Remembering Family Breakdown: A Heideggerian Hermeneutical Analysis

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

REMEMBERING FAMILY BREAKDOWN:
A HEIDEGGERIAN HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

BY
JANET NELSON WRAY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
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Dedicated to Thomas

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Phenomenon of Interest

Perhaps it is not coincidental that changes in the functions and structures of the American family and changes in the value of remembering in our society should have occurred concurrently. This observation may have significance to those who are striving to understand the complexities of family functioning. This does not imply causality necessarily, i.e., that changes in the family as we once knew it "caused" a devaluation in the act of remembering, or that a devaluation of the act of remembering "caused" changes in the American family unit. Instead, it suggests that the breakdown of each has implications for the other.

The days of the Ozzie and Harriet Nelsons or the Walt and June Cleavers as prototypes of the American family appear to be gone forever. This is not necessarily a good or a bad thing; it just is. The American family has changed. Presumably some of the changes in the family unit have been correctives to the family of bygone days. For example, perhaps families today are doing a better job of allowing each member to fulfill more than just a prescribed role by supporting each member's efforts to achieve his or her potential as he or she defines it. Perhaps the expectations of
today's families are more realistic and honest. Perhaps it is a growthful thing that families no longer feel as if they must stay together regardless of the costs for "the sake of the kids."

On the other hand, some of the changes in the family unit may be less positive. Such changes may be "the unintended consequences" of some of the necessary and positive changes. One of these unintended consequences, I propose, is the decline in the value and activity of remembering. As a society, we have forgotten remembering.

In the end, the scientific study of memory and the presence of elaborate electronic aides-memoire are the currently most manifest symptoms of the declining interest in "remembering in the old manner." Whatever the ultimate reasons for this decline, we must acknowledge it as an established fact, an intrinsic feature of ever-increasing proportions within Western culture. It has become such a deeply entrenched tendency at the level of praxis and theory alike that it would be Luddite-like to try to reverse, or even to lament, the trend. (Casey, 1987, p. 10)

If it is true that the changes in the American family are fundamentally irreversible because of changes in our assumptions about such things, for example, as gender roles and what constitutes a family, then perhaps it is not helpful to make attempts to restore the family to "the way it used to be." However, the decline in the value and activity of remembering seems to be far less intentional than the changes in the family have been. It may be possible that efforts can be taken "to unforget our own forgetting" (Casey, 1987, p. 10).

One mode of remembering that we as a society appear to have devalued and forgotten is the remembering of our personal, family and communal stories, or narratives. John Steinbeck has been credited with saying, "Without our past, how do
we know we’re us?" The narrative method of remembering does not separate the
question of "what is?" from "what was?" It does not separate a general account of the
meaning of being with the unique events of a person’s life. In order to find meaning
in a person’s unique life, each person must authentically relate to the present in light
of the past. "In doing so, in Nietzsche’s terms, I become what I am. In doing so, I
find my unique place and stance within the temporal unfolding of the human, cosmic,
and divine story" (McCaffrey, 1992, p. 8). Meaning, therefore, is not behind the text
of a person’s autobiography waiting to be exposed and then condensed into a moral or
rationalistic interpretation. Meaning is first and foremost experienced.

What does the word "experience" really mean? The meaning of the English
word "experience," according to Gillespie (1988), is derived from the Latin word,
experiens. This usage is the present participle of the Latin verb which means to try, to
prove, and to test. Closely related to this meaning is the Greek word perios, which
means a way through, and pernein, meaning to convey, and peran, meaning to pass
through. From such Greek origins, through Anglo-Saxon, Dutch, German, and English
changes, we arrive at words that mean to travel, to go, or to journey. To experience,
then, means to try out something by passing or living through it oneself. Experience
is what happens when one actually lives through or undergoes an event. "It is what
happens to you" (Gillespie, 1988, p. 34).

However, it is not raw experience that is the stuff out of which narratives are
forged. Experience includes both aware and unaware events (Gillespie, 1988). Stories
are fashioned only out of aware events. Without some conscious awareness of the
experience, or unless we become aware of the event, it is not available for withdrawal from our bank of memory (Gillespie, 1988). Experience is not useful to us in the creation of our personal stories, therefore, unless it is remembered.

"Memory," said Macbeth, "the warder of the brain." The root of the words memory, remember, remembrance, memento, memorize, memorabilia, memorial, memorandum, and commemorate appears to be (s)mer. According to Shipley (1984), this root seems to have taken three paths: (1) Its basic meaning seems to have been to keep in mind or to be concerned about. (2) Its second meaning is what one deserves, a share, portion, part. (3) Its third meaning is a part of the body, especially a limb.

The Sanskrit word smriti means that which is remembered; tradition (in Hindu religion). The Greek Moirai (singular, Moira) are the three Fates, alloters of one’s portion in life. The Romans called them the Fates, from fatum, that which is spoken. The Latin word memor means mindful, and memory, remember, remembrance, memento, memorize, memorabilia, and memorial are all derivative from memor. From the French word memoir comes memorandum and commemorate. The Latin word membrum means limb, and from it comes member, dismember, and membrane. From the Norse comes Mimir, the giant that guards the well of Wisdom; Wisdom is the daughter of Memory. "In Greek mythology, Memory (Mnemosyne) is mother of the Muses. Truth (Wisdom's sister) lies at the bottom of a well. From the bottom of a well, one can see the stars by day" (Shipley, 1984, p. 368).

To re-member, then, means to recall to mind, to make re-mindful. The opposite of remember is dismember, to make dis-mindful, to fragment. This suggests
that memories of experience may be dis-membered or fragmented in our consciousness, perhaps because of childhood trauma, or a sense of discontinuity, or the limitations of our remembering function, etc. This is not the same as forgetting. "Forget" is not the opposite of "remember," "dis-member" is.

Remembering, then, seems to be the foundation upon which a life narrative is built. We do not create a life narrative from those experiences which we have forgotten or were never consciously aware of, although amnesia might explain gaps in our narratives. Instead, it is the "how" and the "what" of our remembering that precedes any attempts at creating our autobiographical narrative. What do we remember? And how do we organize that which we remember? Remembering, then, seems to be the foundation upon which a life narrative is built. We do not create a life narrative from those experiences which we have forgotten or were never consciously aware of, although amnesia might explain gaps in our narratives. Instead, it is the "how" and the "what" of our remembering that precedes any attempts at creating our autobiographical narrative. What do we remember? And how do we organize that which we remember?

Each person is responsible to be the storyteller of his or her unique life. Becoming a self is not a given; instead it is a process or task. The data out of which a self is constructed is the totality of the remembered experiences of that person's life, and the meaning given that totality. It is not necessary that every event and action is remembered nor that every remembered event actually happened as it is remembered. The necessity is not in the accuracy of the remembering. It is in the remembering of events and actions in the manner of the remembering person and the meaning given to the remembered experience and coming to terms with the event by means of interpretation. In order to mold a self out of the remembered events of one's life, a person needs to be a storyteller. As a storyteller, he or she needs to achieve a coherence among the events of his or her life, and to emplot them in a way that yields meaning (McCaffrey, 1992).

A story must be intelligible and interesting to the storyteller and the listener for it to be meaningful (McCaffrey, 1992). If there is a lack of intelligibility or
interest, the unity gives way to fragmentation and incoherence. The mind is not re-membering, bringing to mind, being mindful. Instead, there is dis-memberment; the mind cannot connect the ideas or events together in a meaningful, thematic way. If there is a lack of interest, the hearer is no longer touched by or able to identify with what is told. The unity gives way to dis-unity. "The hearer's being and the mode of being of the narrative separate" (McCaffrey, 1992, p. 28).

To re-member means to continually reinterpret and re-employ the remembered events of one's life. To re-member one's life as story is a continuous process of re-interpretation and meaning-making.

The ideal life is the ideal story where no detail is inconsequent. All events have been interpreted and integrated. And the integration is a continuous process because new events arise. All events need to undergo emplotment. As new events arrive, distention arises, and the need for grasping together, re-employment [sic] constantly arises. Especially during times of suffering and crisis, I need to struggle with ways to retell my story so as to incorporate this new traumatic event into the story of my life. (McCaffrey, 1992, p. 32)

Adult Rememberers of Family Breakdown

The tendency for persons to order their lives according to their own theories or stories of self is apparently universal among all human societies (Young-Eisendrath & Hall, 1991). All persons are, theoretically speaking, capable of remembering and narrating their life experiences in the form of a story. These stories or interpretations of self appear to develop as the result of the individual in relationship with other persons, i.e., the product of the person's interactions with the family, society, and culture of that person.

Experiencing crisis and suffering is also a universal phenomenon. All persons
experience traumatic events in the course of their lives. The stories of persons who
grew up in families-of-origin that experienced significant trauma or disruption are a
potentially rich resource for stories of persons’ quests for meaning. I have come to
call these persons Adult Rememberers of Family Breakdown, and much of Chapter IV
is devoted to defining this concept.

The stories of Adult Rememberers of Family Breakdown are not merely the
means of achieving information about Adult Rememberers. The stories or narratives
are an essential component of the Adult Rememberers’ quests for meaning. In each
person’s life, the search for meaning cannot take place apart from narrative. The
assumption is that all persons, including Adult Rememberers of Family Breakdown,
have not only an innate desire to narrate their life experience, but also an intrinsic
ability to do so. I wish to explore the validity of this claim.

Unfortunately, health caregivers, including nurses, tend to value universal
cognitive explanations for the experience of being human more than they value the
unique narratives of their individual patients. Narratives told in the healthcare setting
are often valued only to the degree that they lend support to some universal or
generalizable cognitive or behavioral explanation for an entire classification of
patients. For example, a patient’s story may have value because it supports a
particular diagnosis, such as clinical depression, not because it sheds light on who this
unique human being is. The quest for a cognitive explanation takes a story and tries
to reduce it to a rationalistic or empirical statement, category, or diagnosis. Such
attempts at explaining patients’ experiences do have their place in healthcare, but they
are limited. Cognitive explanations alone are ultimately unsatisfying in the search for meaning. Assisting patients to make meaning of their healthcare experiences by weaving them into their life stories is a significant aspect of providing holistic nursing care.

The reduction of narrative to cognitive meaning is not a true reduction. The narrative itself cannot be discarded. It is irreducible. The meaning of the narrative is not hidden behind the text in a cognitive statement, rather the meaning unfolds in front of the text in the encounter between the text and the being of the reader/hearer. (McCaffrey, 1992, p. 2)

One instance of this tendency to reduce narratives to cognitive or behavioral meanings in healthcare is the use of diagnostic categories. One example of this is for nurses or other healthcare providers to take the stories of Adult Rememberers of Family Breakdown and to reduce them to a cognitive explanation in the form of the diagnostic category Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families. The cognitive explanation becomes even narrower with such spin-off diagnostic categories as Adult Children of Alcoholics, Adult Children of Divorce, and Adult Survivors of Incest. To name only a few.

In the past 25 years or so, the use of these diagnostic categories has become common practice in healthcare. These categories first emerged when clinicians, including nurses, began to recognize common characteristics and similar themes in the stories of the family members of alcoholics and addicts. Shortly thereafter similar core constellations of characteristics were noted among family members experiencing other types of family trauma or disruption, such as psychiatric illness and domestic violence of all types. In the quest for cognitive understanding, the stories of these
many unique persons were reduced to signs, symptoms and defining characteristics of
the "Adult Children" grouping of diagnostic categories.

These diagnostic categories and cognitive explanations were helpful initially
in raising the public's awareness, stimulating the creation of prevention and
intervention services, and catalyzing the creation of support groups for affected
persons. As a result of this attention, a great deal of clinical and empirical research
has begun on Children of Alcoholics (COAs) and Adult Children of Alcoholics
(ACOAs). The increased attention has resulted in a number of questions being raised
about this population of COAs/ACOAs.

The July, 1990 issue of Alcohol Alert, a publication of the National Institute
on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), raised the question of whether Children
of Alcoholics and Adult Children of Alcoholics are indeed a unique group, or whether
the problems described by those from families-of-origin with parental alcoholism also
occur in other types of dysfunctional families. For example, are ACOAs more alike or
different than adult survivors of incest? The question is an important one. If the
problems of COAs/ACOAs are not the result of alcohol-specific mechanisms, then this
has implications for treatment strategies for COAs/ACOAs. "Further," stated Enoch
Gordis, M.D., NIAAA Director, "if all children from dysfunctional homes are at equal
risk, then all are entitled to the benefits of any public policy designed to help children
from troubled homes" (1990, p. 3).

There is much in the COA/ACOA literature that would suggest that the
cluster of personality characteristics and problems described by COAs/ACOAs are not
related primarily to the presence of parental alcoholism itself but to the intrapsychic and interpersonal dysfunction that may result from growing up in a home with parental dysfunction. Cork's research in 1969 suggested that the negative relationship between the parents is considered more detrimental than the actual drinking of the alcoholic by the majority of children of alcoholics (Cork, 1969). Morehouse and Richard's study (1982) identified seven major areas of concern cited by young children of alcoholics.

Only two of the areas were directly related to parental alcoholism.

Ackerman's extensive research with adult children of alcoholics resulted in a rank-ordered list of seven concerns, different from the concerns of Morehouse's young children and Ackerman's adolescent children of alcoholics, and only one concern related directly to the parental alcoholism (Ackerman, 1987).

A number of other authors have suggested that the cluster of problems associated with COAs/ACOAs are not unique to that population. Kritsberg (1985) considers the alcoholic family as one type of dysfunctional family. He proposes that dysfunctional families only in the degree of dysfunction. He states that there is always emotional abuse in alcoholic families, and physical and sexual abuse are also common. Depending on the severity of the abuse in any family, the more or less severe the family dysfunction will be. The more severe the family dysfunction, the
more emotional damage there will be to the offspring.

Smith's (1988) research on grandchildren of alcoholics reported that

Grandchildren of Alcoholics (GOAs) may not report extreme examples of verbal, sexual, and/or physical abuse, and yet the damage done to them in terms of adult functioning as the result of emotional abuse may be similar to the damage done as the result of other types of abuse.

Whether the Adult Child who has visible trauma in the past, or the Grandchild whose emotional needs were neglected, the outcome is a victim lifestyle. The severity of abuse (e.g., incest) will naturally determine how seriously a person is damaged and will set the time necessary for recovery, but the outward extreme abuse is not necessarily the only issue facing the victim. . . . My definition of abuse is any behavior which deliberately, or even inadvertently, damages or detracts from the self-esteem of any human being. (Smith, 1988, p. 67)

Friel and Friel (1988) dedicated their book entitled Adult children: The secrets of dysfunctional families to those who have entered "an adulthood of addiction, depression, compulsion, unhealthy dependency, stress disorders, unsatisfactory personal and professional lives, including their children, and with whom there are no relationships, and lives of quiet desperation" (p. 5). The obvious question is "What were the family dynamics that led so many into such adulthoods?"

Regardless of our symptoms or circumstances, we are Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families because: Something happened to us a long time ago. It happened more than once. It hurt us. We protected ourselves the only way we knew how. We are still protecting ourselves. It isn't working anymore. (Friel & Friel, 1988, p. 22)

Significance to Nursing

What is the significance of all this to nursing? Or stated another way, why should nurses care about this question and this problem? It is estimated that one in
eight persons over 18 years of age qualifies as an ACOA (Russell, Henderson, & Blume, 1985). The population of Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families (ACDFs) is, of course, much larger. These persons are reported to have higher than average rates of stress-related illnesses, depression, anxiety, compulsions, substance abuse, physical and/or sexual abuse, and somatic complaints (Cermak, 1986). They are likely, therefore, to be a significant percentage of the patient population of every nursing specialty. Nurses are in relationship with them whether or not these persons are actively remembering their family histories. Nurses must be educated about the importance of listening to these persons' stories if they are to do more than merely treat the symptoms; i.e., if they are to help them interpret and make meaning of their healthcare experiences in light of their life narratives.

Furthermore, a number of nurses are themselves ACOAs and Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families. The resultant issues may impact their lives, both personally and professionally, including their ability to nurse effectively their patients who are Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families.

**Background of the Phenomenon of Interest**

Current theories of Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families (ACDFs) tend to address the criteria by which a family is labelled "dysfunctional," i.e., the development of psychopathology in individual family members, and the relationship between the dysfunctional family of origin and the development of psychopathology in offspring. Current theories, however, do not provide adequate explanations for why offspring from the same family of origin vary so dramatically in degree of function.
and dysfunction. Current theories do not address what it means to be an ACDF. Nor do they consider that perhaps it is less a matter of the types of events ACDFs have experienced and more a matter of the ways in which ACDFs have remembered and interpreted those experiences that shapes their identity as ACDFs. Current theories are enamored with diagnostic categories and cognitive explanations. They have little patience with or interest in the unique stories or narratives of individual ACDFs except as a means of achieving information from ACDFs, despite the fact that narratives are an essential component of the quest for personal meaning.

ACDFs are likely to be characterized in current theories as having experienced adverse life circumstances as children and having increased constitutional vulnerability, for example, increased genetic loading for psychopathology (Cobler, 1987). Even in the presence of such characteristics, however, many adult children appear to be able to cope with problems threatening their present adjustment and to function effectively (Cohler, 1987). A study by Zubin and Steinhauer conducted in 1981 and cited in Cobler, 1987, suggested that as a result of genetic factors, some persons may be more or less able to learn from past experience in such a way as to help them cope with present problems. The theory of invulnerability or resilience has been the theoretical framework for these studies on increased constitutional vulnerability among some ACDFs.

However, a number of experts in the ACDF field recommend caution in assuming that resiliency is the mechanism by which some ACDFs seem less affected than others. There is a limitation in reducing the experience of being what I prefer to
call an adult rememberer of family breakdown to a theory such as resiliency theory. The limitation is that cognitive explanations such as resiliency theory appeal only to one aspect of the person, the rational aspect. Cognitive explanations do not reach the broader and deeper and holistic ranges of being. They cannot hold and sustain us as persons. It is only by encountering the stories themselves that we are able to reach levels of meaning and parts of our being that the common cognitive or diagnostic explanations cannot touch:

The analytical method attempts to directly specify the way the world is, the way the human person is, and the way Mystery is. Only then will it ask the autobiographical question. How does my life fit with these specifications and how does this attempt to fit produce meaning in my life? (McCaffrey, 1992, p. 7)

The analytical method has been used almost exclusively in the development of theory and treatment approaches for ACDFs. In addition to the theory of resilience, there have been theories of family "laws," such as ACOAs don't talk, don't trust, and don't feel (Black, 1981). There have been role theories also, whereby a number of roles have been offered as ways of surviving as a COA and ACOA, such as the family hero, scapegoat, lost child, and mascot (Wegscheider, 1981). Individual adult rememberers of family breakdown have had to ask themselves, "How does my life fit within these specifications of what others say it means to be an adult child? Furthermore, does this attempt to fit enhance or deter me from making meaning in my life?"

Trying to fit one's life within these externally produced specifications separates the question of "what is" from "what was." The analytical method values a
general or common account of the meaning of being an adult rememberer of family breakdown over the uniqueness of each adult rememberer's story.

Before the advent of analytic systems of thought, there were only the great stories. The great stories simultaneously spoke of "what is" and "what was." But they did it within the temporal structure of a narrative. A person encountered the great stories in order to help them tell their own story in order to help them find meaning in their life [sic]. (McCaffrey, 1992, pp. 7-8)

As a society, we no longer share many, if any, great stories. We have devalued remembering and telling all types of stories, including our personal and cultural narratives. And yet, the narrative method is superior to the analytical method in assisting persons to make meaning of their lives. The narrative method does not separate a general account of the meaning of being with the unique events of a person's life. It simultaneously deals with the timelessness of a general account of being and the timefulness of my personal and cultural history. It deals with them within the temporal structure of emploted events. And it deals with them in a way that is not exclusively cognitive. Narrative reaches (and touches) a broader and deeper range of our being. (McCaffrey, 1992, p. 7)

**Summary Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to inquire into the nature and structure of re-membering and how memory is constitutive of experience. Specifically I was interested in the re-membered narratives, or the living memories and meanings, of the lived experiences of adult children of dysfunctional families. As the result of this study, I have come to call these persons adult re-memberers of family breakdown.

Before I was able to engage in this process of description and interpretation, however, I first conducted a review of the pertinent literature. Of particular interest
was the literature that pertained to dysfunctional families, adult children of alcoholics (as the prototype for adult children of dysfunctional families), and memory. The memory literature of most interest was that which addressed the narrative method, autobiographical memory, and remembering. The questions which directed this literature review included:

1. What constitutes a dysfunctional family?
2. What is known about adult children of alcoholics as a prototype for adult children of dysfunctional families?
3. What have been the historical understandings of memory?
4. What is known about the basic memory processes in the person?
5. What are the effects on memory of changes in development and environment or other significant experiences over a lifetime?
6. What are the conditions under which memory prospers and declines?
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to study the Adult Rememberers of Dysfunctional Families, it was necessary to understand how this phenomenon had been researched in the past. The review of literature proceeded in two parts. First, the large body of dysfunctional family literature was examined, as well as the adult children of alcoholics literature since to date, far more is known about this subgroup than about any other. The second body of literature examined was that of memory and autobiographical remembering.

