meanings emerge from the text. Polkinghorne (1989) emphasizes the active, intellectually engaged role assumed by the phenomenologist with his comment, "This is not an automatic or technical process; it requires the researcher's judgment" (p. 53). Perhaps the most important aspect of the analytic process is for the phenomenologist to maintain a stance of openness as the thematic relationships within and across the protocols emerge. Some themes might appear very faintly at first, while others recede to the vanishing point.

Reliability, Validity and Generalizability

Kvale (1996) notes that in a well-conducted study, reliability and validity—what he terms "issues of verification" (p. 233)—should be addressed throughout the entire research process. To conduct thoughtful, germane and well-crafted interviews, the phenomenologist must not only be well-informed about the topic of study, but also should be a flexible interviewer who can lend structure and sense of purpose or direction to the discussion (Kvale).

Several aspects of the present study were designed to promote rigor and to capture and communicate vital aspects of participants' experiences of feeling neglected. Foremost, the thematic structure of the interviews is to be grounded in the participants' verbatim descriptions and their own interpretations of their experience. Polkinghorne (1989) advocates transforming the participants' words, their relatively presuppositionless descriptions of experience, into the scholarly language of philosophy and psychology. Such a

transformation, however, would likely detract from the experiential understanding which the thematic structure is meant to evoke in the reader; the purpose of phenomenological methodology is, after all, to capture the structure of *experience* (Valle *et al.*, 1989). Thus, granting primacy to the participants' verbatim descriptions of the phenomenon should not only promote the reliability and validity of the findings, but also lend them texture and evocative power.

As a measure of fostering reliability, major segments of five of the transcribed interviews were analyzed in a phenomenological research group within the Psychology Department at the University of Tennessee. This seminar was attended by qualitative researchers and clinicians skilled in the use of dialogic analysis and assumedly possessed of more disinterested perspectives than me toward neglect. As noted previously, this scholarly engagement of the text afforded me an opportunity to consider broader and alternative interpretations of the material than had emerged from my individual engagement of it.

Before conducting the interviews, I was interviewed by a published phenomenologist about my experiences of feeling neglected. This procedure, known as a "bracketing interview," is designed to help prevent the investigator's preconceptions from unduly influencing not only the final results of the study, but also the direction and content of the interviews themselves (Pollio *et al.*, 1997). Like several of the participants' interviews, the bracketing interview was presented in the phenomenological research laboratory for analysis and thematic interpretation; this took place before the interviews were conducted with the participants of the study. Themes which emerged from my bracketing interview included

isolation, damage, rejection, lack of protection from danger, and the co-option of personal experience by others for their own gratification.

Since phenomenological investigation is a direct method of investigation—that is, participants are asked to describe directly the phenomenon being investigated—content validity is an inherent strength of the methodology (Kvale, 1996). Furthermore, to the extent that the participants' actual words are presented in context, the reader is able to determine whether the phenomenologist's interpretation is valid by analyzing how well it fits the data (Giorgi, 1975).

The issue of methodological rigor—what Kvale terms “quality of craftsmanship” (1996, p. 241)—is also important to any study. Since interview analysis is an interpretive endeavor, it behooves the interviewer to make clarifications or interpretations of the participants' statements in the moment, so that the participant can affirm, augment or correct the interviewer's interpretations, as noted above. To the extent that this occurs, the validity of the interview as a means of investigation is enhanced (Kvale).

Participants in this study were self-selected and thus perhaps not a representative reflection of those who have experienced themselves as neglected. The findings, therefore, are not intended to be *directly* generalizable to a larger population. This does not mean, however, that no generalizations can be drawn from the results of the study when proper attention is given to context. Kvale (1996) describes several forms of generalizability which are relevant to qualitative research. Of particular interest here is what he refers to as “analytical generalizability,” which assumes that the informed reader will be able to determine the applicability of the research findings to other circumstances:

Analytical generalization involves a reasoned judgment about the extent to which the findings from one study can be used as a guide to what might occur in another

situation. It is based on an analysis of the similarities and differences of the two situations. In contrast to spontaneous naturalistic generalization, the researcher here bases the generalization claims on an assertational logic. There are several forms of assertational logic, such as the legal form of argumentation in court and arguments for generalization based on theory (p. 233, emphasis original).

As can be seen, many steps have been taken and several measures are in place to help ensure the validity, reliability and relevance of the present study.

Conclusion

The strength of phenomenological methodology lies not in statistical methods but in *language*, via vivid descriptions of emotionally evocative topics. This study may be devalued by some psychological researchers because it does not employ the natural science methodology associated with logical positivism. For those open to less restrictive methodologies and epistemologies, however, the phenomenological interview proves to be both logical and compelling as a means of investigating subjective aspects of neglect. The interview format affords those who have experienced themselves as neglected a direct voice with which to articulate their experience; to the extent that participants feel understood, they are likely to feel empowered (Kohut, 1971). Moreover, not only are participants listened to, but they are invited, via the dialogic nature of the interview process, to collaborate actively in finding the meaning emergent in their stories. Research on neglected individuals has tended to focus on dysfunction and pathology; in the present study, however, a labeling of the participants as "disordered" is not intended. Rather, the evocative power of the participants' own words, the chance to tell their individual stories, will bring about a better understanding and appreciation of what the world might be like for human beings when they experience themselves as neglected.

Chapter III

. . . . I have said before
That the past experience revived in the meaning
Is not the experience of one life only
But of many . . . not forgetting
Something that is probably quite ineffable:
The backward look behind the assurance
Of recorded history, the backward half-look
Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror.

—T.S. Eliot
The Four Quartets

RESULTS OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Four major themes describing subjective aspects of neglect emerged from the twelve phenomenological interviews evaluated in the study. These consisted of *Feeling Alone*, *Feeling Invisible*, *Being Used* and *Being Affected*. The first three of these themes occur within the context, or against the ground, of *Interpersonal Relationships*, while *Being Affected* occurs against the ground of *The Self*. These themes are interrelated in the sense that although one particular theme is likely to be figural within the description of a given instance of feeling neglected, other themes might also be echoed within that episode. In other words, aspects of more than one theme might be present in a given situation.

Taken together, the four themes paint a compelling portrait of what is essential to the experience of feeling neglected; please see Figure 1 (p. 51) and Figure 2 (p. 52) for visual depictions of this thematic structure. All four themes are experiential in nature rather than theoretical. Furthermore, each theme forms a Gestalt with its ground and cannot be separated from it; that is, the themes occur, or are visible, only within specific contexts and are not separate from them. The illustrative examples of the themes included in this chapter are purposely lengthy to provide abundant contextual information; this helps to situate the experiences clearly within the domains of the interpersonal world

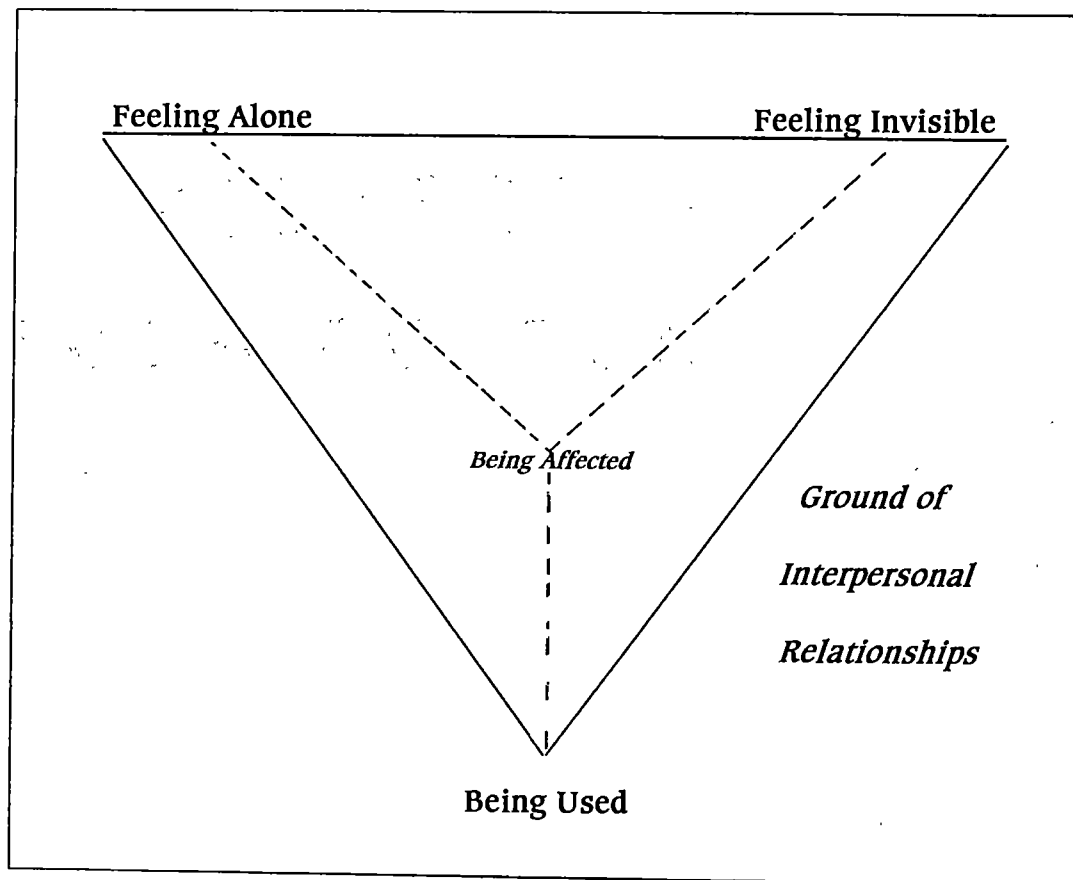


FIGURE 1: FRONTAL VIEW, THEMATIC STRUCTURE
OF THE EXPERIENCE OF FEELING NEGLECTED

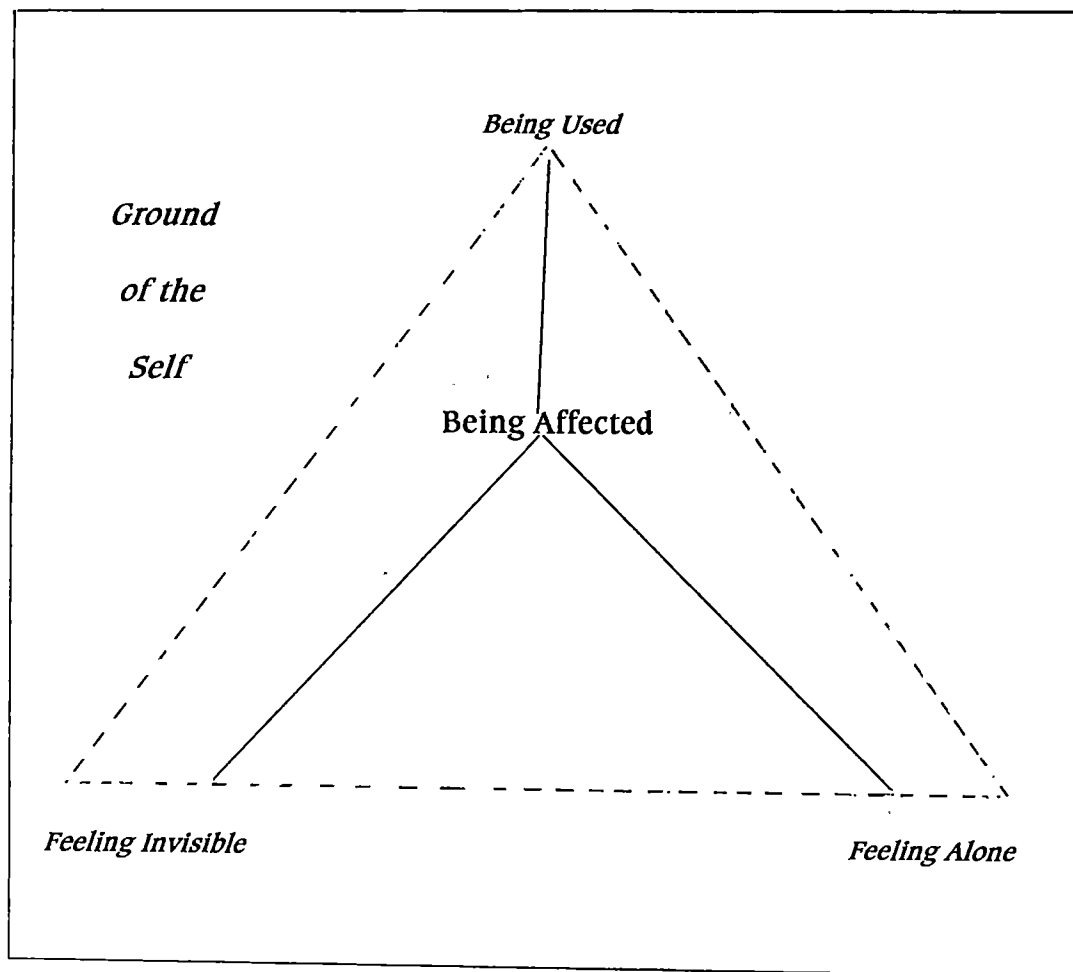


FIGURE 2: OBLVERSE VIEW, THEMATIC STRUCTURE
OF THE EXPERIENCE OF FEELING NEGLECTED

and the self. Representative examples of the four major themes will be drawn from all twelve interviews used in the study; please see Table 1 (p. 54) for a listing of which particular themes were present in interviews individually.

Interpersonal Contexts Discussed by Participants

The fact that eleven participants talked about feeling neglected by their parents may be an artifact of the circumstance that so many of them (i.e., eight) were college students age twenty-two or younger; six were less than twenty years old. It perhaps also suggests that parental relationships do indeed loom large in the human psyche. By contrast, four participants described circumstances in which they felt neglected by their spouse or significant other and four discussed situations in which they felt neglected by friends. None discussed feeling that they had neglected themselves, nor did any describe feeling neglected in work-related, academic or professional settings. One, however, discussed feeling neglected within an avocational context, that of playing extracurricular basketball.

Theme I: Feeling Alone

All twelve interviews contained the theme of Feeling Alone. One participant beautifully articulates this experience explicitly within the larger context of feeling neglected. She employs a vivid physical metaphor, that of a mountain range, to describe the psychological distance that she feels from her mother as a result of her mother's not being more readily available to her:

And so this one particular time when I really was aware of feeling neglected was one night—I know it was a school night because I went to bed relatively early, and I was in bed, and I had this really horrible nightmare about my mom dying. And it was this really strange dream where she was like a robot and she was winding down, and she was like, you know, dying in front of me in the front yard, and I was trying to figure out if there was anything I could do to save her, and she was just dying. So I woke up from this—it was like 2 o'clock in the morning—and I woke up just in this panic from this nightmare that I'd had.

TABLE 1: PRESENCE OF THE FOUR THEMES IN THE INTERVIEWS

PARTICIPANT	FEELING ALONE	FEELING INVISIBLE	BEING USED	BEING AFFECTED
I	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
II	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
III	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
IV	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
V	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
VI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VII	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VIII	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
IX	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
X	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
XI	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
XII	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

And when I woke up, I was aware that my room was dark, but the door was open enough that I could still see that there were lights on off in the rest of the house. And I could hear that the stereo was going, and so I knew that she and [mother's live-in boyfriend] were still up getting high and listening to Tom Waits albums; and I was lying there feeling this really intense need to get up and go in there and make sure that she was okay. And I felt like I really needed some comforting and some reassurance from her. And I remember lying in bed in the dark and my heart was just pounding from this dream, and I was just really scared. And you know, you're kind of disoriented when you first wake up in the middle of the night. And I knew she was in there, and I knew she was stoned, and I knew she was with him—and I hated him; and he was just a complete slime—and *I just remember feeling so alone, so completely isolated, and so furious with her. I was so angry that I was, that I didn't feel like I could go to her: That she was in there, and there might as well have been a mountain range in between my room and where she was at,* because I went through this enormous internal dialogue with myself of saying, "God, she's your mother! Get up and go in there and tell her that you need her," and then thinking, "No, that would be embarrassing; I don't want to do that; I don't want to show any weakness in front of this guy," and thinking that she would be angry with me if I did that, and thinking that I should just handle it on my own, so I was sort of angry with myself for even needing her at that point in time. But the two things that I was really aware of in terms of my feelings were just being furious, and just feeling really helpless and isolated.

This experience of feeling alone is especially poignant because of the life-long lack of psychological connection which the participant has experienced with her father:

Just to start out with, both of my parents were alcoholic. And my mom and my dad actually met in A.A. And my dad really never quit drinking, and when he wasn't drinking, he was usually always using something else. And so he kind of just was not very present; so he, he was kind of just not around: *Even when he was there he just wasn't really around. But my mom was a pretty stable figure for me until I was about 14, and that's when she started drinking again.*

Many participants experienced aloneness within the context of their parents' other commitments, often their fathers' careers. One, for example, states:

Okay. Well, probably the biggest time I felt neglected was, I guess it was kind of like, not an awkward stage in life, but I guess it was between my 7th and 8th Grade year in junior high. And I'm real close to my dad, real close: He's like my best friend. But he moved away for the summer, for like an internship-type job—thing for our church, and he went and was in charge of the camp up in [small town], and I'm from [city]. And it wasn't far, but I couldn't drive at the time, so I couldn't go see him. And my sister was off at college, and my mom was working two jobs 'cause my dad was doing that; *so I kind of felt neglected because there was no one there and I was stuck at home all the time, and so. . .*

In a similar vein, another subject reports:

My parents, they would give me anything I want. Not anything I wanted, but they would try their best to accommodate what I wanted, and I guess [they] would feel like buying me something would make me happy. *But I wanted their love and their affection, their attention; that's what I wanted, not their gifts that money could buy.*

I: Can you say more about when you began to feel like you weren't getting their love and attention?

P: I don't know. Well, this is about the time—Okay, when the time happened, this is about the time my mom had to get a second job, so she was out of the house like at night-time and everything like that. And my father already had two jobs, so I would come home, it would just be my brother and me, and he's older, so he would always have something to do; I would just be like, "Okay, what do I do?" I mean, I would call people, my friends, but it's like [my parents were] always putting restrictions on me: phone restrictions, when I went out, who my friends were. They restricted on that because they didn't like certain types of people, I guess; or, not so much they didn't like who they were, but what they did.

Reminiscent of the first participant's relationship with her father, another participant recalls:

I'm trying to think of a time: I guess the closest I ever felt to neglected was when we were, my dad was, our family was living in [state], and my dad was going to [university]; and it wasn't so much over-all neglect, but just that he was so busy with his doctoral research that, like, for four years, I never really saw him that much. And like I said, at the time I don't think I experienced it as much as I did retroactively, looking back on it a few years later. 'Cause at the time, I was only 5 to 9: I wasn't used to him being there or not there, so it wasn't. . . . *But he kind of took on a different sort of role; he was a lot more of a, sort of an object of legend or something: He would kind of appear from time to time, and then he would just disappear for a couple days, and that was kind of strange.*

The experience of actively being left behind, tantamount to abandonment, was voiced by several participants. One subject states:

Well, the first time that I guess I can remember was about two years ago. And I was having problems remembering things, and I talked to my dad about it and he told me that the reason I couldn't remember some of these things was because my mother had left, and—Did you want to ask a question?

I: What types of things were you having trouble remembering?

P: *I remember my mom not being there, and I had patches where I just couldn't remember. I remember certain areas, like I remember being taken to my grandmother's house and coming home and my dad being there, but I never remember my mom being there.*

I: When you were a small child?

P: Uh-huh; when I was really small. And it was only until recently, when I started talking to him about it and thinking, "I really don't remember these things; what happened?" And so, because I had so many questions, he decided to tell me that my mother had left when I was really young. I was about 2 and my sister had just been born, and she had taken my sister and I out-of-state. So I guess, really, you could say she kidnapped us from our father. We were gone for a short period of time--this is all from what he's told me--and she said that she couldn't handle their marriage anymore. And so then she took my sister and I back to him, and she left. And I, I do--I don't know why I remember that time, but I couldn't remember why she wasn't there, because I, I guess I had black patches. As I think now, remembering--or, not remembering, but after what he had told me, I began to feel really upset about it, and I eventually had to go to a counselor about it because I was so upset about it--But I had realized that she had left, and six months later she came back and reconciled with my dad and they had my other two sisters. Okay. Well, after they were born, she said she couldn't handle the marriage anymore and she left, so they got a divorce. So that was really the first thing that I could remember.

Another participant describes a specific instance of being temporarily abandoned by his mother, something he experienced her as doing regularly; moreover, his father had virtually disappeared from his life:

There was a--I guess I was 8 years old, and my mother took me and my brother to a church outing, and there were hundreds of people--it was in [city]--and there were a bunch of things going on. And I was depressed anyway about something, and she just kind of took off; and I didn't know any of the people there, really, and my brother was off somewhere else, and I just went off and climbed a tree and just sat there, I guess. *And she never came looking for me; she--I guess I wanted her to come looking for me, I wanted her to pay some attention to me, but she didn't and I felt kind of sad. Yeah, I was sad.*

I: Were you aware of anything else, any other feelings?

P: I just felt that she didn't care about me. *She had separated from my father when I was 3, so I was forever wondering what he was up to, and I felt he didn't care about me because he was never around.* And, you know, Mom had a habit of doing this stuff. . . .

Yeah. I remember being 5 years old, and sitting at my little kid-sized card table, and my mom was getting ready for something, getting ready for work, and I guess I, maybe I was doing something she didn't like: She said, "If you don't behave yourself, I'm not going to come home; I'm going to go out, and I'm never going to come back." And she did that--that was a recurring thing as long as I can remember. She finally did take off when I was 17 and left me with my [younger] brother; she finally did take off.

I: For good?

P: *She left me on my own, left me to my own devices to survive, but that's a whole other story.*

In contrast, another subject describes a less serious but still disturbing incident of being temporarily left behind by his mother, who was absorbed in a relationship with a classmate of his whom she was tutoring:

If [classmate] was around, [my brother and I] were just kind of on the back burner as far as. . . I can think of times where [my mother and my classmate] would just kind of go off—*we'd be shopping or something—and the two of them would just kind of go to another section of the store or something, just the two of them; and we would never even realize they'd left until we'd turn our heads* and . . . Just that kind of feeling: Maybe almost being in the way. . . That was sort of the feeling you got: I mean, "If this wasn't my mom. . . It doesn't seem like my company here is doing anything to add to the enjoyment of the situation."