There are two major sections of the literature review. Organization of each section was dictated by the research itself. The first section of the literature review is divided into two parts. The first part is a summary of the dysfunctional family literature. "Dysfunctional families" was chosen as the concept for review because it is the umbrella or parent term used for searching the literature for related concepts such as neurosis, pathology, illness, sickness, and maladaptation, to name just a few. The second part of section one is a review of the Adult Children of Alcoholics literature. This category has been chosen instead of Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families for pragmatic reasons: (1) Adult Children of Alcoholics has been the research and clinical
prototype for all types of Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families until very recently; and (2) far less literature exists to date for other types of Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families.

The second section of the literature review is also divided into two parts. The first section is an historical overview of memory. The second part is an historical analysis of autobiographical memory and the life narrative.

Section 1, Part 1: Summary of the Dysfunctional Family Literature

Introduction and Overview

The term "dysfunctional family" has become popular in everyday American usage despite being a relatively recent concept. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1976) defines "dysfunctional" as the adjectival form of the noun "dysfunction," and it defines "dysfunction" as "impaired or abnormal functioning" (p. 356).

"Functioning" is the gerund, or verbal noun form, of "function." Webster’s (1976, p. 465) gives five definitions of "function." It is the second definition which concerns us: "the action for which a person or thing is specially fitted or used or for which a thing exists.

The dictionary definition of the noun "family" according to Webster’s (1976, p. 414) includes the following: (1) a group of people united by certain convictions (as of religion or philosophy): FELLOWSHIP. (2) a group of persons of common ancestry: CLAN. (3) a group of individuals living under one roof and under one head: HOUSEHOLD. (4) the basic unit in society having as its nucleus two or more
adults living together and cooperating in the care and rearing of their own or adopted children. (5) a group of related persons, lower animals, or plants; also: a group of things having common characteristics.

"Family dysfunction" as a term does not appear in the dictionary. With such a variety of definitions for the concepts of "family" and "dysfunction," it is necessary to search the literature to analyze this concept. Such a search need only include literature from the past 40 years or so, because before 1950, an individual's psychosocial symptoms were considered purely intrapsychic in origin. Therefore, although individual dysfunction was a relevant concept prior to 1950, "dysfunctional family" as a concept did not exist per se.

The approach known as family therapy was born during the early 1950s. It is this approach which gave birth to the concept of dysfunctional family. It might be said that family therapy was born by accident. A number of psychodynamic therapists began interviewing the family members of their patients as a means of gaining or collaborating information. Unbeknownst to one another, these therapists observed interactions among family members which fueled a new causative theory of human problems. For example, these therapists noticed that when the identified patient made changes in his/her behavior, another family member often became "sick" so that improvement for the individual did not always mean improvement in overall family functioning. In fact, in numerous cases, it appeared that the identified patient's therapy was actually undermined by the family. Such observations resulted in reconsidering the family's role in the treatment of pathology.
These insights led to a vast amount of research in the 1950s and 1960s linking family dynamics and schizophrenia. For the first time, family function was described using a systems approach, and the concepts of homeostasis, double bind, pseudomutuality, and pseudohostility were coined. "Family function" was also coined, and the term meant the process by which a family operates to achieve its goals, both stated and unstated (Miller, 1980). It is likely that for the first time, the concept "family dysfunction" was introduced as well.

These ideas and findings were generalized into specific frameworks of family interrelationships, and several schools of thought developed in the 1960s. The most popular of these approaches involved adaptations of a systems approach. According to Jones (1980, p. 8), "The different frameworks represent different ways of viewing a family's functional and dysfunctional behavior." Unfortunately, most of these frameworks do not clearly define what they mean by functional and dysfunctional family behaviors.

The primary goal of family therapy is not to discover the "cause" of the family’s problems, but rather to break the dysfunctional pattern that exists between one or more family members and the family as a system (Gorman & Kniskern, 1981). Family systems theory and family therapy assume that a linear causal model is useless for studying or treating human interaction in families. Both assume a reciprocal or circular notion of causality instead (Becvar & Becvar, 1982). The family view of dysfunction emphasizes the ways that each individual influences the family system’s effectiveness. Thus, individual psychosocial health is a reflection of family
psychosocial health. Family psychosocial health, in turn, measures the family's overall system effectiveness (Sedgewick, 1981).

Family Therapy Approaches

Since the 1950, many approaches to family therapy have been introduced. All share the premise that family therapy should promote a change within the family system. Most approaches assume that family dysfunction stems from the family's system of rules and roles. Most refer to family function and dysfunction but do not clearly define what these terms mean in their approaches. Several classification systems have been developed to group the many approaches to family therapy. Six such classifications, including one by a nurse therapist, follow.

The first of these classification systems was created by the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP) and published in the 1970 book Treatment for Families in Conflict. The book was a rudimentary attempt to classify the theoretical orientations of family therapists by using a continuum ranging from A (therapists with a primary focus on the individual) to Z (therapists with a primary focus on family systems).

Beels and Ferber (1973) constructed the second classification system from observations of family therapy sessions. They found that therapists presented themselves to families by means of different styles. These styles were:

1. **Conductors**: those therapists with vigorous personalities who direct the family (Nathan Ackerman, Virginia Satir, Salvador Minuchin, Murray Bowen, for example).
2. **Reactors**: those therapists who follow the direction of the families.

   (a) Reactor-Analysts: those who follow more of the psychoanalytic tradition with a focus on the internal responses of family members (Carl Whitaker, Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, James Framo, Lyman Wynne, and Harold Searles, for example).

   b) Reactor-Systems Purists: those who are interested in power relations within the family and become covert leaders (Gerald Zuk, Jay Haley, Don Jackson). The basic concern for each of these is communication.

Guerin (1976) classified family therapists according to theoretical orientation. This resulted in two major groups: psychoanalytic and systems orientations. He further subdivided these groups into individual, group, experiential, and Ackerman-like approaches.

Foley (1974) classified five major therapists into two categories:

1. **Role-Relationship Model**: Ackerman

2. **Systems Model**:

   (a) Those who see the family as an emotional relationship system, e.g.:
       Bowen

   (b) Those who see the family as a communication system, e.g.:
       1. Jackson: emphasizes cognitive aspects
       2. Haley: emphasizes power relationships
       3. Satir: emphasizes feelings

Nichols (1984) compared eight family treatment strategies in a systematic
manner. These eight strategies were: (1) Psychoanalytic; (2) Group; (3) Experiential; (4) Behavioral; (5) Extended Family Systems; (6) Communication; (7) Strategic; and (8) Structural. There was also the Systemic (Milan) approach of Palazzoli et al. (1978). It was categorized separately based on its divergent theoretical and clinical assumptions and techniques.

The sixth classification of family therapy approaches, and the only one to have been done by a nurse therapist was that of Jones (1980). Jones identified seven approaches to family therapy, categorized systematically according to the theoretical and clinical orientations of each: (1) Integrative; (2) Psychoanalytic; (3) Bowen's Multigenerational; (4) Structural; (5) Interactional; (6) Social Network; and (7) Behavioral.

Jones' classification system will be used to organize the literature review that follows. In addition, the following three questions will be asked: (1) What are the definitions of dysfunctional family as conceptualized by each of Jones' seven major family therapy frameworks? (2) If the concept "dysfunctional family" is not referred to specifically by a particular framework, are there other terms used which are presumed to have similar meaning? (3) How do the concepts and definitions used by the seven approaches compare and contrast? The literature for each of the seven major approaches will be reviewed first; and these three additional questions will be addressed later in this section.

**Integrative Approach**

Credit for the first of the seven major approaches, the Integrative Approach to
Family Therapy, is given to Nathan Ackerman. Ackerman does not define dysfunctional family per se, but he does define two related concepts. He defines "healthy family" (1972) as a family embedded in a healthy community and having a commitment to a sound set of human social values. He defines "family pathology" as an inability to adapt to differences and change on the part of family members and the family as a unit. Pathology for Ackerman consists of a breakdown of role complementarity (circular support) or an inappropriate coping pattern with conflict (role adaptation). In an advanced form of family pathology, an individual family member may become an identified patient. Ackerman does not define what he means by "family," but it is likely that he had a traditional notion of the nuclear family in mind.

Ackerman believed the model of role-relationships best fits the phenomena of family dynamics. He rejected the systems notion for two reasons. First, he feared losing sight of the individual when a systems emphasis was imposed on the family as an integrated whole. Second, he believed that viewing the family as a system did not allow appropriate emphasis to be placed upon family values. This permitted the therapist to lose sight of what Ackerman deemed the therapist's primary responsibility to be, i.e., assisting the family in distinguishing healthy and unhealthy values.

Therefore, according to Ackerman, the unhealthy or pathological family is one which is not embedded in a healthy community and does not have a commitment to a sound set of human values.
Psychoanalytic Approach

The psychoanalytic approach to family therapy borrows concepts from Freudian psychoanalysis, object relations, ego psychology, and self psychology and applies them within the family context. Persons classified as working within this approach include Framo, Grotjahn, Boszormenyi-Nagy, Spark and Stierlin. These therapists consider the family as a close relationship system in which the family members are influenced by each other's psychological make-up (Jones, 1980). It is not always clear which persons qualify as family members in this approach, but a traditional nuclear family understanding is likely.

It was Freud who proposed that neurotic conflicts are birthed in early interactions between children and their families. He isolated the family from treatment in hopes of liberating the patient from the family's pathological influences. He helped create the illness model of psychiatric disorders for the individual (Nichols, 1984).

The psychoanalytic family therapists believe that a breakdown in healthy family functioning occurs because one or both of the parents are disturbed. The general pattern in what psychoanalytic family therapists refer to as "neurotic families," rather than dysfunctional families, is that parents impose the same acts of unfairness on their children that were once imposed on themselves as children. Hence, there is conformity to a "family illness model" of therapy whereby a necessary requirement of a disturbed, or dysfunctional, family is one or more disturbed, or dysfunctional, marital partners.

Along with Murray Bowen, the psychoanalytic family therapists are the only...
family therapists within Jones' classification system who do more than merely recognize the significance of family-of-origin relationships. The psychoanalytic family therapists and Bowen are the only family therapists who utilize the family-of-origin as a therapeutic resource. They are the only ones who prepare adult children to deal actively with members of their original family, often by establishing an adult-to-adult relationship with the parents and other members of the family-of-origin (Jones, 1980).

**Bowen's Multigenerational Approach**

The Bowen Approach, founded by Murray Bowen, is also called the Multigenerational Approach. In 1975, Bowen (1976) formally changed the name of his family therapy approach from "family systems theory" to the "Bowen theory" because of the confusion he perceived between family systems theory and general systems theory. His disciples nicknamed the approach the Multigenerational Approach.

Bowen's approach resulted from his early observations that the family dynamics present in schizophrenic families were also present in families with less severe problems and even in asymptomatic families. He proposed that the intensity of patterns being observed were related to two variables: (1) the degree of anxiety present, and (2) the degree of integration of what Bowen calls the "self" (Bowen, 1976).

According to Bowen (1976), the concept of differentiation of self is "a cornerstone of the theory." He states:

The concept defines people according to the degree of fusion, or differentiation,
between emotional and intellectual functioning... The concept eliminates the concept of normal, which psychiatry has never successfully defined. It is not possible to define normal when the thing to be measured is constantly changing. Operationally, psychiatry has called people normal when they are free of emotional symptoms and behavior is within average range. The concept of differentiation has no direct connection with the presence or absence of symptoms. People with the most fusion have most of the human problems, and those with the most differentiation, the fewest; but there can be people with intense fusion who manage to keep their relationships in balance, who are never subjected to severe stress, who never develop symptoms, and who appear normal. However, their life adjustments are tenuous, and, if they are stressed into dysfunction, the impairment can be chronic or permanent. There are also fairly well-differentiated people who can be stressed into dysfunction, but they recover rapidly. (pp. 65-66)

When anxiety intensifies and/or remains chronic, the organism develops tensions manifested as "symptoms" or "dysfunction" or "sickness" (Bowen, 1976).

The lower the level of differentiation or integration of self, the less able the organism is to adapt to anxiety.

Bowen also hypothesized that anxiety is infectious within a family. A changing degree of chronic anxiety can result in anyone appearing normal at one level of anxiety or abnormal at another level. Thus pathology manifested in an identified patient is merely a symptom of the family unit. It is not one individual who is sick, but the emotional system of the family unit. In his 1971 writings, Bowen refers to the concept of "family dysfunction":

One of the most important aspects of family dysfunction is an equal degree of overfunction in another part of the family system. It is factual that dysfunction and overfunction exist together. On one level this is a smooth-working, flexible, reciprocating mechanism in which one member automatically overfunctions to compensate for the dysfunction of the other who is temporarily ill... I called this the overadequate-inadequate reciprocity. (Bowen, 1971, p. 168)

In addition to the concept of differentiation, Bowen uses the terms
"dysfunction" and "dysfunctional" when discussing several of the concepts which form the eight interlocking building blocks of his theory of family therapy. When discussing the concept of triangulation, for example, he describes how repeated triangling becomes a chronic "dysfunctional pattern," preventing resolution of differences or making one or more of the threesome vulnerable to physical or emotional symptoms.

Also, his concept of the family projection process includes a discussion of the "dysfunctional spouse" as one of several mechanisms for handling fusion or undifferentiation. Large amounts of undifferentiation can be absorbed through physical, emotional, or social dysfunctions. This is a reciprocal relationship in which one spouse dominates the relationship, while the other is submissive and adaptive. The dysfunction of the spouse who has handed all responsibility over to the overfunctioning spouse may be manifested as drug or alcohol abuse, irresponsible behaviors, poor work history, psychiatric problems, chronic family illness, or other conditions which seriously affect the individual's functioning. (Cain, 1980, p. 122)

These are examples of conditions which, according to Bowen, qualify the spouse as being dysfunctional. Dysfunctional relates to those conditions which seriously affect the individual's functioning. If an individual is dysfunctional, according to Bowen, then the family is also dysfunctional, and vice versa. Family dysfunction, therefore, may be the pathologic manifestation of undifferentiation of both the individual self and the family self.

Similarly, Bowen's discussion of the concept of emotional cutoff makes reference to dysfunction:

One family remains in contact with the parental family and remains relatively
free of symptoms for life, and the level of differentiation does not change much
in the next generation. The other family cuts off with the past, develops
symptoms and dysfunction, and a lower level of differentiation in the
succeeding generation. (Bowen, 1976, p. 85)

Bowen (1976, p. 85) believes that the same fusion of emotional and
intellectual systems that occurs within the individual occurs in society as well:

The societal concept postulates that the same process is evolving in society as
in the family; that we are in a period of increasing chronic societal anxiety;
that society responds to this with emotionally determined decisions to allay the
anxiety of the moment; that this results in symptoms of dysfunction; that the
efforts to relieve the symptoms result in more emotional bandaid legislation,
which increases the problem; and that the cycle keeps repeating, just as the
family goes through cycles similar to the states we call emotional illness.

Bowen’s usage of the concept dysfunction in these last two examples
demonstrates that for him, dysfunction is manifested by symptoms. Dysfunction may
be the result of poor differentiation of self, intense emotional cutoff, or increasing
the chronic anxiety. Dysfunction may be similar to, or synonymous with, the states
known as emotional illness. For Bowen, a dysfunctional individual implies a
dysfunctional family and vice versa.

**Structural Approach**

Salvador Minuchin uses the term structural family therapy to refer to a
method that is designed to change the family through modification of the feedback
system of relationships. He provides one of the clearest definitions of the concepts of
family and function. For Minuchin and his followers, the family is considered to be a
system of individuals whose relationships and actions are governed by an invisible set
of functional demands that organize all behavior (Minuchin, 1974). The family is a
system because it consists of interlocking behaviors and responses to behaviors which occur through transactional patterns. Transactional patterns are laws which govern interactions evolving over time in a family. Such invisible laws govern the how, when, and to whom to relate within the family context in specific instances. The existence of clear boundaries surrounding family subsystems is essential for successful family functioning.

Minuchin's conceptualization of a breakdown in healthy family functioning (1967, 1974, 1978) is similar to that outlined by Ackerman. That is, the demands for change in the family can bring about one of two possible results: (1) there may be growth on the part of each individual in the family, each subsystem within the family, and the family as a unit; or, (2) there may be a maladaptive response to the demand for change at each of these levels. The result of such maladaptation to change is the evolvement of "dysfunctional transactional patterns" to govern family interactions and conduct on the part of family members.

Two profiles of dysfunctional transactional patterns are depicted, i.e., the enmeshed and the disengaged family structure (Minuchin, 1967). The two profiles are schematically represented as follows (Minuchin, 1974):

**DISENGAGED/RIGID.....CLEAR BOUNDARIES.....ENMESHED/DIFFUSE**

For example, selection by the family of one person to be "the problem" is a method of maintaining a rigid, inadequate family structure, and the symptom is an expression of the family dysfunction. Therefore, for Minuchin, the presence of dysfunctional transactional patterns qualify the family as being dysfunctional.
**Interactional Approach**

The interactional (also referred to as interactionist) approach to family therapy has been variously termed the "strategic" (Haley, 1976) and the "communication" (Foley, 1974) approach. Confusion surrounding this approach stems from the work of a number of different persons who represented two distinct research endeavors, i.e., the Gregory Bateson (Double Bind) Project, and the Mental Research Institute (MRI). Don Jackson was associated with both projects at various times, as were Jay Haley and John Weakland. Furthermore, the two projects were housed in the same building for a while, and a connection between them was assumed.

In general, the interactional approach grew out of both of these research endeavors. It was based upon the cybernetics model (the science of communication and control theory), and symbolic interactionism (Schvaneveldt, 1966). The unit of analysis for therapy was "behavioral-communicational" or "interactional" phenomena between and among family members, i.e., the focus was on the internal functioning of the family. This was the generating principle of family therapy.

The Bateson group investigated "dysfunctional communications" generally within both "sick" and nonsymptomatic families (Sluzki, 1976). The concept of double bind was one of the major concepts developed during this project. Research at the MRI argued that behavior and communication were synonymous, and behavioral actions per se became the unit of analysis (Greenberg, 1977). The concepts of homeostasis, feedback, family rules, quid pro quo, axioms of communication, circular causality, multifinality, and equifinality—all of which are derived from principles of
cybernetics—were developed for use in family therapy.

Therapists of the interactional perspective conceptualized the family as a system of interactive behaviors or communication. Three other major assumptions of this perspective were (Hill & Hansen, 1960): (1) Social conduct is most immediately a function of the social milieu. (2) A human being is an independent actor as well as reactor to his or her situation. (3) The basic autonomous unit is the acting individual in a social setting. Beyond these basic assumptions, each therapist-theorist added his/her own presuppositions.

For example, Jackson (1967a) described the family as an interlocking system where each member is a subsystem that influences all other members. Watzlawick (1967) stated that the family is a communication system which is equivalent to a behavioral system. Haley (1963) and Satir (1967) concurred with this, although Haley emphasized the notion of power, while Satir emphasized the notion of feelings. The parameters around which family functioning occurs, then, are derived from the family rules which represent the governing principles of family life.

Consequently, according to Jackson (1967b) and Watzlawick (1967), family dysfunction occurs when the rules of family functioning become ambiguous. Haley (1963) described the same phenomenon as a refusal for persons to define the nature of the relationship. Satir (1967) emphasized that dysfunctional families have dysfunctional rules, i.e., rules that are ambiguous and/or unspoken. Dysfunctional rules beget dysfunctional families, and vice versa, according to Satir (1971). Each of these therapists were convinced that emotional dysfunction is primarily the outcome of
emergent aspects of ongoing interactions. Therefore, therapy should deal with "here and now" interactional processes.

The general goal of family therapy within the interactional approach is clarification of the family rules (Jackson and Watzlawick), to produce a behavioral change within family members (Haley), which serves to clarify and make functional the communication (Satir). The tasks of therapy involve observation of what is going on in the interactional system, how the system continues to function, and the degree to which change is possible (Greenberg, 1977). The parameters of dysfunction must be defined, as well as the strengths of the system. Following this observation, the therapist's main function is to effect change in the interactional sequences that precipitate and maintain symptoms of dysfunctional communication/behavior. The aim of intervention is to modify the context in which the family resides and/or in which the dysfunction is manifested.

Thus, for the interactionists, a dysfunctional family is one which manifests dysfunctional communication and behavior stemming from ambiguous and/or unspoken family rules. The usefulness of this framework is expanded by the addition of concepts from theories such as developmental theory and systems theory which consider the context in which interaction occurs, including external forces which influence family socialization.

**Social-Network Approach**

A variety of therapists with diverse backgrounds have utilized social network concepts as an approach to family therapy. Attneave (1976) states that most family
therapists of this orientation utilize a systems approach to theory. Individuals are seen relative to the context of the larger social network rather than relative to the context of the family.

The family is conceptualized as a network of related individuals which is embedded within a larger social network. Breakdown of family functioning occurs within this larger social network, and a manifestation of breakdown in family functioning is loss of resilience of the social network. From this point of view, the dysfunction lies not within the family but rather within society at large. Families are not sick; society is sick. The goal of network intervention is not cure or treatment but the enablement of people to cope with stresses of social change.

Behavioral Approach

A central issue in family therapy revolves around the extent to which dysfunction is an internal, intrapsychic phenomenon and the extent to which it results from external, social forces. The traditional psychoanalysts represent the intrapsychic purists and the behavioral therapists represent the external social forces purists. According to the latter, all behavior is learned, and conversely, no behavior is intrapsychically determined (Jones, 1980).

Behavioral family therapists conceptualize the family as a system of interlocking behaviors whereby the behaviors of each family member are stimulated by, or are a response to, the behaviors of each other. A breakdown in family functioning occurs when undesirable behaviors of one or more family members are reinforced by other family members. Any behavior that is socially reinforced will
strengthen, whether it is appropriate or "maladaptive" behavior. Behavior modification theory, concepts, and techniques as introduced by Skinner (1953; 1976) are used. If no behavior change occurs, the fault lies with the behavioral modification program, not with the patient.

Additional Approaches to Jones’ Classification System

Developmental Theory

Although developmental theory is not a family therapy approach per se, it is a popular theoretical framework applicable to family assessment and care. This framework considers the family as it evolves over time, constantly changing as it proceeds from one chronological stage to the next (McNally, 1980). Each stage presents unique tasks for family members who resolve these tasks with varying degrees of success. The results of these stages and tasks are then carried over into the next stage. Central to this framework is the premise that developmental tasks must be completed within a critical period of time if successive stages are to be favorably negotiated (Erikson, 1963). Family development theory is built upon the longitudinal process of sequential and cyclical patterns of growth, development, and decline.

The most frequently used concepts in family development theory include family, family structure, family functioning, and family patterns (Hill & Rodgers, 1964). However, the definitions for these concepts are hard to come by. They are used in such a way that presumes the reader understands their meaning without having them defined. The developmental framework also underscores the importance of
concepts from the systems and interactionist frameworks while simultaneously placing an emphasis upon the concepts of developmental stages and tasks.

Ideally, the family unit functions to provide a relatively safe and secure environment in which all members have the opportunity for maximum growth. During periods of calm, members channel their energies in the same direction. They are able to support one another in meeting developmental tasks alternately. Periods of conflict erupt during critical periods of growth when family members’ goals, needs, and developmental tasks are incompatible.

The family system has developmental tasks of its own which arise sequentially and which ensure its well-being and continuity as a functioning unit. The family’s growth responsibilities change during its life cycle, and the accomplishment or failure of family tasks in earlier phases affect the later phases (Duvall, 1977).

All families experience stress and conflict from time to time as an inevitable accompaniment to growth and change. Therefore, stress and conflict in a family do not automatically qualify it as a dysfunctional family. The assumption of new roles and responsibilities is thought to bring rewards as well as hazards.

However, in addition to the developmental stresses and conflicts that all families face, there are unique crises which tax the family’s resources and threaten stability and integrity. A crisis is defined as any situation for which present coping skills are inadequate. Crises may be classified as developmental or situational.

Developmental crises are periods during the life cycle when change takes place at comparatively rapid rates (Erikson, 1963). For example, the identity crisis of
adolescence and the generative crisis of adulthood are proposed to be experienced by everyone.

Situational crises originate in specific life events which occur at a particular point in time and which arise unexpectedly or with little warning. The addition or loss of a family member, especially in cases of illegitimacy, suicide, or divorce, are situational events which may become the precursors of crisis for some families. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes are prototypes of crisis events that affect families, communities, and even nations. Duvall (1977) categorizes types of family crises as follows: dismemberment (loss of a member), accession (addition of a member), demoralization (loss of status), and any combination of these.

Crisis Theory

The major concepts of crisis theory, a subtype of developmental theory, came from Lindemann (1944) and Caplan (1961). Basic to crisis theory is the assumption that crises are part of the human condition. Lindemann observed that adaptive forms of grief differ from maladaptive forms, and early intervention may mitigate pathological grieving responses. Caplan elaborated on Lindemann’s work by identifying the following three stages of the developing crisis:

**Stage 1:** Tension arises as usual coping measures are tried in response to a hazardous or life event.

**Stage 2:** Lack of success in coping leads to greater tension which then produces disorganization of the system.
Stage 3: The failure of usual coping measures creates a need for alternative solutions and receptivity to change.

Crises typically occur not as isolated events but within the context of an already existing family system. They are managed according to the resources available to the family. Socioeconomic level, marital and familial relationships, and previously completed tasks are the variables which determine whether a crisis will strengthen or weaken the family. The goals of the therapist are to help families increase their success in surmounting developmental tasks, and to move toward effective planning and problem-solving which will introduce new strategies for coping with crisis.

A dysfunctional family in the context of developmental and crisis theory, therefore, would be a family who is unsuccessful in achieving developmental tasks, resulting in decreased family stability and integrity. A limitation of the developmental/crisis framework is its lack of a theoretical foundation on which to base interventions once a family assessment has been done. Further elaboration of wellness tasks, where wellness is viewed as "a continually evolving and changing process related to the developmental stages of man and the individual's completion of certain developmental tasks" (Bruin, Cordova, Williams, & Fuentes, 1977, p. 209), may enhance the value of the developmental framework in working with families.
adaptation. Unlike the "pathological" models of the family, these models emphasize the essential "normality" of families by focusing on "normal" people reacting to stress. These models when viewed together conceive of families as normal people coping with stress and disorder rather than being disordered or pathological themselves (Orford, 1987).

The key assumption in each of these models is that continual changes within families are a constant threat to family health maintenance. Changes in members, roles, or settings are stressful events. Internal resources of families vary according to the economic, social, and emotional status of the family unit. Furthermore, the point at which a stressor bisects the life cycle of a family can lead to an increase in familial vulnerability if a transitional developmental crisis is already occurring within the family organizational structure (Hymovich, 1973). Hence, there are overlaps between stress and coping theory, and developmental theory/crisis theory.

The adaptability potential of a family varies with its ability to retain and to utilize its experiences, its inherent strengths, and its patterns of bonding. Family coping mechanisms consist of any responses to external life strains that serve to prevent, avoid, or control emotional and physical distress (Pearlen & Schooler, 1978). The accustomed means of dealing with conflict may be taxed or inadequate, and the expected responses in family interactions may not occur. The family unit may then flounder under the tension of a situation that can rapidly reach crisis proportions.

Dysfunctional patterns of behavior result if the family cannot assimilate stress-induced changes by mobilizing its resources. Symptoms of disequilibrium in family
functioning occur when dysfunction leads to non-function in necessary areas of role allocation, task completion, and decision-making (deGive, 1980). The primary goal of intervention must be the reorganization of the family unit to regain equilibrium in order to survive.

Hirschowitz (1974, 1975) has identified seven unhealthy patterns or dysfunctional reactions that families use to deal with change:

1. Data received about needed change are distorted and obscured.
2. Data are ignored or tuned-out by members who withdraw.
3. Energy is dissipated as family members try to retain the past or fantasize about the future.
4. When the need for change cannot be denied, the family searches for a scapegoat.
5. The father may abdicate his parental role and invest most of his time at work.
6. Members may anesthetize emotional pain with drugs, alcohol, food, or other compulsions.
7. Ultimately, the family may request that someone else take over the family and may become dependent on an individual or agency.

The course of a family through the changes induced by its readaptation to stress includes three stages: equilibrium (maintenance); disequilibrium (mobilization and modification); and reequilibrium (modulation). The movement of families through these stages of stress-induced change toward a return to equilibrium can be predicted
by two sets of variables (deGive, 1980): (1) factors internal to the family, i.e., role flexibility, other familial resources, stage of the developmental life cycle, and the family's definition of the event itself; and (2) factors external to the family, i.e., the family's competence at transacting with their kinship network, their community, and society at large.

The end result of appropriate utilization of internal and external resources is a decrease in stress and a return to healthy functioning. Families who are unable or unwilling to mobilize their strengths to achieve greater flexibility in roles and function will experience disorganization and defeat.

This pattern of defeat and inadequacy is found in those families who are no longer able to cope with stress. Although stress and coping theorists do not define the concept of dysfunctional families per se, families with this pattern would qualify as families needing assistance. When the capacity to meet obstacles and to shift course has been exhausted, these families have usually had a history of failure to adapt functioning to the changes wrought by internal and external forces. Each new stress precipitates old memories of past experiences of failure to reorganize and reattain a sense of cohesion and integrity. Successful coping strengthens a family, while failure weakens family morale and structure (Hill, 1958).

Each family must learn to surmount innumerable crises during its life cycle and to reorganize or reestablish equilibrium in its internal structure. It must strive to prevent the stress inherent in continued failure and defeat. The coping abilities of individual families, i.e., their success or failure in maintaining the health of the family
unit, are a function of the recognition and the utilization of resources, both internal and external to the family.

Significance of the Dysfunctional Family
Literature Review

A number of concepts related to the concept of "dysfunctional family" have been identified as a product of the literature review. These include: "breakdown in family functioning" (Jones); "system ineffectiveness" (several family therapy approaches); "family pathology" (Ackerman); "neurotic families" and "family illness" (Psychoanalysts); "symptoms" and "dysfunction" and "sickness" (Bowen); "maladaptation to change" and "dysfunctional transactional patterns" (Minuchin); "ambiguous and/or unspoken family rules" and "dysfunctional communication" and "dysfunctional behavior" (Interactionists); "loss of resilience of social network" (Social Networkers); "maladaptive behavior" (Behaviorists); "taxed family resources" (Developmentalists); and, "inability to cope with stress" and "past experiences of failure and defeat" (Stress and Coping Theorists).

Many of these related concepts are understood by their developers to provide a definition or meaning of the concept "dysfunctional family." For example, dysfunctional family may mean:

1. A breakdown in family functioning (Jones);

2. System ineffectiveness (according to most of the approaches except some of the psychoanalysts and perhaps Ackerman);

3. Family pathology; the inability to adapt to differences and change; a
breakdown of role complementarity or role adaptation; lack of commitment to a sound set of human social values; being embedded in an unhealthy community (Ackerman);

4. Family neurosis; a family with intrapsychic illness (the Psychoanalytic Family Theorists);

5. Sickness of the emotional system of the family unit (Bowen);

6. Maladaptation to change affecting the family system; dysfunctional transactional patterns of families (Minuchin);

7. Ambiguous and/or unspoken family rules; dysfunctional communication; dysfunctional behavior (Interactionists);

8. Loss of resilience of the social network of the family; dysfunctional society begets dysfunctional families (Social Network Theorists);

9. Maladaptive behavior of the family member(s) and/or family unit (Behaviorists);

10. A family whose resources have been taxed by crises (the Developmental and Crisis Theorists); and,

11. A family who is no longer able to cope with stress because of past experiences of failure and defeat in maintaining the health of the family (the Stress and Coping, Adaptation, and Adjustment Theorists).

These definitions or meanings of "dysfunctional family" are at very different levels of abstraction or specificity. Some give characteristics of dysfunction, others seem to be ascribing causality. Some use very vague, undefined descriptors, others are
very specific and definite in the terms used. An understanding of "dysfunctional family" as a concept remains elusive.

With the exception of Ackerman and some of the Psychoanalytic Family Therapists, all of the above approaches consider the family to be a system. The most popular position regarding the locus of pathology is that in which both the internal and external dynamics are considered, but one of the two is emphasized slightly more than the other. The approaches may be divided into four major groups regarding the manner in which a breakdown in family functioning is viewed: (1) introjection of parental figure(s); (2) fluidity or rigidity of the family system; (3) maladaptive learning; and, (4) taxed resources for coping with stress and crisis. Note that these four may be considered causes of family dysfunction as well as manifestations of family dysfunction.

The Psychoanalytic and Bowen approaches assume that symptoms develop in family relationships either as a result of; or a defense against, some form of psychopathology; i.e., there is "sickness" inherent in family discord. The inability to individuate or differentiate is seen as potentially dysfunctional.

In contrast, the Interactionist, Structuralist, Social Network, Behavioral, Developmental, and Stress and Coping frameworks point out that family dysfunctions may occur in the absence of significant individual psychopathology. The family may be dysfunctional on a relational or behavioral level even though no one individual within the family is dysfunctional.

Just as the Psychoanalysts seem to assume that an individual is always sick if
the family is dysfunctional, the Interactionists seem to assume that symptoms are always interpersonal in nature, with a second person being a contributing force to the dysfunction of the first. The Interactionists also demonstrate how functional and dysfunctional behavior is a dynamic entity involving feedback in an interpersonal context.

A strength of the Social Network, Developmental and Crisis, and Stress and Coping frameworks is the fact that each capitalizes on the strengths of the family. Each of these is built upon a growth model and assumes that just because an individual is having emotional difficulty, the individual is not necessarily dysfunctional. Dysfunction within an individual or family may be a reflection of the situational circumstances.

The Behavioral approach emphasizes that all behavior can be learned and therefore can be unlearned. This is an optimistic and action-oriented approach. It is not concerned in any way, however, with the meaning of the behavior to the individual or the family. It is concerned solely with the behavior itself.

Thus far the review of the literature has resulted in a critical comparison of the different schools of thought about family dysfunction rather than the meaning of the concept "dysfunctional family." The definitions and descriptions seem to give all of the perspectives on why families are dysfunctional. What is missing seems to be any consensus on what are considered manifestations of dysfunction or characteristics of dysfunction according to each of the theoretical classifications. Furthermore, several of these approaches imply these definitions of family dysfunction by discussing
causality without actually providing definitions. Are causality and definition of the concept necessarily one and the same?

These comparisons show that each approach to family therapy stems from different assumptions and offers a different conceptualization of what goes right and what goes wrong in family functioning. What is meant by healthy and dysfunctional family functioning, therefore, varies a great deal. Gurman and Kniskern (1978) point out that only minimal agreement, in fact, exists regarding what constitutes a healthy, functioning family. The same appears to be true regarding what constitutes a dysfunctional family.

This literature review has attempted to utilize the major concepts of each of the family therapy approaches as a means of identifying dysfunctional family characteristics. Other theorists and clinicians have also tried to identify these characteristics. Barnhill (1975, 1979) reviewed numerous concepts of functional and dysfunctional family dynamics and isolated four themes each having two dimensions.

**Theme 1:** Identity Processes: Difficulty attaining identity (includes Bowen, Wynne, Singer, Lidz, and others).

**Dimension 1:** Individuation versus enmeshment

**Dimension 2:** Stability versus disorganization

**Theme 2:** Change: Inability to adapt to environmental change (includes Ackerman, Minuchin, the Social Networkers, the Developmental, Crisis, Stress and Coping Theorists).
Dimension 3: Flexibility versus rigidity

Dimension 4: Stability versus disorganization

**Theme 3:** Information Processing: Distortions in Communication and Perception (includes the Interactionists).

Dimension 5: Clear versus unclear or distorted perception

Dimension 6: Clear versus unclear or distorted communication

**Theme 4:** Role Structuring: Includes concepts such as power (Haley), quid pro quo (Jackson), family rules (Satir), and transactional patterns (Minuchin).

Dimension 7: Role reciprocity versus unclear roles or role conflict

Dimension 8: Clear versus diffuse or breached generational boundaries

Barnhill's classification system clarifies what is dysfunctional in each of the four schools he identifies. The eight dimensions represent eight continuums. Individuation, mutuality, flexibility stability, clear perception, clear communication, role reciprocity, and clear generational boundaries represent the healthy and functional end of each of the eight continuums. Enmeshment, isolation, rigidity, disorganization, unclear or distorted perception, distorted communication, role conflict, and diffuse generational boundaries represent the dysfunctional end of each of the eight continuums.

Barnhill (1979) points out that the four family themes and the eight family dimensions are all interrelated. The primary theme may differ among family theorists and therapists as they begin to explain the family dynamics depending on their
theoretical orientation, but one theme eventually leads to the other three.

Olson et al. (1979) also looked at a multitude of family therapy concepts in an attempt to discern whether there was consensus regarding what constitutes healthy and dysfunctional family functioning. They found that most if not all of the family therapy theorists make reference directly or indirectly to two characteristics which define whether a family is functional or dysfunctional. These two characteristics are cohesion and adaptability. These two dimensions form the basis of Olson et al.'s Circumplex Model of family therapy.

Family cohesion is defined in this model as having two components (Olson et al., 1979): (1) the emotional bonding members have with one another, and (2) the degree of individual autonomy a member experiences in the family. Olson et al. hypothesized that a balanced degree of family cohesion is the most conducive to healthy family functioning (1979). Enmeshment describes an extremely high degree of family cohesion, and disengagement describes an extremely low degree of family cohesion. Both enmeshment and disengagement are conducive to family dysfunction.

Olson et al. point out (1979) that many of the family therapy concepts used to describe family cohesion have been developed by psychiatrists. Many of these concepts describe the two extremes of high or low cohesion with more emphasis on dysfunctional family functioning. It is likely that more dysfunctional than functional family concepts have been developed because dysfunctional families are more likely that functional families to seek the help of psychiatrists doing family therapy.

The second dimension, family adaptability, is defined as the ability of a
marital/family system to change its power, structure, role relationships, or relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress (Olson et al., 1979). The variables that are included in this dimension are family power structuring (i.e., assertiveness and control), negotiation styles, role relationships, relationship rules, and feedback (both positive and negative). Olson et al. hypothesize that family dynamics are more functional when there is a balance between change and stability, and therefore more dysfunctional when there is an imbalance between change and stability.

Another attempt to better understand what constitutes a functional versus a dysfunctional family is represented in the Beavers Systems Model of family functioning. The Beavers Model, the result of 25 years of research and clinical work with families, merges a clinical psychiatric orientation with general systems theory. It culminated in the development of the concepts of family competence and family style along with assessment tools to measure these two concepts.

Competence and style, when considered simultaneously and interactively, provide a useful map for locating essential system characteristics associated with family and individual psychological and behavioral functioning. . . . The more competent the family, the more balanced and flexible the current style, since the family can change if needed. The extreme forms of centripetal (CP) or centrifugal (CF) styles are seen only in rigid and poorly functioning families; their stereotyped and inflexible patterns of behavior produce a simple, unalterable stylistic extreme. (Beavers & Hampson, 1990, pp. 46-48)

Likewise, family competence refers to how well the family performs its necessary tasks. These tasks include providing support and nurturance, establishing effective generational boundaries and leadership, promoting the developmental separation and autonomy of its offspring, negotiating conflict, and communicating effectively. While we have found that some families perform certain tasks better than
others, we have also found that it is unlikely that a family will be extremely efficient or competent in a certain domain and extremely dysfunctional in others" (Beavers & Hampson, 1990, p. 14).

The terms centripetal and centrifugal are systemic/relational terms used to describe the style dimension of the model (Beavers & Hampson, 1990). Extremes of the CP family style may include parental exploitation of dependency needs, parental interference with the attempts of offspring to achieve self-differentiation, and parental exploitation of loyalty so that offspring believe the parents cannot live without them. In contrast, CF families have tenuous external boundaries, release or expel offspring too early, and have little of the internal "glue" or balance seen in well-functioning family systems.

Members of CP families look to the family as a source of pleasure, joy, and satisfaction, whether they find it there or not. . . . CF families look outside the family for pleasure, satisfaction, and joy, whether they find it there or not. . . . Any system that maintains a rigid style becomes stuck and inflexible, signals of diminished family competence. . . (Beavers & Hampson, 1990, pp. 35-36)

Noting similarities between the Beavers Model and Olson et al.'s Circumplex Model, the authors also note an important difference. Self-reports by family members and observer-raters of the same families share similar views of family competence using the Beavers Model. In contrast, Olson et al. admit that comparability across these levels is minimal. Beavers & Hampson suggest that one explanation for this discrepancy may be due to a problem with the theory behind the Olson et al. scales.