Most participants talked about feeling alone within the context of relationships with their parents. One participant, however, described her experience of frequently being left out by her peer group when she was a young girl. This appears to partly have been due to the fact that her time was heavily scheduled with extra-curricular activities and partly due to rejection because she did not behave in a way that was expected of her:

[W]hen I was younger, there was this girl who lived across the street from me and she would always leave me out because I had, I already had a best friend: She wanted just to be best friends with me, and not with this other girl; and I always felt neglected because she would leave me out, or she would even call this other girl, [name], and ask her to go out and play with her, but not me because she knew that I was better friends with [name], or whatever. And also because I was a swimmer and I swam my entire life—I started swimming when I was like 6 years old, and I swam—I mean, I had to travel like an hour away to go to swim practice; and, you know, for meets and everything I was gone every weekend; *and I didn't have the same exact kind of lifestyle that everyone else did that lived in my neighborhood.* We would, or everyone else would, play outside on the weekends and I would be gone, so when I came back it was harder for me to try to fit in. But, I mean it was just swimming, and I also ice-skated, and no one else that I knew other than one friend ice-skated, *so I was kind of put outside the little group of friends that we had;* and that was my major neglect that I can think of then.

Theme II: Feeling Invisible

The theme of Feeling Invisible is symbolic of, and subsumes, such things as not being listened to and not being appreciated. Eleven participants described situations which illustrate this theme. The most visually striking and perhaps richest description of this experience is as follows:

I guess I'll talk about when I was a little girl first. I just remember one time when I went up the stairs in my house, and I was sort of looking at my parents—I can't remember if my father was there, but definitely looking at my mother in the living room and thinking, *"I'm a ghost in this house, and they don't know who I am."* And for the first time in my life sort of articulating how I felt: That there was the sense that they tried to see me, but. . . I think at the time I thought they weren't trying hard enough [chuckles], that they really, just sort of facing that they didn't have a clue about who I was, and that I was in some sense on my own. Um, and feeling, I guess—let me think about this for a minute—I think in some ways recognizing that was a relief to me, to just finally face it because I had been trying very hard to get them to see me. And that may be the neglected part—the feeling that they should be able to see me. And then finally when I just realized that—I must have been about 9 years old—they can't see me, I'm a ghost in this house, it was actually, in some sense kind of a relief, although I know that there was also a lot of sadness, a feeling of sadness connected with that; I think it still felt like I wish I could have been born into a house where they could see me. . . .

And that's the way I often felt, I think especially with my mom, is that if she did get a glimpse of me, she slammed the door really quick. But most of the time I felt like she just didn't see me at all.

I: What do you think she saw?

P: God. I have more of a visual image, instead of putting it into words: I think it was as if my mom just saw like this outline of a person. I do have a visual image, and the visual image is as if there were just an outline of me, but that I were transparent; she saw no blood and guts. Or I didn't seem solid to her in some way—I'm afraid I'm blocking this [referring to microphone] in some way with my arm—and I don't know what to hook that visual image up with. *Because the felt experience was so much like I was just a ghost in that house, as if there were. . . I left some, I rippled the wind in passing, but that nobody really saw who I was.* And I don't know; I think there must have been points of contact—I'm actually very close to my mother now, so this is really painful; it's been a long, hard journey for both of us.

One participant discusses feeling invisible as he contrasts his experiences of neglect and abuse:

I: Do you think that the abuse and neglect had different effects on you; can you separate them?

P: I think I would have rather been abused than neglected.

I: Really? What makes you say that?

P: I just think of all the times I sat by myself as a kid, and all the places I'd go by myself. *And with abuse, there's acknowledgment: I exist, somebody else notices me. With neglect, it's like I'm not here, I'm invisible, I don't exist. With abuse you can talk yourself into believing that your parents love you in some twisted sort of way; with neglect, there's no evidence of anything: love, hate, resentment, anything.*

The participant who passed much of her time alone at home one summer while her father was away at camp, her sister away at school and her mother working two jobs, felt that her mother expected too much of her and did not give proper attention to how hard it was for her to be alone so much of the time:

I mean, it's like you're raising yourself, it feels like, for—even though it was just a couple of months, like two months—you just still feel like, "You know, I shouldn't be doing this; I'm not old enough," you know, "Why. . . ?"; it was just hard; I don't know exactly how to say it, but if you think about being between, you know, the summer between your 7th and 8th Grade year, you're not used to washing your clothes, or. . . I guess not so much; I mean, you're used to cleaning your room and making your bed, but it's kind of like now; I mean, it's like I was doing things that once you go off to college, you're like, "Whoa! Mom's not here to wash my clothes; how do I do this?" or, "Mom's not here to cook dinner," or, "Mom's not here to do the dishes," or whatever. *So it was kind of hard in that way, 'cause you just felt like here were being put all these grown up pressures on you. 'Cause I would have to help clean up the house; like, if I made a mess, I was the only one there. Well, at that time, you're still, like, forever the house would be messy, and Mom would come home and get mad, you know: "I've been gone all day, I've been working all day, and I come home to a house that's a mess; I don't, you can't expect me to clean it up," which is understandable, but then she's got to understand that it was hard because of that, too.*

Not surprisingly, sibling rivalry contributes to experiencing oneself as neglected; one subject states:

I can recall a time when I was about 12, 13, in 7th or 8th Grade, and this was like the time where my brother—he's about three years older than me—he was in high school, and he was starting to drive, getting his driver's license, and about to graduate; so he was getting all his college plans together, and my parents were really into him. And I sort of felt neglected by that because all the attention focused

on him, and I had just transferred, well not transferred but switched schools from lower elementary to junior high, and I felt that I needed similar support from my parents, and I felt really pressured on school work and doing good in school. And it sort of—*I felt neglected, and it sort of just caused me to go through like a phase of being bad and trying to do things to get my parents' attention; and I did outrageous things*, such as—I always do my school work; that was one thing I always did—but in school I would deliberately not pay attention in classes, not actually cause fights but have attitudes all the time—my parents said I always had an attitude problem. But it was sort of for them, just so they could notice that.

I: Were you aware at the time that you were doing it to sort of get your parents' attention?

P: At the time, no. But surely after that, like a year after that, I would say, I could see why I did that. But I realized it afterward; but at that time I didn't. At the time, I felt that I was, that they were treating me younger than I really was, and they were treating my brother older than he really was. And I wanted to be treated the same as he did; that was my thinking back then: I wanted to be able to do what he did. "And I don't care if he's three years older than me, I want to do what he does"; that was my thinking.

Sometimes the participant is seen by the other in a way that does not feel like an accurate reflection of the participant's identity, but in a way that fulfills the other's needs:

And somehow there was this message that I got from both [my mother and her boyfriend] that if I were a really cool daughter, you know, I wouldn't mind; that I was being prudish, or I was being goody-two-shoes or something to disapprove of him. And so I was furious that she had brought, that she had kind of—I felt like our space had been violated: We'd been living alone together for some time, and here she brings this total stranger into the house. And not only is he a total stranger, she didn't ask anything; *she didn't ask me how I felt about it*. He just showed up one day. But he didn't feel safe, and that was really part of it. . . .

She ignored me a lot; she kind of, kind of left me to my own devices. She just assumed that I would take care of myself, and I usually did. She liked to kind of paint herself as this really cool, liberated kind of mom. And my friends thought she was just great, of course; they never had to live with her. And you know, she was: She had some qualities that were really amazing. But in the category of being a dependable, predictable "Mom figure," she just wasn't very good. But she had this vision of herself as just being real cool, and real open-minded, and all this kind of stuff, *and so she had me kind of cast in the vision as being this really completely healthy, completely together kid who took care of herself and who was really cool, too, and very open-minded about what she was doing. And so she just didn't really seem to pay much attention to any negative responses I might have had to any of this: It didn't fit with her vision of how things were supposed to be going.*

I: And you did have negative responses to. . .

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah; I didn't feel safe: I mean, I was really frightened a couple of times that these guys were going to come in and do something to me, and it wasn't all together out of the realm of possibility: And there was no lock on my bedroom door or anything like that, and I was afraid. There were several times when I would find that she had gone somewhere and I was alone in the house with these loser guys, and I thought, "There is no way that I could imagine how a mom could justify placing her child in danger like that." Nothing ever happened, but it could have.

One participant describes some ongoing situations in which her husband has not seemed to give adequate attention to her needs. She discusses one such situation in the following passage:

It's a situation in my marriage that's really hurtful to me, and something that I'm not sure what to do about, but I think that I feel neglected. Actually, I might as well talk about it. My husband has lost interest in sex, and I know that this is probably uncomfortable for him, but it's certainly uncomfortable for me and not the way I expected to spend this part of my life. And I feel sympathetic with how uncomfortable it may be for him, but I also feel neglected and sorry for myself, and not quite sure what it is that I'm supposed to do about this. And so I feel really hurt and neglected, and sometimes I feel angry at him.

I: I would think so. And you almost have a sense that somehow you're supposed to do something about it, or [unintelligible phrase].

P: I'm not clear what I can do about his problem, except for some days I think that if I could just find the proper match I could light a fire under him and he would do something about this problem, which he hasn't shown a lot of inclination to do. But for myself, it's not clear to me how I'm supposed to take care it. I don't like feeling the way I feel; I think that there are things, possibly, that I can do to not feel this way, but so far none of the ones I've been able to think of are okay with me, and so I'm sort of having to sit with discomfort.

I: Yeah, and anger.

P: And anger, and hurt. And occasionally, a feeling that I'm not really loved.

I: What makes you feel that?

P: *That if I were really loved, uncomfortable as it is to him to acknowledge this problem and check into possible solutions, he would at least be making the effort because he would recognize that it's causing a problem for me in that I don't choose to live with that.* For himself, he can make a choice to live without sex: That's fine, so long as he's not married and making the same choice for his wife.

Another participant describes a situation in which neither he nor his girlfriend was able to appreciate each other's point-of-view, and in which no satisfactory resolution was reached for him:

I guess once when I felt neglected—do you want to know what the situation was, or just how I felt? The situation, I guess, was I was getting ready to go out of town once, and I was going on a trip, and I was at my girlfriend's house that night. And it was supposedly our last night together, and at 11:00 at night her friends called her up, and I guess ten people came over the last night I was supposed to be there, and I spent the entire night with all of her friends and not really talk, and didn't even get a chance to talk to her throughout the night. And it bothered me, it upset me a lot. *And I tried to talk to her about it but she was, she didn't want to talk about it because she wasn't concerned about it.* She was more concerned with seeing her friends 'cause she hadn't seen them in a while, and I don't think she realized that it bothered me. But it was, I don't know, it was disturbing a little bit, I guess.

I: Yeah, it did bother you.

P: Yeah, yeah. I don't know; *I felt like she had chose them over me, is what I felt like, you know?* Like, she should have told them she could see them the next day because I wasn't going to be there the next day, but for some reason she thought that was going to be the only chance to see them. And they came over at 11:00 and stayed till 3:00; it wasn't a very good night.

While it is inevitable that in even the most gratifying relationships, one's needs and desires will be frustrated some of the time, there is little likelihood of satisfaction if one is simply seen as a means to an end. A participant describes his unsatisfactory relationship with his winning-obsessed coach at a time at a time when he had just lost his step-father and moved to a different state:

I liked the guy [my mother] was remarried to: I really liked him because he took a big interest in the things that I did. It was more on a schedule—like I said, I like scheduled things: I like to know what's going to happen. It was more like that when she was married to him, because they would get home at a certain time and for the most part they would cook dinner at a certain time, and some nights we'd sit down and eat together; but I liked it a lot more. It was really hard when he wasn't there, when they got a divorce and we moved up here: The first year, that was the hardest, I think, that I've ever, ever had.

I: What was so hard about it?

P: It was hard because I didn't have a male figure in the house; that was hard. When I lived in [Southern state]—that's where I used to live, in [state]—when I lived there, I knew basically everyone that I was in school with, everyone. And when I moved here, I was excited about moving here, but once I got here, I didn't make friends very well at all. And I don't know why. I tried to meet people; I think people had already made their friends at that point in their life, and so they were kind of already in their cliques, so I wasn't accepted well, to where I wanted to be accepted, anyway. And so that was really hard for me because on the weekends I didn't do anything; I didn't have anything to do, so that was what was really hard.

I: Yeah, that would be; that would be hard. How long was your mom remarried?

P: She was remarried, I'd say, three-and-a-half years: I was in 6th Grade, and then—or maybe it was about four years. I was in 6th Grade when they got married, and then they got a divorce when I was in 10th Grade.

I: So that was from the time you were about 12 to 16 or so?

P: Yeah, 12 to 16, I'd say.

I: It does sound like it was important for you to have a male figure.

P: Yeah, it really was; because before then, my dad, we've always—like now, he lives in [city, Great Lakes state]—So I see him—and I love my dad—I see him every summer and Christmas and holidays, but for the most part I don't have a male figure in my house. So I wasn't that. . . I guess I was more, I would do more things that my mom wanted me to do, and less athletic: I wasn't very athletic before [my step-father] came into the house; I didn't do much of anything like manly things that guys usually do; but then when he came in, he got me involved in basketball and things like that. And I played basketball through high school; and I was on [league] teams, I went to [city, state]; and I probably would have played for a Division I or II school had I stayed in [Southern state], because I was doing real well there and the coaches really liked me there, and that was another adjustment problem I had when I moved up here. The different coach that I played for here was totally different than the style than I played down there, and I guess you could say, for that part, I felt neglected here.

I: Tell me about this coach: What was he like?

P: The coach here was, he was just, he did not, you know, *he didn't care about you, he didn't care about your personal life, he didn't care what you did; basically, he cared about winning.* And I agree; that is a very important thing, because all my coaches have emphasized winning, 'cause that's what we're there for. But they way he went about it was he was more like a Bobby Knight-type coach: Real hard-core, you can't talk to him, he doesn't look at you when he talks to you, he looks in the air, down at the ground, never makes eye-contact.

I: What was that like for you?

P: I hated that, I hated that because *I just wanted to talk to him as a person and I could never do that because he was always looking up here, and you're trying to talk to him; and to me, it was like he was reciting things; he wasn't even listening to what you were saying.* And he had a set idea in his head of what type of player you were regardless of whether he had seen you play: He knew where you were going to play, and it doesn't matter what your ability is because that's where you're going to play, and you're going to play his offense. And I agree with playing his offense, but I think he should have adapted his offense to the players that he had.

One participant describes a relationship in which her parents, particularly her father, express little interest in her as a human being and certainly show no concern about her emotional well-being:

For example, my father never knew, to this day doesn't know when my birthday is, how old I am, what grade I was in school, who I was dating, the name of my husband or ex-husband. I mean, it was just like he wasn't inter—I felt like he wasn't interested in my life at all. In fact, he didn't even call me by my name till I was about 11. . . .

You know, when I was a little girl, around 11, and I was working with my Dad, we were carrying papers. I was carrying the papers: I was doing the work; he was getting the money. Uh, my mother did a little bit of babysitting. And we never went out to eat anywhere, but if we went somewhere, it was like Blue Circle, which is like a Krystle. I remember we went one time, and I was sitting in the back seat behind my Dad. My mother, my sister was in the back seat behind my mother, and they were having this discussion. And my Dad said he'd pay for his meal, and my Mom says she will pay for her meal and my sister's meal, and I have to pay for my own! [Weeps.] And it was a few years back when I'm like, I realized, when I saw that—I *kept seeing that image, and of hearing him; I'm like, "Nobody wanted me. Nobody wanted me."* And that's how it always was: My mother was there to take up for my sister, and my Dad was there at his own thing, and I was left to do my own thing.

Another participant describes an experience of being under-appreciated by a friend. To be sure, the legitimate and sometimes difficult issue of how friends negotiate competing needs is implicitly raised via the triangulation between the participant, her friend and the friend's boyfriend. What stands out for the participant, however, is that her friend seems to pay insufficient attention to her and to show little consideration toward her:

I have this friend that I just met this summer—we're like really good friends—and we always have gone to see this band together—I've seen them fifty-million times—but we always go together; it's like something we've always done. And it was

like one time she just all of a sudden decided she didn't want me to go that time, and she didn't even have—Well, she didn't really have a reason, but it was—The reason was just—I mean, it made me feel neglected, because it was something we'd already planned on going to together, and then she just all of a sudden just up and changed her mind, and it hurt my feelings really bad. And she's real neglectful with little things: She never remembers details about me; I'm always telling her the same things over and over and over again, but like she's real self-centered. She's real self-centered, which I accept that about her because she's my friend, but. . . *we never, ever just talk about me: It's always about her.* . . . [S]ometimes like it's only her that we should ever be concerned about.

I: It sounds sort of one-sided.

P: It is, but it's something I've just kind of accepted about her personality, because she's like a really, really good friend; and if I really, really needed her she would be there, but sometimes I wish she would just think about me more than herself; she never does. . . .

[S]he told me that she wanted time by herself, and I think her boyfriend met her there because she wanted time alone with him, but it's just something like—Well, he always goes with us when we go to our shows, but I think he was already there; that's what it was: He was already there, and she was going to, on the way back—I think it was in [city]—She wanted the time down there just to be by herself, and on the time back just to be alone with him. And that was all fine and good, but she shouldn't have told me, like made plans to go with me two weeks earlier if she was going to do that two days before we were supposed to go. Plus, it's something I really enjoy going to, and I really miss those guys 'cause I haven't seen them in like a month or two, and they're really good friends, and so. . . .

I: Well, you said you do feel close to her: Can you tell me what that's like?

P: Well, it's really one-sided 'cause I know a lot more about her than she does about me, and I'm always there for her, but. . . I don't know; we have a lot of fun when we go out, and we go do things, all sorts of stuff, but she's frustrating. But she also makes me really happy when we go do things together and have fun: It's a really good time. But sometimes when I'm depressed I need to stay away from her, because she has—Her way of helping me is like giving me an easy answer to say, but it's not something easy to do, and that's the end of the conversation.

I: Could you tell me about a specific time when that happened?

P: For a while I was, I got real depressed in January. Because she was, the only people I ever hung out with were a group of people that were around then; when I didn't hang out around them, I just didn't have anything to do. And that bothered me that I let myself get in that situation of not having more than just one group of friends. So she just started spitting out answers. Well, I'm also really shy when you first meet me, usually, and then as you get to know me, I'll start to talk more; and then I'm not shy at all after I've known you for a while. So it's real hard for me just to jump in and make new friends, and I was just, I was just telling her—I'm sorry [cries]: It just sort of makes me upset—I was just sitting there and I was telling

her—I was really, really depressed; I've never been depressed before, and it just bothered me to death. I was sitting and I was just telling her how upset I was that I let myself get in that situation, and that I would get depressed over it and things like that, and she was just like—I'm sorry [sniffles]—she was too busy to listen sometimes, but then she would turn around and listen to what I was saying, and then she would be, like, "Well, go join a club," or, "Well, you need to do this," or, "Well, you need to do that and then you'll meet people." And I was trying to explain to her that it's not that easy for me. *It wasn't that I wanted her to give me answers: I just wanted her to listen. And she wasn't catching on at all, and that just kind of hurt my feelings.*

I: She wasn't catching on to you.

P: Yeah, exactly; yeah. But just little things like that: She does that all the time. It makes me feel neglected sometimes, and *it hurts that she doesn't know me.*

Theme III: Being Used

Nine of the twelve participants described situations in which they felt used, or exploited, by the other. Although the participant in the following example enjoyed being used by her mother to attract men—she was, after all, 16 at the time—she was made uneasy by the larger relational context with her mother out of which this particular phenomenon grew:

[T]here was this one time where she—she had this lady that she worked with; it was like a drinking buddy of hers—and the three of us went up to [city, state] for Hallowe'en night, and up in [city] for Hallowe'en they had this, like, Mardi Gras: They'd shut down, they'd shut off the whole main street, and everybody just kind of wears costumes and just gets wild in the streets. I was 16, and I guess—I mean, part of what was going on was that when I was 16, I looked a lot older than 16, and she'd always made it real clear that she valued the fact that I was attractive. And so—I mean, I looked, I don't know—it's kind of embarrassing now: I look at some old pictures of myself now, and I think, "My God, I look like a little prostitute or something," but I really played it up. So we went out to [city] and I can't even remember what she and this other lady were wearing; I have no idea. But I was dressed like a vampire, kind of vampire/gypsy sort of a thing. And we went up there, and I was wearing this really low-cut, really clingy kind of dress, and I was with her, and I looked older. So I was with these two women, you know, and me. And they were on the make, on the prowl for all these men. And the men would come over and they'd want to talk to me, and then they'd start talking to them, *and I felt like I was being used as a "man-magnet," basically, to bring men over so they could talk to them.* And that was kind of amusing: I kind of knew what was going on, and it really didn't bother me; but there were a couple of times, like one time when this one guy was kissing her at the table—We were sitting at this bar, and you know, there were people everywhere, and everybody was just

wasted—and so we were sitting there, and this man grabs hold of my mom and starts kissing her, and I guess I must have looked at her in some disapproving way, you know, like, “Mother!” And she said, “Oh, get over it! We’re here to have a good time; you just need to lighten up.” And I thought, “Okay, I guess I’ll try.”

I: But it bothered you.

P: Yeah, it did bother me; I thought, “Mother, quit doing this in a bar; God, have some sense of propriety!” And then there was this other guy, this Australian guy, who kept trying to put the moves on me and she seemed to be encouraging it. And I was like, “I am not going to let this guy put the moves on me in front of my mother: This is embarrassing.” And so. . .

[Tape ends.]

P: . . . in front of my mother and I was embarrassed, and I finally leaned over and I told him I was 16. And I mean I’m sure he was 27 or something like that, so that freaked him right out: He had no idea that I was that young. And she got mad at me because she was afraid that we’d get in trouble for having me in there if somebody found out I was 16. *So she wasn’t concerned that this guy was doing this; she was upset that I might ruin their party.* So I guess that kind of thing, the sort of—if I made any kind of disapproving statements, she would make comments like I needed to lighten up, or I needed to loosen up, or I needed to not be a party-pooper, kind of, you know? And that she would allow things that—I think I pushed the limits intentionally to see how far she would let things go, and she let them go a lot farther than I would have really been comfortable with. You know, I may not have complained about it at the time, but I was aware that I didn’t feel like she was being very, again, very motherly.

One participant found himself feeling as if he were in a paternal role when he was

8 years old:

Mom worked; she’d leave me and my brother, who was 6, at the apartment; she felt that I could take care of myself.

I: When did that start?

P: Probably around the time when I was about 8.

I: That’s pretty young to be left in charge of someone.

P: Yeah. I got. . . I was responsible for my brother since I was about 5, I guess, 5 or 6; but she started leaving us alone when I was about 8.

I: What did it seem like to you at the time?

P: *It felt like I was the other parent: I was the father, I was doing what my father was supposed to be doing.*

Another participant experienced her mother, who may well have been depressed, as exploiting her, seducing her with praise into performing too many household chores at a young age and into taking primary responsibility for caring for her younger sisters:

[M]y mom worked a lot. Like I said, she kept us for two days and my dad kept us for five even though they said that they had joint custody. She was, would sleep a whole lot after they got divorced, and she would ask me to help her, you know, help her out; she says I was her little helper. And I was about 8, and she said that I was "Mommy's little helper," and I could stay up thirty minutes past my bedtime, kind of like a reward, if I would help her. And she, she was there for us if we had a problem: We could always go to her and say, "I have this problem; can you help me?" But as for homework and stuff, she would try to help, but in the same sense, she wouldn't help: She would look at it and say, "I'm sorry; I just can't understand it." And we knew that, I mean even my younger sisters knew that she just didn't try: She would look at the book and she would just say, "I'm sorry, I just don't understand." She said, "Well, this just doesn't make any sense," and she'd kind of blow you off, and that would make you upset. So my sisters would come to me, and they'd say, "Can you help me?," and I would try to read through it, and I'd say, "Okay, well this is what you can do." And most of the time if she couldn't help us, we would call our dad and say, "Will you read through this with us?," and he would say, "Sure," and so he was more emotionally, not emotionally, he was more there for us with help and so on.