In the Circumplex Model, rigidity and chaos are polar opposites, while in the Beavers Model these characteristics are proximal on a systems organization level; rigid control is the next higher step above chaos in the developmental progression of structure. It is possible that both family members and observers
were seeing something fairly close in organization, instead of the polar opposites interpreted through the Circumplex Model. (Beavers & Hampson, 1990, p. 63)

How does this enhance our understanding of the definition and meaning of the concept dysfunctional family? Olson et al.'s dimensions of cohesion and adaptability are similar to the Beavers dimension of family style. The Beavers dimension of family competence also shares similarities with the two Olson et al. dimensions. Furthermore, every characteristic of dysfunctional family and its related concepts heretofore discussed appears to fit at least one, if not more, of these dimensions. Hence, these dimensions appear to be the appropriate components of an operational definition of the concept dysfunctional family. Inductive conceptual clustering of dysfunctional family characteristics and related concepts has resulted in the following operational definition:

**dysfunctional family**: a social system of persons defining themselves as a family characterized by: (1) a lack of competence to perform its necessary tasks (as defined by Beavers); (2) either an extremely high degree of family cohesion (centripetal, enmeshment) or an extremely low degree of family cohesion (centrifugal, disengagement); and, (3) the inability of the system to adapt its style, power structure, role relationships, and relationship rules in response to situational and developmental stress or crisis.

**Summary and Investigation Issues**

Most of the studies that have been done to define and understand the concept of dysfunctional family have been descriptive or exploratory in design, including case
histories, inductive conceptual clustering, and surveys. The verdict is not yet in. The concept of dysfunctional family is still relatively new, and new theories are being proposed. Many studies merely describe demographic characteristics of families. Others measure independent aspects of family functioning. Still others describe specific dysfunctional family types. The prototype for this latter kind of research has been the study of Children of Alcoholics (COAs) and Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOAs). More recently the literature has begun to look at survivors of incest, physical abuse, and other specific family-of-origin dysfunctions. Methodologies that allow several dimensions of behavior to be considered simultaneously in these dysfunctional family types are rather recent (Beavers & Hampson, 1990; Moos & Moos, 1976; Olson et al., 1979).

In the next section, I will review the COA and ACOA literature. This population is unique in several ways. For example, very little research has been done on ACOAs and COAs who have not presented themselves for treatment. It is likely that there is sampling bias in the studies that have been done on COAs and ACOAs to date.

Also, few studies have been done on persons identifying themselves as "adult children of dysfunctional families" in general. Adult children are seldom residing with their families-of-origin. The family therapy theories that are not concerned with families-of-origin, (and only Bowen and some of the Psychoanalysts are), do not appear to be a good fit for investigating adult children of dysfunctional families.

Furthermore, ACOA siblings vary, often remarkably, in their degree of
function and dysfunction, regardless of how dysfunctional they report their families-of-origin to be. The theoretical framework chosen to investigate this population needs to account for this variability.

Lastly, the definitions of dysfunctional family are hard to come by, as the review of literature has demonstrated. All of the characteristics, related concepts, and definitions, including the operational definition, require someone outside of the family to tell the family what is meant by the term dysfunctional family. However, it would seem that these characteristics of a dysfunctional family are certainly no more and perhaps even less important than an adult child’s perception that she or he was a member of a dysfunctional family-of-origin.

Another way of coming to a conceptual definition, and the way that fits the phenomenological method, is to ask: What does a self-identified adult child of a dysfunctional family mean when she or he says she or he is from a dysfunctional family-of-origin? The purpose of this study is to explore the self-reported meanings of the concept dysfunctional family by self-selected adult children of dysfunctional families.

Therefore, the operational definition that emerged from this review of the literature will be shelved for the purposes of this study. Instead, the focus will be on the subjects’ perceptions, as revealed in their stories, of what it was about their families-of-origin that made them dysfunctional. The operational definition and the perceptions of the subjects will be considered as completely independent items until the end of the study. At that time I will look to see if there is any congruence or
salient themes between the conceptual definition and/or the subjects' perceptions. It is hoped that this concept analysis and the proposed hermeneutic analysis will shed understanding on the meaning of the concept dysfunctional family.

Section 1, Part 2: Adult Children of Alcoholics

Introduction and Overview

In one of the most comprehensive reviews of the literature on adult children of alcoholics to date, Windle and Searles (1990) conceptualize the literature on children and adult children of alcoholics (ACOsAs) as being divided into three distinct branches. First, there are the scientific reports which adhere to currently accepted scientific standards and appear in specialized professional journals. These reports may or may not utilize high-quality methodology or accurately interpret data. Innovation is often sacrificed in the name of experimental rigor.

Second, there are the reports which appear in the news media. The news media loosely translates the results of the scientific reports for lay consumption using a process that is often highly selective and inadvertently slanted. This is the result of insufficient understanding of research methods and complex issues. Often the press will focus on dramatic single case histories which have scientific merit only to the extent that the circumstances are generalizable to other members of the population. The third branch of the literature on children of alcoholic parents is derived from practicing clinicians. This segment of the literature suffers from generalizability problems as well as from a general lack of methodological rigor due to the often anecdotal and selective reporting techniques. However, the authors frequently have
advanced degrees that lend an aura of scientific respectability to their work. A more serious limitation is the articulation of a causal link between psychological distress or dysfunction in the (A)COA and the parental alcoholism. The advantage of this strategy is an explanation for the individual's difficulties, regardless of the validity of the causal relationship. It also has the effect, however, of deemphasizing more proximal-causal factors and removing much of the responsibility from the individual for his or her own actions, feelings, and problems. Another problem in this area of the literature is the lack of standard criteria for identifying a child of an alcoholic or for self-identifying one's parents as alcohol abusers. Recognition and definition is often post hoc and may be dependent on the adult adjustment of the individual involved. Noncomparability of definitions is a legitimate criticism for all three branches of the literature.

Understandably, the results as reported by this third category of the literature have often been in conflict with the scientific literature over the interpretation of both theory and data. Good science requires experimental rigor at the expense of ecological validity, while clinical data may retain substantial real-world meaning for specific individuals while compromising empirical validity and reliability. Furthermore, clinicians may ignore or reinterpret research findings that do not fit their theoretical orientation or personal world view, and researchers may dismiss clinical reports as uncontrolled or riddled with theoretical overinterpretation.

Despite limited scientific support for the efficacy and durability of treatment for (A)COAs, the counseling and treatment of this population has become big
business. Also, no clinical syndrome has been identified that is distinct for (A)COAs. Symptoms presumably linked to being an ACOA (e.g., low self esteem, chronic depression, relational difficulties) are not uniquely associated with being a child of an alcohol-abusing parent.

What most studies have failed to recognize is that most individuals emerge from these environments relatively intact psychologically and emotionally, and that there may be several complex factors independent of being a child of an alcoholic parent that could result in psychopathology. One of these may be the ability of the person to remember narratively. This dissertation will explore that possibility.

West and Prinz (1987) demonstrate that while a great deal of childhood psychopathology has been attributed to the stressful effects of parental alcoholism, a minority of children exposed to these effects actually exhibit clinically significant behaviors. This may mean that most ACOAs emerge relatively intact psychologically and emotionally. However, it may also mean that what are defined as clinically significant behaviors may not be an exhaustive list. For example, perhaps the inability or disinclination to remember narratively is a heretofore unrecognized example of a behavior indicative of "dysfunction" or "breakdown."

Aldrich (1986) suggests two factors which may undermine the accuracy of predicting adult psychopathology in (A)COAs: accentuation of the functional significance of antecedent psychopathological states and minimization of individual capacity for personality change. Windle and Searles (1990) suggest a third factor: underestimation of the importance of the conjoint effects of individual personality and several physical, psychological, social, and environmental factors.
associated idiosyncratic environmental pressures.

Despite an intense research and clinical interest in the (A)COA area, there are few systematic reviews available to summarize past research results, guide future research, or clarify clinical findings. In fact, there are only a few sources that are regularly cited: the review by Cotton (1979) and the report prepared the Children of Alcoholics Foundation by Russell, Henderson, and Blume (1985) of the Research Institute on Alcoholism. In addition, there is Brown's (1988) review of the literature and Windle and Searles' book (1990) which was originally planned to be an update and expansion of the Russell et al. monograph.

Parental Alcoholism and/or Drug Addiction as Child Maltreatment

It has been estimated that over 28 million children in the United States live in families where one or both parents are alcoholics. "Many of these individuals suffer a variety of problems related to the alcoholism of a parent that was never labeled as such" (Brown, 1988, p. 11). The incidence and psychological impacts of parents addicted to other substances (e.g., heroin or cocaine) are less known, but are likely to be equally significant.

Although the empirical data on the long-term sequelae of living with an alcoholic or drug-addicted parent are limited, the recent proliferation of adult children of alcoholics groups and organizations, as well as growing clinical interest in the problems of such individuals, suggests that this is a significant form of child maltreatment in our society (Briere, 1992). Other types of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse, and emotional neglect, have been
linked to alcohol-intoxicated parents in the clinical and research literature (e.g., Kaplan, Pelcovitz, Salzinger, & Ganeles, 1983; Murphy et al., 1991). In addition, adults in therapy who report having been psychologically, physically, and/or sexually abused as children frequently describe their maltreatment in the context of parental drunkenness or drug intoxication.

The association between alcohol abuse and child maltreatment is so common that various writers have implied that family dynamics arising from and sustaining parental alcoholism, rather than abuse per se, are the primary etiologic factors in the child's later psychological disturbance. It is likely that being raised in a family with substance-addicted parents increases the likelihood of—at minimum—psychological abuse and neglect, and should be understood by clinicians as such. It is probably not true, however, that parental alcoholism or "the alcoholic family" is necessarily the only underlying traumagenic factor in such cases, nor do all instances of child abuse occur in the context of alcohol. Instead, alcoholic behavior may represent one of several toxic phenomena simultaneously present within a given family, such that parental substance addiction and concurrent physical, psychological, or sexual abuse may have both unique and overlapping negative impacts on the child's current and future psychological functioning (Elliott & Edwards, cited by Briere, 1991, pp. 13-14).

Therefore, although being raised in an alcoholic home is not the only form of deprivation or trauma for children, there is evidence that for at least a portion of persons, it provides a vast store of negative childhood experiences that have significant impacts on the later mental health of many people. Also, more is known about adult
children of alcoholics than about adult children from any other dysfunctional families. Therefore, adult children of alcoholics has been chosen for review instead of adult children of dysfunctional families because ACOAs have been the research and clinical prototype for adult children of all types of dysfunctional families.

### Review of the Literature

Most of the literature on children and adult children of alcoholics consists of outcome studies, and these reports are generally categorized into health issues, alcohol-related issues, and psychosocial difficulties (Seilhamer & Jacob, 1990).

#### Health Issues in Children of Alcoholics

A number of investigators have focused on the in utero sequelae of maternal consumption of alcohol, including fetal alcohol syndrome (Graham-Clay, 1983; Holzman, 1982; Smith, 1979; Warner & Rosett, 1975). Others have studied child abuse and neglect within this group (el-Guebaly & Offord, 1977, 1979; Hindman, Caffaret & Gauth, 1980; Olmon, Ruck, & Verheul, 1983; Orme & Rimmer, 1981; Wilson, 1982). Still others have investigated neurological and neuropsychological deficits associated with minimal brain disorder (Blane, & Hill, 1971; el-Guebaly & Offord, 1979; Nylander, 1960; Rydelius, 1981; Sloboda, 1974).
Alcohol-Related Issues in Children of Alcoholics

The second major area of attention in the (A)COA literature focuses on alcohol-related issues. This consists primarily of reports describing the increased risk for alcoholism among children of alcoholics. Beginning in the 1960s, the notions that alcoholism was a family disorder and that alcoholics often had offspring who became alcoholic were disseminated (Ackerman, 1966; Bowen, 1974; Cotton, 1979; Goodwin, 1979). According to Seilhamer and Jacob (1990), since that time, two relatively distinct bodies of research have developed: studies that focus on genetic influences in the intergenerational transmission of alcoholism, and studies that are concerned with environmental influences in the etiology of alcoholism.

Efforts to produce evidence for a genetic factor have been based on studies that examine rates of alcoholism in ethnic groups, identical versus fraternal twins, adopted children of alcoholic parents, and half-siblings (Cadoret, Cain, & Grove, 1980; Cadoret & Gath, 1978; Cloninger, Reich, & Yokoyama, 1983; Goodwin, Schulsinger, Hermansen, Guze, & Winokur, 1973; Kaij, 1960; Partanen, Bruun, & Markkanen, 1966; Schuckit, Goodwin & Winokur, 1972). Compelling findings from these studies resulted in a search for mechanisms or markers by which a genetic risk is expressed, including endocrine, neurochemical, motor, neurological, and cognitive-perceptual functions. Russell et al. (1984) reviewed 119 studies of genetically influenced characteristics related to alcohol in ACOAs, including neurophysiological, biological, and biochemical factors. According to Brown (1988), the results of the genetic studies suggest the possibility that there are "multiple alcoholisms" with different biochemical
determinants, patterns of inheritance, and clinical manifestations.

While these studies present data that support a genetically based propensity for alcoholism, they are not completely explanatory. For example, they do not account for the 40-50 percent discordant rate in identical twins, and they fail to explain the large proportion of alcoholics with no ancestry of alcoholism (Cadoret et al., 1980). In a critical review of the literature, Searles (1988) discusses the methodological and conceptual shortcomings that limit the conclusions of many of these studies, noting that "environmental influences may have been underemphasized as significant factors in the etiology of alcoholism" (Searles, p. 163).

The literature on family environmental influences in the etiology of alcoholism has been less rigorous than the genetic studies. Although clinical observations describe the deleterious effects of living in a home with alcoholism, there is a lack of guiding conceptualizations and systematic investigations of the actual processes and events that occur within these families.

Cloninger (1981, 1983) investigated the interaction between environment and genetics. Goodwin (1984) suggested that the category "familial alcoholism" be used to differentiate from nonfamilial alcoholism reflecting differences in development and symptomatology.

Another notable effort in this area has been the work of Wolin & Bennett and their colleagues (Wolin, Bennett, & Noonan, 1979; Wolin, Bennett, Noonan, & Teitelbaum, 1980). They have examined how the preservation versus disruption of family rituals is associated with the subsequent drinking status of offspring. In an
attempt to elucidate environmental influences that potentiate the transmission of alcoholism across generations, these researchers focused on how families preserve ritualized patterns of behavior. Rituals refer to the specific ways a family carries out everyday activities (such as meals), the ways it marks transitional events (births, marriages, deaths), and how it celebrates special events such as holidays. Specifically, these researchers hypothesized that families that are able to maintain family rituals despite a parent's alcohol problem are less likely to produce children with an alcohol problem. Although the preliminary results supported the hypothesis, they are in need of replication with demographically broader and larger samples. However, they underscore the viability of identifying distinct family behavioral patterns that may lead to specific child outcomes.

The efforts of Wolin et al. represent an important contribution to much needed theory-building in this area. However, the family ritual model currently lacks sufficient empirical validation and exemplifies the immaturity that characterizes this area of study. Moreover, although several theorists have proposed integrative models that include both nature and nurture (Cloninger, 1983; Cloninger, Bohman, & Sigvardsson, 1981; Goodwin, 1979), the alcohol-risk literature continues its split developmental path with a critical lack of efforts to explore the interactive effects of genetics and environment.

Psychiatric and Psychosocial Disturbances of Children of Alcoholics

The final area of interest has focused on the possible psychiatric and
psychosocial disturbances of children of alcoholics. This domain, described and summarized by several reviewers (Adler & Raphael, 1983; Deutsch et al., 1982; el-Guebaly & Offord, 1977; Jacob et al., 1978; O'Gorman, 1981; Russell et al., 1984; Scavnicky-Mylant, 1991; Seilhamer & Jacob, 1990; West & Prinz, 1987; Wilson, 1982; Wilson & Orford, 1978; Woodside, 1988a), encompasses interpersonal relationships, academic performance, self-concept, role acquisition, coping behaviors, personality profiles, and psychopathology.

Again, the emphasis here is on children of alcoholics as casualties, although methodological limitations in this literature undermine confidence in such an interpretation. Among the problems, according to Seilhamer and Jacob (1990) are: (1) a critical lack of adequate control groups, especially psychiatric groups that would allow for the determination of specific effects; (2) a lack of assessment of stress factors found to correlate with alcoholism, such as marital conflict, unemployment, family violence, separations, and relocations; (3) a need for an evaluation of the mental health status of the nondrinking parent since his or her capability to be a protective agent could significantly influence child outcome; (4) vague and inconsistent criteria for diagnosing alcoholism; and (5) little attention to drinking-related variables such as duration, severity, consumption pattern, location of drinking, and interaction of sex of drinking parent with sex of child. Moreover, samples are often small and unrepresentative of children of alcoholics in the general population, drawn from clinical or judicial systems, and assessed by indirect sources with retrospective reports of dubious reliability and validity.
Notwithstanding these methodological inadequacies, many reviewers over the past decade have affirmed the assumption of increased risk for children of alcoholics. In their 1978 review of empirical studies, Jacob and colleagues found modest to moderate support for significantly greater psychosocial problems in offspring of alcoholics. More recently, West and Prinz (1987) concluded that "the findings taken as a whole support the contention that alcoholism is associated with heightened incidence of child symptomatology" (p. 214). Likewise, Russell et al. (1984) state that collectively "studies convincingly demonstrate that children of alcoholics are at a particularly high risk for emotional and behavioral problems" (p. 52).

Cork (1969) postulated that offspring of alcoholics had more difficulty making friends, were mistrustful, hostile, and uncomfortable with the opposite sex, and exhibited dysfunctional parent-child relationships. Ransom (1988) found that most academically and socially competent children had mothers who reported low or moderate levels of childhood adversities, such as familial alcoholism. In a review of the clinical literature on adult children of alcoholics, Brown (1988) characterizes the alcoholic family environment as one of "chaos, inconsistency, unpredictability, unclear roles, arbitrariness, changing limits, arguments, repetitions and illogical thinking, and perhaps violence and incest. The family is dominated by the presence of alcoholism and its denial" (p. 27).

Adults who were raised in families with an alcoholic parent frequently describe a childhood filled with fears—often for themselves, other family members, and the alcoholic him- or herself. They may report times when the substance abuser was
out of control and seemingly dangerous to him- or herself and others. Adult children of alcoholics were often part of an environment characterized by chronic unpredictability and unreliability. There was often a sense that the child was deprived of being parented and instead was dependent upon one or more people who could not be counted upon for safety, security, or nurturance. The child was forced into a caretaking/parental role by virtue of the alcoholic's regression, neglectfulness, or primitive demands (Brown, 1988). It is not surprising that as adults, children of alcoholics continue to have problems (Scavnicky-Mylant, 1991; Woodside, 1988b). Wright et al. (1991) found that ACOAs in comparison with their peers were more likely to recall their childhoods as unhappy and stressful. Jones (1992) found that young adults with memories of regular problem drinking by their parents perceive less positive regard and a greater denial of their feelings by their parents. McNeill and Gilbert's 1991 study showed that having a parent who drank heavily was significantly correlated with external locus of control, and external orientation was correlated with depression in offspring. Brown and Beletsis (1986) found that adult children of alcoholics in a long-term clinical research and treatment program reported serious psychological problems in their adult lives which they related to their childhood family environment which included the alcoholism of one or both parents. Cermak (1984) has compared the after effects of being reared by an alcoholic parent to post-traumatic stress disorder with similar symptoms. Black (1981) theorized that the coping strategies which helped younger children of alcoholics cope with the stress of family life are not well-suited to more "normal" adult social interactions outside the family of
often an extremely low self-esteem. Distrust of one's self is the result of ignorance about one's feelings. The "all-or-none" functioning rejects anything less than perfect. Imperfection equals failure. Disregard for one's own needs, overresponsibility for others, and the lack of a sense of personal rights results. Adult children feel they are the cause of any problems and are always apologizing. They are overwhelmed with anxiety and the need to rationalize whenever they express a need or desire.

Thus, one's own needs should be avoided, ignored, or denied, since self-control must be maintained at all costs. Another result of the sense of over-responsibility for members of one's family of origin is the inability to form primary attachments to one's own current family and problematic intimate relationships (Brown & Cermak, 1980; Cermak & Brown, 1982; cited in Scavnick-S-Mylant, 1991).

A number of empirical studies, however, (Alterman, Searles & Hall, 1989; Barnard & Spoontjen, 1986; Calder & Kostyniuk, 1989; Goodman, 1987; Seefeldt & Lyon, 1991; Venugopal, 1985) have disputed the clinical evidence that there exists a "core constellation" of personality traits which constitute the adult-child syndrome.

Characteristics of ACOAs are also the characteristics of codependency (Cermak, 1985; cited in Scavnick-S-Mylant, 1991). Fischer et al. (1992) writes that offspring codependency may act to protect against the impact of the dysfunctional family of origin and such outcomes as alcoholism and excessive risk taking.

Wegscheider (1985) describes five signs of codependency: delusions, low self-worth, compulsions, frozen feelings, and medical complications. The denial or delusion originates from what is thought to be love, believing that other people's happiness will
lead to one's own. The realization that one cannot control the feelings and behavior of another, however, induces emotional paralysis. To recognize this relationship as pathologic would require the codependent to admit one's own dysfunction. Thus, the codependent does whatever possible to minimize and rationalize the alcoholic situation. The low self-worth of the codependent, however, compels him or her to continue engaging in approval-seeking behavior, feeling that they can never do enough to ensure love and approval (Cermak, 1985; Cruse & Wegscheider-Cruse, 1988; Wegscheider, 1985; Wegscheider-Cruse, 1988).

Codependents deal with the uncertainty and possible uncontrollable nature of emotions by suppressing them and making them unavailable through numerous compulsions. Harman (1991) calls this the obsessive compulsive personality adaptation and writes that ACOAs may combine this with other forms of adaptation. "Whenever you sense that you have no choice in how you behave, you are in the grips of a compulsion" (Cermak, 1985, p. 13). Major compulsions may involve a substance (alcohol, drugs, nicotine, sugar) or a behavior (work, power, religion, spending money/gambling, eating, exercising, sex). Often these compulsive behaviors lower the codependent's self-esteem even further and are used to keep a lid on potentially immobilizing emotions, such as fear, guilt, anger, and loneliness (Cruse & Wegscheider-Cruse, 1988; Wegscheider-Cruse, 1988).

The chronic stress codependents are exposed to may also contribute to the following medical complications, although not exclusively caused by the codependency: hypochondria, anxiety, depression, insomnia, hypertension, anorexia
nervosa, bulimia, colitis, bowel problems, respiratory diseases such as bronchial asthma, and cardiac irregularities (Wegscheider-Cruse, 1988).

Greenleaf (1981) coined the terms "co-alcoholic" and "para-alcoholic" in an effort to prevent a continuation of the pattern in which the entire family becomes consumed by the alcoholic person's problem and identity. She refutes the notion that alcoholism is literally a family disease unless every member is indeed alcoholic. She contends instead that alcoholism is an individual disease that also produces a family syndrome. Additionally, she argues that a person is more than a disease or a syndrome, and therefore uses the terms "alcoholic," "co-alcoholic," and "para-alcoholic" only as adjectives, not nouns.

The prefix "co-") means with or necessary for the functioning of. The adult who assists in maintaining the social and economic equilibrium of the alcoholic person is demonstrating co-alcoholic behavior. The prefix "para-" means like or resembling. The child who grows up in a family with the alcoholism family syndrome learns behavior from both parents, i.e., para-alcoholic behavior. Says Greenleaf (1981, p. 16):

We must remember that the alcoholism syndrome produces particular kinds of behaviors, not particular kinds of people. The first question that we need to ask when we observe dysfunctional behavior is: Is this learned behavior or is it a naive attempt to fill a gap in the behavioral repertoire? We need not be the victims of our biographies.

Greenleaf's theory is supported by O'Sullivan (1990) who found that ACOAs who had mentors, (e.g., a teacher, pastor, coach), are more likely to trust their own values, potential, and other people, and to have a higher feeling of self-worth and self-liking than those ACOAs without mentors. Woititz (1984) writes that many ACOAs are
emotionally damaged. But many ACOAs' difficulties will be resolved once they are taught to translate information into productive behavior.

A number of theorists have discussed the development of specific role behaviors in children of alcoholics which continue into adulthood. Black (1979) applied Adler's birth order and family systems theory to identify specific role patterns or coping behaviors among children of alcoholics. The first of these role patterns is identified as the "responsible one," which is an example of a super-coping strategy. This role is typical of the oldest or only child who helps to maintain stability and provide a sense of self-worth in an inconsistent and low esteem family. The "adjustor" is a second role that may be combined with the first or assumed separately by another sibling. This child follows directions easily, is flexible, and is able to adapt to social situations. The "placater" is the third role; he or she tends to be sociable and helpful since his or her primary goal is to smooth over conflicts. The final role is that of the acting-out child who is unable to interact with others in acceptable ways and is unable to express his or her needs.

The role behaviors identified by Wegscheider (1979; 1981) are very similar to Black's. Wegscheider uses family systems theory to explain the development of the roles, since every member adapts to the chemically dependent person by assuming a role that will create the least amount of stress. These roles are not static, and family members may continuously switch roles to cope and to relate to the alcoholic/chemically dependent person.

Wegscheider's survival roles include the chief enabler, family hero, scapegoat,
lost child, and mascot. The chemically dependent person relies most on the chief enabler, who represses all feelings to fulfill the dependent’s responsibilities. The family hero also feels responsible for the entire family and tries to relieve the pain; however, due to the progression of the alcoholism, this role leads to feelings of inadequacy. The family scapegoat realizes one is only rewarded for what one does, whether positive or negative. So, he or she withdraws from the family, often destructively, to achieve a sense of belonging elsewhere, usually from peers. The lost child tries not to be an additional burden to the family, and suffers in silence and loneliness by never developing close ties within the family. And finally, the family mascot brings fun into the family and uses charm and humor to survive.

In addition to these coping styles of Black (1981) and Wegscheider (1981; 1985), Nardi (1981) and el-Guebaly and Offord (1979) also identified the role of the "competent" child. This is the child who, rather than developing psychopathology as a result of the chaotic environment, demonstrated characteristics of the "model" child. Niven (1984) called this group of "competent" children the "invulnerables." Invulnerables are unlikely to enter the treatment system because they appear highly functional. Therefore, they will not be identified as having difficulties related to parental alcoholism until adulthood, if at all (Brown, 1988).

There have been few empirical investigations to validate the typologies of Black (1979) and Wegscheider (1979, 1981). Those that have been done have failed to support the clinical findings (Woodside, 1988b). Manning, Balson, and Xenakis (1986), for example, did not find a prevalence of type A personalities, which they
equate to Wegscheider's family hero role, among schoolage and adolescent children of alcoholics. Rhodes and Blackham (1987) evaluated whether differences existed in Black's role-prescribed behaviors among adolescents from alcoholic and nonalcoholic homes. Results indicated that only the acting-out role was significantly higher in adolescents from alcoholic homes. There was no main effect found for birth order. Scavnicky-Mylant's (1988) qualitative study of the process of coping among young adult children of alcoholics also failed to identify specific role behaviors. These findings bring into question Black's and Wegscheider's assumptions about role behavior typology and its relationship to birth order in alcoholic/chemically dependent families.

Black's and Wegscheider's works, however, do seem to answer the demand for the study of "invulnerable" children of alcoholics. Their findings help to create a cautious approach in making naive or premature interpretations of resiliency among this population at risk, since it is the very positive external appearances of the role behaviors in which children of alcoholics engage that may cause one to perceive them as invulnerable or resilient (Scavnicky-Mylant, 1984, 1991). Defending against inner feelings of shame and inadequacy, these children achieve extraordinarily on the outside (Bingham & Bargar, 1985). Others suggest, however, "that some children of alcoholics will remain symptom-free until they encounter adult stresses that touch on latent areas of vulnerability" (Moos & Billings, 1982, p. 161).

A summary of the results of empirical research in psychopathology reveals evidence supporting more psychopathology in ACOAs compared to controls (Benson
& Heller, 1987; Cole, 1988; Franks & Thacker, 1979; Ginchereau, 1989; Knowles & Schroeder, 1990; McKenna & Pickens, 1983; Miller & Jang, 1977). There is also evidence that does not support more psychopathology in ACOAs (Barnard & Spoentgen, 1986; Beardslee, Son & Vaillant, 1986; Gerner, 1989; Kashubeck, 1989).

Since the 1980s, a vast number of empirical studies have examined the personality characteristics of ACOAs (Bachner-Schnorr, 1987; Berkowitz & Perkins, 1988; Carder, 1991; Carroll, 1991; Cole, 1988; Eve, 1987; Fidelibus, 1988; Goglia, 1986; Jackson, 1985; Moore, 1987; Moroney, 1991; Sharma, 1990; Stevens, 1990; Thomson, 1989; Van-Vranken, 1990). In general, empirical evidence for personality traits typical of ACOAs has been inconclusive and has failed to substantiate the clinical notion that ACOAs are a homogeneous group (e.g., different from adult children of other types of dysfunctional families of origin). For example, Fisher, et al. (1992) found that ACOAs are similar to adults with other types of dysfunctional family histories, and both differ from adult children from non-dysfunctional families.

Recent empirical research studies have compared levels of health or dysfunction in the family of origin to current personality characteristics in ACOAs and adult children of non-alcoholics. Empirical studies suggesting a significant between-group difference included those by Andrasi (1987), Brower (1987), Carey (1986), Durlak (1988), Gold (1989), Latham (1988), Pierucci (1990), Sollars (1989), and Soukup (1990), and Transeu (1988). Transeu's 1990 study found that individuation evolving from family dynamics rather than from intrapsychic individuation was more crucial to the development of psychopathology. Each of these support the relationship
between family of origin dysfunction and dysfunctional ACOA personality traits. Although surveys of the literature have fostered an impression of poor psychosocial adjustment of children of alcoholics, several recent reports have been more skeptical. At least two empirical studies (Tolton, 1988; Kunstenaar, 1991) have found no relationships between family of origin dysfunction and personality characteristics. Several empirical studies have found that a substantial proportion of children of alcoholics are faring well in comparison with children of nonalcoholics (Claire & Genest, 1987; Jacob & Leonard, 1986; Miller & Jang, 1977; Werner, 1986). Sollars (1988) found no differences between ACOAs from dysfunctional and moderately functional families, and adult children of non-alcoholics from dysfunctional and moderately functional families. Thomson (1989) found that college-aged ACOAs do not have personality traits that differ significantly from adult children of non-alcoholics.

Tweed (1991) found that ACOAs who had never sought psychological treatment were similar to nontreatment non-ACOAs in having more adaptive cognitive styles. However, ACOAs who had sought treatment were more influenced by their negative family environments than non-treatment ACOAs. Risk factors tended to be family conflict, negative parent-child relationships, and longer length of time living with an actively drinking alcoholic parent. More protective factors were family cohesion, positive parent-child relationships, and adaptive cognitive styles. Pollock et al. (1990) found no evidence that paternal alcoholism and childhood physical abuse interacted to increase the risk of antisocial behavior in offspring.
Heller et al. (1982) caution against "risk overprediction" that can occur by (1) the use of biased samples, (2) a focus on childhood or adolescent symptoms that have unknown predictability for adult functioning, and (3) inattention to the segment of alcoholics' offspring who are "copers." In the last 10 years, a systems-interactional perspective, also called family process studies, has generated increasing interest among alcohol researchers and clinicians in efforts to disentangle the complex association of abusive drinking, family processes, and outcome on individual, dyadic, and systemic levels (Seilhamer & Jacob, 1990). Although the use of this perspective is still in an early stage of development, it has already generated a number of provocative hypotheses relating alcoholism and family interactions (Dunn et al., 1987; Moore, 1982; Seilhamer, 1987; Steinglass, 1980; Wolin et al., 1979, 1980).

In sum, these theories suggest that: (1) there is an ongoing association between parental drinking and the parent-child relationship, (2) this association involves a causal relationship, in that drinking/intoxication effects disturbances in the parent-child relationship, and (3) while parental alcoholism is assumed to cause negative outcomes for children in the long run, the quality of the parent-child relationship during day-to-day cycles of sobriety and intoxication may vary with drinking pattern and consumption level. (Seilhamer & Jacob, 1990, p. 182)

Summary and Investigation Issues

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several child, family, and alcoholism clinicians published reports about an underacknowledged and poorly understood phenomenon: the impact of parental alcoholism on children. During the ensuing years, there has been an active movement to remedy this oversight. This is evidenced by the growing body of literature on the subject, as well as the formation of special interest groups of national scope, numerous conferences, and the development of self-
help groups and programs aimed at treatment and prevention.

Even so, ambiguities about this population prevail. Although there is a wealth of descriptive reports in the literature, there is a lack of comprehensive theories and sound empirical research. Also, although the emphasis has been on the victimization of these children, some reports suggest considerable heterogeneity among children, including adult children, of alcoholics.

Despite the uncertainties, however, there is a general consensus that children and adult children of alcoholics are a population at risk. There is little doubt that the deluge of descriptive literature has established an awareness of the needs of these persons. "The critical issue at this time is the clarification of the parameters of risk, those biological and psychosocial factors that mediate vulnerability" (Seilhamer & Jacob, 1990, p. 169).

Specific childhood outcomes are undoubtedly determined by a highly variable and complex interplay of many factors. One of the factors that has received very little attention is the ability of children and adult children of alcoholics to remember narratively. This includes a consideration of the family interaction processes that promote or discourage the remembering process. This study will investigate this factor in the following chapters.

Section 2, Part 1: Historical Overview of Memory

We have largely forgotten the critical role of memory among the ancient Greeks and in the Roman empire. Casey (1987) tells us that until the advent of alphabetic writing, the Greeks of the twelfth to eighth centuries B.C. depended upon
persons with special training in memorizing for the survival of their oral culture.

The Romans had a large bureaucracy but relatively little paper, requiring the educated Romans who administered the empire to remember much of what we would write down today. They understood the importance of disciplined memory, and they taught it as a standard part of education. They called this disciplined memory _ars memorie artificialis_ or "artificial memory." It was not necessarily unnatural, but it strove to systematize and train natural memory.

An unknown Roman author wrote a textbook for rhetoric students in about 80 B.C. called _Ad Herennium_. In it he described an organization principle called the method of "loci," a technique for remembering speeches without the use of notes. It required that the student imagine a known architectural building into which he or she would place mental images of the various parts of the text to be memorized. "Recall consisted of an imaginary stroll through this space, looking at the images, and remembering their associations" (Bolles, 1988, p. 6). The model of the wax block and the blackboard (or membrana) described by Herennius demonstrates an important principle. Memories could be thought of as objects having both a size and a place and requiring storage until they were recalled. Thus it was a logical step for Plato (427-347 B.C.), in the _Theaetetus_, and his disciple Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), in _De Memoria et Reminiscentia_, to develop these notions with their suggestion "that sensory images may impress themselves upon the mind as a signet ring may leave its impression in a block of wax" (Marshall & Fryer, 1978, p. 3).

The model of the wax block is a helpful conceptualization of one of the
aspects of memory commonly referred to as recognition memory. It provides one explanation of how an image seen for the second time can be recognized as the same image that was seen the first time. A wax tablet allows either drawings or writings to be inscribed on it, so both forms can be remembered. If the wax is soft, a person may be easily taught, but he may also forget quickly as the pliable image becomes less distinct. If the wax is hard, the person might be slow at learning, but once the image is finally imprinted, it will endure.

Plato developed a second model—the birdcage metaphor—as an explanation for the aspects of memory commonly referred to as storage and retrieval.

As Plato puts it, the bird can be in the cage without one necessarily being able to catch it instantaneously and at will; that is to say, "catching is of two kinds, one before possessing for the sake of possessing, the other when one already obtained possession for the purpose of having in the hands what was already possessed." This second type of "catching" is critical, of course, for it shows how errors might arise in the retrieval process, "as if it were taking a pigeon that he possessed instead of a dove." (Marshall & Fryer, 1978, p. 6)

The models of the wax tablet and the birdcage (more commonly known today as the "storehouse" model) have been used in the memory literature even to this day with little or no variation. The significance of Plato's metaphors is attested to by the fact that they have sustained empirical research for two millennia.

Combining these two metaphors into a mixed-metaphor led to a third model, that of the "library." A library contains a large collection of books that must be organized to be useful. Aristotle, Kant (1798), and Bowen (1877) each had versions of the library hypothesis related to storage-relations. St. Augustine (in his Confessions), Jackson (1874), Morton (1970), Seymour (1973), and Pylyshyn (1973),
as well as a considerable proportion of nineteenth and twentieth-century works on the library model have been devoted to arguing that different types of stacking arrangements are used for the two types of material, verbal and visual, that make up the contents of the library (Marshall & Fryer, 1978).

Others, like Ramus (1578), Gesner (1770), Thomson (1907), Cattell (1887), Cattell and Bryant (1889), Collins and Quillian (1969), Jacobs (1887), Miller (1956a), Wundt (see Marshall, 1970), Loftus et al. (1970), Meyer and Schvaneveldt (1976), and Cavanagh (1972), have devoted their speculations to the library retrieval strategies (cited in Marshall & Fryer, 1978).

The advent of cheap and abundant paper, followed by the birth of science in the late 1500s and early 1600s, found a rejection of artificial memory with its vivid imagery, personal meanings, and what were seen as arbitrary systems of order. The new order preferred impersonal rote memory, and this movement was so influential that our culture continues to value scientific reasoning and rote memorization.

Three hundred years after the disappearance of artificial memory, scientists cautiously returned to its study, but with very conservative assumptions. The first modern systematic study of memory was begun in 1879 by Hermann Ebbinghaus, using himself as the subject. Ebbinghaus accepted the wax-tablet and storehouse metaphors of artificial memory and took for granted both that memory stored items and that it was capable of accurate recall. Like the scientists who had preceded him 300 years earlier, however, he scorned the techniques used by ancient memory experts to improve recall, calling them "tricks." Even more unfortunate was his desire to
eliminate all interest in the influence of meaning on memory.

As a result of trying to combine two contradictory theoretical inheritances, Ebbinghaus did little more than study memory in relatively meaningless situations. Despite the fact that his work inspired many followers, he failed to advance any new theoretical understandings. Instead, he and his long trail of followers, in their desire to study "pure" memory, disconnected memory from meaning and feeling. It may be argued that the kind of memory they promoted—rote memory—is the least natural kind of memory. We do not just learn by rote but seek to understand a situation in all its complexity.

The study of memory was further bedeviled in the latter nineteenth and much of the twentieth century by the rise of associationism, the theory that the brain works by linking a stimulus with a response. One of its advocates was Abercrombie whose 1857 classic furthered this theory. Association theory came about as an attempt to address both storage-arrangements and retrieval strategies within one paradigm. Three classes of principles comprise associationism (Marshall & Fryer, 1978). The first class is that of natural, logical, or philosophical association in which items are connected rationally, and organized as a function of logical or semantic structure. The second class consists of items connected by time or space. In the third class, items consist of artificial cognitive transformations or mnemonics, such as the method of loci referred to previously.

More recently, associationists tried to answer the question of how we remember the order in which things are presented. They believed that each word is
associated with the one which precedes it. But after performing countless "serial order" studies, they themselves were forced to admit that the associationist assumptions failed to be supported (Taylor, 1979). For over 75 years, it appeared that the bulk of the memory researchers had been barking up dead trees.

New thoughts about memory had begun to appear near the turn of the nineteenth century with Sigmund Freud. Freud, too, accepted the traditional metaphors of artificial-memory theory and assumed that the brain preserved all experience. However, Freud (1893) distinguished between "wax-tablet" exact-replica impressions which he called projection paralysis, and "reconstructed" impressions which he called representation paralysis. Further, he called the phenomenon of repression "a failure of translation" from an unconscious memory to conscious verbal recall (1895). He strongly believed that a record of the past is of no use if it cannot be retrieved into consciousness, and a record is useless and even dangerous if it is incorrectly imprinted or deciphered. This belief found its way into psychology where psychotherapists were often suspicious of their patients' remembrances, and were more concerned about the truthfulness of patients' memories than they were about what the memories meant to their patients.

Freud's understanding, however, of personal reference as something that limits and shapes memory was a radical step forward from the traditional metaphors of the wax-tablet, the storehouse, and the library. Despite the fact that Freud saw this personal reference as a constraint to memory and not a use for memory, Freud's insight into the relation between oneself and one's thinking ushered in the next
theoretical breakthrough (Bolles, 1988).

This next major theoretical advance combined Freud's understanding of personal reference with modern understandings of efficient information-transmission, storage, and search processes. The notions of tachygraphy (for example, shorthand), and cryptography (for example, Morse code), began with Cicero (106-43 B.C., De Oratore). Both techniques employ the use of short codes, more compact versions of messages, allowing the need for less storage space for messages and more efficient retrieval.

These two additional notions and Freud's view that personal reference affects memory were the foundations for what is known as reconstructive theory (Brewer, 1986), the transformational model of memory (Sameroff & Chandler, 1975), or the constructivist approach (Cohler, 1982; Paris & Lindauer, 1977; Riegel, 1977). This new approach "emphasizes the extent to which new information leads to transformations of the previous existing pattern of memories . . ." (Cohler, 1982, p. 211).