But after my parents divorced, I was really responsible. I helped her; I was her helper, like I would help set the table, or I would help her stir the soup, or stir whatever else we were cooking. And I would help her fold the clothes after the laundry was done, and then eventually it came where I would help her so much that I just took on the responsibility; she would kind of push it on me: "Oh, you did such a good job," and she would kind of praise me and say, "Well, you did such a, you're so good at this, why don't you do this for me?" And that would make me feel good, but in the same sense I knew that was just her little trick: She'd make me feel good so I would do it. And eventually it came where, you know, I did do all the laundry and all the dishes and so on.

I: And how, how did you feel about that?

P: Well, then, I thought I was trying to help her, but it came to a point where I was so over-loaded—I remember when I was like 9, a year after all this had happened, and I told her, I said, *"You know, I feel like you're just pushing it all on me, and all you do is sleep. And you'll watch TV with us, and you'll laugh with us, but you won't, you're not, I feel like I'm trying to take care of everybody else."* And she would say, "Oh, well, I'm sorry," she says, "I thought, you know, since you did so well I was just giving you more responsibility, 'cause I thought you wanted to help me." And I told her, "You know, I do want to help you, but I don't need so much"; and then she would say, "Oh, all right." And then it would slack off for about two weeks, and then it would start back up. So, if I constantly reminded her, which I hated to do because I felt like I was having to nag her all the time, and she, you know, I would have to, like, knock her in the head every two

weeks—not physically, but just tell her, and it would die off for about a week-and-a-half or so, and then it would just resurface. So, um. . .

I: Yeah; it sounds really frustrating.

P: It was; it was very frustrating, especially with having to keep up with my school work and trying to take care of my little sisters. Like, I would give my little sisters a bath, or I would make sure they dried their hair and got the soap out of their hair, or were doing their homework; and I would tell them stories, or, you know, right before bed, and—And I felt like their mother; I mean, I really did. . . .

I know that right before I got my driver's license, my mom taught me how to drive, and my dad told me, he says, "The only reason she's teaching you how to drive is so she won't have to drive anywhere for herself: You'll be able to do it for [her]." And I was like, "No, Dad, you're wrong." Well, it happened: As soon as I got my license, it seemed like I was going to the grocery store every single time. If she needed whatever, in the middle of the night, she would, like, "Oh, will you go out and get this for me?" And if I didn't, she'd make me feel guilty: "Well, I guess I have to go out for myself," or. . . *And she'd make you feel bad for not doing something, and I wouldn't mind doing it if it was appreciated; but it got to the point where it was expected, and that's just, it's not—I don't know—I didn't like it anymore.*

Not only does this same participant continue to experience herself and her sisters as being manipulated by their mother, she also feels that they have been used as pawns in their mother's dealings with their father:

She'll go out and buy one of us a dress or something, and she'll be, like, "Oh, well, you owe me: You can do the dishes, you can wash the car, and you can do all this for me because you owe me." And we hate, I mean that's our worst saying of all of us; you know, we all agree it's the worst thing she could say to us.

I: What's it like when she says it to you?

P: Oh, it's just, we hate it. I mean, you can ask any one of us and we would say, "We hate that saying!" because it's like saying she has something above us, saying, "I gave you this, so now you owe me this, this and this." And it's more so where, I don't know—we don't ask for anything anymore. And she'll say, "Well, how about we go shopping?"; we'll be like, "No, no, no," because we know what will happen, so we're like, "No, that's okay; we don't need anything," more so that—And another thing is that a lot of times, to get back at my dad, she would, she'd go out and spend all of this money; and they've all agreed that whatever we need, that they would split the cost. I know when I had to have braces—my parents were married when I first had them—but they split the cost of them, and that's what they've done ever since. *But she would go out and blow like \$200 on stuff we didn't need, and we weren't aware this is what she was doing, and she'd give him half the bill; and he would say, "What's all this for?," and she would say, "Oh, well, this is the stuff they need," and it wasn't.* So finally we realized that's what she was

doing, and we'd be like, "No," you know, "we don't need anything." But if it's something that we do need, we'll go to our dad first and say, "We need this; can you buy this for us?," and then he would give her, you know. . . it works out better that way.

Another participant felt rejected by her mother and "shoved off" onto her father, who related to her as an assistant rather than as a daughter:

And so if Daddy was going somewhere to get out of the house, just to get away from my mom—which, a lot of times that's what it was—and I was sent off with him.

I: By your mom?

P: Yeah: "You go with her," or, "You take her." And I don't think to this day my mom realizes how much that hurt.

I: But it was very hurtful.

P: Yeah, 'cause it's like she never wanted to spend any time with me. You know—and it was about a month ago I was talking to [friend] and I'm like, "What the hell did she do all day long, that she couldn't spend any time with me?" I don't know what she did. I mean it's not. . . The house wasn't spotless, so she wasn't continuously cleaning. For cooking, she never did anything but open up, put something on the stove and let it cook all day long. And I'm like, "She didn't do any gardening, she didn't do any reading, she didn't do any crafts like crocheting, cross-stitching, anything; she hardly ever sewed; she wasn't involved in any volunteer organizations, she didn't go visit people; we didn't have people to go visit. She didn't watch soap operas." I'm like, "What the hell did she do, she didn't have any time for me?" Yet she always had time for my sister. [Weeps.]

I: It really is hurtful.

P: And my dad, he wanted me to help him: I was his assistant. When he started the correspondence school, I was his secretary: I would address the envelopes and do this; I would assist him with testing of the tubes, vacuum tubes; I had the book; I would set the machine and test them and everything; I was the one that would hold the soldering gizmo-gun and everything like that. If he wasn't doing that, or working on the car, I was the one he was yelling and screaming at to hold all the car things: the lights, this and that. Or, we were down in the basement and he was doing wood-working, and I was the one that had to hold the wood and do this and that. And he was always yelling and screaming about something.

I: That sounds terrible.

P: Yeah. *So it's not that I, he wanted to be with me, or wanted me; I felt like I was shoved off on him. And so he accepted that not as a child, but as his assistant.*

I: And that wasn't what you wanted.

P: No. I remember about fifteen years ago, in that time-frame, and someone was upset because her father had died. And I'm like, "Why?" I thought, "I can't understand why some women get upset," and this woman obviously had a very close relationship with her father, and she was "Daddy's little girl." And I'm like, "I don't understand that; I don't know what that feels like."

I: I wonder if you began to realize then that your relationship with your Dad wasn't all that other people had.

P: Oh, I knew as a little girl that things were wrong, I knew that we were different from everybody else. Not only were we poor, but we were very dysfunctional. And I remember having thoughts that I hoped that I was adopted, and feeling sad when I realized I wasn't.

I: You wanted to be part of a different family?

P: *I wanted to be part of a family.*

One subject discusses feeling as if a role-reversal had occurred between her parents and her:

I think from a pretty early age I felt like, I got the message somehow that I was responsible for taking care of things, for taking care of the people, in large part because no adult seemed to have the capacity to do it: They didn't take care of each other, they didn't take care of themselves. My mom, up until—like I said, around the time I was 14, 15—she took care of the practical things. I mean she would make sure that we always had enough food and that kind of stuff, which my dad really never did. And that didn't really change: I never really remember being afraid that I was going to be out on the street or not have anything to eat. It was more just a sense that she didn't know how to take care of herself on any kind of an emotional level, or to take care of her health, or to take care of anything like that, or to take care of me on any kind of an emotional level, so I had to do it. *If it was going to get done, it had to be me.*

Another participant describes feeling an unwanted pull to assuage her mother's unresolved guilt about her own maternal failings:

Sometimes it's hurtful because she asks me, she'll call me and say, "I was such a bad mother to you; I was wanting a cheerleader and I didn't appreciate the poet that I got. I didn't know how to appreciate the poet; I feel so bad about it." And at those times she truly is feeling bad, but I feel like she's asking me to absolve her of something, and it irritates me in some way. I do it, I say, "It's okay, Mom. You know this story has a happy ending: I'm all grown up now, I'm in graduate school, the story seems to be having a happy ending. It's okay, Mom." But something about having to do that really makes me mad. It was hard enough to go through having a mom who wished you were somebody else, even though I can be much more understanding about it now: She wished I would be the kind of

child she knew how to mother. And I can be much more understanding of it, but I don't always want to have to comfort her about it. Something about that irritates me. . .

Although he does not explicitly articulate it, one subject appears to feel exploited in his relationship with his mother because she seems to live vicariously through him and to co-opt his experience for her own gratification:

We just start talking and she'll start asking me about girls and she starts telling me about stuff that she's, just her personal life and asking me about my personal life, and for some reason I'm not comfortable talking to her about that. And I guess that's what [P.'s classmate and mother] had, and that looking from the outside in, it looked like that's what I wanted, but I guess in reality it's not exactly. . .

I mean, I like it; I like it: I like being able to talk to her, but there's still—I'm *not even sure why this is, but when I tell her something like that, I can see her face kind of light up, like she realizes that I'm confiding something, and she's happy about it, and when I see that, it makes me not want to tell her. I'm not really sure. . . For some reason, when I can see her getting, when I see her lighting up, all of a sudden it just, it hits me that this is going to be something that she's going to be asking about a lot: "Do I really want to get into the details about what happened, what's going to happen, and that sort of thing?"*

I: You know, you feel like you want some privacy.

P: Yeah. I guess, yeah, I guess the best way I feel like dealing with her is just not to say anything, just try to keep her in the dark. I think that bothers her.

I: What makes you think it bothers her?

P: Just, she'll just make little comments like, you know—Like before she'll ask me about something—Like this last, when Spring Break when I was home, at one point she asked me about this girl, and she was like, "You usually don't tell me stuff like this, but. . ." It's just she'll make little stuff like that, you know: "You haven't told me this, but are you blah blah blah blah blah"; just kind of letting me know that, you know, she doesn't understand what's going on in my life socially that much. Or even other stuff: I mean, I kind of keep her in the dark and my parents in the dark about what I plan to do with my life, like when I have different ideas and stuff: They're more likely to be the last people that know than the first people who know.

I: How do you understand that?

P: How do I understand, like why I do that? Well, I really don't know. There's a certain, I have two friends that I'm just always telling everything to, that I just feel really comfortable talking to. And sometimes I think about them as just being more of a family than our family, as far as things like that.

Theme IV: Being Affected

Being affected is the only theme emergent in the study that occurs against the ground of the self instead of the ground of interpersonal relationships. This theme is perhaps self-evident in that people are likely to be affected by any significant human phenomenon which they experience. It rests on the fact that individuals reflect upon and make judgements about what they have experienced; in that sense, it is more experience-distant than the other themes. This is reflected in the fact that the word *affected* lacks the evocative power—the emotional punch—that the words *alone*, *invisible*, and *used* possess. Nevertheless, all of the participants explicitly discussed ways in which they were affected by experiencing themselves as neglected, whether fleeting and relatively insignificant or long-term and profound; several wept during the interview process, which presumably reflected significant sadness engendered in them by having experienced themselves as neglected.

It must be stated that in one interview, I explicitly introduced the topic of being affected into the conversation, although it seemed to follow from what the participant had been discussing:

P: Voc Rehab helped [me] a lot. But my mother is dirt-poor; my father's dead—he drank himself to death—he's been dead for three years; Mom's dirt-poor, we don't speak; I don't have any contact with my brother; so I'm here in [city] by myself. I still keep in touch with relatives, some aunts.

I: *What effects do you think that your childhood has on you today?*

P: *Self-esteem: I think it's ter—greatly affected my self-esteem. And my confidence—my stomach's growling thinking about this—my confidence is a lot lower. If I had had a decent childhood and had had something solid, you know, had some parents to lean on for support emotionally and financially, just showing me the ways of being an adult—explain credit cards to me, explain how to do my taxes. Mom told me when I was 15, she said, "You may be smarter than I am, but you don't have the common sense and you're not as worldly as I am, and you're going to need to know how to do things, and I'm not going to tell you to do things, how*

to do things." She told me this almost verbatim. And then taxes came around: You know, I got a job, had to figure out how to do my taxes; she wouldn't tell me how to do that. And just stuff like that: She never explained to me that good grades were necessary, and that college—if I ever wanted to get out of poverty—that college was a necessity. And I'm still finding out things. I've got my first credit card now, and I'm trying to figure all this out on my own. I have a friend who's into finance, and he's explaining a lot of things to me. *I'm just pulling all this knowledge that I should have gotten from parents; I'm trying to pull it from everywhere else, and it's hard. I feel like I've been left behind: Here I am, 28, and I really, really, resent my parents.*

Another participant, in discussing the fact that her mother had left her father and her when she was very small, does explicitly and spontaneously introduce the topic of being affected early in the interview: *"[I]t affected me that she left; it affected me that she put so many things, I guess, in front of me."*

As an example of immediate affective impact engendered by experiences of feeling neglected, one subject states:

There were times when she—this is the thing that made it hard—she would see just enough of me, and I would feel, I would feel seen, heard, understood, accepted, embraced, whatever you want to call it, whatever metaphor you want to use, just enough that it would give me hope. *And then the next time, when she didn't get it, she didn't see me, or she rejected me, it would hurt so bad! Oh, God!* And it was a little unpredictable.

The participant who believes that his self-esteem has been affected by neglect also discusses the frequent depression which he experienced during his childhood:

I: You said that you were depressed a lot in the past?

P: Yeah, I was depressed as a kid; definitely.

I: What was that like for you?

P: I was depressed at school, so I was a natural target for the other kids. So I got not only beat up at home, I got beat up at school. The depression: I would have bouts of crying, and I didn't know why; I had no idea. But I'd just go from okay to just wanting to cry.

I: Just in seconds?

P: Yeah; I would go sit down somewhere and just cry. *It was horrible; there were days, you know, I'd wake up in plenty of time for school, and I would just sit there*

staring at the wall trying to put my shoes on: It'd take me forty-five minutes to put my socks and shoes on. I just, it was almost like I was frozen in place. I don't know if it was out of terror, or just never had the energy, never had any energy.

As a young adult, one subject discovered that her ability to form a stable attachment to a romantic partner was initially compromised by her experience of unhealthy relationships during her childhood and adolescence:

I tried desperately to screw [the relationship with my future husband] up at first 'cause I didn't know how to deal with it: I was not used to having somebody predictable around; I was used to living from chaos to chaos, and I didn't really know any other way to do it. So I would go around creating chaoses for myself so that I could figure out what to do. And he just was having none of it: He was pretty impervious to chaos.

I: Were you aware of feeling anxious?

P: Um-hmm!

I: Then you felt anxious about the relationship with [husband]?

P: Yeah; when things would go too solid and too stable for a while, I would start getting really panicky: I mean, I was sure if I didn't do something to create some mild crisis, something horrible was going to happen. *Plus, I just didn't know how to handle it: I didn't know how you were supposed to act if things were going okay; I had no idea.*

Another participant reports a thematically similar phenomenon uncovered in her journey toward self-knowledge:

The concept of being happy, I think it really hit me when I was about twenty-five, when I was in a second bad marriage, and I remember thinking I didn't know what "happy" was. And someone made a comment that stopped me in my tracks. And so then I . . . At that point's when I decided, "Hey, I want to know what this 'happiness' is all about." So I have been working for the last—Well, then it was about, it was later on, you know: I'd say in the last five or six years I have been working on trying to know what "happy" is and to be comfortable with being happy, 'cause I get uncomfortable with being happy. And that's when I start, *that's one of the main issues in my therapy, is that whenever I feel happy, I'm usually so uncomfortable with it that I start doing self-defeating, self-, bad things to destroy it.* Because it's an uncomfortable feeling that I'm not, I'm not comfortable with.

Some subjects found that their experiences with neglect gave them the opportunity to develop coping skills. One states:

[Feeling neglected by my friend] was kind of sad, but I just kind of got over it; and actually, it tried to, *it made me stronger, 'cause it made me know how to make an effort to make new friends and not have to worry about other people, and. . . I just learned how to deal with people like that and not worry about the way they were, and just worry about myself and do what was best for me.*

Another states:

And I'm sort of glad that I did go through that neglected period, because I learned from it. And what I learned was that I needed to be a stronger person whether I am being neglected, or whether I'm having people, well not giving me praise, but not neglecting me. And I need to keep going whether I'm neglected or whether I'm not; and I think it's helped me as a person, and it's made me who I am today.

I: How has it helped you?

P: It's helped me in ways where I don't get stressed. I mean, there was a time during that period, I was really depressed: I felt like, okay, I didn't know what my future held, I didn't want to do things, just came home and watch TV, whatever, because I felt neglected. But now, I've gone through that phase where—I thought it was a phase, which it was 'cause I'm not in it anymore—but now, looking back, when I was neglected, now I can say, if it happened now, *I can look back on past experiences and be like, "Well, that didn't work: It didn't get me anywhere, not doing anything; it didn't get me anywhere, crying, or just going to my room watching TV. There are other alternatives that I can do if I'm being neglected by a certain person."* I mean, it would have probably helped if I actually did talk to my mom, like, "I feel as though you neglect me," or, "I feel as though you treat me like a child; we need to talk about this."

One participant weighs the positive and negative long-term effects that her experience of neglect has had on her:

I definitely think that it has made me the person I am today: I'm a very strong and independent person. . . I've taken care of my sisters, and helping them with homework and doing things, I guess for myself: It's all taught me that I'm the one that's in control of my life and no one else is, and I can't let other people take control of me like that. *And it hurts to know that [my mother] left and that she put other things, material things, above me and my sisters; and that hurts, and that will always hurt, I think, and I'm still bitter about it—'Cause I learned, you know, two years ago about this, and I'm still very bitter about it, and—But I definitely think it made me the person I am today, and I'm happy that it happened this way because I'm happy that I'm, you know, independent, and that I can do things for myself.* And I'm on my own, really, even though I know I have my dad's support; she told me that she would not help me go to school. She said, "If you decide to go. . ."—She wanted me to stay at home and go to a community college so I could stay with her, and she, I guess she was scared of losing her first daughter even more; and she, finally, I guess, she accepted it, but she said, "If you go to college, I'm not going to help you," and I was like, "Okay; fine." So I've gotten to school, and I've done, really, everything on my own: I mean, I pay for school

myself, I pay for everything myself; and I think she's kind of shocked. She didn't think I could do it; and I think that that shocked her, so I think more and more she's realizing that I can do things without her, and I think that kind of bothers her.

Summary

Twelve in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who had experienced themselves as neglected at some point in their lives. Analysis of these interviews yielded four interrelated themes: Feeling Alone, Feeling Invisible, Being Used and Being Affected. The first three of these themes occurred within the context of interpersonal relationships, while the fourth, Being Affected, became visible against the ground of the self.

Participants described *feeling alone* in such situations as: 1) being left behind by a parent in a way or a place that was disconcerting, 2) being separated from a parent by emotional distance, 3) being rejected by one's peer group because of non-conformity to group norms, and 4) experiencing little quality time with one's parent(s) because of other, usually work-related, parental commitments.

Participants described *feeling invisible* in such situations as: 1) being overlooked in favor of a sibling despite one's own need for parental guidance, 2) being misperceived by a parent in a way that meets the parent's needs, 3) feeling misunderstood by a parent, 4) experiencing unrealistic parental expectations directed toward oneself, 5) having one's spouse fail to give adequate consideration to one's needs, 6) having one's significant other put his or her wishes ahead of one's own, 7) not being listened to or treated with consideration by a friend, 8) having a coach who cares only about winning, and 9) having parents who refuse to learn basic personal information about oneself and who show no interest in meeting one's needs.

Participants described *feeling used* in such situations as: 1) being treated by one's parents as a hired worker rather than as part of the family, 2) feeling responsible for taking care of one's parents while still a child oneself, 3) being used to lure possible erotic partners for a parent, 4) being manipulated by a parent into taking on major household responsibilities at a young age, 5) being used as a pawn by one parent in order to punish the other parent, 6) being asked to provide reassurance to a parent who feels guilty about his or her own parental inadequacies, and 7) being asked to reveal detailed personal information to a parent for his or her vicarious gratification.

Finally, participants were aware of *being affected* by their experiences of feeling neglected; both immediate and late effects were described, as were long- and short-term consequences. Such various phenomena were described as: 1) having a tendency to undermine positive situations and relationships, 2) feeling bitter about being abandoned by a parent, 3) feeling depressed as a child, 4) suffering from low self-esteem as an adult, 5) having been hurt each time a parent failed to understand oneself, and 6) having developed such coping skills as: a) being independent, b) being strong, c) not caring unduly about other people's judgments, and d) talking about relational problems with the appropriate party; that is, with the person involved in the problematic situation.

Chapter IV

*Tell us, they'll say to me. So we will understand
and be able to resolve things. They'll be mis-
taken. It's only the things you don't understand
that you can resolve. There will be no resolution.*

*-Peter Høeg
Smilla's Sense of Snow*

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to gain an appreciation of what life might be like for people who experience themselves as neglected. The extant literature on human neglect, focused almost exclusively on child neglect, has tended toward delineating pathological correlates as well as describing ecological factors that contribute to the phenomenon. To the extent that neglect has been conceptualized as a personal experience, it has been defined by researchers rather than by persons who suffered neglect. What this study offers, then, is an empirically-based thematic description of the experience of feeling neglected as defined by people who have explicitly experienced the phenomenon. Such an experience might, in a particular instance, comprise aspects of feeling alone within the larger context of an interpersonal relationship, feeling invisible in the presence of others, experiencing oneself as exploited, experiencing oneself as affected by the neglect endured, or a combination of these themes.

What is the value of such a finding? The thematic nature of the phenomenological approach already suggests an answer: The structure of themes discovered opens the way for a potentially rich dialogue about meaningful human phenomena, both in therapeutic contexts and in other settings. Such phenomena are, of course, not arbitrarily meaningful but are firmly situated within such important existential contexts as the body, time, the world, and in this case, human relationships and the self (Pollio *et al.*, 1997).

Relationship of the Present Study to Previous Research

From these findings, it is clear that to experience oneself as neglected is a complex phenomenon. Whereas feeling alone or invisible might readily have been predicted as an aspect of feeling neglected, feeling exploited or misused by the other perhaps more readily suggests abuse than neglect, a sin of commission rather than a sin of omission. This would seem to support the idea that psychological abuse and neglect are not completely discrete phenomena, but do indeed overlap each other to some extent (cf. van der Kolk *et al.*, 1994). In terms of theoretical implications, the theme of feeling used as a component of feeling neglected supports self psychology's Buberian central thesis that human beings, if they are to be content, must be attended to as subjects in their own right rather than treated as objects to be used as means to an end (cf. Buber, 1923/1970; Kohut, 1971; Wolf, 1988). Thus, this study suggests that it would be beneficial to enlarge our conceptualization of neglect to include a more active connotation of exploitation than is included in the current lexical definition of the word.

Most of the empirical research that has examined forms of maltreatment, including neglect, has been ameliorative in intent with an eye toward not only understanding the pathological correlates of maltreatment but also toward influencing the way in which maltreatment is conceptualized within public policy. These approaches have enjoyed success as reflected in a fuller understanding of etiological and pathological correlates of mistreatment and in broader legal definitions of child maltreatment. The studies which have been published to date, however, have grown out of a natural science paradigm, and this has led to some problems in terms of the methodology employed in these studies. The foremost of these is that various forms of maltreatment, including emotional neglect,

have been operationally defined rather than empirically described. Since these definitions have not been standardized, issues of content validity emerge throughout the literature on child maltreatment.

To be sure, such problems are not especially significant relative to the benefit that has come out of the attention given to correlates of maltreatment; they arise, however, out of the assumption that it is not possible to derive valid findings from personal experience. The present study serves as one demonstration that thematic descriptions based on personal experience can indeed help to provide a more fully realized, and in that sense better, definition of such phenomena. Because of their focus on experiences of self and others, the results of this study are related to, and provide support for, Hart and Brassard's (1987) argument that the key ramifications of maltreatment are psychological in nature; that is, that maltreatment strongly affects views and experiences of both interpersonal relationships and self.

Limitations of the Study

In the present study, my interest in the experience of neglect grew out of a clinical context. Thus, I was particularly interested in understanding the phenomenology of the experience so that I, and by extension other therapists, could better hear and more fully comprehend significant themes articulated by patients when they talked about feeling neglected or other similar phenomena. The fact that this study is based on individual experiences of interpersonal phenomena does not detract from its implications for clinical work; in fact, the study has yielded the type of information that clinicians typically seek and have access to in their work with patients. However, this study tells us little about human relationships from the vantage point of interpersonal process: While we are granted

access to a single side of each story in the present study, there is of course more than one side to every story in the human repertory. We must thus keep in mind that present results speak only to participants' *experiences* of others and not to an "objective" reality about what those others are like as human beings or what they might describe of their relationships to our participants.

Another possible limitation of the study is that participation was open to any adult who could articulate experiences of having felt neglected. Theoretically, such experiences could be innocuous compared to the neglect which mandates that children be removed from the custody of their parents. In other words, experiencing oneself as neglected is not identical with being exposed to neglect so severe that it puts one's personhood in danger. Throughout the study, I took care to emphasize that I was studying incidents in which individuals *perceived* themselves as neglected, not incidents which would have met some abstract definition of neglect. I thus make no claim that the experience of feeling neglected is equivalent to being a victim of child neglect or any other equally malignant phenomena.

On the other hand, participants whose neglect met some sort of legal or other definition would not necessarily be good subjects for phenomenological research. Ney (1987) describes several psychological defenses he believes must be worked through and relinquished if those who have experienced maltreatment are to become aware of thoughts and feelings about the experience. These phenomena include identification with the aggressor (i.e., developing aggressive personality traits), rebelliousness, and precocious but superficial social development. Such posited phenomena further include depression, gratification through fantasy, the search for idealized others, and the formation of

obsessive-compulsive, phobic, or other neurotic adaptations. Additionally, Ney feels that maltreatment might lead to believing oneself responsible for the aversive behavior of the perpetrator(s). Entrenchment of any of these phenomena could indicate difficulty articulating the relevant experiences needed to participate in the present study. After all, asking participants to describe their personal experience presupposes introspective capacity and some degree of self-awareness on the part of the participant (van Kaam, 1969).

Given that children and adolescents are likely to lack a well-developed capacity for introspection (cf. Gil, 1991), I decided to recruit only college-age and older participants for this particular study. However, all of the participants were younger than forty and most were under twenty-one. Perhaps older participants would have had a different understanding of both their experiences of feeling neglected and the grounds which contextualized them; in other words, more mature individuals might hold more complex interpretations of their interpersonal relationships and of themselves. Thus, the study might have benefitted from the broader perspective that greater life-experience can afford older human beings.

The tendency for human beings to distance themselves from so unpleasant an experience as feeling neglected was apparent throughout the study. First, it was difficult to obtain subjects who were willing and able to talk about experiences of feeling neglected. Second, several participants qualified their interviews by stating that the situations which they were describing were not truly significant incidents of neglect. One, for example, said:

In the back of my mind I was never completely neglected. You know if I, like even in 7th Grade, if something really bad happened, I was safe, so in that sense, I think—you know, the most primal, survival senses—I was never, ever neglected. And I think that helps a whole lot, you know; even if you're having a bit of emo-

tional neglect for a day you know—I mean, not consciously, but you just—you know that whatever happens, you'll be okay. You know, it's not like, it's not a material neglect, I think, so it's. . . That helps a lot, too, as far as being able to get through it all right, feeling, being able to keep up optimism or whatever.

Third, when I was presenting interviews for thematic analysis in the phenomenological research laboratory, many seminar members seemed to have difficulty empathizing with the participants, thinking them both complaining and somewhat unreasonable in their expectations of others. Perhaps it was a failure of bracketing on my part, but it was my experience during the interview process that many participants honestly and openly described situations which were serious if not harrowing; to me, they seemed legitimately affecting. Please see Appendices B & C for complete transcripts of two interviews.

Implications of the Findings for Psychotherapy

It is not easy, to be sure, for a listener to be truly present to another person talking about unpleasant experiences. It requires not only self-awareness but also a lack of defensiveness for the listener to remain open to what the other is saying in such situations. Indeed, issues of what is often called countertransference, or resistance on the part of the therapist to understanding and helping the patient, have traditionally been a major concern of the literature on psychotherapeutic process (e.g., Searles, 1979). Many theorists of psychotherapy, themselves experienced clinicians, maintain that it is fundamental to the healing process to help patients articulate that which has been traumatic to them (e.g., Johnson, 1994; van der Kolk, 1994). For this reason, the therapist must be able to hear and process the themes of such traumata without impediment.

Several implications for psychotherapy with individuals who have experienced themselves as neglected are suggested by the present study. As already suggested, therapists might wish to be aware that they may experience an impulse to shut out, or at least

minimize, negative events articulated by patients. Second, since neglect is experienced against the ground of interpersonal relationships, those theories and frameworks which view the psychotherapeutic relationship itself, as opposed to specific techniques, as healing seem particularly germane to working with patients who have experienced neglect. Self-psychologist Wolf (1988) states:

The most fundamental finding of self psychology is that the emergence of the self requires more than the inborn tendency to organize experience. Also required is the presence of others. . . who provide certain types of experiences that will *evoke* the emergence and maintenance of the self (p. 11, emphasis original; cf. Kohut, 1971).

Other appropriate therapeutic approaches for individuals for whom it would be helpful to resolve issues of feeling neglected would include those growing out of interpersonal (e.g., Sullivan, 1953), object relations (e.g., Winnicott, 1965), and person-centered theories (e.g., Rogers, 1961) of human psychology. To borrow from Winnicott (1965), a "good enough" relationship between therapist and patient probably needs to be experienced as a meta-intervention for the patient to resolve his or her experiences of self as neglected. Encompassing far more than overly-intellectual interpretive procedures that sometimes take place in insight-oriented psychotherapy, the process of actively exploring and explicitly *experiencing* the relationship with the therapist would seem likely to be not only intellectually informative, but also emotionally ameliorative for the patient.

A primary goal of therapy with patients who have experienced themselves as neglected might be simply to help them feel understood; this, in turn, should allow them to more fully understand themselves in addition to helping them feel less alone or more visible within a significant interpersonal context. Such a process, grounded in relationship, takes time to develop and probably cannot be created artificially or hurried along. More

limited psychotherapies with specific behavioral goals or interventions, on the other hand, would seem to ignore the overriding importance, for those who have experienced themselves as neglected, of the process of being understood and appreciated as fully subjective human beings.

At least in theory—and one must be careful not to idealize the therapist or the therapeutic alliance—the relationship with the therapist can be a more healthful relationship than negatively-tinged relationships in the patient's past or present life. To achieve this goal, the therapist must work actively to provide a place where the patient's best interests are given priority, something that is likely to have been lacking in the life-experience of those who have felt neglected. In non-therapeutic relationships, such an approach is often not possible to maintain, even if it were desirable; outside events will, after all, inevitably impinge to some extent on any interpersonal relationship. The process of providing such an attentive relationship is more possible in the therapeutic context because of the limits or boundaries of the relationship in both time and space. Since the therapist is not normally called upon to be present to the patient outside of the therapeutic hour, he or she can give fuller attention to such things as listening actively to the patient and working to maintain empathy. Such a stance might help the therapist negotiate such difficult issues as, for example, disliking the patient in the countertransference in a manner similar to that of teachers who do not like neglected children because of their passivity or neediness (cf. Cicchetti *et al.*, 1985).

Kohut (1971) theorized that in addition to psychosexual development, the emergence of self-structure is a fundamental component of the human psyche's development. His writings are particularly germane to those who have experienced neglect. For example,

he emphasized the importance of others' being psychologically available to the young child if the child is to develop a healthy sense of self. Wolf (1988) enumerates several specific types of needs that he believes must be met by the parental figure(s) in order for the child to develop and maintain a healthy self-structure. These include the opportunity to not only see oneself as similar to others but, especially in infants, to experience oneself as merged with the other (i.e., with the primary caregiver); other vital experiences that Wolf discusses include feeling affirmed by the other, experiencing oneself as important to the other, and, finally, being accepted in the presence of conflict with the other.

In self psychology, the roots of psychopathology are believed to lie more in on-going environmental deprivation during development than in discrete traumata (Wolf, 1988). Such a lack of healthily affirming relatedness is thought to preclude the young child's internalizing the means for developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self. Healthy relationships with caregivers, on the other hand, readily afford this type of experience. Crucially, however, even if one develops a healthy self-structure as a child, the need for affirming relationships with others persists. Wolf states, "Along with food and oxygen, every human being requires age-appropriate self-object experiences from infancy to the end of life" (p. 11, 1988). Thus, from the perspective of self psychology, adults' experiences of feeling neglected would likely be highly relevant to their psychological well-being.

From the viewpoint of self psychology, it is important for therapists to conceptualize patients' material, including their own countertransference reactions to patients, more broadly than would be indicated by the principles of traditional psychoanalysis. Patients whose sense of self did not develop in a healthy manner are prone to being diagnosed with personality disorders and may come across as egotistical or excessively needy, thereby

evoking negative responses from others (Wolf, 1988). Such individuals are thought to play out interpersonal conflicts that derive from maldevelopment of normal, or healthy, narcissism (Kohut, 1971). Thus, the therapist's task might be most basically conceptualized as tolerating these potentially troublesome phenomena within the therapeutic relationship without reacting to them in a counterproductive way; to use a cliché, the therapist must be proactive rather than reactive in both conceptualizing the neglected patient's complex interpersonal issues and helping the patient work through them. Goals of treatment might include not only rendering the patient's interpersonal needs less pressing by being fully present to the patient but also exploring barriers which prevent the patient from forming gratifying interpersonal relationships. Additional goals of psychotherapy with emotionally-deprived individuals might include not only helping such patients become aware of relational needs, but also of the ways in which those needs affect their relationships and other aspects of their lives.

It is within such a relationally-oriented therapeutic framework that it would probably be most advantageous to help patients not only elaborate experiences such as feeling invisible to others and feeling alone in the presence of others, but also to help them explore such phenomena as feeling exploited by others and perceiving oneself as damaged by such events. Such an interpersonally-oriented therapeutic approach thus has important restorative potentialities for narcissistically deprived individuals which range far beyond the didactic (cf. Kohut, 1971).

Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research might include conducting phenomenological interviews with individuals who meet certain definable criteria beyond being able to recall

and discuss having felt neglected. For example, people whose parents were charged with subsequently substantiated neglect, including individuals who were removed from the home as children due to severe neglect, might provide a radically different thematic structure than the one emergent in the present study, or they might provide a structure which is nearly identical. Also, researchers could interview middle-aged and older individuals in order to determine whether they describe incidences of neglect rooted in childhood or later in life, and whether their greater life-experience relative to the participants in the present study affords them a better means of resolving their feelings about having felt neglected. Researchers might also attempt to interview adolescents and children who have been neglected, both those who are self-identified and those who meet other criteria. At this point, it is not clear to what degree such individuals would be able to articulate their experiences, but some of them, at least, might be able to provide richly informative descriptions. Many of the participants in the present study, after all, volunteered to tell their stories only after they were offered extra credit for doing so; they nevertheless managed to evoke powerful images and articulate profound personal experiences in this recounting of aspects of their lives.

And so the cries and whispers died away.

—Ingmar Bergman

Cries and Whispers

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

TABLE A-1: GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

FEMALE	MALE
8	4

TABLE A-2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

18	19	20	22	28	32	38	39
3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1

TABLE A-3: RACIAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

AFRICAN-AMERICAN	CAUCASIAN
1	11

TABLE A-4: MARITAL STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS

DIVORCED	MARRIED	SINGLE
1	2	9

TABLE A-5: PRINCIPAL OCCUPATION OF PARTICIPANTS

CLERICAL	STUDENT
1	11

TABLE A-6: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS

COLLEGE FRESHMAN	COLLEGE SOPHOMORE	COLLEGE JUNIOR	COLLEGE SENIOR	GRADUATE STUDENT
6	1	1	2	2

TABLE A-7: LENGTH OF INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW	MINUTES	WORDS
I	99.5	14,496
II	89.1	11,213
III	57.3	9,229
IV	107.7	15,326
V	61.1	11,644
VI	56.2	9,495
VII	59.2	9,874
VIII	38.5	6,202
IX	84.9	16,181
X	42.5	8,726
XI	60.5	10,103
XII	47.7	9,308

Appendix B

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW WITH A FEMALE PARTICIPANT

I: Well, I would just like you to think of a time that you felt neglected and tell me about it.

P: Okay. To start out with, I'm going to give you some background information kind of to set the context for what was going on at the time, 'cause I don't think it would make a lot of sense otherwise. Just to start out with, both of my parents were alcoholic. And my mom and my dad actually met in A.A. And my dad really never quit drinking, and when he wasn't drinking, he was usually always using something else. And so he kind of just was not very present; so he, he was kind of just not around: Even when he was there he just wasn't really around. But my mom was a pretty stable figure for me until I was about 14, and that's when she started drinking again. So she had been sober for 14 years and she started drinking again. And so the times that I'm thinking of are mostly in my adolescence, and not remembering a whole lot of times that I really felt neglected earlier than that. So that kind of forms the context for it.

When I was 14 and my mom started drinking again, my parents divorced, and so I was living alone with her. And she, I guess, really binge drank: She'd go for long periods of times when she wouldn't drink, and then she'd go for weeks, and sometimes longer than that, where she was pretty much using the whole time. So this particular time—I think I was about 16; I may have been 15, but I think I was 16—and my mom had been working, ironically enough, at an alcoholism rehab center. She was a, she actually even got to be the executive director of this place and she was still drinking the whole time. At this point in time, though, she hadn't been working there very long and she was just a counselor, so she was an alcoholism counselor. And this place was really bizarre: I don't know what it was about this place, but a lot of the staff members ended up dating each other and dating clients from there. And there was all this joking around about how the people there kind of followed the "13 Step" program; and basically what they were talking about was that they'd end up sleeping with people that they were supposed to be kind of helping.

And so on three different occasions, my mom brought these men home who had been patients of the alcoholism rehab center, and they lived with us for a couple of weeks. And this particular time, she had brought this guy home—his name was [name]—and he'd been staying with us for about two weeks at that point, I think; he ended up staying with us for about a month all together, and then he got kind of inappropriate with me, and I told her, "He is out of here, or I'm leaving," and so she got him on the bus and sent him back to wherever he was from. But this was kind of in the middle of that time that I'm thinking of. And basically what she and [name] would do was they would sit in the den, and they would get stoned and listen to Tom Waits and John Prine albums. And they'd do this till like 3 o'clock in the morning, and it was this big kind of hippie scene my mom was doing.

And so this one particular time when I really was aware of feeling neglected was one night—I know it was a school night because I went to bed relatively early, and I was in bed, and I had this really horrible nightmare about my mom dying. And it was this really strange dream where she was like a robot and she was winding down, and she was like, you know, dying in front of me in the front yard, and I was trying to figure out if there was anything I could do to save her, and she was just dying.

So I woke up from this—it was like 2 o'clock in the morning—and I woke up just in this panic from this nightmare that I'd had. And when I woke up, I was aware that my room was dark, but the

door was open enough that I could still see that there were lights on off in the rest of the house. And I could hear that the stereo was going, and so I knew that she and [name] were still up getting high and listening to Tom Waits albums; and I was lying there feeling this really intense need to get up and go in there and make sure that she was okay. And I felt like I really needed some comforting and some reassurance from her. And I remember lying in bed in the dark and my heart was just pounding from this dream, and I was just really scared.

And you know, you're kind of disoriented when you first wake up in the middle of the night. And I knew she was in there, and I knew she was stoned, and I knew she was with him—and I hated him; and he was just a complete slime—and I just remember feeling so alone, so completely isolated, and so furious with her. I was so angry that I was, that I didn't feel like I could go to her: That she was in there, and there might as well have been a mountain range in between my room and where she was at, because I went through this enormous internal dialogue with myself of saying, "God, she's your mother! Get up and go in there and tell her that you need her," and then thinking, "No, that would be embarrassing; I don't want to do that; I don't want to show any weakness in front of this guy," and thinking that she would be angry with me if I did that, and thinking that I should just handle it on my own, so I was sort of angry with myself for even needing her at that point in time. But the two things that I was really aware of in terms of my feelings were just being furious, and just feeling really helpless and isolated.

I: You were aware of both things at the same time?

P: Yeah. Now when I think back on it, I would bet you that the hopelessness on that felt bigger then. When I think back on it now, what I remember is really feeling really angry, but I'm not sure how much that stood out for me at the time. I know it was there, though.

I: Can you say a little more about what you were furious about?

P: Yeah. For one thing, she had brought this man into the house who was not safe. I mean it was clear to me at that point already that he was not safe.

I: How did you know that?

P: Just little comments he would make; you know, he would kind of leer at me occasionally, and put his arm around me when he knew I didn't like that, and talk about inappropriate things in front of me. And somehow there was this message that I got from both of them that if I were a really cool daughter, you know, I wouldn't mind; that I was being prudish, or I was being goody-two-shoes or something to disapprove of him. And so I was furious that she had brought, that she had kind of—I felt like our space had been violated: We'd been living alone together for some time, and here she brings this total stranger into the house. And not only is he a total stranger, she didn't ask anything; she didn't ask me how I felt about it: He just showed up one day. But he didn't feel safe, and that was really part of it.

Part of it was that I think the whole context of feeling that we were living a lie at that point in time, because she was using and she was going out and working at this alcohol rehab place. And as a result of that, I really couldn't have talked to anybody about what was going on 'cause it was this big secret, you know, because if anybody would have found out she might have lost her job. So there was this whole kind of conspiracy of silence around that, so I was angry with her for using, partly. But part of it too, I think, was that I was afraid for her; and I think that was what the dream was showing, was that I really felt like she was hurting herself and that she was headed in a

direction that felt deadly to me. And I was afraid for her and it made me really angry that the thing that was dangerous was something that she was doing to herself volitionally. So I felt like she was killing herself.

I: And it sounds like that would be really hard to see, and knowing that you couldn't do anything about it.

P: And that's where that feeling of being helpless came in: I didn't feel like there was anything that I could do to intervene. But—and I think the other part of me being angry was that I really felt like she was not being a mom; she wasn't. She was acting like my roommate or something like that; she wasn't there in any kind of consistent way. And there I was, frightened and needing some mothering, and she was not capable of it at that point in time. And I knew that. And I was angry because I felt like it was not fair that I should not have a mom and still have to live with her.

I: Yeah. It sounds like you had very little input into what went on in your household and in your relationship with her.

P: Yeah, she'd listen to me: I mean, she always gave much lip service to my input, but—well, and if it was. . . Sometimes she really would listen: It depended a lot on the situation. When she was using a lot, she didn't listen to anyone, and so. . . When she was going through a period of being sober for a while, then she really would listen, but. . . She didn't then, but she said that she did; she always asked me about, you know, wanted my feedback on this or that, but when it really came down to it, she wouldn't change anything for that. When it came down to, you know, kind of brass tacks, she would, like when I finally told her, "You are getting him out of here, or I'm leaving. And I don't really care where I go, but I'm not staying in this house with this man anymore." And he was gone the next day, so I guess I had to scare her, though, before she'd listen to me, and that didn't seem like a very good way to have to do things.

I: 'Cause it seems like if you were scared, it didn't matter.

P: Right; yeah, I think that's true. And the thing about that was that was kind of a nodal point where I became aware of being neglected, but it's not like that was a whole lot different than what had been going on before. You know, it's just that I hadn't really been aware of it prior to that.

I: Something in you changed.

P: Yeah. I think I got angry.

I: Maybe you were ready to get angry?

P: Yeah, maybe so. Maybe, yeah. But I'm just aware that really there was this feeling of there being this unbreachable gulf between the two of us where I couldn't, couldn't get through to her: I couldn't get through to her by talking to her, I couldn't get through to her by trying to reason with her, and right at that moment it felt like I couldn't even get up to walk across the house to go to where she was, so I just stayed in the bed and just lay there being afraid, until I finally fell asleep.

I: What was that like for you? It sounds awful.

P: Yeah. Um, I guess it wasn't an unusual experience for me, you know? I think that a lot of my childhood was spent in all different sorts of different things like, you know, lying in bed listening to my parents scream at each other in some other part of the house, or lying there wondering where one of them was, being worried about something: Trying to go to sleep like that was not an uncommon thing for me, and it was just this sense of being scared and being sad or being angry or being whatever, until you were finally just too exhausted to tolerate anymore of it and you'd just turn off. And kind of the sense of almost spinning my wheels, lying there perseverating on the things I couldn't do anything about, and not being able to see a way out of the situation, and just spinning my wheels till I ran out of gas, and then I'd finally just kind of pass out, um. . .

I: It sounds like you felt almost some responsibility for changing things, or. . . I know this is my own idea, but does that sound true? Or. . .