The person who began the movement away from traditional memory theory was Bartlett (1932). He deliberately revolted against the Ebbinghaus school and sought to study meaningful memory. He broke away from the traditional metaphors of artificial memory and argued that memory is active, not merely a passive storehouse or library for things past. But he continued to accept the artificial memory assumption that the function of memory is to recall the past as accurately as possible (Bolles, 1988).
The development of reconstructive theory was very slow in the making. Science did not readily abandon the premise that memory is merely a storehouse, and therefore passive. The time-honored metaphors of memory all insisted that memories must be stored.

Theorizers developed models that tried to mix the two views, whereby memory consisted of both a storehouse for passive storage, and a working area where data was retrieved and memory became active. "In the 1950's, as confidence in the notion of stored memories declined, neuroscientists began to suspect that functions of memory were localized" (Bolles, 1988, p. 119). In the late 1960's, psychiatrist E. Roy John, M.D. in his pivotal book The Mechanisms of Memory tried to state the best stored statistically throughout the brain and that the information emerges from the operation of many neurons, "as in a democratic vote" (Bolles, 1988, p. 119).

The continued failure to discover a means of storage was not taken as easy evidence that no storage existed. Atkinson and Schiffrin (1968) proposed three storage areas for memory: a long-term area, a short-term area, and a vestibule storage point where sensory data first arrives in the brain. Other storage views of memory were introduced, such as suggesting that memory for different parts of an activity is distributed among the different functional brain areas. Another suggestion proposed the metaphor of the hologram for memory whereby all information is stored at every point in the brain (Rosenfield, 1988).

But memory and brain research in the 1960s and 1970s did not support these
logical expectations about the brain having storage areas for memory. Neither did the research support the theory that problems with memory retrieval is the result of simply forgetting, as in passive memory theories. New research in the middle 1980s suggested that the neuron itself is the organ of memory, and it showed that the behavior of the neuron does not depend solely on present input but on past experience as well. In addition to studying neuronal activity, neuropsychology began identifying brain circuitry to understand how separate parts of the brain cooperate to construct a memory.

The brain is not a piece of clockwork that holds us in orbits determined by the mathematics of our situation. It is a biological wonder that lets us use and build on experience, if we dare. The memory circuits have no absolute end. They are loops, leading back to their starting place, letting us move up and down the levels of memory until we ourselves feel that we have remembered enough. (Bolles, 1988, p. 138)

Practically speaking, these two findings—that experience changes the neuron and the brain remembers by returning its circuits to the changed neuron (Bolles, 1988; Squire, 1986)—provide neuropsychological support for the idea that our memories undergo transformations in the form of distortions, reorganizations, and data combinations. This evidence challenges the traditional assumption that accurate recall is memory’s chief function.

Piaget (1973) observed that children’s memories for particular events can actually improve over time. Here was the missing empirical link in the development of reconstructive theory. Having an active memory allows us to update or interpret our memories to reflect our new understandings of the way we think about ourselves and the world.
Fig. 1. Historical Development of Memory Models/Metaphors
In reconstructive theory, recall is understood not as the literal retrieval of an exact copy of the original image, but as the remembering of a general impression of the whole from which the details are then reconstructed.

This means that memory may not be strictly veridical. There appear to be circuits for emotional memory, factual memory, and interpretive memory, and "we can organize these circuits by referring to subjective motives for the construction of a memory" (Bolles, 1988, p. 162). This is a significant challenge to the wax tablet and passive memory understanding that memories were precise duplicates of the original events. And as already pointed out, it has led to the idea that there may be multiple representations or interpretations of the same event.

Therefore, accurate recall may be viewed as an artificial function for memory, and reconstructive recall as a natural function for memory. Both may be useful or problematic depending on the specific circumstances. In any case, precise recall is not memory's chief function; survival and meaning-making is. The study of the functioning of memory and the functioning of the brain appears to have come together at last.

Section 2, Part 2: Historical Analysis of Autobiographical Memory and Life Narrative

Autobiographical memory refers to the memories a person has of his or her own life experiences. Personal recollections have been valued and studied far longer than there have been formal disciplines to study the process of remembering.

From the beginning biographers and historians have used personal recollections to construe the individual and collective past. The archival function of memory has often been given primary emphasis in biographical and historical work. According
to this view, life memories are time capsules, records of an unrepeatable past. As such they can be used both to recount the past and to teach lessons for the future. The intimate association between memory and narrative arises from this urge to use the past to instruct present and future generations. (Robinson, 1986, p. 19)

While writing autobiography is a relatively new activity, as is writing itself, the oral tradition of telling one's life story is not.

The self-told narrative is, by all accounts, ancient and universal. People anywhere can tell you some intelligible account of their lives. What varies is the cultural and linguistic perspective or narrative form in which it is formulated and expressed. And that too will be found to spring from historical circumstances as these have been incorporated in the culture and language of a people. I suspect that it will be as important to study historical developments in forms of self-telling as it is to study their ontogenesis. I have used the expression "forms of self-telling," for I believe it is form rather than content that matters. (Bruner, 1987, p. 16)

A particular personal narrative of the life course represents continuing reconstructive activity. The rules for narrative construction guide the attempt to account for human actions across time (Gergen & Gergen, 1986). A successful narrative must establish a valued endpoint and then "select and arrange events in such a way that the goal state is rendered more or less probable" (Gergen & Gergen, 1986, p. 26). The form of the narrative is based on a socially shared expectation that stories should have a beginning, a middle, and an end (Cohler, 1982). In meeting these rules, narratives are capable of demonstrating a connectedness or coherence, and a sense of movement or direction through time (Gergen & Gergen, 1986). "The failure to maintain a coherent personal narrative leads to feelings of fragmentation and disintegration" (Cohler, 1982, p. 205).

McAdams (1985) claims that individuals reconstruct their own pasts and create their own histories so that it appears to them that the past has been "planned"
by them and so they can justify their present stance in the world. Freeman (1984) similarly claims that the narrative is not what is "remembered," but what is constructed; patterns are not detected until after the fact.

It is an individual's life story that specifies a personalized niche in the environment, consolidates the synchronic dimension of identity, and provides that essential sense of inner sameness. It is also the individual's life story that has the power to consolidate the diachronic dimension and provide the equally essential sense of personal continuity over time. The life story provides unity and purpose to life. (DeVries, Birren, & Deutchman, 1990, p. 4)

Written autobiographical accounts have had a rich and varied, albeit shorter, history in the Western world than oral accounts. According to Weintraub (1978), early autobiographers in Western culture, according to Weintraub (1978, p. xv), sought to find meaning in relation to organized realities they perceived to be external to themselves, such as religious institutions, traditions, families, and worldviews. Out of their writings emerged "model conceptions of personality," an understandable interpretation in the world of the Atomists and the school of Hippocrates which had made the psyche, with its sensations, its cognitions, and its memories, into a physical object (Marshall & Fryer, 1978). Weintraub (1978) writes that a "model conception of personality" can be understood as:

An ideal form of being [which] beckons men and women to model their lives upon it. . . . All such ideals share certain formal characteristics. They prescribe for the individual certain substantive personality traits, certain values, virtues, and attitudes. They embody specific life-styles into which to fit the self. They offer man a script for his life, and only in the unprescribed interstitial spaces is there room for idiosyncrasy. (p. xv)

These earliest Western autobiographical efforts served, therefore, more to present personality models than to reveal the uniqueness of an individual.
Weintraub (1978) suggests that with the Confessions of St. Augustine, autobiography began to be representative of a new paradigm of how the individual derives meaning. Confessions is distinctive in its personal focus, its introspection, and its interpretive qualities. But those increasingly reflective autobiographers who succeeded St. Augustine throughout the Middle Ages were the exceptions to the traditional "model-conceptions-of-personality" paradigm.

Even so, the new paradigm of individuality was emerging. The many-layered quality of medieval civilization... contributed to a basic process of social differentiation and thus ultimately to the emergence of individuality as a consciously cultivated value. (Weintraub, 1978, p. 79)

From Petrarch to Goethe, the majority of the autobiographies which Weintraub considers reflect movements away from the model-conceptions-of-personality paradigm and toward the more self-conscious paradigm of individuality. These autobiographies concerned themselves with the creation of self-narratives or self-histories. They were evidence of the shift in focus in historical perception, away from a belief:

that every life, or even the complex life of a whole culture, is a process of unfolding, subject to the laws of a preformed destiny or nature... toward a belief that something becomes what it is through an unpredictable, contingent interaction of diverse factors in a constantly developing configuration of reality. (Weintraub, 1978, p. 262)

Since the time of Goethe (the early nineteenth century), a convincing argument can be made that the individuality paradigm increasingly pervades Western culture. Individualism is among the highest values held by contemporary Americans, and as will be shown later, this may very well have had an impact on the development of the autobiographical capacity in modern Americans.
We can trace the roots of systematic empirical research on autobiographical biography to Galton (1883) and Freud, two contemporaries of Ebbinghaus. Both established traditions of research that were quite different from Ebbinghaus' and each other's. Both were interested, however, in the double aspect that distinguishes the study of life memories from traditional research on learning and memory, that being an interest in both the remembering and the rememberer.

Galton's approach was similar to that of a botanist. He was fascinated by variety, and he sought to describe, quantify, and codify memory. His was a type of ecological survey with the goal of creating a taxonomy of recollections as well as obtaining knowledge of the causes, significance, and individual differences of the various types of memory.

Freud pioneered a combination of the case history method and interpretive methods to explain and treat persons driven by experiences they "could not forget and struggled to avoid remembering" (Robinson, 1986, p. 20). Freud believed that causal inferences about a person's life could be made by the analyst even when the recollections and associations of the patient did not disclose them. Hence, the analysis of autobiographical memories went beyond the literal level of the content of patients' memories.

Following the work of Galton and Freud and others, there was a long period of stagnation in the study of autobiographical memory. The use of autobiographical accounts to understand human behavior was widely accepted until the beginning of the twentieth century when the rise of behaviorism cast aspersions on autobiographical
activity (Birren & Hedlund, 1986). Such methods were viewed unfavorably except by Hall (1922), Buhler (1933), Murray (1938), and Allport (1942), who used autobiographical materials in the construction of their theories and made a strong plea for the continued use of personal documents in psychological research. "The exclusive focus on 'observables' left little room for such nebulous notions as retrospection, life review, and reminiscence" (DeVries, Birren, & Deutchman, 1990, p. 4). During the 1960's, reminiscence came to be regarded as a negative aspect of abnormal aging and a symptom of mental deterioration. Reminiscence was referred to as "defective," "pathological," and "regressive," and older adults were discouraged from such "living in the past."

Autobiographical and retrospective methods were denigrated in scientific endeavors because they were thought to represent an antiscience point of view by discouraging the search for general laws and favoring the description of particular phenomena instead (Nunnally, 1978; Runyan, 1984). They were also held suspect because they could not be generalized. Hence it was believed that no useful information could be gained from these methods (Holt, 1962). Additional criticism arose out of the belief that individuals were notoriously inaccurate and unreliable reporters of their own lives (DeVries, Birren, & Deutchman, 1990, p. 4).

However, the climate of opinion within psychology and related disciplines was changing with theoretical models of memory becoming more versatile, complex, and able to address the uses of memory in everyday life. Over the last 30 years or so, there have been signs that the autobiographical, interpretive, and narrative tradition is...
Mourning the devaluation of narratives as sources of knowledge, and emphasizing the moral force, healing power, and emancipatory thrust of stories, scholars across the disciplines have (re) discovered the narrative nature of human beings (Banks, 1982; Bell, 1988; Brody, 1988; Heilbrun, 1988; Polkinghorne, 1988). ... Such diverse phenomena as ethnography (E. Bruner, 1986), psychoanalysis (Spence, 1982, 1987), the life course (Cohler, 1982), the life history (Peacock, 1984), the research interview (Mishler, 1986), the physician-patient relationship (Brody, 1987), developmental theories (Gergen & Gergen, 1986), and everyday explanations (Gergen, 1988) have been viewed as having traditions, forms and structures exemplifying the narrative, as opposed to the logico-scientific mode of thought (J. Bruner, 1986). ... This (re) conceptualization of human beings as narrators and of their products as texts to be interpreted constitutes a potentially critical moment for nursing scholars. ... (Sandelowski, 1991, p. 161)

A similar trend may be seen in research on autobiographical memory. Linton (1975) and Casey (1987) used their own recollections to better understand the transformation, organization, and significance of autobiographical remembering. Khilstrom and Harackiewicz (1982) have examined the earliest childhood recollections from the perspective of personality and memory. Studies of reminiscing in middle-aged and older adults are raising questions about the structure and functions of personal histories (Butler, 1963; Field, 1981; Lieberman & Tobin, 1983; Myerhoff, 1978). Brim and Ryff (1980), Franklin and Holding (1977), Tulving (1972; 1983), Oakley (1983), and others have attempted to develop a normative taxonomy of memory in an effort to bridge the studies of memory and human development. Neisser (1978), Neisser and Winograd (1988), Katherine Nelson (1988), and Connerton (1989) have emphasized the ecological and social aspects of autobiographical remembering.

A number of theoretical perspectives are adding to our understanding of
autobiographical memory. Experimental psychology is still a widely used theoretical perspective. This traditional approach asks questions about such processes as encoding, retention, retrieval, recall, and recognition. It also provides laboratory-tested accounts for much of the data.

Cognitive psychology and the more cognitive end of the experimental psychology perspective have most recently concentrated on the structure and function of memory. One contribution has been the concept of "schema," one of the recently identified organizational forms of human memory. Although cognitive psychology has provided concepts for personality and social psychology to investigate, it has been slow to incorporate ideas that have arisen from personality and social psychology. This may in part be due to the nature of the research questions, but it may also be due to reductionist tendencies. Increased reciprocity might benefit both perspectives since they are faced with similar issues.

Unlike most of the research that has focused on the universal characteristics of memory, developmental psychology has contributed the important idea that persons are often markedly different in development at the time of encoding versus the time of retrieval. Erikson (1968) described the process of life review as the fundamental, culminating task of later adulthood. Successful completion, he theorized, would result in wisdom, whereas unsuccessful completion would result in despair. Also, developmental studies have indicated that autobiographical memory changes with development (Barclay & Wellman, 1986; Linton, 1982, 1986; Nelson, 1988). These notions will be considered in greater depth later in this analysis.
The theoretical perspectives of personality and social psychology address one of the distinguishing characteristics of autobiographical memory from other sorts of memory:

Autobiographical memory is about the self; it is about such technical terms as self-theories, self-reference, and identity (Barclay, Chap. 6). Autobiographical memory is the source of information about our lives, from which we are likely to make judgments about our own personalities and predictions of our own and, to some extent, others' behavior. Autobiographical memory, however, also provides a sense of identity and of continuity, a sense that can, but need not, be lost along with the neuropsychological loss of other aspects of autobiographical memory functioning (Baddeley & Wilson, Chap. 13; Butters & Cermak, Chap. 14; Crovitz, Chap. 15). (Rubin, 1986, p. 7)

Within psychoanalysis, there has been extensive discussion of memory and the literature and everyday life to reflect the increasing saliency in the development of the inner world. Freud, as we have seen, was never clear regarding the already famous interactions among disciplines and extent of loss of the memorial process through childhood and adulthood. Contemporary psychoanalytic theory, according to Cohler (1982, p. 212) has emphasized the importance of understanding childhood memories.

As present reflections upon earlier experiences, successively transformed across childhood and adulthood, rather than simply as the direct recall of events from early childhood in an unmodified form (Fine, Joseph, & Waldhor, 1959/1971; Loewald, 1972, 1978; Neubauer, 1980; Novey, 1968; Peskin, 1978; Peskin & Gigy, 1977), are seen to understand the patient’s interpretation of much.

Social psychology goes a step further than personality psychology and psychoanalysis, however, with the consideration that remembering is not merely an individual enterprise conducted in solitude. Much of our remembering is about and done with other people. The contents and meanings of memories "are likely to change as a function both of changes in the social and cultural surround as well as aging itself" (Chandler, 1976; Cole & Scribner, 1977; Hazan, 1980; Kvale, 1975, 1977;

The influence of the humanities has been a significant one in the study of autobiographical memory. Some of the questions psychologists have only recently pondered have been asked by scholars in the humanities for some time. These include scholars in literature (Barclay, 1986), history (Brown, Shevell, & Rips, 1986), and philosophy (Brewer, 1986). Sandelowski (1991, p. 161) writes:

Scientists under the influence of such interpretive traditions as phenomenology, hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism, and feminist and cultural criticism have developed a "literary consciousness" (Marcus, 1986, p. 262), assuming standpoints and employing techniques once distinctively associated with literary analysis and criticism. . . . The study of narratives has linked the sciences with history, literature and everyday life to reflect the increasing reflexivity that characterizes contemporary inquiry and furthers the postmodern deconstruction of the already tenuous boundaries among disciplines and realms of meaning (Ruby, 1982).

Nursing as a discipline has always been privy to stories that embody the lived experience of nurses and patients. Despite the richness of this resource, nursing has been limited by the positivist point of view and has tended to devalue these stories as a means of knowing and meaning-making. Nursing has not readily acknowledged that it may be more important to understand the patient’s interpretation of his/her experiences rather than to have only objective information about these experiences (Birren & Hedlund, 1986; Devries, Birren, & Deutchman, 1990). Only recently are some nurses advocating the use of story as a link between nursing practice, ontology, and epistemology (Boykin & Schoenhofer, 1991).

The exceptions to this have been in geriatric nursing, and to lesser degrees, in home health and psychiatric nursing. Geriatric nurses in particular have been aware
for some time of the effectiveness of group reminiscence therapy as a nursing intervention (Burnside, 1990; Dye, 1989; Kovach, 1990; Oleson, 1989; Osborn, 1989; Taft, 1990; Tourangeau, 1988a, b; Youssef, 1990). Burnside (1984) posits that the distribution of attention among elderly group members has the effect of reducing pressure on any one person and providing support in dealing with painful memories. By creating a safe place where the trials of life can be shared, the group can affirm the individual’s ability to proceed beyond a troubling event by creating meaning out of the entire life narrative (Magee, 1988).

Summary of Section II

This review of the literature has examined a number of theories of memory. The consequence of most contemporary theories of memory has been that it has been studied in experimental psychology and other disciplines as if it were a thing. Memory acts as if it were a computer, or as if it were a physiological mechanism. These metaphors as metaphorical are discarded and become literal fact. Furthermore, the current metaphors of memory all say that memory is like a thing—a computer, a sensing mechanism, or a physiological process. Thus, we can say that the experimental psychology of memory has contributed a great deal to the thing-like quality of memory as lived. (Sardello, 1978, p. 138)

Most of the research on memory has been driven by the analytic method. This method began with presuppositions leading to the observation of certain characteristics of the phenomenon of memory. However, the presuppositions were forgotten and the characteristics were presented as empirical truths.

In doing this study, I was not so interested in how memory is mechanical, or
how it is biological, or how it is technological. I was interested in how memory is constitutive of experience. We all have experiences; experience shapes memory but it is memory that we carry with us and remembering that shapes our meanings today. Our memories are our past, our present, and our future. I was interested precisely in the ontology of remembering, i.e., how memory is constitutive of experience. In particular, I was interested in the is-ness and given-ness of remembering by those I eventually came to call adult rememberers of family breakdown.

In order to study the lived experience of being an adult rememberer of family breakdown, I needed a method whose concern would be to disclose and understand the meanings embedded in the everyday world of lived experience. I sought an approach that would provide the possibility for observation in which known biases would be freely admitted, so that characteristics of the phenomenon would be understood within the limitations of that bias (Sardello, 1978). A research method grounded in Heideggerian phenomenology, not to be confused with existential phenomenology (Dreyfus, 1987), was chosen. This method was Heideggerian hermeneutics, or hermeneutical analysis.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the overall design of the study. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is a reiteration of the question that was asked and the problem that was studied. Since Heideggerian phenomenology grounds the entire research project, including the interpretive methodology that was employed, a description of the development of Heidegger's ontological hermeneutic phenomenology is presented in the second section. The third section is a description of the used methodology for this study, Heideggerian hermeneutical analysis. Finally, the participants in the study and the procedures used to collect the data are described respectively in the fourth and fifth sections of the chapter.

Problem Statement

The Review of Literature demonstrated that literature on the experience of remembering the past is sparse. In particular, there is very little written about the experience of remembering from the perspective of the actual rememberers who are living their memories. The rememberers of specific interest in this study are adult rememberers of family breakdown. What remains unclear in the literature is how these particular rememberers understand the experience of their remembering, i.e.,
what does remembering family breakdown mean to them?