P: Yeah. I think from a pretty early age I felt like, I got the message somehow that I was responsible for taking care of things, for taking care of the people, in large part because no adult seemed to have the capacity to do it: They didn't take care of each other, they didn't take care of themselves. My mom, up until—like I said, around the time I was 14, 15—she took care of the practical things: I mean she would make sure that we always had enough food and that kind of stuff, which my dad really never did. And that didn't really change: I never really remember being afraid that I was going to be out on the street or not have anything to eat. It was more just a sense that she didn't know how to take care of herself on any kind of an emotional level, or to take care of her health, or to take care of anything like that, or to take care of me on any kind of an emotional level, so I had to do it. If it was going to get done, it had to be me.

So yeah, I did feel like there ought to be something that I should do, could do: You know, there ought to be something that—if I could just think of the right thing to do, then maybe she would act differently. Maybe she'd stop drinking or maybe she'd kick this guy out of the house or maybe she'd do X, Y or Z different than what she's doing now, and some sort of a sense that I hadn't found the right key yet, and that if I could find whatever it was, then I could make things okay. And I think, despite the fact that that is kind of awful, you know, carrying around that kind of responsibility, it feels better than admitting that you have absolutely no control over it at all, you know?

I: It sounds like you did try to do things to get some control over the situation.

P: Yeah, I tried. I'd try and talk to her, I'd try and catch her when she seemed in a reasonable state and reason with her. I'd try to ignore it and just cut her slack, I'd try and figure out whatever it was she needed and kind of give that to her so that maybe she wouldn't find the need to go get it in these other more self-destructive ways; and none of it worked.

I: Was that a big shock for you, in a way, when she brought the man home for the first time?

P: I'm trying to remember which one was the first one; I'm pretty sure it wasn't him. I don't remember being shocked: I remember being surprised that it lasted as long as it did, you know? I thought maybe he'd be there for a couple of days and then he'd be gone. And it was sort of horrible to come home from school everyday and walk through the door and he'd still be there: It was like, "Oh, God, when is this going to end?" And they were slimeballs; I guess that was part of it, too: They were just these slimy, loser guys; I was like, "Mother, what are you doing!?" I knew that the reason was that she was having sex with them: She didn't flaunt that, but I knew that that was part of it. But I thought, "God, Mom! You know, you're an attractive woman; what in the

hell are you doing with these grunge guys?" They were usually quite a lot younger than her, and they were just total losers, and I couldn't figure out why she was doing that to herself.

I: How was she different toward you when they were there?

P: She ignored me a lot; she kind of, kind of left me to my own devices: She just assumed that I would take care of myself, and I usually did. She liked to kind of paint herself as this really cool, liberated kind of mom. And my friends thought she was just great, of course; they never had to live with her. And you know, she was: She had some qualities that were really amazing. But in the category of being a dependable, predictable "Mom" figure, she just wasn't very good. But she had this vision of herself as just being real cool, and real open-minded, and all this kind of stuff, and so she had me kind of cast in the vision as being this really completely healthy, completely together kid who took care of herself and who was really cool, too, and very open-minded about what she was doing. And so she just didn't really seem to pay much attention to any negative responses I might have had to any of this: It didn't fit with her vision of how things were supposed to be going.

I: And you did have negative responses to. . .

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah; I didn't feel safe: I mean, I was really frightened a couple of times that these guys were going to come in and do something to me, and it wasn't all together out of the realm of possibility: And there was no lock on my bedroom door or anything like that, and I was afraid. There were several times when I would find that she had gone somewhere and I was alone in the house with these loser guys, and I thought, "There is no way that I could imagine how a mom could justify placing her child in danger like that." Nothing ever happened, but it could have.

I: What was it like when you were there alone with them?

P: Well, really uncomfortable: It was kind of like, I felt reasonably sure that I could take care of myself. My fantasies usually involved kicking the hell out of them; and they usually were not in the greatest shape, you know, having abused themselves for so long, so I wasn't really afraid. I thought I could probably get away, but it felt kind of like if you know you've got a nest of wasps in your eaves, you know that you know they're there, and you're kind of keeping an eye—like you're outside doing work and you're keeping an eye peripherally on what's going on in that nest of wasps over there. So I was always aware of where they were at, for one thing: I'd kind of pinpoint their location in the house. And I know that I had one ear always kind of tuned to paying attention to what I thought they were doing and where they were going in the house, so that they couldn't catch me off guard.

I: Right. You had to be vigilant.

P: Right. And a lot of times I'd just leave and go someplace else.

I: Where would you go?

P: Um, call up a friend: I always had some guy that I was dating and I'd call him up, or I'd call a friend who had a car, or I'd just go out in the yard: I figured he couldn't do much out in the yard.

I: That was smart.

P: Yeah! I didn't have a car, so I couldn't just leave. So, yeah, that made me angry, too: There was just this feeling that she was just not taking very good care of me, and that I didn't deserve to have that happen.

I: Did that shift around the time you became 14 and she started drinking: Did she change in the way she was toward you? 'Cause you said that she had always sort of taken care of your physical needs, but I wonder if she had previously been able to take care of your emotional needs?

P: Yeah, yeah; she really was a pretty neat mom. . .

I: How so?

P: She really would listen to what I had to say, and she wanted to know how I felt about things, and she wanted to know what I was afraid of, and she wanted to. . . She helped, you know, like, would tell me stories to kind of chase away the scariness: She'd come in my room at night if I'd had a bad dream and tell me stories and stay with me until I went back to sleep. She always made sure that I was safe; I always felt early on that no matter what else was going on, like with my dad, I knew I was safe, that she would be there; when it came down to it, that she would be there. And I did feel like I had a lot of input into what was going on: She really listened. But then, it really did start when my dad got this job in [another state] and we moved up there for seven months or something, and just left everybody behind: My whole family was in [state], and we'd lived there my whole life. Right before my fourteenth birthday we moved up there because my dad got a job, and we didn't know anyone up there.

I think my mom was always a little bit depressed, but it really caught up with her then, and she didn't have any friends and she didn't have anything to do, and my dad would come home and he'd start drinking at night; and so she started drinking with him. And we were—I had some friends that I spent some time with but they were getting in trouble right and left; I mean, I'm really glad that I made the decision to not go that direction. But that was when it really started: That was when I really started, on a regular basis, feeling like she was not available, and that I wasn't having any impact or having any control anymore, and that she really didn't seem capable of listening to me because she was so caught up in her own pain. And before that, the only other times that I can remember feeling that way was when she wasn't around, like a couple of times when she got sick and had to go to the hospital.

I: So it was really like she wasn't there?

P: Um-hmm, yeah. In some pretty fundamental ways, she was just absent. And I was really worried about her. I think the very first time that I ever really felt neglected was right before they, we left to move back to [state], and I came home from school, and—I guess maybe I'd gone out to a movie with a friend of mine or something—and this is the very first time I ever remember this happening, but it got to be such a frequent thing after that: Feeling really anxious when I reached for the front door and wondering what I was going to find when I opened it, and hesitating to go in because I wasn't sure what was going to be going on. And I walked in, and they had both been drinking all evening, and for some weird reason they wanted to talk to me about how I felt about them drinking, and they were drunk. And I tried to talk to them when they were sober, and they didn't want to hear it, so I was kind of not sure what was going on. But I finally figured out what they wanted to do was they wanted to convince me that it was okay; and in order to do this, my dad got this idea that I should have a drink with them. And I said, "No, I am not going to have a drink with you! You guys know how I feel about this, and there's no way!"

And he actually—I don't know what he was thinking—started chasing me around the house with this glass of rum and Coke, like he was going to make me drink this glass of rum and Coke, and I just thought, "You people are insane"; it's like, "God!" So I ran down the hall—actually I had a lock on my bedroom at this place—I locked myself in my bedroom and I locked the bathroom door, and my dad is, like, beating on the door, furious, trying to get me to have this drink, and I just thought, "You people are crazy; I'm living in a house of lunatics." And then I started getting kind of scared because he was banging on the door, and I thought, "What is going on here!?!"; I don't think I'd ever really felt afraid of him before. And this went on for some time, and then he threw up on the door, and I just thought—And here I am, in [city, state], in the middle of the winter, and there wasn't anybody there that I could go to, and I just thought—It was the first time I really thought, "Somehow I have to find a way to survive this, and there's no one to help me. And the people who should be helping me are crazy, and they're of no help at all."

I: How did you deal with that; I mean, that sounds like a life-changing revelation in a way, or it sounds very, very important, a major thing.

P: I guess I just decided that no matter what I did, they weren't going to ruin my life, that—I think some part of me got hardened almost overnight: I just thought, "Fuck you people; you are not ruining my life. If you want to drink yourselves to death, then you just are going to go right after it, but you are not going to pull me down with you." And I was able to do that with him better than with her, because I was just so worried about her: I felt really responsible for her, like, you know, "If I could just be a better kid or make better grades or do this or that, then maybe she would find the will to live."

I: So really, you saw yourself as having a major impact on her behavior.

P: Yeah, yeah; and she said I did. Although, thinking back on it I don't think that I did, really. But yeah, it felt like I did.

I: In what context did she say that you did?

P: She just always would tell me that I was the most important thing in her life, and I believed it, for a long time. And I think for some period of time—and maybe that didn't change; maybe it's just that she got so sick, you know, but I think I was real important to her; I think she just couldn't do anything with that a lot of the time. She would feel real guilty for the things that happened, but she just wouldn't change her behavior on the front end, you know?

I: How do you know she felt guilty?

P: Oh, well, she'd talk about it, she'd cry, she'd vow that she was going to change, she'd kind of beat her breast and go around beating herself up emotionally and that sort of thing, you know?

I: That sounds like a terrible thing for you to see, for you to hear.

P: Kind of; actually, I thought she needed to feel guilty.

I: Okay, all right; so it wasn't so terrible!

P: No, no; well, if it got out of hand—I didn't want her to feel so guilty that I had to start worrying about her again; but yeah, I thought she needed to feel guilty: She wasn't acting like a very good

mom; she *was* guilty. But that was really when I remember it starting was when we went up to [state]: That was kind of the beginning of the end, and it just got dragged out for years and years, and. . .

I: What got dragged out?

P: Just all of this stuff happening over and over again.

I: I wonder if you felt fairly safe and secure before that, and after that point, it sounds like a lot of times it was not safe in your house for you.

P: Yeah. That is the thing that I think I was most aware of, was that what seemed to change most is that I no longer felt safe, and that I was afraid to go home a lot of the time: I was afraid that there would be some weird man living in my house that could be a potential threat, I was afraid that I'd walk in and find her dead, I was afraid that she would say something unforgivable to me; there was always something to be afraid of.

I: Did she say things that were really hurtful?

P: When she was drunk, yeah: She'd kind of vent on me. Not a lot, but I remember when she did; infrequently, but. . .

I: What was that like for you when she did that?

P: Oh, it was awful; it was just really awful. Just really, it was very painful to listen to her say those things, because even though later she'd say, "You know I didn't mean that; that was just the alcohol," I was like, "Mom, you know, I know that people get, their inhibitions get loosened up when they're drinking, but it's not like they're different people; it's not like you would be saying something that somewhere wasn't in there." So I don't think I ever believed that it was just the alcohol: I thought that somewhere in there she really thought those things, and that was really painful to think about. The longer it went on, the more I would just really be angry and say—I used to try and stay and help her, but the older I got, I'd leave: I'd go stay at a boyfriend's house for a couple of days, I'd go stay with my sister for a couple of days, I'd just leave and stay with a friend.

I: What led you to leave?

P: The realization that staying wasn't helping, that. . . Plus, I just couldn't tolerate it, I really couldn't tolerate it anymore; it was just more than I could stand. I felt like I was basically watching her kill herself, and I just couldn't do it anymore. I think I got in touch with some anger, and I think I was really able to take the anger and just kind of sit on it and say, "I have a right to be angry over this stuff," and then just decide that I also had a right to not have to put myself through that any longer.

I: I wonder if that was the beginning of that realization that night when you felt like there was a mountain between you and your mother?

P: Yeah, 'cause that did really, things seemed to change after that point: I think that was the first time I'd ever actually threatened her that I was going to leave and meant it, and actually had planned out places I would go. And I had decided, "No, you're not going to make it so I have to drop out

of high school: I'm going to go, and I'm going to get, I'm going to be all right; there are places I can go."

I: It sounds like you had decided pretty early on to take care of yourself, that you knew you could do it, and then—Well, at some point you could do it. . .

P: At some point, yeah.

I: I think that's really great and fairly amazing that when you were 13, you could decide that you weren't going to let your parents hurt you, or destroy you, and I wonder if you could say a little more about that.

P: Well, I think that has something to do, ironically, with what a good mom she was in some ways early on, 'cause she really did teach me that I deserved something good out of life, and made it so that I just expected that I could do what needed to be done. She just had a lot of confidence in me and a lot of faith in me and encouraged me a lot, and gave me a lot of good feedback about what I was doing, and actually served as a role model because when I was younger, and my dad was the one who was pretty much out of commission a lot of the time, she took care of things; she was very strong; she was always there. She just was very dependable and I never really worried that things would get out of hand, 'cause I knew that she would take care of it.

I: What about when she was depressed?

P: It really didn't seem to make that much of a difference: She kept passing through that.

I: What was different? 'Cause it sounds like you did notice some depression in her.

P: I think what was different was that part of what was enjoyable about her was that she was really feisty and really funny, and just ornery sometimes; I mean, you know, my mischievousness I definitely got from her, and that was not there: She wasn't fun during those times; she was, she seemed more, maybe more fragile. Maybe I did worry about her then even so, but it was more along the lines of worrying about her health, I think: Worrying that something from outside would hurt her. But I guess, yeah, that there's just something in there: I always was somewhat worried about her and wanted to make sure that she was okay; but it's just that earlier on, I trusted that she would be, and later on I didn't.

I: Was she more like a mother to you up until you were 14, she started drinking, and then it became more like she wanted to be your friend in a lot of ways?

P: Yep, exactly. She wanted—Yeah, the boundaries in our relationship when I was a kid seemed pretty clear: I knew, I was a respectful kid and I did what she said, and I knew that I'd get in trouble if I didn't; you know, pretty standard "Mom" stuff.

I: Right. And she took care of you.

P: Yeah, she took care of me. Even when things went crazy with my dad, I always knew that she would take care of me. But yeah, something changed: It's like she wanted to alter the boundaries of our relationship and I just wasn't comfortable with some of the places she wanted that to go. And some of the things—She wanted to share some confidences that I just had no interest in sharing; I just wasn't going to do it.

I: About her?

P: About her and about me. She wanted to act like my friend; she wanted to know things about me that I thought mothers had no business knowing about their daughters and she wanted to tell me things that I had no interest in knowing about her.

I: I can see what you say, then, about you having a clear sense of boundaries: I mean, it seems like that came early in your relationship, and so you were able to use that later on. . .

P: Luckily!

I: So you were able to stay sane, stay together.

P: Yeah.

I: You had said that you sort of got a message from your mom that she wanted you to, like, loosen up somehow. Can you say a little more about that? Like, how did you know she wanted you to do that?

P: I'm thinking there was this one time where she—she had this lady that she worked with; it was like a drinking buddy of hers—and the three of us went up to [city, state] for Hallowe'en night, and up in [city] for Hallowe'en they had this, like, Mardi Gras: They'd shut down, they'd shut off the whole main street, and everybody just kind of wears costumes and just gets wild in the streets. I was 16, and I guess—I mean, part of what was going on was that when I was 16, I looked a lot older than 16, and she'd always made it real clear that she valued the fact that I was attractive. And so—I mean, I looked, I don't know—it's kind of embarrassing now: I look at some old pictures of myself now, and I think, "My God, I look like a little prostitute or something," but I really played it up.

So we went out to [city] and I can't even remember what she and this other lady were wearing; I have no idea. But I was dressed like a vampire, kind of vampire/gypsy sort of a thing. And we went up there, and I was wearing this really low-cut, really clingy kind of dress, and I was with her, and I looked older. So I was with these two women, you know, and me. And they were on the make, on the prowl for all these men. And the men would come over and they'd want to talk to me, and then they'd start talking to them, and I felt like I was being used as a "man-magnet," basically, to bring men over so they could talk to them. And that was kind of amusing: I kind of knew what was going on, and it really didn't bother me; but there were a couple of times, like one time when this one guy was kissing her at the table—We were sitting at this bar, and you know, there were people everywhere, and everybody was just wasted—and so we were sitting there, and this man grabs hold of my mom and starts kissing her, and I guess I must have looked at her in some disapproving way, you know, like, "Mother!" And she said, "Oh, get over it! We're here to have a good time; you just need to lighten up." And I thought, "Okay, I guess I'll try."

I: But it bothered you.

P: Yeah, it did bother me: I thought, "Mother, quit doing this in a bar; God, have some sense of propriety!" And then there was this other guy, this Australian guy, who kept trying to put the moves on me and she seemed to be encouraging it. And I was like, "I am not going to let this guy put the moves on me in front of my mother: This is embarrassing." And so. . .

(Tape ends.)

P: . . . in front of my mother and I was embarrassed, and I finally leaned over and I told him I was 16. And I mean I'm sure he was 27 or something like that, so that freaked him right out: He had no idea that I was that young. And she got mad at me because she was afraid that we'd get in trouble for having me in there if somebody found out I was 16: So she wasn't concerned that this guy was doing this; she was upset that I might ruin their party. So I guess that kind of thing, the sort of--If I made any kind of disapproving statements, she would make comments like I needed to lighten up, or I needed to loosen up, or I needed to not be a party-pooper, kind of, you know? And that she would allow things that--I think I pushed the limits intentionally to see how far she would let things go, and she let them go a lot farther than I would have really been comfortable with. You know, I may not have complained about it at the time, but I was aware that I didn't feel like she was being very, again, very motherly.

I: No, not at all. 'Cause it does sound like you had definite feelings, related to her being your mother, about how she behaved and about how you behaved in each other's presence, and it's like she just didn't pay any attention to that at all, or give any regard to your feelings.

P: Yeah, really; exactly. So there was kind of this, I would say just sort of this pervasive undercurrent of feeling neglected for a long time with little node-points of where I became aware of it on a different level; and it had some emotional impact that it hadn't had before.

I: What did it mean to you? I know *neglected* is sort of my word, but is that what came to mind: You felt neglected, or just. . .

P: Maybe; I think it was more not feeling safe.

I: Like losing control?

P: Yeah, yeah; and nobody seemed to be, you know? But yeah, I think I would have used the word *neglect*, and I'm pretty sure I did use the word *neglect* in terms of saying, "You are neglecting your duties as a mother to me." And I know I said that to her 'cause she threw it back to me; and later on, once she sobered up, she apologized about all that stuff, and she thought she'd been neglectful, too, and I agreed with her. But yeah, she was neglecting her responsibilities, she was neglecting her duties, and she was neglecting me, and I was very aware of that.

I: Did she sober up--Did you mean, "When she had sobered up" during an interval of sobriety, or did she sober up for good?

P: She sobered up for good when I was about 21, 20--maybe I was 20: She went into a residential alcohol treatment place for about three months, and she stayed--I mean, she didn't live a whole lot longer than that--but for the rest of her life she was sober.

I: What was your relationship like at that point?

P: There was a lot of trying to mend things; I got really involved in Adult Children of Alcoholics for a while, went to those meetings and then I finally decided they were just a little too "loosey-goosey" for me. But it was helpful for a while: You know, I got this workbook and I was working through the exercises and all this kind of stuff. And she had gotten back in AA, and my sister was in AA at that point in time and so was my brother, and they were all living in [city] going to

AA together, the three of them. And so I would call—we were kind of like working the steps together, basically, and I was working in this ACOA model and they were working in the AA model, and we would kind of compare notes about where we were at in terms of what we were thinking of; and she and I had lots of long conversations of trying to work through some of this stuff that happened to us. And there were a couple of specific things that I confronted her on, a couple of particular incidents that I felt like I really needed to work on forgiving her for, and that she felt like she really needed to work on forgiving herself for them; and so we had a lot of dialogue about, around a couple of different things that had happened that I really felt shouldn't have happened at all. And so it was good: I mean, we got a lot of stuff out in the open, and I thought, I think that we were in a pretty okay place when she finally died.

I: Okay, okay. That's good.

P: Yeah, yeah. I'm glad we had the opportunity to do that, but I mean it took a lot of work; I mean, we weren't anywhere close to being finished.

I: How did you feel before she got sober. I mean, you had said that you were staying away from home more and more. Did you go off to college?

P: Um-hmm, um-hmm. Left for college, felt like I was abandoning her.

I: Oh, really?

P: Oh, yeah; big time, oh, yeah. And that was hard, you know: I would call home and sometimes she'd be drunk, and I was far away so there was nothing I could do, and so it was hard to think of her there drinking. Then we both went through a couple of health crises: She went through one that was a lot more serious than mine, and then I went through one, and that was hard, knowing that she was still drinking through all of that.

I: She couldn't be there for you?

P: Yeah. Actually, what had happened was she got cancer and she had married this guy from Canada, which was very weird: She married this guy from Canada that she'd known a hundred years before, and then not long after that she found out that she had cancer, so she went up to Canada—'cause you know, they have socialized medicine up there, so she went up there to get treatment. So she was up there doing that, and I was living alone that summer—I had gone back to our hometown and I was working and just taking care of our house and paying the rent, or mortgage: She'd send me some money for the mortgage, and I'd pay it, and then I was paying the utilities out of my check. So I was living alone in our house, and then I found out that I had an abnormal Pap smear and had to get laser surgery, and she was in Canada. So when all the—you know, to get the biopsies and got the news and all of that kind of stuff, she wasn't there for any of that. Then when we finally decided I was going to have to get surgery for it, she came home: She flew home like a week before that so that she could be with me when that was going on, so that was good.

I: Was that comforting?

P: Yeah, it was very comforting; yeah, yeah, that was very, very comforting. And by then she had, she was kind of to the point where I think these health things—It wasn't much longer after that

she got herself into treatment, so she was already kind of—her mind set had changed, and she was starting to already be more responsible.

I: Right, yeah. So you noticed that, and it felt different to you?

P: Yeah: It was really reassuring that I felt cared for again.

I: Were you able to find someone to care for you in the interim? You had talked about having friends, and boyfriends, and. . .

P: Yeah: Well, I tried. Actually, [husband] and I had just started dating at that point in time. It's really interesting, too, 'cause I was dating this other guy really hot and heavy and thought I was madly in love with him, and [husband] that summer was in [state]: He was working; he was working like seventy hours a week on this beastly job. And I had more contact on the phone with [husband] calling to make sure that I was okay than I had with the guy who was in town. And so that was kind of a—it's like, "Huh": I started thinking about my relationship with [husband] differently at that point in time. Yeah, he was always there.

I: Always there?

P: Always there; I could always count on him. That was one of the main reasons why I married him.

I: When did that start, his always being there; had you been friends?

P: Yeah, my first year in college we got to be friends, and he was just always this kind of solid peripheral presence: He didn't really, he wasn't intrusive in any kind of way, but I always knew that if there was something going on that was upsetting, or something that I needed some help with, be it moving some furniture somewhere or needing somebody to talk to about something, he was always there; that's nice.