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to discover and make visible some of
the common meanings embedded in the lived experience of adult rememberers of
family breakdown. I will attempt to discover thematic relationships in these common
meanings. I seek ultimately to begin to understand more fully how nurses can
participate with adult rememberers of family breakdown to create meaningful
narratives out of living memories. The methodology employed is that of Heideggerian
hermeneutic phenomenology. Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Heideggerian Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Ontological hermeneutic phenomenology is indebted to the contributions of a
diverse array of thinkers, among them Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, and
Ricoeur, but particularly, I would argue, Heidegger. Heidegger made a distinction
between the terms "ontological" (ontologisch) and "ontical" (ontisch): "the latter
applies to any relation to entities within-the-world, while the former applies to any
relation to the Being of those entities" (Richardson, 1986, p. 23). It is helpful to
consider the traditions of hermeneutics and of phenomenology briefly in order to
appreciate Heidegger's significance in the development of ontological hermeneutic
phenomenology.

It is important to note, however, that not all contemporary hermeneutic
thinkers, including a number of nurse researchers, agree with the philosophical turn
that occurred with the introduction of Heideggerian phenomenology. Contemporary
philosophical hermeneutics is exceedingly complex, consisting of many competing
theories of interpretation. Howard (1982) suggests that there are three major branches of contemporary hermeneutic theory: objective hermeneutics; Heideggerian and Gadamerian hermeneutics; and, critical or radical hermeneutics. Each theoretical position has its own assumptions and consequentially, significant methodological implications. As this study is grounded in Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology, the other two contemporary theories of hermeneutics will not be discussed.

Hermeneutics as a discipline can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. The Greek word *hermeneutikos*, "related to explaining," referred to bringing to understanding something that is foreign or unfamiliar so as to seem familiar and comprehensible, especially by means of language (Bauman, 1978). The word was derived from Hermes, the wing-footed messenger-god of Greek mythology. Hermes was associated with the Delphic oracle. He was responsible for changing the unknowable into a form that humans could understand or comprehend. He accomplished this through the discovery and use of language and writing.

More recently, hermeneutics has had two major branches. One is the rules, methods, or theory governing the exegesis of linguistic texts, including Biblical exegesis dating back to the seventeenth century; as well as legal discourse and literary criticism. In this early phase of its history, hermeneutics was a highly specialized subdiscipline, primarily of theology.

The second branch has been the philosophical exploration of understanding, including the character of and the conditions requisite for understanding (Bauman, 1978). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the scope of hermeneutics
expanded greatly, and hermeneutics as an interpretive method found applications in fields outside of theology. Schleiermacher redefined hermeneutics as the study of understanding itself. He and his followers were among the first to develop hermeneutics as the primary aspect of social experience, not only for the scholarly interpretation of texts, but also for understanding the mystery of the inner life of "the other." With this came the realization that other persons cannot be classified and deduced according to general laws.

Part of the mystery of individuality was an admission that we can never be sure of completely or rightly understanding what another human being says. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, it was generally believed that as human beings we are able to grasp something common and intelligible in the utterance of another due to a common rationality in consciousness and being.

With the advent of the modern epoch in the nineteenth century, the experimental sciences gained dominance over philosophy and theology. The questions of philosophy and theology moved away from affirming that subjective understanding is able to grasp reality, to the purely epistemological questions of justifying the mathematically symbolic constructions of nature and the validity of such scientific methods.

As a consequence, hermeneutics also began asking an epistemological question: "To what extent are we justified in assuming that we have a correct understanding of the texts?" An entire system of rules and principles developed from experience in classics and theological learning. It grew out of the belief that there is a
certain set of principles that allows the reader to grasp the real idea of the text. On this basis, the philosophical interpreters of the so-called historical school, especially Dilthey, developed the belief that the humanities need and have their own psychological foundation and hermeneutical methodology. It was Dilthey who saw hermeneutics as the foundation for those disciplines (i.e., all of the humanities and social sciences,) that interpret human expressions of the inner mysterious subjective life (Bauman, 1978).

Yet in the same epoch, Nietzsche captured the concept of interpretation in a new and radical sense: "There are no moral phenomena, there are only moral interpretations." This radical position forced the dichotomizing of the two earlier forms of interpretation: (1) interpretation as simply interpreting statements following the intentions of the author, or (2) interpretation as revealing the meaningfulness of statements in a completely unexpected sense and even against the meaning of the author. Husserl and Heidegger represent two of the voices in this dialectic.

Husserl claimed that he was the only real positivist, in the sense of taking things as they are given. This became the principle of his phenomenology. Husserl’s conviction was that sense perception was primary and hermeneutics secondary. He believed it was possible to make a distinction between phenomenology as pure description of lived experience and hermeneutics as interpretation of experience. Husserl and strict followers of his method would insist that phenomenological research is pure description and that hermeneutics (interpretation) fails to do this. Husserlian purists insist that the object of phenomenological description is to bracket out all
phenomena from consciousness except for the phenomenon being studied and to intuit the essences of that phenomenon as it appears in consciousness. "From such a point of view, the notion of hermeneutics or interpretation already implies the acknowledgement of a distortion, of an incomplete intuiting" (VanManen, 1990, p. 26).

The thinker who introduced the concept of hermeneutics in philosophy, and not only in the methodology of the humanities, was Heidegger. He placed hermeneutics in the center of his analysis of existence in showing that interpretation is not an isolated activity of human beings but the basic structure of our experience of life. We are always taking something as something. (Gadamer, 1984, p. 58)

Heidegger was a student of Husserl’s who parted ways with his teacher by his claim that sense perception is never given. Instead, it is an aspect of the pragmatic approach to the world. We are always hearing—listening to something and extracting from other things. We are interpreting in seeing, hearing, receiving. In seeing, we are looking for something; we are not just like photographs that reflect everything visible. We are more like photographers, looking for the moment in which the camera shot would be an interpretation of the experience.

This is the primacy of interpretation which Heidegger proposed and Husserl refused to accept. Husserl steadfastly held to his conviction that realizing what is present for the senses is of primary importance. All interpretation is a secondary act. Heidegger argued that all description is ultimately interpretation. "The meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation. . . . The phenomenology . . . is a hermeneutic in the primordial signification of this word, where it designates this business of interpreting" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 37).
The Heidegger of *Being and Time* attempts to develop an ontology of understanding that would ground understanding in our "being in the world" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 78ff). Unlike Husserl's ideal of a presuppositionless philosophy, Heidegger argued that our own historical existence, our "being in the world," affects our understanding of everything, both positively and negatively.

Unlike Husserl, we find ourselves "thrown" into a world, and we cannot evade our particular set of circumstances (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 174, 223-224, 264). Finding oneself "thrown" into some set of circumstances is an ontological characteristic of human beings. Try as we may we cannot escape from being part of a world that is not of our own making but on which we are dependent (Wachterhauser, 1986).

More important, however, for hermeneutics, is the fact that our ‘thrownness’ involves an inextricable relation to history. . . . Because we come to understand nature only through a historical matrix, history is, in a sense, more primordial than nature,” (Wachterhauser, 1986, p. 21). Having such a "world" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 78ff.) is a precondition of all understanding. Given this "situatedness," all new understanding depends on our ability to relate new phenomena to our already existing set of understandings. Our understanding is a continually changing reality, but it is our preunderstandings that allow us to find our way.

Heidegger criticized previous accounts of knowledge, meaning, and understanding as being distorted because they did not give due credence to the influences of historicity. Heidegger’s critics accuse his position as being that of
skeptical relativism. His supporters would argue that Heidegger's position is that of perspectivism instead.

Just because we always understand reality from some perspective does not imply that what we understand is, really, our own perspective and not reality. On the contrary, we understand from a perspective but what we understand is still reality. (Wachterhauser, 1986, p. 26)

Heidegger argues that meaning is neither arbitrarily imposed from without nor discovered as fact. Just because we grasp reality from an historically mediated perspective does not allow us to be arbitrary. Rather, meaning is worked out in a dialectical fashion that is free from suspicion.

To be sure, we genuinely take hold of this possibility only when in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last, and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conceptions, but rather to make the scientific theme secure by working out these fore-structures in terms of the things themselves. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 191)

"In this sense," writes Wachterhauser, "Heidegger is not asking us to do the impossible, that is, to step outside our preunderstandings and view things as such or, as Gadamer sometimes phrases it, "From a perspective that is no perspective at all," but he is asking us to look deeply at things as they present themselves from the horizon of our preunderstandings. (1986, p. 28)

According to Heidegger, a very important source of our preunderstanding is language. One of the most important functions of language is what Heidegger calls the "apophantic" function of language in which language "lets an entity be seen from itself" (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 196-203). In other words, language allows us to determine the similarities between and the distinctiveness of things from other things. Furthermore, language develops as we strive for new ways to describe new
experiences. "Changes in the world necessitate changes in language, and changes in language affect what we are able to grasp about the world," (Wachterhauser, 1986, p. 29). It is language that allows us to see the relatedness of things to each other and to us. Therefore, for Heidegger, all description is ultimately interpretation, and language is a primary vehicle for interpretation.

It was Dilthey who believed that hermeneutics as a method could provide an objective understanding of life and other persons, a view that is sometimes referred to as analytic hermeneutics (Howard, 1982). Heidegger, on the other hand, viewed interpretation not as a tool for knowledge but as constitutive of what it means to be a human existent (Dasein). Persons are self-interpreting beings whose being is both a given and something that is gradually uncovered as we live our lives in the context of the world. Writes Rather (1990, p. 83):

As such, being must be studied as it presents itself in the everyday world of practices and lived experience. Since both experience and being are intrinsically language-imbued and involve public or shared contexts of significance, the description and interpretation of experience in the language with which people actually represent themselves is required. The task for Heideggerian hermeneutics is thus to explore our understanding of what it means to "be" in the world, which already has come about through language (although some meanings of being remain concealed) (Polkinghorne, 1983).

Heidegger believed that our written and spoken texts conceal much about Being. A thinking dialogue with the text furthers disclosure of Being. In An Introduction to Metaphysics, Heidegger (1953/1959) described three phases or movements to an hermeneutical analysis of texts, the goal being meaningful understanding. The first phase consists of an effort to determine the overarching meaning which envelopes the entire text. This is the truth of the text, i.e., Being
coming to light, and it is a meaning which is not necessarily explicit. The second phase moves away from interpreting the whole of the text to focusing on the parts. A comparison of the two interpretations follows in an effort to ground an understanding of the whole in relation to the parts and vice versa. The shifting back and forth between the parts and the whole has been termed "the hermeneutic circle." In the process, conflicts, similarities, questions, new themes, and possible meanings are revealed. "In the third phase, one takes a stand in the center of the text, on the border between concealment and disclosure which was established in the author's creative act of naming Being. Then the interpretation seeks to go beyond, to what was not said," (Rather, 1990, p. 84).

This thinking dialogue between the interpreter and the text discloses meanings which were heretofore not apparent to either the author or the interpreter, and in so doing, transpersonal understanding may result. "The hermeneutical process in its essence comes not in the scientific explication of what is already formulated in the text; it is rather the process of originative thinking by which meaning comes to light which was not explicitly present" (Palmer, 1969, pp. 157-158).

According to VanManen (1990), phenomenological text is descriptive in that it names something and aims at letting that something show itself. Phenomenological text is interpretive in that it mediates between interpreted meanings and the thing toward which the interpretations point. It might be said, then, that hermeneutic phenomenology is a type of textual analysis that aims for deep description and interpretation. Furthermore, phenomenological descriptions are always concerned with
Some aspect of lived experience, and a good phenomenological description should resonate with the reader’s sense of lived life. "In other words," writes VanManen, "a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience--is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience" (1990, p. 27). Such description is both compelling and insightful.

It is also helpful to describe what hermeneutic phenomenology is not. VanManen (1990) distinguishes phenomenological descriptions from other types by identifying the ways descriptions can be descriptive, perhaps, but fail at being phenomenological:

1. Sometimes the experiential interest of phenomenological inquiry is confused with journalistic or biographic accounts, or personal opinions rather than aiming at lived experience.

2. Sometimes a description aims at lived experience but fails to elucidate the meaning of that experience.

3. Sometimes a description may succeed in conceptual clarification or theoretical explication of meaning but fails to elucidate lived experience.

A good phenomenological description is an adequate elucidation of some aspect of the lifeworld... a good phenomenological description is something that we can nod to, recognizing it as an experience that we have had or could have had. (VanManen, 1990, p. 27)

The Heideggerian hermeneutic interpreter seeks to depict lived experience. The process of understanding can, however, never achieve finality. To understand existence is to understand differently and deeply. Subjectivism is avoided by taking the interpretation beyond the original, unreflective understanding of the narrator. "By
finding meaning in experience and then expressing this meaning in words, the (interpreter) enables the community to think about experience and not just live it" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 30).

Heidegger and Remembering

As we have seen, what is at issue for Heidegger is the question of the meaning of being. It is constitutive of a person to have an ontological pre-understanding of being.

What is at stake in philosophical hermeneutics will thus be the 'explication of those beings with regard to their basic state of being' (SZ 10; BT 30). . . . Thus in history, '... what is primary is rather the interpretation of authentically historical beings as regards their historicity' (SZ 10; BT 31). (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 55).

Obviously, the issue of persons as historical beings is critical for Heidegger. But what does Heidegger have to say specifically about remembering personal history?

"Not much," one might be tempted to say upon glancing at the index of Being and Time and learning that the word "remember," or errinnern in the original German translation, appears in only three sections. But, the word "forget," or vergessen in German, is cited in eighteen sections. What does this mean?

Casey (1987, p. 8) writes that, "The inner dynamic of all of Heidegger's philosophical work may be said to consist in a prolonged effort to deal with the forgetfulness of Being. . . . in the form of an ontological blindness. . . ." This ontological blindness may be considered a form of dis-memberment. One antidote to this dis-memberment is the remembering of Being.

I would like to highlight Heidegger's response to remembering as an antidote
to the problem of the forgetfulness or dis-memberment of Being in four sub-sections:

(1) Remembering: Toward an authentic existence; (2) Remembering: Temporality and historicality; (3) Remembering: The gathering of thought; and (4) Remembering: Being-in-the-world--The worldhood of memories.

Remembering: Toward an Authentic Existence

There are two fundamental modes of existence, according to Heidegger:

authentic existence in which Dasein, the human existent, has taken possession of its own possibilities of Being, and inauthentic existence in which these possibilities have been relinquished or suppressed. Although to be fully human means to experience authentic existence in greater proportion to inauthentic existence, "the inauthenticity of Dasein does not signify any 'less' Being or any 'lower' degree of Being. Rather it is the case that even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity--when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 68).

In other words, Dasein experiences both modes of existence to some degree.

For Heidegger, authentic existence gets suppressed in everyday Being-in-the-world much of the time. To choose possibilities is distinctive of existence, but the possibilities of choice are taken away. Who has taken them away? It is not anyone in particular. Instead, it is the anonymous "they" of the mass societies--das Man, Heidegger calls them. The consequences of mass-products and mass-media and mass-economies are uniformity and conformity. "The self of everyday Dasein," declares Heidegger, "is the 'they-self,' which we distinguish from the authentic self--that is,
from the self that has taken hold of in its own way" (1962, p. 167).

Dasein, therefore, is never complete in its Being. It is constituted by possibilities rather than properties. A Dasein can either choose itself or lose itself; it can either **exist** (stand out) as the unique being which it is, or it can be submerged in a kind of anonymous routine manner of life, in which its possibilities are taken over and dictated to it by circumstances or by social pressures from the "they" of das Man.

Heidegger calls the "authentic" past **Wiederholung**, meaning "fetching (something) back" out of the past. "Fetching" implies that the authentic past requires some sort of action, and that action is re-membering. The "inauthentic" past is referred to as "oblivion," and on its ground "arise" one's memories which are "borne in mind." The inauthentic past is passive in nature and dis-membered. Heidegger calls the past "**Being-as-having-been**."

If **Being-as-having-been** is authentic, we call it "**repetition**." But when one projects oneself inauthentically towards those possibilities which have been drawn from the object of concern in making it present, this is possible only because Dasein has forgotten itself in its ownmost thrown potentiality-for-Being. This forgetting is not nothing, nor is it just a failure to remember; it is rather a "positive" ecstatical mode of one's having been—a mode with a character of its own. The ecstasis (rapture) of forgetting has the character of backing away in the face of one's ownmost "been," and of doing so in a manner which is closed off from itself. . . .

The unity of these ecstases closes off one's authentic potentiality-for-Being; and is thus the existential condition for the possibility of irresoluteness. (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 388-389)

Dasein, then, achieves authenticity only in a resolute repetition of its past (Casey, 1987). The past provides the very depth of memory, yet the past is continually reshaped in the present by remembering. "Rather than being a simple stockpile of dead actualities—an instance of what Heidegger would term 'standing
reserve’--the past ‘begins now and is always becoming.’ In short, the past develops, thanks to the delaying action of remembering,” (Casey, 1987, p. 275).

To Heidegger, this is not a past which is like baggage which Dasein drags along behind itself, but a past which is experienced historically. The historical, therefore, is the self, that is, the having-of-oneself by the enacting of one’s own existence in historical contexts. This historically enacted self-having is the "how" of man’s being. "The phenomenological explication of the 'how' of this enactment of experience according to its fundamental historical sense is the decisive task in this whole complex of problems involving the phenomenon of existence," (Sheehan, 1982, p. 52).

One of the fundamental ways in which Being-in-the-world is disclosed to itself is understanding. Understanding has to do with the disclosure of Dasein’s possibilities. "Possibilities" refers to "a way of Being that is open to the Dasein in some situation or other, and into which it can move forward," (Macquarrie, 1968, p.22).

But the possibilities of Dasein can be diverted and perverted by everyday existence, and the various ways in which this occurs are summed up by Heidegger in the phenomenon which he calls the "falling" of Dasein, a falling away from what is most distinctive in the existence of Dasein.

The fallenness of the Dasein is described by Heidegger in various ways. It is a kind of tranquilzing, for it takes away from Dasein responsibility and the anxiety that goes with it; it is also an alienation, for it has diverted the Dasein from authentic selfhood and also from authentic community; and furthermore it is a scattering, for the Dasein’s possibilities are dictated by factors outside of himself and there is lacking the cohesion and unity that belong to authentic
Another way to describe fallenness might be as dis-memberment. And just as understanding is one of the fundamental ways in which Dasein is disclosed to itself, so is re-membering. It might be said that remembering, too, is part of the core of distinctive characteristics that distinguish the human existent from other kinds of beings, or that remembering is constitutive of the universal structures of human existence. This does not imply that other types of beings do not remember, but draws attention to the fact that the human being ex-ists (stands out) as the only remembering being that is open to and responsible for what it is (Macquarrie, 1968).

According to Heidegger (1962, p. 38), "We shall point to temporality as the meaning of the Being of that entity which we call Dasein." There are three "ecstases" or dimensions to existence as temporality: (1) the Present, (2) what-has-been, and (3) what-is-to-come. Remembering straddles all three. In the Present, Dasein remembers what-has-been to illuminate the possibilities and to project them to the boundary of what-is-to-come. For Heidegger, this is a kind of "eternal life" in the midst of time: transcending the "now" to attain authentic existence.

Thus we see that in every ecstasis, temporality temporalizes itself as a whole; and this means that in the ecstastical unity with which temporality has fully temporalized itself currently, is grounded the totality of the structural whole of existence. . . . Temporalizing does not signify that ecstases come in a "succession." The future is not later than having been, and having been is not earlier than the Present. Temporality temporalizes itself as a future which makes present in the process of having been. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 401)

The temporality of Dasein helps to distinguish it from things. Unlike the
thing of substance, whose "relation to time is that of moving from one 'now' to
another, so that at any given moment, its past is 'no longer' and its future is 'not yet'" 
(Macquarrie, 1968, pp. 34-35), Dasein is not simply confined to the "now." As
"projecting," says Heidegger, it is already in the future, while as "thrown," it is always
one who has already been.

He is not simply "in time," moving along from one now to the next; rather, he
takes time and has time. Of course, in the inauthentic mode of existence, the
Dasein, as he gets scattered in immediate concerns, tends to be like those
entities which simply "hop" from moment to moment. But this is a fallen or
deteriorated existence. In any case, we may suppose that the Dasein never
quite becomes just another object, enduring through time. But clearly it is in
an authentic existence that the dimensions of temporality are most fully unified
and that true selfhood is attained. . . . It is through the appropriation of both
the "ahead" and the "already" that he is freed for authentic resoluteness in the
present situation. The authentic Dasein displays "the unity of a future which
makes present in the process of having been; we designate it as 'temporality'."
(Macquarrie, 1968, pp. 34-35)

The temporality of every person's existence is caught up in the wider
with people and as an agent of possibilities" (Macquarrie, 1968, p. 38)
with the temporal movement of history, like a droplet of water which is autonomous but also
like the historian, the rememberer is not interested in all the facts of the
past, present and future of his own existence, but likewise the past, present
and future of the historical community to which he belongs" (Macquarrie, 1968, p.
36).

How does the existent and the community make use of that which is
disclosed? Remembering is one major way. It might even be said that the
rememberer and remembering communities are self-historians.