I: It sounds like he was able to do some things that you wanted your mother to do, but she couldn't.

P: Yeah. Yeah.

I: That is nice, to have someone there; it really is.

P: Yeah; it was amazing. I tried desperately to screw it up at first 'cause I didn't know how to deal with it: I was not used to having somebody predictable around; I was used to living from chaos to chaos, and I didn't really know any other way to do it. So I would go around creating chaos for myself so that I could figure out what to do. And he just was having none of it: He was pretty impervious to chaos.

I: Were you aware of feeling anxious?

P: Um-hmm!

I: Then you felt anxious about the relationship with [husband]?

P: Yeah; when things would go too solid and too stable for a while, I would start getting really panicky: I mean, I was sure if I didn't do something to create some mild crisis, something horrible was going to happen. Plus, I just didn't know how to handle it: I didn't know how you were supposed to act if things were going okay; I had no idea. But yeah, I was able to kind of. . . I always had a lot of good friends, I've always had good friends; and usually, I could--Well, when I got older, I could call my brothers and sisters. During my high school time, they were all living in other states and really weren't around, and Mom didn't want them to know what was going on, and so I didn't feel comfortable calling them and telling them very much about it, so. . . But there were always friends that were around. You know, I guess I just relied on myself a lot: I read a lot of books, I did good in school so that I could make sure that I could go to college and get out of there.

I: Yeah, yeah. That's great; that's great.

P: Yeah.

I: Well, you've talked about--I think a lot about--sort of being aware of boundaries and how they shifted, and you talked about not feeling safe a lot of the time, and. . . I don't think I'm very good at summarizing all the themes, but is there anything else you feel like was sort of thematic in your experience?

P: I think the anger's got to be in there somewhere.

I: Anger--that was important?

P: That was really important: I mean, I think the anger was what got me through it, you know?

I: Yeah, you used it: You channeled it to help yourself.

P: If I'd just been sad and isolated and lonely and helpless and depressed, I don't know what I'd have done, you know? But when you can kind of grab hold of some anger, it can get--That was what got me through it, I think.

I: How did it do that? Did you just sort of. . .

P: Yeah, I felt righteous indignation, by God: I thought, "You just should not be acting this way. Any reasonable person would tell you that you should not be acting this way." And it was fairly elusive, 'cause I felt guilty, I felt like I ought to be taking care of her, I felt like I ought to cut her more slack; but there were times when I could really grab a hold of that and say, "No, this is not okay for you to be doing this: This is horrible, and you just need to cut it out. And if you're not going to cut it out, then I need to find some way to tolerate it, or I need to leave."

I: So you really said that to her, or was it saying it to yourself?

P: I think more I said it to myself. But I can remember screaming at her at times and just saying, "You're a horrible mother," and just saying, "You just need to get your head out of your ass; you need to quit acting like this!" So she'd yell back at me, or she'd cry--if he'd cry, then I'd usually feel bad and quit it. But, yeah.

I: Well, definitely your anger allowed you to get yourself out of the situation; and also, it sounds like in some ways it did impact your mother and made things better some of the time.

P: A little bit, yeah: 'Cause that was what would usually be the—me getting angry and threatening her that I'm leaving, and then she'd do something.

I: Yeah, yeah, 'cause you were important to her, apparently.

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so. . . But that's it: I think you pretty much hit the other major ones.

I: All right. Is there anything else at all that you want to say about feeling neglected?

P: Just that I don't think I would have coped as well with feeling neglected later on if I hadn't felt like I was cared for early on. I think that not being neglected early on was what gave me whatever it was that I needed to get through the later stuff.

I: A sense of self, in some ways?

P: Maybe, yeah. Some sort of faith that somewhere, there was something predictable enough that I could get through it. But that's it.

I: Thank you very much.

P: You're welcome.

Appendix C

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW WITH A MALE PARTICIPANT

I: . . . you to think of a time that you aware of feeling neglected, and tell me in as much detail as you can what that was like for you.

P: Okay. There was a—I guess I was 8 years old, and my mother took me and my brother to a church outing, and there were hundreds of people—it was in [city]—and—there were a bunch of things going on. And I was depressed anyway, about something, and she just kind of took off; and I didn't know any of the people there, really, and my brother was off somewhere else, and I just went off and climbed a tree and just sat there, I guess. And she never came looking for me; she—I guess I wanted her to come looking for me, I wanted her to pay some attention to me, but she didn't, and I felt kind of sad. Yeah, I was sad.

I: Were you aware of anything else, any other feelings?

P: I just felt that she didn't care about me. She had separated from my father when I was three, so I was forever wondering what he was up to, and I felt he didn't care about me because he was never around. And, you know, Mom had a habit of doing this stuff.

I: She had a habit of doing it?

P: Yeah. This church thing really made me keenly aware of how I felt about my mother: I wasn't terribly happy with her.

I: Was that like a turning point for you: Was that the first time you were aware of feeling something different toward her?

P: It's the first thing that comes to mind when you ask me about feeling neglected: That's probably the springboard.

I: Can you tell me a little more about what happened?

P: At that specific event? Well, we got there, and she started—we got to this church function, and she started socializing or whatever, and just kind of left me there; I guess she felt that I'd be looked after, or whatever. I just took off: I went away from the entire group of people. I really didn't know anybody, didn't know where my brother was, went off and climbed a tree, and sat there; and I don't remember if I cried—I think I may have cried: I did that regularly as a kid. But I sat off in the tree, and just felt really unwanted, and almost abandoned.

I: You say, "almost."

P: Well, I knew my mother was somewhere in the area: I figured she hadn't taken off on me, But, I mean, you leave an 8-year-old with hundreds of people, a lot of them strangers—I mean, most of them strangers, in fact—you know, that's not responsible.

I: Right. I would have been scared, I think

P: I don't know if I was scared as much as just wanting to be acknowledged, really; maybe I was looking for attention. Mom had a habit of doing this: Mom worked; she'd leave me and my brother, who was six, at the apartment; she felt that I could take care of myself.

I: When did that start?

P: Probably around the time when I was about 8.

I: That's pretty young to be left in charge of someone.

P: Yeah. I got. . . I was responsible for my brother since I was about 5, I guess, 5 or 6; but she started leaving us alone when I was about 8.

I: What did it seem like to you at the time?

P: It felt like I was the other parent: I was the father, I was doing what my father was supposed to be doing.

I: And it sounds like you were aware of it at the time that he wasn't there.

P: I was very aware of it: I asked about him all the time; I think I was very angry with my mother for leaving him. I'd say, "All the other kids have fathers, and I don't. Why is that? Am I any less worthy?"

I: So you saw other people around you and you realized that you didn't have what they had.

P: Yes, and we were poor on top of it, so I tied everything together: I figured the reason we were poor was because I didn't have a father, and I wanted to wonder, I wanted to find out why he wasn't around. And my mother always told me how she hated my father, but then she'd go and say how I reminded her of my father, so I thought, "If she hates him, she must hate me." I remember specific things, specific things she would. . . Mom, Mom was pretty cruel.

I: Can you tell me about some specific things that come to mind?

P: Yeah. I remember being 5 years old, and sitting at my little kid-sized card table, and my mom was getting ready for something, getting ready for work, and I guess I, maybe I was doing something she didn't like: She said, "If you don't behave yourself, I'm not going to come home: I'm going to go out, and I'm never going to come back." And she did that—that was a recurring thing as long as I can remember. She finally did take off when I was 17 and left me with my brother; she finally did take off.

I: For good?

P: She left me on my own, left me to my own devices to survive, but that's a whole other story. What else did Mom do? Mom would leave us alone for extended periods of time: I remember staying up and watching movies like "The Exorcist" or "The Omen" at 6 years old and being—or 7—and being terrified. She would leave us with baby-sitters who would take off, or they'd go off and do their drugs or whatever: This was the 70's, hey.

I: But no one was there for you.

P: No.

I: It sounds like you're real aware now that you needed someone for guidance.

P: Yeah. I hold a grudge, I definitely hold a grudge—I'm very angry about the whole thing. But yeah, Mom was awful, Mom was psychotic, Mom had some problems. But I'm just now finding this out; I'm just putting two-and-two together. But, um, she wasn't interested in raising children, and I think she resented the fact that she was tied down to kids, but that's not my fault. . .

I: No, you're right.

P: I have to. . . It's hard to come to grips with that, you know?

I: Yeah, it is hard; it's real hard. Were you aware at the time that she resented being tied down?

P: Well, I was. . . She may have loved us because we were her kids, but she didn't like her very much. And I think we reminded her of my father who was—there were all kinds of things wrong with him.

I: That's something you know now?

P: Yeah, I knew it then. He used to beat her, and he used to beat us, me and my brother, and that's why she left him. But I remember him: I remember being somewhere around two years old and having him come in the door and me running to him, "Daddy," having him take a shoe off and throw it at me, put a hole in the wall with the shoe.

I: And you were running toward him.

P: Yes, yeah.

I: That's really hard, something for a kid, and it sounds like you're sort of dealing with it now: You're realizing all these things, and struggling with them.

P: Yeah.

I: How did you get from being left alone at 17 to where you are now?

P: Oh, my God, that was—I quit school when I was 16 so I could work, quit high school. . .

I: Was that something that you needed to do?

P: I needed to work because she wasn't washing my clothes and she wasn't buying food for us: She would get mad at us, and she wouldn't buy us food. We relied for a while on the neighbors, but then we moved and then we didn't have any neighbors, so we had to fend for ourselves. My brother got into crime; I got horribly depressed, but I got—You know, I was also very angry. So Mom signed me out of school, and I worked graveyards at a Burger King. And Mom was still physically abusive; that was another thing she was into: pots and pans, and belt and brooms. She'd, Mom's—I'll get back to 17 in a second—Mom conducted a reign of terror over me and my brother, thought that would keep us in line. There was always a lot of violence, and if there wasn't

violence, there was always the threat of violence hanging over our heads: It was supposed to keep us in line, I think.

I: You were aware of it being there always, this threat.

P: Yeah, oh yeah; I was terrified all the time. You know, to this day I'm still really apprehensive about a lot of things, very nervous; and I blame that, the way I am now, on the things that happened to me then as far as the violence goes. Yeah, she'd—we'd get in, and if she was in a bad mood, my brother and I would immediately hide under the beds or hide somewhere, because we knew she was going to beat the Jesus out of us. And if she couldn't get us under the bed, she'd poke with brooms, and, you know, I caught brooms to the face.

I: Was that something that happened pretty regularly?

P: Yeah, yeah.

I: Was there any prediction to, you know, what might set her off?

P: No, not really. Well, if she was, if she started yelling at us a lot out in public, that was pretty indicative of the on-coming beating.

I: So what was going on inside of you, you know, if you noticed her. . .

P: "Have to defend myself, have to do something: Don't want to get beat."

I: What did you do; what could you do?

P: Well, for one thing, I was always, I was forever kissing her ass as far as cleaning the house—I didn't go outside and play with the other kids: I stayed at home and cleaned. I was, I wanted to be loved by my mother, I didn't want to be neglected; I wanted to be noticed. So I would stay home with a box of Brillo pads and shine up the oven or the broiler, or take some cleaner to the bathroom—I started this around 7 years old.

I: So you were working really hard. . .

P: I really wanted to be noticed: I wanted to work my way into Mommy's heart. Pretty twisted, you know. . .

I: What was twisted about it?

P: But it makes sense now. It's twisted that this should happen to a kid, but I know that there was nothing that I could do about that then, but it still angers me that. . . I guess I thought at the time it was a survival mechanism; I don't know.

I: I wonder if it was a survival mechanism.

P: Yeah, to insure that I wouldn't get the hell beat out of me all of the time, I mean to try to appease Mom some, whatever the hell it was: frustration or anger. I don't know if it worked or not, because I still got beat regularly.

I: Do you have any sense of it helping, or appeasing her at all?

P: Yeah, a little bit.

I: A little bit, okay. You know, it sounds like you really didn't have a childhood.

P: No, I definitely didn't: I had a horrible childhood.

I: Yeah, yeah. You had said that you were going to come back to when you were 17.

P: Okay, yeah. I worked a bunch of jobs, I had a bunch of different roommates—When she left me at 17, I had saved up some money from Burger King, so I found somebody willing to rent me an apartment. Got an apartment, I let my brother live with me. But he was a lot bigger than I was, and we got into fights. He beat me up—I was skinny, he was benching 325; he was 15 years old, but he was a lot stronger than I was. And a couple of fights went by, and I just said, "That's enough." Turned off the electricity and told him to move out, and stayed with a series of people, different people for a while. Worked a lot of different jobs, lived with a couple of sets of relatives, just a lot of—stayed on a lot of couches. And joined the Army when I was 20: That didn't work out; I was out by the time I was 21.

I: What didn't work out about it?

P: I was just horribly depressed in there, and so they let me out with an honorable discharge.

I: You were really working hard to find a place for yourself.

P: Yeah, yeah. Never really developed that identity that I've read so much about, just never seemed able to find any. I guess my identity as a victim, as a punching bag, someone that horrible things happened to: That was my identity. But I couldn't function in the Army very well.

I: You said that you were depressed a lot in the past?

P: Yeah, I was depressed as a kid; definitely.

I: What was that like for you?

P: I was depressed at school, so I was a natural target for the other kids. So I got not only beat up at home, I got beat up at school. The depression: I would have bouts of crying, and I didn't know why: I had no idea. But I'd just go from okay to just wanting to cry.

I: Just in seconds?

P: Yeah; I would go sit down somewhere and just cry. It was horrible; there were days, you know, I'd wake up in plenty of time for school, and I would just sit there staring at the wall trying to put my shoes on: It'd take me forty-five minutes to put my socks and shoes on. I just, it was almost like I was frozen in place. I don't know if it was out of terror, or just never had the energy, never had any energy.

I: Were you aware of not wanting to go to school?

P: I don't know if it was not wanting to go to school as much as not wanting to deal with kids. I developed this thing where I didn't want to be around people.

I: Can you tell me about that?

P: Yeah. It made work very hard, made school very hard.

I: How old were you?

P: It started happening in school, junior high school, in high school. I don't know where to start, there's just so much to say. When I was 12 years old, my mother, she was still beating me up, she had her series of boyfriends, she was drinking, she was doing drugs, and she and her boyfriend used to beat me up. And then she started to call me all sorts of horrible names. And I started, to avoid beatings I'd start running of the house, and I'd start staying, I would start sleeping on the trains or sleeping on the fire-escapes--this was [city]--sleeping on the beach; and then stopped going, started cutting school a lot, didn't want to go; I was too upset to go to school. I didn't, I couldn't do my homework at home because I had all this shit going on at home, and I'd go to school, I wouldn't know the work. So that got, it started to perpetuate; things just got kind of out-of-control. And I was in gifted classes all through elementary school, and through junior high; I was in IGC classes. You know, I found it impossible to go to school and deal with these kids and then go home and deal with Mom.

So Mom sent me, when I was about 11--the end of my 11th year--she told me, she sent me to [state] to live with some cousins, and it was fine, but there was one time where they had company and they didn't want me to come out of my room, and I felt that they were very, very ashamed of me, so I ran away and went back to [state] and lived with my mom. That lasted a couple of months: Then she sent me to my dad, whom I hadn't seen since I was 3, and he beat me up, and he beat my step-mother up because she didn't want the extra kid around. And there were a lot of, there was a lot of guns and drugs and beer and liquor, and he was drunk every day. And he used to--I only got hit twice when I was out there for six months, but my step-mother got a beating everyday. My father used to be a professional fighter, a prize-fighter, and I don't know what his deal was, but he beat up everyone around him, in fact. He beat up his step-kids, he beat up my step-mother, and then one day he beat me up, and I called my grandmother and said, "Now my dad's beat me up." So she wired me a ticket, and one day he went to work, I stole his bicycle--I was 12--and pedaled from [suburb] to [city], [state] and jumped a bus, spent three days on the bus going back to [state].

I was going to stay with my grandmother, but my mother took me back. While I was in [state], my mother had gotten remarried to some guy, so it didn't take long before my mother decided that she didn't want her kids to ruin her new marriage, so she put me and my brother in foster homes. We were in foster care the first time for three-and-a-half months, we went back for a couple of months, and she put us back in foster care; and I spent the next two years in foster care, going from home to home.

I: Going from home to home.

P: The first home the second time, I was with my brother for a month, but he and I fought all the time, so they put me in a home with a bunch of Vietnamese kids, and that was pretty strange. I had no friends, and it was awful. And then I was in another home. My mother took my brother out of foster care a year before she took me out, and she used to come see us--our social worker would pick us up and we'd all meet at this group home once a month, the second Sunday of the

month, and Mom would spend a couple of hours with us, and she did this regularly until she took my brother out of foster care; and I was in there for another year, and I think I saw her twice over the next year on these visitations. So I, here was a 14-year-old kid going, "Hmm, Mommy doesn't love me." But I knew that all along, "Mommy doesn't love me." And then my foster mother would tell me things like, "'Mother's just a word.'" You know, "Grown up and deal with it: Your mother doesn't care about you." And she was right, but that was kind of a harsh reality for a 14-year-old; but she was right. And I stayed in foster care until I was 15 and-a-half, and. . .

I: Was the foster care itself of any help?

P: No! It made me more aware of how much other people had and how much I didn't.

I: So maybe, in some ways, it was harder even to relate to people.

P: I had no friends, the kids at school used to call me "Little Orphan Boy" and stuff like that. "No, there's a difference: I'm in foster care. Technically, I'm not an orphan: I have parents. I haven't been. . ."; but I was trying to rationalize the whole thing. I would be in foster care and I'd think, "Well, my mother didn't want me," you know? I was in the fourth foster home, I'm thinking this is the sixth time she sent me away since, you know, the sixth place I've been away from home since I was 11.

I: You know, I don't know how you can make sense of that.

P: I'm still not sure I have. But I definitely felt neglected growing up. As far as making it to college, I had, when I got out of the Army, I had a job, and I was making really good money at it—I was bringing in \$400 a week after taxes doing Coke machines and other vending machines, and I was a warehouse manager, and did all the (lost word). And I pulled my back out one day and thought, "I can't do this; I'm going to kill myself doing this." And I'd always wanted to go to school, and after a brief stay at [hospital] for a sort of a nervous breakdown or whatever—you know, this job, I guess the stress from this job got to me, and I just got suicidal and called up [hospital] and stayed there for two-and-a-half-months—This was back when they would juice your insurance for all it was worth, back in '90 or '91. And I got out, and I had talked to Voc Rehab and they said they would send me to school. So they put me through school for a few years until I got my Associate's Degree, but it was hard: I had to go back and re-learn all this stuff I needed to know from high school. But I am the only person in my family with a degree, my immediate—I have cousins, I have a cousin who has a degree, actually two cousins who have degrees, but as far as brothers, and mother, father, grandparents, aunts and uncles, I'm the only one who's got a degree.

I: And you did it all on your own.

P: Voc Rehab helped a lot. But my mother is dirt-poor; my father's dead—he drank himself to death—he's been dead for three years; Mom's dirt-poor, we don't speak; I don't have any contact with my brother, so I'm here in Knoxville by myself. I still keep in touch with relatives, some aunts.

I: What effects do you think that your childhood has on you today?

P: Self-esteem: I think it's ter—greatly affected my self-esteem. And my confidence—my stomach's growling thinking about this—my confidence is a lot lower. If I had had a decent childhood and had had something solid, you know, had some parents to lean on for support emotionally and financially, just showing me the ways of being an adult—explain credit cards to me, explain how

to do my taxes. Mom told me when I was 15, she said, "You may be smarter than I am, but you don't have the common sense and you're not as worldly as I am, and you're going to need to know how to do things, and I'm not going to tell you to do things, how to do things." She told me this almost verbatim. And then taxes came around: You know, I got a job, had to figure out how to do my taxes; she wouldn't tell me how to do that. And just stuff like that: She never explained to me that good grades were necessary, and that college, if I ever wanted to get out of poverty, that college was a necessity. And I'm still finding out things. I've got my first credit card now, and I'm trying to figure all this out on my own. I have a friend who's into finance, and he's explaining a lot of things to me. I'm just pulling all this knowledge that I should have gotten from parents; I'm trying to pull it from everywhere else, and it's hard. I feel like I've been left behind: Here I am, 28, and I really, really, resent my parents.

I: Yeah. Understandably, I would say.

P: And I'm angry, I'm bitter. These are effects from. . . (trails off)

I: It sounds like, when you were growing up, you really didn't have any source of support, emotional support. Was there any friend. . .

P: Nobody pushed me to do anything, nobody rewarded me for good grades: I had a roomful of achievement awards, I was always in gifted classes, and I think I--There's no telling, had I been in high school, and had I had something to go home to, there's no telling what I could have done. Now I'm going, "What if, what if, what if," and I'm trying to do the best I can with what I've got now, but I can't help but think about the "What-if's."

I: Does that add to the bitterness you feel?

P: Yeah. And I get, you know, very self-deprecating, but I think, "Well, I don't have a chance." And dating is a mystery to me, intimacy is a strange, far-off concept. I sleep with people; it's a purely mechanical act. Especially women, I don't trust women. There's just so much: I'm seeing several people right now, and I don't feel close to any of them. And there's a girl who's wanting to date me. And she's better than average-looking, but she's got, she's doing all kinds of things with her career, and she's already established, and I can't figure out, I think, "Well, why is she interested in me? Here I am a 28-year-old undergraduate Senior." I feel worthless as far as--"I would only bring her down," is what I think, but I try to tell myself that I'm worth more than that; but that's not how it feels.

I: It feels, just, what; how does it feel?

P: I feel that I'm unworthy of stable, intelligent people, so I settle for people who I know are pretty dead-end, pretty screwed-up. Because that's, I guess I still hear my mother telling me--not literally: I don't hear voices or anything like that, thank God--but I still have Mom's message that I'm worthless and that she's going to leave me, and that I'm going to be alone; so that I keep several women around, worthless people that I'm never going to want to have a relationship with.

I: What is your relationship with them like?

P: Purely mechanical sex, try to show no emotion--For a long time, I shut down emotionally pretty much; every now and then somebody will come along that will try to chisel their way inside, and that freaks me out. But my relationship with these women that I'm dating right now is just purely

sexual, purely don't-go-anywhere-with-them, don't-do-anything-with-them, don't-even-have-meaningful-conversation.

I: What is that like for you?

P: Oh, man, it's like I feel alone, very alone; it's like it's me against the world.

I: Is it always like that for you? Always?

P: Yeah. See, I have intimacy. . . I don't have very many male friends; I have one male friend, but. . .

I: The guy in finance?

P: Yeah. I mean he's not, he's got his own business: I met him at a chess tournament. But that's about it.

I: Is that a good relationship for you?

P: It's not bad. I don't feel terribly close to him, but he hasn't done anything to me. I guess that's how I judge good relationships from bad ones: The bad ones are the ones where someone's done something bad to me, and the good ones are the ones that nothing much happens at all: I haven't been hurt.

I: You said that you become aware of something when someone tries to get close to you, something that freaks you out. Can you say more like what's that like for you?

P: I get very uncomfortable; I think, "What does this person want from me?" For instance, this person calls me last night, this girl, and she's just so normal: She comes from a decent family, she's got a roommate, she's got a couple of jobs, she's doing very well in school, and I guess I'm trying to find something wrong with her so I can feel comfortable with her, maybe because I feel there's something wrong with me; something defective is more like it: That's a better description.

I: What would that be?

P: Maybe coming from a non-family childhood. . .

I: And that makes you defective?

P: I don't understand.

I: I said, "And that makes you defective?"

P: Yeah. I feel that I'm lower than other people who come from better families. I had an experience about five years ago where I dated a girl who came from a very good family, and she took me home to meet her parents, and it was awful. They asked, the first thing they asked—they're an old Southern family—they asked what my Daddy did, and I was very vague about that; then they asked about my Army career, my illustrious Army career, and I was vague and very avoiding on that; then they asked about my mother, what she did; and they asked why I was driving the car I was driving;

and my girlfriend told them that I was very bright, and the mother said, "Well, if he's so bright, how come he's not making any money?" And I haven't dated a girl from a good family since.

I: 'Cause it seems like they won't accept you.

P: No, I mean they don't want their girl marrying someone who doesn't have a future, is what they saw me as, and that just made me feel very, very bad. And now I'm, I don't, I meet people, I never tell them about my family. I used to be eager to tell people that I would meet about myself, and I didn't realize how much it freaked people out, like, "Oh, this guy is damaged goods: He's carrying a lot of baggage." You know, a lot of people are turned off by that. Some people thrive on it, I mean the people who can't fix their own lives, they try to help me.

I: What's that like for you when they try to do that?

P: That's not the kind of attention I want: I don't, it doesn't, that makes me feel uncomfortable; it makes me feel even more damaged.

I: What does feel good to you?

P: As far as relationships go? Being around somebody who hasn't had it easy, but somebody who's trying, like I am, to have a normal life; trying not to survive, but trying to get past obstacles: Somebody who hasn't come from a rich family, somebody who's had to work, somebody who's had, you know, struggled a little bit; I am more comfortable around people like that.

I: Maybe someone who can understand you.

P: Yeah. Somebody who can relate, at least.

I: It sounded like when you were young, you were in this care-taking role with your brother. Could you tell me a little more about your relationship with him, you know, the history of it.

P: [Name], yeah. I remember being 5 or 6 and having to make his bed. He liked peanut butter and jelly sandwiches; he would leave stuff out, and I would get in trouble if he'd leave that stuff out. Or if we'd leave toys out, I would get blamed; whether it was me or him or both of us, I would get the blame. I got the blame for the things that didn't get done. I was responsible for him. Then he grew up: I mean, he started to get, even before he hit puberty, he was bigger than I was and started picking fights with me. That's when the care-taking thing stopped pretty much as far as, except for the apartment when Mom left: All of a sudden I had to take care of him again. But he was a thug, started burglarizing houses when he was 14. The day I got out of Basic Training when I was 21 was the day he got out of prison, so we both had graduations of our own that day. In fact, I'm the only male in my family—my grandfather, my father, my brother, most of my uncles—who hasn't been to—all of my uncles, in fact—who hasn't been to prison. They were angry and violent; I got depressed.

I: How do you feel about that now, that you got depressed and they were angry and violent?

P: I don't know: It's something I rarely think about.

I: It's hard to think about.

P: He would, he was better able to defend himself: He channeled all of his anger into other people, just like my dad and my grandfather before us. He beat the hell out of everybody in his path, and I wasn't like that. You know, I'd get picked on and just kind of shrivel up in a ball.

I: Like you wanted to escape all the pain?

P: Yeah. I was a big day-dreamer. I still phase out: Someone can be talking to me and I just, if I don't want to deal with the subject at hand, I can just escape.

I: What do you think about, what types of things?

P: It can be anything, anything. I think a lot about my childhood, actually; I'm trying to remember that a lot of what I'm going through now isn't happening now: A lot of my reactions to things are reactions I'd had as a 7-year-old boy. I'm still so emotional about everything, I have a hell of a time holding down a job. Oh, yeah, I started to go into that earlier: I can do well for a few weeks at a time, and then something can happen; I could have a bad interaction with somebody and that'll be it: I start getting terrified of going to work, I start calling in sick, you know, be physically unable to get to work. And even when I'm really good at the job, I'm--The jobs I've had, I'll do well for a little while. I'll get manager jobs like that. I don't even go for manager jobs: I get them offered to me because I'm efficient; I guess I'm kind of very organized; and I seem to do well with people for a while if I really work at it.

I: If you work at it?

P: I really, I have to work at it.

I: What do you have to work at?

P: Being able to deal with people, trying to not be emotional, trying to control myself; if I get emotional, I forget things. I had a job waiting tables at a Pizza Hut where one day--I was kind of confused about everything, but I was getting it under control. I got into an argument with this waitress who stole an order of mine, and I just forgot everything: I forgot all my tables, I forgot what order I was doing things in, I got very confused and I panicked and ran off the job; I just took off. Or if I'm not on the job and--Put it this way: The longest I've had a job outside of, say something, something really part-time thing at school, the longest I've had a job on the outside is four months or five months.

I: It sounds like inevitably some conflict will happen.

P: That's why I'm afraid to get--Yeah, imminent disaster; I just sit around and wait for it. That's what I'm afraid, you know: I get my degree; what good is a degree going to do me if I can't hold on to a job. I have a, that hangs over my head like Domesday.

I: Right now, this very day?

P: School feels--yeah--school feels very safe. I graduated from [community college] two years ago, and they had to make me leave: They had to make me graduate. I was just so familiar with it, and I felt safe there.

I: What makes school feel safe?

P: I kind of feel like I'm avoiding real life; I don't know. This girl who asked—She's got two jobs outside and she's doing really well here, and I'm thinking to myself, "My God, if I ever want to get a job in my field, I'm going to have to get some experience now, because nobody's going to want to hire somebody who's got a degree and no experience." And I know these things, but I haven't done anything as far as even looked into getting jobs somewhere.

I: It sounds like it's hard to think about.

P: It's one of these things that I avoid. You know, I can sit and force myself to think it out on paper, and I will put it off: It's a scary thing for me. I blame my being afraid of that and being afraid of people, I blame that on getting beat up every day, almost every day as a kid, and just having the threat of doom, of my mother leaving me, hanging over my head.

I: Are you consciously aware of that, of people leaving you, of the fear of that?

P: Yeah! All. . .

(Tape ends.)

P: . . . just got out of a relationship—I guess I'm still in it—this girl that I for dated four-and-a-half years who did, when I graduated [community college], told me, she didn't say, "Congratulations," she said, "That's not enough." And I said, "Yeah, I know it's not enough, but aren't you going to congrat"—let's put it this way: She's never supportive; she had nothing but bad things to say to me, kind of the way my mother was. And I just cling to her for dear life, clung to her for dear life; you know, she gets boyfriends and threatens not to come around anymore, I still panic. I mean, I just, "Don't leave me." And I know—My God—she's such a wreck, a wreck of a human being; she's had a wreck of a life: She's nothing but bad for me, and I know that's why I still keep running back to her.

I: You know, it's so often hard to know. . . You know, you know things in your head that something's bad for you, but still, it feels so different: It feels like you need her, it sounds like.

P: Yeah, it's a definite physiological kind of reaction I get when—You know, I saw her a week ago, and she told me she was seeing somebody else, and all of a sudden I went from not caring to, "Oh, my God, what am I going to do?" And I sweet-talked her out of it, and then I went and slept with somebody else, but I felt safe thinking that this other girl was still there for me.

I: I wonder if sleeping with someone else was a way to express something to her, too.

P: Yeah. It was my way of being aggressive toward the first girl. I think I hate her on a certain level; I really think I do.

I: What makes you think that?

P: I think the reason I go out and I sleep with all of these other people is because of this one girl.

I: Do you feel hatred toward her?

P: Yeah, I do; I just feel nothing but heat, and wanting to see her do horribly, wanting to see her life just collapse.

I: At the same time, you also feel like you need her.

P: Yeah. And I know she despises me: She's told me that. And even when she told me—once she had told me she loved me—she would do things completely to the contrary.

I: And what was it like for you when she'd do that?

P: I was confused: I was like, "This is how she loves me." But there's that familiar "Mom" theme there: She's my mother, and she's going to leave me.

I: So having her, in some ways it sounds like it's comforting, even if you're always also on the edge of. . .

P: Yeah; we're both probably on the edge of killing each other all the time: It's gotten violent, it's gotten ugly.

I: When has it gotten violent; what led up to that?

P: I hadn't had a job in two years, and I finally got a job making \$7-an-hour in a [product] factory, a [product] plant. This was about three years ago, and I was so proud of myself, and I'd been to work for two days, and I was, "Look! I've got a job! I'm actually hanging on to the job: I've got in two days and I'm going to go in today." She said, she started going on about the "white trash" thing, the factory worker thing, and she had me sitting on the floor crying just with my head in my lap, and just yelling names at me; I didn't go in to work: I was sitting there pulling at my hair and just crying on the floor; and I saw her sitting there with a smile on her face on the couch, and I went over and flipped the couch over on top her and got down and put my hands around her neck, and she ran for the door and I through the TV set at her. And there have been times where she's come over: One time she caught me with a girl, and she punched me in the face and did all this stuff, and I pushed her and I'm like, "You need to go!" And she wouldn't go and I called the police on her. I would feel—if I could stay away from this girl, my self-esteem, I'm sure, would increase, but the fact that I need these people the way I do, especially this girl, really makes me feel like I'm trash, makes me feel that I'm not worthy of decent, normal people, people with any kind of future. And I don't mean money, I just mean "future" in being able to function normally.

I: Right; to find someone in a way that's healthy for you.

P: Somebody I'm going to be able to grow with and not out of, stay together out of a mutual desperation. But this is what I'm used to, this is what I grew up with, this desperation and constant anxiety. And I'm forever a nervous wreck: I'm forever sitting with my teeth clenched and my fists clenched and my arms crossed and my legs crossed, and people get uncomfortable with that.

I: Do you know what it is that's making you nervous?

P: Just constant being on guard, constant waiting for something to happen. I'm never relaxed, even when I'm at home: I have to force myself to sit and just do nothing and try to relax.

I: What happens when you're trying to relax: You're alone and. . . ?

P: I feel, I get these thoughts saying that I'm wasting time, that I should be doing something, that—Or more commonly, I get that thought that, "Well, you're sitting here by yourself because no one cares about you." That's a big thing.

I: So being alone is hard.

P: Being alone is negative when I could study, or I could work out, or I could do something positive; even just being alone at all is very hard for me. And I live by myself, and I do spend a lot of time by myself; I'm just flooded with these thoughts, these negative thoughts.

I: How do you handle them; what do you do to . . .

P: I get out of the house, I try to get out of the house, but sometimes I'm even afraid—There's the trade-off: I either stay home and feel like a failure or go out and feel uncomfortable around people; you know, they're equally, equally bad.

I: What do you want from people in the sense of what would you like to see your life be like in relation to other people?

P: Some understanding and not quick judgement, not quick categorization: You know, "This guy's 28, and he doesn't have a real job; therefore, he must be a bum or there's got to be something wrong with him." You know, that's not fair.

I: Do you experience that, that people do that to you, they categorize you?

P: Yeah. People I meet, they're fine with me—I look younger than my age—they're fine until they find out my age. If they think I'm 21 or 22, things are fine; they find out I'm 28, you know, like, "Well, how long have you been to college as an undergraduate?" Or, "What are you doing for yourself career-wise?" Or, "What kind of a job are you working at?" A lot of people come out, directly out and ask me how do I make a living; I could tell them, "Government-subsidized housing and food stamps," and that would freak them out, so I don't tell them that. And a lot of people are turned off by the fact that I haven't done something more with myself, because these people take stability in college and family for granted: They just assume that's got to be there, that's a prerequisite for normalcy. And which, you know, I sort of believe that, not just on an emotional level, but, I mean, that makes sense that a person is more likely to be stable when they come from stability themselves. So now I avoid telling people about me: I won't, and I try to crack jokes and try to cover it up with bad humor, whatever; most of all, cynicism.

I: What do you think about that; does that work for you?

P: Yeah. I've met other people like me, angry and cynical, and it's not about other people; it's about themselves.

I: What's it like for you to be with them?

P: These people that have this in common with me? A lot more comfortable. I went to [hometown] over Spring Break, and I have friends: One of them has become an utterly worthless drunk; it made me uncomfortable to be around him and his friends: All they did was drugs and drink. I like to drink, but I feel guilty about it because my father drank himself to death, so I'm very aware of my drinking, and so I try not to do it to excess. But this other person, she's very unhappy, but

she's functioning, and she comes from a lot of the same stuff I did: She grew up adopted and she struggled in college for a while and she just quit: She's been working, and she's bright, and she's very aware, and we can sit and we can exchange in war stories, or. . . I guess we wallow in misery together and I guess that makes me comfortable. That's not what I really want, though, but that's what works for me at the moment.

I: It works because it makes you feel comfortable?

P: Well, it gives me, makes me feel connected to the other person, knowing that they've got these things in common with me.

I: Is it hard to feel connected in general, unless. . .

P: Yeah, yeah: I rarely feel close to anybody.

I: It does sound like you might feel lonely a lot of the time.

P: I feel lonely all the time: I can be with a bunch of people and feel lonely; I can go out to a bar and be surrounded by people and try to talk to people, and be doing okay talking to people, and still feeling completely by myself. Feel like a freak, like I stick out like a sore thumb even though I'm dressed liked everybody else, I've got the same haircut as everybody else; I just feel like an open wound.

I: Open wound?

P: Yeah; I just feel not up to snuff, not up to par with everybody else.

I: I wonder if you feel wounded inside, too. You had said you feel sad. . .

P: Yeah. I sit, sit out in the same bars, for instance: I just long—I see these people, these groups of people together—and I just kind of long to be part of that, or something. The only thing I'm involved in right now is a chess club.

I: What's that like for you?

P: Well, I have something in common with these people: chess. And that's not bad, but everything is contingent on chess, and that's not real. You're as. . . That's my connection to these people; I can't seem to get beyond that.

I: What keeps you from getting beyond it; do you have a sense of what it is?

P: I guess I'm too aware of the winning or losing thing.

I: Okay: So you play pretty seriously.

P: Yeah, yeah: I play tournaments. It's hard for me to drag myself to these tournaments, but once I'm there and I'm actually in the game, I'm okay. And if I get, I don't really mind the losing—I don't enjoy it—but I don't mind losing as long as I don't lay down and die. Even if I'm losing, and I put up a good fight, I don't mind that. It's kind of like my life: At least if I try, I try, keep trying; don't give up. But as far as getting close to these people, I'm not exactly sure what keeps me from

connecting with them on another level other than chess. A lot of them are older, a good deal of them work out at Oak Ridge, there are doctors. There is one doctor, and he's—I mean I've eaten dinner with him; I've been over to his house several times playing chess with him—but he's like, he's 50 years old, he's got his wife and kids and house and his brand-new BMW; you know, I'm just blown away by the whole thing: Here I am, completely not there, except for chess. And for me to beat him pisses him off, visibly pisses him off. So I don't go around him very much: I haven't seen him in a couple of months, in fact.

I: It sounds like that's pretty unpleasant for you when he becomes pissed off.

P: It is, and he doesn't complement me on my win: He'll just say that he was tired, or come up with some (lost word) trying to cover his ass, I guess; and I understand that: It's an ego-thing. But, with a lot of these people, including me, there's way too much invested in the game, in the winning or the losing.

I: Is it also sort of an "ego-thing" for you, or something to do with your self-esteem?

P: Yes; yeah.

I: Well, that makes sense; it sounds, again, like it's sort of a parallel to your life: Right now you may not feel like you're on top of it, but you can see that you've worked. . .

P: I'm not living. . . I'm not sitting still at least, and I'm trying to do something.

I: And I hear a lot of frustration that you're not where you want to be.

P: I feel like I'm not doing enough. But sometimes I get so depressed, I find it hard to do any—Yesterday, I felt, it was almost impossible for me to get to school. I mean, I walked around my apartment just looking at the walls, thinking, "I'm not going to go today, I'm not going to go today, I'm not going to go today."

I: Almost a frantic quality to it?

P: Yeah, yeah; I argue with myself about it, thinking if I stay here I'm going to feel really bad about myself and if I go my nervousness will pass.

I: What are you nervous about?

P: Sometimes about the clothes I'm wearing—This is starting to sound pretty far out, I know: Believe me, I've gone through all this and examined the hell out of it; I know some of it sounds pretty bad. Sometimes it's just about dealing with people, sometimes it's just about something hanging over my head: Maybe an assignment, or maybe something, errands that I have to run out of school that I haven't done; it could be just about anything. Or just sometimes I just wake up, and I feel very, very dark, just no energy, and not really wanting to go through with the day, just wanting to stay in bed and hide. And I do that sometimes.

I: What's that like for you when you do that?

P: I try to sleep as much as possible; I can sleep for twenty hours, or stay in bed for twenty hours, at least, and sleep most of it, and just lose the day completely. "What's it like?"

I: I mean, how do you feel about doing that?

P: Guilty. Yeah, my life is ridden with guilt and shame.

I: Yeah; it does sound like you have a real hard time accepting yourself.

P: I do. If I ever have kids, I will acknowledge their existence, their existences, definitely; I will not ignore them.

I: Is that, you think, the worst thing of all is being ignored?

P: Just not being instructed properly, not being told that I was worthwhile.

I: I'm hearing you talk a lot about not being told you were worthwhile, and feeling depressed, and really struggling to find acceptance; that's one thing you've talked about. And then also, you've talked some about not knowing how to fit in into the world, not knowing how to take care of yourself.

P: Taking care of myself is a big thing: I feel guilty; I feel like I've done something horrible if I go to a restaurant to eat, or if I buy an item of clothing; if I do anything for myself I feel bad: I have this definite issue about taking care of myself, doing anything for myself. I think, "Well, this could have been money more wisely spent." Spent on what? But maybe I still have Mom's ideas, maybe: Mom was forever throwing these negative things at me, telling me what a loser I was, or—I was chubby when I was 12, or 11; she'd tell me I was fat. She'd say, "Oh, you don't have a girlfriend; you must be a faggot," or something like that. You name it, anything she could come up with to hurt me, because she couldn't sit and talk with me.

I: What—do you have a sense of what was going on with her? What kept her from being able just to sit and talk with you.

P: She drank a lot; maybe that had something to do with it. Maybe because I asked her so many questions about so many things, and maybe she didn't have the answers. I really try to do, I really try to give her the benefit of the doubt, but it just doesn't add up.

I: No, it doesn't, it doesn't.

P: The scale tips.

I: In some ways, I think it's easier to give someone the benefit of the doubt, 'cause how do you make sense of the fact that it wasn't about you at all? That's scary, that's scary.

P: Mom's doing horribly these days, and I saw her back in January: After not talking to her for over a year, I saw her in January; and she lives in a run-down house with six dogs, and the place smells like dog pee, and it's awful: I couldn't stand to stay there. I am not, I am not like any of them. I always had, growing up, I felt different: I always felt detached and not part of where I was with them; I never felt that I belonged to them.

I: You were aware of feeling different from the beginning, or as far back as you can remember?

P: Yes, yes. Maybe—And after a while I started to feel different from everybody, and I used to think it was a good thing: I used to think that maybe I knew something that they didn't. But that became a problem.

I: What made it a problem?

P: Just being so alone; having to be the only one of my kind: You know, it was me versus the world.

I: What was it that made you feel like you were different; what about you?

P: Maybe the fact that I seemed, maybe because I was sad more often, it seemed, than other people. Or I would write a lot, I would do a lot of—and nobody around me did these things: Nobody read, nobody wrote, nobody took any interest, nobody had any hobbies; everybody worked and smoked and drank and had sex, and you just hung out and did nothing. And I collected coins, I collected everything: I collected stuff out of serial boxes. I collected pretty much whatever I could get my hands on; I collected and categorized and organized, and nobody else did these things: My brother didn't, my mother didn't, my mother's boyfriends didn't, my other relatives didn't; nobody seemed to care about anything.

I: And you did care about things.

P: I did! I wanted, I cared about how I looked, and I cared about how, you know, doing things, tangible things.

I: Were you aware of that being something positive in you?

P: I thought it was positive: I thought it made me a good person.

I: What do you think about it now?

P: I think it made me neurotic: I think it made me want to organize and control everything in my life; and the things that I don't have total control and total grip on make me feel helpless and, you know, just anxious.

I: Like other people.

P: Yeah, I've been accused of being controlling, and I can see where they would get that.

I: And, I mean I was thinking other people are something you can't really control, and that's, it is anxiety-provoking. (Pause.) So it sounds like some of the things that helped you when you were a kid, you also can see some problems with; you're sort of trying to struggle with that. Not trying to, but you are struggling with it I guess.

P: I think stuff like that isolated me; I guess after getting beat up at home and at school, it was safe to be isolated; safe-er: It was better to be isolated than to risk beatings emotionally or physically from people. The reason I got chubby when I was 12, or 11 was because I—This was when I came back from living with my father, right before the foster homes—I stayed in the apartment for like two months and did nothing but bake: Bake cakes, and brownies; and every now and then—I'd just kind of hang out the window and watch kids play in the street—every now and then I'd invite

somebody up to share some of my baked goods, and every now and then somebody would accept, but that was a big risk.

I: What made it a risk?

P: Well, they might not like what I made, or they might make fun of me doing that.

I: But you took the risk.

P: Yeah, I did. But also, at the point when I was depressed, also, when I really wanted attention—Actually, I don't know if I was suicidal or I just wanted to get a rise out of somebody—I'd go up to the sixth floor and go up on the roof and walk the ledge.

I: Were you scared then at all?

P: No; I've never been afraid of heights.

I: You really don't know if you were suicidal, or you wanted attention?

P: I think I may have been a little bit: I think maybe a combination of the two.

I: Maybe you wanted someone to rescue you.

P: Yeah, maybe that's what I was looking for; that's probably it: Waiting for Mom to come up and say, "Oh, I love you, honey." But what Mom would do instead was pack your bags and take you to fucking [hospital]. You know, "I'm going to drop you off: You're crazy." She had me in therapy when I was 8 years old; and my first therapist told me that the way I was feeling wasn't my fault, and said that it had something to do with my mother, and I made the mistake of telling this to Mom. And she yanked me out of that, and she started sending me to Catholic Charities: This guy would come pick me up and put me in a van, drive me to this church and to this little play area and have me work out scenarios with toys and stuff. And I'd be like, "So why are you having me play with these toys?" "Oh, I just want to find out something about you." "You're a shrink, aren't you?" And he was like, "Well, yeah: Sort of." So I'd go home and say, "Mom, how come you're sending me to a shrink? Do you think I'm crazy?" I was 8 years old; I was observant, though, so I started—And when I was 10, some kids chased me to the door and my mother screamed out the door, "Leave him alone: He's under doctor's care!" So that stuck with me also. And I've been in therapy—Oh, my God, I've seen so many people it's not funny. When I was in foster care, I saw these people, and I just, I don't know. . . But hence, my interest in psychology. . .

I: Yeah. Well, it sounds like some of the experiences weren't helpful, to say the least.

P: No: A lot of them were just going through the motions, didn't generally give a shit. But there were some people who were interested in my well-being; and I guess that was what I was looking for as a kid: People who were interested in my well-being.

I: Yeah; I think we all need that.

P: Essential to having development.

I: Have you found therapy helpful in any ways?

P: Yeah. It's, stuff I relate in therapy I wouldn't tell anyone else.

I: It feels safe?

P: Almost. There's still a fear of being judged and a fear of disappointing: After a while I kind of—I guess the person I'm seeing now, I kind of grew to respect a little bit. And there's certain things that I find myself saying, I feel myself being, finding myself embarrassed, thinking, "Oh, you know, this is going to sound really bad; I'm going to let this person down." I think, "Well, who am I trying to impress?" I usually wonder, saying it anyway, and then I tell this person, "That was kind of embarrassing." I'm trying to be honest with myself about everything, too.

I: How is that for you when you do that?

P: Not very comfortable, trying to distinguish between reality, actual real-world reality, and the stuff that I cook up in my head about how other people perceive me or how things actually are.

I: That's hard to do; it really is.

P: And I'm still sort of directionless as far as what I want to do with myself. But I've always been interested in psychology: It's always been sort of a hobby, because I've been around it for twenty years; it just fascinates me.

I: What do you think is making it so hard to find a direction?

P: Fear, maybe: You know, I thought I wanted to go into psychology, but I think, "Well, I'm going to have to deal with people unless I take something, find something completely cut off from people, just some kind of research or something," but I don't think I want that, either. But now there's the fear of, "Well, [self], you're going to have to get a job; a good place to get a job would probably be in the psychology field," which I could probably do if I really wanted to.

I: I'm hearing that you really do want to do something with people, but you're also really scared.

P: I'm afraid of being seen as a failure, maybe; I don't know.

I: Well, maybe you don't know: You're just aware of the fear. But that's a starting point, at least.

P: See, I think if I can start doing things to up my confidence and self-esteem a little bit, I think I would have a better time with, an easier time; maybe not a good time but an easier time. And sometimes I even feel optimistic, but then there are those days when I don't want to leave the house, and I'm thinking, "Okay, I get a job, I get my degree, I start doing something; I've got experience, I've got a decent-looking résumé now, I've finally got a real job," and I wake up one morning and I'm afraid to leave my house, my apartment. That's not something I really have a lot of control over. And I dropped out of school three semesters ago because of that, and that was one of the darkest times in my life.

I: It sounds like it. How did you function day-to-day?

P: Slept as much as possible; eventually wound up with a brief hospitalization.

I: You were suicidal?

P: I did a large amount of a drug, and I'm not sure if I was suicidal: I was just looking for a temporary escape. I guess at some level I was suicidal because I did way, way too high a dosage: you know, just had a very bad physical reaction to it, and I was up for two days, couldn't sleep, and I was shaking; I finally went to the Emergency Room and told them what was going on. And the nurse, the intake nurse, was kind of laughing at me, "Oh, my God, you wise-ass kid": the holier-than-thou thing.

I: But it wasn't like that for you.

P: No, it wasn't. I guess she thought, "Oh, here's this college kid: He's at school on Mommy and Daddy's money and he's doing drugs."

I: You know, you're sort of smiling when you're talking about it, and I wonder, was it funny to you?

P: That I thought she was thinking this? Yeah, because that's the attitude she threw at me.

I: So in some ways, also, she didn't understand where you were coming from.

P: No, and I didn't feel a need to explain it to her, either. I just wanted some, they ran tests on me and I didn't damage anything. You know, they sent somebody from Mobile Crisis or whatever, and I was a lot nicer to this person: I explained things, I was as open as I could be under the circumstances. But the nurse, I picked up on that attitude and I just kind of, it got me angry, "You fucking know-it-all, I don't. . . "Yeah, I wonder how long it takes somebody doing that kind of thing, say even psychology or social work, or an intake nurse at a hospital, how long it takes to desensitize: Where do you stop, where do you stop caring about people?"

I: I wonder if you wonder that about yourself at times, too.

P: Yeah; I think about it all the time: What would it take for me to shut off? I told you I was on food stamps; I had this worker, she was about my age, she had been on Welfare for a while, she had gotten off of it and gotten a job there. And she was the nicest person, one of the nicest people I've ever met; and she was telling me about herself and saying, "It's nothing to be ashamed of; you know, you're in school: You have nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to be ashamed of. You know, if it helps, don't be ashamed." Two years later, the same exact person, the same physical person, changed completely. She was okay to me, but just listening to her talk to some other people, she'd gotten mean; she'd gotten really mean. I'm thinking, "You know, this could happen to anyone." I guess. . .

I: It's hard not to have control over circumstances in your life.

P: I'm just wondering if this is what I want to get into because I carry so much emotional stuff of my own: I wonder how I'm going to deal with other people's, or would I just completely forget about myself and try to solve everyone else's problems? I find myself doing that, too. And I hate when other people do that: I have a friend, and she's really trying to be my surrogate mother and she's 20 years old and it's not what I want. She's really trying to take care of me but she's got problems of her own, and she can't function herself. I tell her I appreciate her, which I do, but it makes me uncomfortable: I mean, she'll neglect herself to take care of me, and I don't want that.

I: That might mean you'd have to neglect yourself to take care of other people.

P: It gets complicated trying. . . Fixing other people is much easier than fixing me; I'd heard that before I even started studying psychology and now I believe it, because you're biased; you can't be objective.

I: It does sound like you know yourself: You know some things about yourself: where you are in terms of relating to other people, and you're working on your self-esteem; and you do have questions about "What can I, can I actually do it?"

P: Big questions, real questions. Like the place I live in now, I want to get out of there; but I'm afraid I won't be able to support myself. And I won't get a roommate: I'm afraid I won't get along with a roommate. I fear everything: I fear, "Is my car going to start? Am I going to run out of gas?" And my clothes I'm wearing. . . I mean, I blame this on not only my neglect, but the abuse I got.

I: Do you think that the abuse and neglect had different effects on you; can you separate them?

P: I think I would have rather been abused than neglected.

I: Really? What makes you say that?

P: I just think of all the times I sat by myself as a kid, and all the places I'd go by myself. And with abuse, there's acknowledgment: I exist; somebody else notices me. With neglect, it's like I'm not here, I'm invisible, I don't exist. With abuse you can talk yourself into believing that your parents love you in some twisted sort of way; with neglect, there's no evidence of anything: love, hate, resentment, anything.

I: And that's the hardest thing.

P: It was for me; it still is: I'm still trying to escape my--trying to grow up--still trying to escape being a 7-year-old boy terrified of Mom; but being even more terrified of her not noticing me, though.

I: You've talked a lot, I think, about how that affects you right now, those fears; is there anything more specific about actually not being noticed?

P: As a kid?

I: Yeah; how you think that affects you today.

P: I remember one thing I did just out of meanness: There were a group of kids who didn't like me, who wouldn't let me hang out with them. And this boardwalk was flush with the sand, but there were systems of tunnels under the boardwalk I guess homeless people or kids had dug out: And there'd be almost walking space, six feet, between the boards and the sand, a system of tunnels. And I was exploring these tunnels by myself one day, and I found this dug-out clubhouse, probably the size of this room, I guess eight feet deep. There was cheap furniture and everything down there: These kids constructed it, and it was their hang-out. There was a bat down there, and I took the bat and destroyed it; then I took a shovel and filled it in, the whole thing. And I was just so pissed off at not being--And one time I tried to burn this, burn a clubhouse down: It was made of wood; I tried to burn it down because these kids wouldn't let me play with them.

But as far as wanting to belong to something now, I ache to belong to something now. I used to pride myself on my non-conformist--You know, it wasn't purely out of choice, either--but in junior

high school and high school, I was, "Oh, I don't have to be like these kids: I don't have to be like them." Now I'm thinking, "God, I'd love to be like that: I'd love to be more like this." Finding my own path is romantic and idealistic and all these other wonderful things, but I never found my own identity, I suppose. In all of my non-conformist, avoiding-people thing, depression, anxiety and loneliness became. . . You know, that shouldn't be, that that's my identity.

I: If it's any consolation, it does sound like you're aware of so many things about yourself and really working on those, and it doesn't always feel like you know quite where you're going, but maybe you're better off now than you were.

P: I'm better off now than I was, I think so. But this little, my world is all-encompassing; I can't—There are other things to be done; I find it hard to lend myself out, I find it hard to share myself with anybody on a real level, because. . .

(Tape ends.)

I: It's hard to be real with other people.

P: Yeah, when you're wrapped up, as wrapped up in yourself as I am; yeah.

I: Do you think that that's something that's a real problem for you, that you're wrapped up in yourself?

P: I've had people tell me that if I wasn't so, if I didn't think so much about myself, that it would be easier for me to do other things, get involved with people and activities.

I: Do you have a choice?

P: I don't think I do, no. Because I try these other things and it always comes back to I'm worried about people: How they see me or how they're going to react to me. I'm, I don't know if I'm inept—I think that's a strong word—but I'm definitely not comfortable in social settings: I went to a party one month ago, and I swear to God I just stood there and looked at people; I couldn't. . . And people would come up and talk to me, and I was like, "Huh, huh, huh?"

I: What were you aware of in that setting?

P: How I looked: How I look in comparison to everyone else; and the thought, "Hey, you're not dressed like these people" popped into my head. And then I thought, "Well, these people are all six or ten years younger than I am; so I don't dress like them: big deal."

I: Comparing yourself to others seems to be a pretty important part of your experience.

P: Yeah, that's a big thing.

I: And you usually come up somehow lacking, or. . .

P: Almost always. I want to, I really do want to better myself, but you know how I just don't get the energy that I need sometimes. I want to exercise, I want to study, I want to be successful.

I: Almost like you want to do everything all at once.

P: I do, but it's hard for me to do things even in small amounts because I feel so sapped. Most of the time, in fact: The only time I have any energy is when I'm angry; or sometimes I get, I just get really, really hyper and I've got energy to get everything knocked out; but most of the time I feel like I'm dragging.

I: What leads up to you feeling hyper?

P: It hits, it just hits.

I: Like you wake up in the morning with it?

P: Yep: Sometimes I wake up in a great mood. I mean, I've been kind of sleep-deprived for three days now, and I've slept maybe four hours a day. But yesterday I woke up, I felt, it took me a long time to get in the shower; today I woke up and I was like, "I know what I've got to do: I've got to do it now." I ran, popped an English muffin in the toaster, I threw on some oatmeal, jumped into the shower, jumped out of the shower, ate breakfast, threw my clothes on, brushed my teeth, shaved, ran out the door, got to where I was going on time; and I did everything.

I: And you were feeling good?

P: Yeah; I had energy.

I: Is that the same as feeling good?

P: Yeah, yeah. Feeling, having, being able to do what I need to do feels good: That's feeling good for me.

I: And then it is hard, it really is hard to really want to do things to help yourself and just not have the energy to do it.

P: It's frustrating; it's depressing; it's. . . But I know I have—I had all this asthma in high school and I told myself I couldn't do stuff. Before I went to the Army, I started lifting weights and found out that I was athletic. It was the Army, and I discovered this about myself; I was 20, 21 years-old, and I was like, "How come I never played anything in high school?" Nobody ever told me that it was important to have physical activity every day of your life, something, to stay healthy; nobody ever told me that. I'd never been in shape; everyone in my family is fat: I'm chalking that up to genetics, though, as much as diet and attitude. 'Cause everyone's built the same, pretty much. But I started lifting weights before the Army because I was excited about going into the Army. And I got there and I had to run and do all this stuff, and I'm thinking, "See, if somebody had told me this, I could have been doing it—I could have been better now than I am." That's the way that I feel about school: Someone might have instilled these ideas like studying, you know: "Everything in small doses, but be consistent." Back to the what-if's: "What could I have been now?"

I: Yeah, it's really hard to sort of let go of that: You have to mourn it.

P: But now just the energy to do things is hard to come by. I get, I seem to have more energy when I'm out drinking with—I have more energy—and that worries me. That's, I could easily settle into alcohol; easily.

I: How often are you drinking right now?

P: A couple of times a week, maybe, and not to the point where I'm drunk; just a few beers. Not last Friday but the Friday before, I did go and get very drunk, and I enjoyed the hell out of myself. And I tried not to feel guilty about it, but I go out and I drink, and I think, "Well, I'm drinking beer: It's going to go straight to my gut." And if I'm drinking one beer, I think, "Oh, my father did this." And I'm wondering about my father: I wonder if he felt, at my age, a lot of the things that I feel now, and alcohol was the only place he could go for comfort; if that's where he went to for, if that's the place he went to for his energy.

I: That's why you go to alcohol: for energy and for comfort?

P: Most of the time it's if I'm feeling really by myself, I go out to a bar; and it's comforting, yeah, it is.

I: You feel less lonely?

P: Yes, because I'm around other people who are doing the same thing.

I: Are you different in the world then: I mean, do you talk more to them, the other people.

P: When I'm drinking? Yes.

I: Maybe it allows you to, it really does get rid of some of your inhibitions.

P: Absolutely does. I feel more worthy of companionship when I can forget about where I come from for a little while. It's kind of sad, but. . .

I: Well, it sounds like you sort of know it's not necessarily a good solution, but it's. . .

P: No, it's not one that's going to work long-term, no; just lead me into trouble. But I try not to be hard on myself: I try to reward myself for everything I accomplish, and I try to care for myself, give myself the proverbial pat on the back every now and then.

I: And I wonder if sometimes it's hard to know what that is: You want to do something to help yourself or give yourself a pat on the back, but. . .

P: I think, "What is it I want to do right now? Do I want to allow myself a beer and not feel guilty about it? Do I want to buy something?" Most of the time that's "No," because I don't have a lot of money: I live from Financial Aid check to Financial Aid check as far as that goes. But I don't know if that's taking care of myself. Trying not to neglect myself.

I: Did you think of yourself as "neglected"? Is that a word that you would have used before you came to this interview?

P: Yeah, yes. I never got a cent from my father as far as child-support; and foster homes, they're incredibly lax: They leave you to your own thing as long as you make it to school.

I: The foster parents?

P: Yeah, or all the force of that system. And Mom never really cared about—The only time she took notice of my absence from school was when truant officers would make reports: Then she

was like, "Oh, I'm going to get in trouble with the state; I'd better do something." But she just pretty much left me to my own thing: Kept my own hours, went where I wanted to go when I wanted to go.

I: And you knew that wasn't good for you, too?

P: I was aware of that, yeah. I needed so much help, and I couldn't get it from her and I became a desperate little kid.

I: And it was hard to find it anywhere?

P: Yeah, it was hard to find it: My ability to trust was shot all to hell. If I do have children, I'm going to have a backbone, I'm not going to let them walk all over me—I'm going to try not to turn them into neurotic children—but I'm definitely going to show them some structure. I may not be able to show them an extended family on my side, but I'm looking forward to the day where I can have children, and I would try not to live vicariously through them, but show them things that I never had.

I: I wonder if that would be a way of also taking care of yourself.

P: That would be; absolutely. Well, I guess I would be living vicariously through my children, which isn't entirely bad, I suppose. It would be satisfying to be able to give my children a the opportunity for good education to really, really go far; but, you know, just give them a taste of a little bit of everything and let them hang on to what they're interested in, like offer them music lessons, things like that; I never had that. I'm trying to teach myself guitar now, and I'm thinking, "If I would have started when I was 10 years old, just gotten some of the basics down. . ."

I: Yeah, and it is hard to not think about that.

P: More "what if's." I just despise my mother; I really do. And I'm just now accepting the fact that my screwed-up childhood was her fault and not mine: It wasn't anything to do with me being a defective kid, or anything like that.

I: And even though someone told you that when you were 8, it's just now that you can sort of begin to really believe it.

P: I believe it up here, but it's. . . In my heart now, it's still hard: I'm still looking to reconcile the family, still looking to forgive Mom; so I've really, over the last five years I've gone all over the place trying to rekindle relationships with them, relatives, trying to look for a place to belong. I haven't done half-bad; I haven't done half bad. I'm closer now to certain aunts and uncles than I was when I was a kid, and a lot of them know what a horrific little childhood I went through, and especially my father's sister: She's well aware of what my father was—he was a monster—and how nuts my mom went after she left him. She, she's pretty good to me.

I: And you like her?

P: Yeah, she's very cool. She goes—It seems everybody on my father's side suffers from depression and drug and alcohol abuse; some of them suffer from schizophrenia: But knock on wood, knock knock knock. And on my mother's side, strict [ethnicity]: Very Catholic, very, and a bunch of drunks also. So I have two strikes against me as far as that goes.

I: It sounds like it's important to you to forgive your mother; something you're thinking about a lot.

P: Not only her: Forgive my family in general: mother, father, aunts, uncles, grandparents, brother. I'm really trying to not be a bitter person; ulcers and cancer and blood pressure problems and heart problems are not what I'm looking forward to in my future: I don't want those.

I: Good for you.

P: I don't want to sit and stew on the hate.

I: I wonder if you feel less angry with your aunts and uncles as you become closer to them.

P: I learn about them. I'm learning that they're—even though one of them isn't completely sane—her daughter is schizophrenic; she's got some problems. But the aunt, the aunt, I accept that: I still love her even though she's got problems.

I: So something in you allows you to accept her now.

P: Yeah. And I think I'm starting to accept my mother, but I don't think I'm there yet.

I: What does it mean that you accept her?

P: Well, I'm trying to believe and accept the fact that, yeah, I've talked to people about her and they tell me that there were things wrong with Mom. And I knew that then, but I blocked it out, and only now am I starting to believe it: Over the last few months, I really tend to believe that, especially after seeing her in January, seeing her react to situations—Now I know why I'm so emotional and I freeze up: It's because of the way she acted when I was a kid; she did the same things back then that I do now. We went into a store and she paid for something off her account, and they just had the wrong phone number for her and she freaked out: She got really paranoid and said, "Somebody's been using my credit card," and she just went nuts; I had to calm her down—And the woman behind the cash register was (grimaces)—like, "Hey, it's not like that: They just switched a number in your phone number; nobody's in there. Check your balance: If you get anything different, they'll fix it; you won't have to pay for it, Mom." And she just, she was in tears, and she was. . . And I'm thinking, "This is like something I'd do." And it was easier for me to help her than it would have been for me to deal with it myself. But I'm beginning to accept the way she is, and was, and somehow try to believe it's not my fault. I mean, I used to think the reason she left my father was because of me and my brother; in fact, that's what she used to tell us. And I'm probably better off having grown up separate from my father, but he could have sent me money, he could have called me and let me know that he still cared about me; he never did that, though.

I: Just because you were better off without him doesn't mean you didn't want him.

P: That's right.

I: Well, it sounds like you really did survive a lot. A lot of bad things. It sounds like you're still having a lot of trouble accepting yourself; that's understandable: I mean, I think it's a process to learn about yourself and about other people and about the world. Do you take some pride in the fact that, gee, you are. . .

P: Yeah, I do; that helps: Just being here is an accomplishment.

I: It really is.

P: The fact that I made it to college at all pleases me; I've got a good GPA: I've got like a 3.3, and my study-habits aren't—I find it hard to get the energy to study, but I try to drag myself to class no matter how I'm feeling.

I: So you have a will.

P: I guess I'm not ready to lay down and die: I've considered it, but I'm not willing to do that; it's not an option.

I: What makes you not willing to lay down and die?

P: I don't know; maybe because my mom seems to have done it: She got into religion and that's all she does; that's all she does now. She's found her identity: She's a church lady.

I: And it's like your identity, you don't want it to be "chess player"; you want to connect to people as people, not as some. . .

P: That's the way I try to see people, is not by what they do but who they are and how they act and what they have to contribute to conversation, and just personality.

I: Okay; well, I think you really talked honestly about your experiences and your thoughts and feelings. Is there anything else at all that you want to add about the experience of feeling neglected; do you think we've covered everything?

P: As far as I can tell.

I: Thank you very much.

P: Thank you.

VITA

Kurt D. Openlander was born on 31 January 1966 in Napoleon, Ohio of High German, Lowland Scots and Dutch stock. He grew up in rural Northwestern Ohio among the vanishing woodlands and former wetlands of the Great Black Swamp. His interests were of necessity turned inward, and his primary childhood avocations were acquiring knowledge and developing a rich inner life. He also took piano lessons for nine years and continues to enjoy playing classical music and jazz standards. He attended Patrick Henry Local Schools, Henry County, Ohio, and was Valedictorian of the Class of 1984.

In August, 1984, Kurt was matriculated at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. While there, he pursued studies in the liberal arts, was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a Junior and won awards for his work in literary criticism, French studies and Italian language arts. He also developed a passion for the cinema which continues to this day. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree *summa cum laude* in May, 1988; his major had been English, his minor, French.

In 1988, Kurt was awarded a University Fellowship at Ohio State in order to pursue literary studies in the Department of English. However, shortly after commencing graduate study he realized that his heart did not lie in literary criticism and, moreover, that he had nothing new or especially interesting to say about T.S. Eliot. He decided to instead pursue a profession which involved intensive interaction with others and which he felt would contribute more directly to his vision of a caring society. He enrolled in psychology courses at Ohio State in the winter and spring of 1989, and he was employed by the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission in Columbus from September, 1989 until July, 1992.

In August, 1992, Kurt moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, acquired his cat Millicent from the Knox County Humane Society, and began studies in the doctoral program in clinical psychology at the University of Tennessee. During his course of study, he completed practica at the University-affiliated Psychological Clinic and at Cherokee Health Systems, Morristown, Tennessee. He developed a keen interest in experiential epistemologies and modes of psychotherapy, and he was delighted to discover that psychoanalysis and phenomenology were alive and well within the Department of Psychology at the University of Tennessee. During this same period, he also became more aware of the importance of art as a source of experientially grounded meaning. Given the positivist bent of much of academic psychology, Kurt came to greatly appreciate having a liberal arts background rather than a scientific one. He is much more interested in what is meaningful to people than in what is "methodologically correct."

In 1997-98, Kurt completed his pre-doctoral internship at the John D. Dingell Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Detroit, Michigan and was also a student affiliate of the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute. He then lost his sense of direction, if he had every really had it, and spent several years searching for himself and considering what is important in life. He also acquired another cat, Francesca. Despite what sometimes seemed like a concerted effort not to finish his dissertation, he ultimately did so and successfully defended it on 28 September 2001. He will be graduated with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on 15 December 2001. His future plans are uncertain beyond attempting to lead a well-considered and fully experienced life.