Much of what Heidegger says about history applies also to remembering
(Macquarrie, 1968, pp. 37-38). Remembering, like Heidegger's account of history,
does not have to do with the past as much as it is present and future oriented. In studying remembering, as in studying history, we are studying persons in order to learn about the possibilities of present and future personal existence. Through studying remembering, as well as history, we deepen our self-understanding. If remembering, like history, has less to do with past facts than with human existence, then it must be studied existentially, as Heidegger uses the word.

The stuff of remembering, like the stuff of history, is possibility rather than fact. This does not relegate remembering and history to the genre of fiction or mythology. Heidegger sees history as being just as strict a study as mathematics but having broader existential foundations (Heidegger, 1962, p. 195). The same could be said of the study of remembering. What we see, therefore, in remembering, just as in history, "are the factual possibilities of existence, and these are not to be confused with merely utopian or imaginary possibilities" (Macquarrie, 1968, p. 38).

Like the historian, the rememberer is not interested in all the factual possibilities that are part of the rememberer's story. The rememberer, like the historian, "selects those that stand out from the routine and the everyday and that disclose new and unsuspected dimensions of the Dasein" (Macquarrie, 1968, p. 38). Remembering, like history, is concerned with the exploration of the authentic possibilities of existence. Memory, like a history book, is not merely a fixed collection of events for reference.

Rather than a mere repository of experience, remembering becomes thereby a continually growing fund for experience: a source itself, indeed a resource, on which not only future acts of remembering but many other experiential modes can draw as well. . . . Remembering keeps this experience together, keeps it
coherent and continuous, by virtue of its remembering from below. . . . [This means that] whenever we remember and in whatever way we remember we get a different past every time. (Casey, 1987, pp. 284-285)

Remembering, then, like the study of history, makes a considerable difference in how we relate to the past. Indeed, since both remembering and history uncover the past as ever different, it makes all the difference. We do not repeat the past as if it were a photograph, unchanging and invariant in its details. We regain the past as different each time. Or, as Casey says, "we regain it as different in its very sameness" (1987, p. 286). Sameness for Heidegger (1957, pp. 11-34) is very different from identity, a resemblance proceeding by the way we are cognizant of the self and not repeating the past as self-identical. Where the self-identical means just that and does not allow for the different in any way, the same not only allows for the different, but even fosters it from time to time. It may foster it by means of remembering.

In and through the dense operations of autonomous remembering, I recall the same past differently on successive occasions. . . . No wonder we keep coming back to the past in memory—whether in ordinary life or in history or in psychoanalysis—without finding it in the least boring! As autonomous rememberers, we are generating our own ever differing versions of the same past. . . . Each time we remember truly we are refinding the past, our past; however radical the differences between successive rememberings may be, they remain differences that accrue to the same past which we are attempting to recapture. . . . We are refashioning the same past differently, making it to be different in its very self-sameness. (Casey, 1987, p. 286)

Remembering: The Gathering of Thought

It becomes self-evident that we are what we remember ourselves to be. We cannot dissociate the remembering of our personal past from our present and future selfhood. The sameness of our memories enables us to have a continuous personal identity whereby our consciousness now is the same as our consciousness then. "We
can just as well say that it is the same memories that unite our temporally disparate
selves into one self: my self" (Casey, 1987, p. 290).

At the same time, even though remembering thrives in the climate of
sameness, Dasein is free to establish its ongoing and future selfhood by means of its
own remembering.

Therefore, it is clear that, thanks to memory, we have a quite considerable part
to play in our own self-begetting as persons. Each successive self can re-orient itself by altering its hold on old memories and weaving in new ones; it can reinterpret its history in a different manner; it can even represent itself to itself in a variant manner. Everywhere there is the production of personal identity, a production proceeding by the free remembering of the self by itself. (Casey, 1987, p. 292)

If it is clear that personal selfhood is dependant upon the activity of
remembering in all its complexity, it is still not clear how this activity actually works. Heidegger provides us with a clue when he states, "Memory is the gathering of thought," (1968, p. 3).

When it is the name of the Mother of the Muses (i.e., Mnemosyne), "memory" does not mean just any thought of anything that can be thought. Memory is the gathering and convergence of thought upon what everywhere demands to be thought about first of all. Memory is the gathering of recollection, thinking back. (Heidegger, 1968, p. 11)

"Gathering" connotes drawing together or assembling items into a provisional whole. When Heidegger refers to gathering "thought," he is referring to thought in its broadest sense to include perceptions, emotions, pieces of dialogue, indeed all the parts of our life history. When gathering thought is memorial in nature, the unity is no longer provisional. Instead, it is a unity that according to Heidegger, we keep:

"Keeping is the fundamental nature or essence of memory" (1968, p. 151). Gathering-
as-keeping is more than just selecting parts to create as new wholes. Gathering-as-keeping also involves the decision to validate the wholes thus drawn together as memorable and therefore worthy of being retained in memory (Casey, 1987).

Heidegger (1968) calls this Andenken meaning "commemorative thought," a knowing that is a commemorative "thinking back" (pp. 4, 11, 143, 244).

But, says Casey (1987), remembering for Heidegger involves even more than the two movements of gathering and keeping. The gathering and keeping of memory is always a gathering and a keeping in:

It is not sufficient for remembering to draw together and retain its content so as to exhibit it--that is, to display it as might a computer screen. . . . Beyond the presentational immediacy of display, memory seeks to preserve its content within. Within what? Within the remembering subject. . . . In its free action remembering gathers itself into every aspect of the human subject--not only into the body and mind of this subject but into his or her emotional life, circle of thoughts, set of social relations, and capacity to speech and listen. It is a matter, in short, of in-gathering memory into the person as a whole. Nothing less than this will do if freedom in remembering is to attain its full range in human existence. (Casey, 1987, p. 294)

Remembering: Being-in-the-World or the Worldhood of Memory

There is a danger when reading Heidegger in making existentialist interpretations, especially as regards his analyses of what may seem to be psychological concepts, such as remembering, care, and anguish. But Heidegger clearly shifted the ontological problem and the question of understanding away from the relation with another to the relation of being with the world:

It is therefore not astonishing that it is by a reflection on being-in, rather than being-with, that the ontology of understanding may begin; not being-with another who would duplicate our subjectivity, but being-in-the-world. This shift of the philosophical locus is just as important as the movement from the
problem of method towards the problem of being. The question of the world takes the place of the question of the other. In thereby making understanding worldly, Heidegger de-psychologises it. This shift has been completely misunderstood in the so-called existentialist interpretations of Heidegger. (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 56)

Being-in, then, is a mode of existing in the world that cannot be construed as being situated within mind or brain and their representational contents.

When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always "outside" alongside entities which it encounters and which belong to a world already discovered. . . . even in perceiving, retaining, and preserving, the Dasein which knows remains outside. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 89)

This is of great significance for remembering. If it is true that we are our memories and if it is true that we are situated in a world, then we must return memory to the world.

In being made of our memories (rather than being their makers), we are also beyond ourselves in our memories. Instead of sucking us into a tight container of the mind or the brain, memories take us continually outside ourselves, and they do so in the very midst of the enactment of their own distinctive in-gathering action" (Casey, 1987).

Memories, therefore, refuse to be contained. Despite the preponderance of theories of memory that define memory as some sort of containment, whether it be a brain-library or a mind-computer, memories defy such simplistic explanations. Memories are not solely mine; nor is the remembered past solely confined to my consciousness. "And making us as they do, these same memories take us out of our own present处境, and a significant part of our existence itself, and throw us into the world; or more exactly, they show us that we have always already been there—and precisely in and through remembering itself" (Casey, 1987, p. 310).
This challenges us to consider memory in a new way. Memory is not confined to the brain or the mind. Rather, memory is in the world. This means that memory is in the things that belong to the world, such as lived bodies, places, other people, and even material things. All worldly things, animate and inanimate, can be memorial. They can embody memories and can evoke them.

Any thing—anything in the world, even the frailest footprint—can become memorial: can become a bearer of memories with as much right as a monument built to stand forever. The fact is that memory is more a colander than a container, more porous than enframing. Its final freedom of in-gathering is a freedom of letting the world in through its many subtle pores (and this in many fashions) only in order to allow us to realize how richly we already inhabit the world without. (Casey, 1987, p. 310)

It challenges our assumptions to consider that the only paradigm of memory is that which considers the remembering characteristic of human beings. It may be instead that memory in some significant sense unknown to us is truly to be found in things as they are situated in the world. This is the worldhood of memory.

"Everything participates in memory," says Piaget (1968, p. 476). This may be more than a form of speech.

If to be is to participate, and if everything participates in memory—animate things as well as their human percipients—this can only mean that everything is memorial through and through. . . Its very porosity, its open-endedness and ongoingness, its ability to bond deeply across remoteness of time and space, its own virtual dimension—all of these help to make memory a powerful participatory force in the world. Or more exactly: as the world. Just as everything participates in memory, so memory participates in everything: every last thing. In so doing, it draws the world together, re-membering it and endowing it with a connectiveness and a significance it would otherwise lack—or rather, without which it would not be what it is or as it is. (Casey, 1987, pp. 312-313)
Method or Methodology?

It has been said that the method of hermeneutic phenomenology is that there is no method (Gadamer, 1975; Rorty, 1979; VanMannen, 1990). VanManen (1990) makes a helpful distinction, however, between research method and research methodology. Hermeneutic phenomenology may not have a method, but it certainly subscribes to a methodology, the theory behind the method. Part of this theory includes a warning against the use of a rigid set of steps or law-like techniques when doing hermeneutic phenomenology.

And yet it is not entirely wrong to say phenomenology and hermeneutics have a certain methodos—a way. Significantly, Heidegger talked about phenomenological reflection as following certain paths, "woodpaths," towards a "clearing" where something could be shown, revealed, or clarified in its essential nature. However, the paths (methods) cannot be determined by fixed signposts. They need to be discovered or invented as a response to the question at hand. (VanManen, 1990, p. 29)

Heidegger would call this phenomenological reflection "thinking." VanManen calls it "scholarship." Whatever this process of reflection or analysis is called, it places demands on the thinker/scholar/researcher to be a careful observer of life as lived and to be familiar with texts from a variety of disciplines which might shed light upon the phenomenon of interest. Other texts may be used in the process of interpreting the text(s) of interest because hermeneutic phenomenology is free from the suspicion that pervades Husserlian phenomenology and positivism. In addition, the hermeneutic phenomenologist is well served by relying upon the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition as a source and a methodological ground for doing analysis (VanManen, 1990).
VanManen (1990) identifies six research activities that are congruent with the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology. He calls these "methodological themes," and offers them as representative of the helpful, practical approaches to doing hermeneutic phenomenological research. The list is not exhaustive and the six methodological activities are not meant to be practiced in isolation. He encourages the hermeneutic phenomenologist "to select or invent appropriate research methods, techniques, and procedures for a particular problem or question" (VanManen, 1990, p. 30).

The six methodological themes are:

1. Turning to a phenomenon which interests us and commits us to the world.
2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it.
3. Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon.
4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.
5. Maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon.
6. Balancing the research context by considering both the parts and the whole.

Hermeneutic phenomenology was introduced into nursing research by Benner (1984a; 1984b; Benner & Wrubel, 1989). Benner sees her goal as a hermeneutic researcher as seeking commonalities in meanings, situations, and bodily experiences in the description and understanding of the lived experience of persons.

Benner (1985) uses three interpretive strategies to reveal configurational and transactional relationships in the data: paradigm cases, exemplars, and thematic analysis. She defines the first interpretive strategy, paradigm cases, as follows:
Paradigm cases are whole cases which stand out as a strong instance of a particular and complex pattern of meanings. They cannot be broken down into smaller units without losing important nuances and aspects of the pattern, so they are reported intact. (Rather, 1990, p. 85).

The second interpretive strategy Benner calls exemplars. Exemplars are vignettes as opposed to whole cases which capture the meaning in a situation so that the reader is able to recognize the same meaningful transaction in other situations which on the surface may appear objectively different (Benner, 1985). "The difference between exemplars and paradigms is one of complexity; both strategies capture the meaning in a situation, but paradigms link multiple meanings into a pattern or meaningful whole" (Rather, 1990, p. 85).

The third interpretive strategy described by Benner is thematic analysis. Benner describes this strategy as follows:

The interpreter identifies common themes, appearing in multiple texts, and extracts sufficient excerpts to present evidence of these themes to the reader. Such excerpts may take the form of single sentences/thoughts, or they may be exemplars or paradigms which demonstrate the common theme. Note that all three presentation strategies--paradigm cases, exemplars, and thematic analysis--allow the reader to participate in the validation of the findings. As is the case with paradigms and exemplars, thematic analysis also preserves the context of the situation. As the goal of hermeneutic analysis is to discover meanings and achieve understanding (not to extract theoretical terms or concepts at a higher level of abstraction, such as in grounded theory), any attempt to decontextualize meanings would change the phenomenon. Recall that in the Heideggerian tradition, persons appropriate meaning within the context of their world of experience; thus meaning resides not solely within the individual nor solely within the situation, but in the transaction between the two. The individual both constitutes and is constituted by the situation. (Rather, 1990, pp. 85-86)

The method of data analysis proposed by Benner has also been used by Diekelmann (1988; 1989a,b). Diekelmann has systematized the more general process
of Heideggerian hermeneutics used by Benner. Hers is a seven-step method for textual analysis, but as is consistent with hermeneutic philosophy, the researcher is warned against using these steps in a rigid or law-like manner. Diekelmann's suggested seven-step hermeneutical method as described in Diekelmann, Allen, and Tanner (1989) is as follows:

**Stage One:** The entire set of interviews is examined as a whole by each member of the research team to obtain an overall understanding of the texts.

**Stage Two:** The text of each interview is summarized by each member of the team with possible themes identified. Written interpretations are supported with excerpts from the interviews. The research team meets weekly to discuss written interpretations of each interview. Dialogue among team members regarding analyses and textual evidence ensues. Group consensus is the ultimate goal.

**Stage Three:** In further independent analysis, each team member's interpretation is compared with the investigator's for similarities and differences. Any discrepancies in the interpretations are clarified by referring back to the text.

**Stage Four:** Material generated in previous stages is reread and studied to see if similar (common) or contradictory meanings are present in various different texts. The purpose of this stage is to identify relational themes, arising out of common meanings, which cut across all texts. Extensive documentation provides support for the identification of common themes.
Stage Five: During this stage of analysis, a constitutive pattern emerges. Constitutive patterns are present in all texts and express the relationships among relational themes. Constitutive patterns are the highest level of hermeneutical analysis.

Stage Six: The purpose of this stage is to validate the analysis with persons not on the research team but familiar with the content area and/or research method. Validation of relational themes and the constitutive pattern is also sought from a subset of the interview participants.

Stage Seven: The last stage is the preparation of the final report (dissertation), using sufficient excerpts from the interviews to allow for validation of the findings by the reader.

The purpose of having multiple interpretations at every stage of the analysis, writes Rather (1990), is to allow for bias control by exposing unsubstantiated meanings and inaccurate interpretations not supported by textual evidence. Each interpreter is committed to allowing the "truth" of the text to speak, and not read into the interpretations any meanings not supported by the text. The open and continuous process of revising the interpretations allows for increased understanding by exposing contradictions, conflicts, and inconsistencies.

I propose that the hermeneutic-phenomenological "methodos" proposed by Heidegger, VanManen, Benner, and Diekelmann is well-suited to this initial interpretive study of adult rememberers of family breakdown. I did not have a formal research team as recommended by Diekelmann. However, I followed her seven stages as closely as possible. Two colleagues doing Heideggerian hermeneutics served as my
research team. We discussed written interpretations of interviews, common and contradictory meanings, and relational themes and constitutive patterns. We also validated the overall analysis. In short, I subscribed to the hermeneutic methodology thinkers proposed by the above thinkers, one that simultaneously relied upon the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition as a source and discovered its way as a response to the interpretive experience itself.

Research Participants

The design of this study called for the recruitment of eight to ten participants. The participants were interested volunteers who heard about my proposed study through their interfaces with me in my professional, academic, and personal affiliations, as well as word-of-mouth. Each respondent was a self-identified adult child of a dysfunctional family, what I have come to call an adult rememberer of family breakdown as the result of this study. The only restriction to the selection of participants was requiring a minimum age of eighteen, since I was studying adult children of dysfunctional families. No other selection criteria as to demographic characteristics was imposed in order to achieve as rich and varied a data set as possible.

Heideggerian hermeneutics is a qualitative research method. Like other qualitative methods, it is essentially an investigative process. However, it differs from most qualitative methods in several significant ways, and this is apparent in the area of sampling. Whereby most other qualitative methods try to make sense of a social phenomenon in large part by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing, and
classifying the object of the particular study, Heideggerian hermeneutics and other methods of interpretive phenomenology try to disclose and understand the meanings embedded in the everyday world of lived experience. Whereby sampling in other qualitative research methods involves not only decisions about which people to observe or interview, but also about settings, events, and social processes (Miles & Huberman, 1984), sampling within interpretive phenomenology involves decisions mainly about which people to interview. This is because Heideggerian hermeneutics specifically is concerned with ontology, the study of the nature of Being, and not the study of beings.

The nature of Being is interpreted or analyzed by means of language. Therefore, sampling involves decisions about which persons to interview, and decisions of settings are only important in regards to ensuring that the participant is comfortable sharing his or her lived experience in that setting. Choices about the sampling parameters of events and processes are made explicit in the interview question, e.g., "Tell me the story of what it was like growing up in your family." Beyond the initial interview question, sampling choices for events and processes are made by the interviewee, i.e. he or she decides which lived experiences to share.

This supports the sampling decisions I made in this study. Participants were volunteers who self-identified themselves as adult children from dysfunctional families. They shared their lived remembrances in a place that was mutually comfortable for them and for me as the investigator. After I asked the initial study question, the interview followed a non-structured format with each participant deciding
which events and processes to share.

Each person who expressed an interest in participating in the study received a recruitment letter explaining the study (Appendix A) and a consent form (Appendix B). The first ten positive respondents to the recruitment letter who were eighteen years of age or older were selected.

Informed consent for participation in the study was assured via signed consent forms from each participant. Participants were contacted by telephone to arrange for the time and the place of their interviews per their consent. In preparation for the stage of data analysis known as consensual validation by research participants, the consent form was designed explicitly to ask the participants’ permission to re-contact them, both for clarification of aspects of their interviews if required and for assistance in data analysis. A subset of participants was subsequently re-contacted by telephone to assist in validation of the analysis of data.

Data Collection

In keeping with the philosophical framework of this study, data was collected via audio-taped, open-ended, nonstructured interviews. Interviews were nonstructured because the study sought an understanding of the participants’ experience as they have interpreted it. The goal was not the validation of a priori hypotheses or theories.

Participants were asked the following statement which is a modified version of the format developed by Nancy Diekelmann, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N. of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. This statement appeared in the recruitment letter in advance of the interview (Appendix A) so that the participants
had adequate time to remember their story prior to the interview and recording session.

Please be prepared to tell me your life story. This may include times you will never forget because they remind you of what it means to be an adult child of a dysfunctional family, or what I prefer to call an adult rememberer of family breakdown. Include as much detail as possible and stay in the telling of your story, rather than stepping back and analyzing it or describing it from afar. After you have given the details of your story, please describe why this story cannot be forgotten and what it means to you. Your story can be from the distant past or the recent past, sad or happy, a story of breakdown when nothing went right or one when everything went right. If possible, please use as few names and references to specific places as possible. If you agree, I may re-contact you for clarifying information after I have read your story, if that is necessary. Or, if you agree, I may re-contact you to have you read an interpretation of your story to see if you agree or can help clarify the meanings of your remembered experience. With your help, the narratives of adult rememberers of family breakdown can reveal the unique and common meanings of the experience of remembering family breakdown. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am most appreciative of your participation in this study. If any of your friends or acquaintances have remembered stories of family dysfunction or breakdown, please share this letter with them and encourage them to contact me. Thank you.

Interviews averaged approximately 90 minutes, continuing until each participant stated that she or he had no more to say. Interviews were conducted at a time and place mutually agreed upon. As principal investigator, I conducted all of the interviews. (Green & Mischel, 1990, p. 349)

The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim by a skilled transcriberist and checked for accuracy by myself. The resulting texts constituted the data for the study. Transcriptions were anonymously numbered, and no one but myself is aware of the participants’ identities. The anonymity of participants was also maintained in the reporting of the data; identifying information in the text such as names, age, living situation, and place of work, was altered. Participants signed a release form which
allows the anonymous interview data to be used for publication in research articles, books, research symposia, teaching materials, and/or nursing education workshops (see Appendix B).

As a further assurance of the protection of participants, this research protocol was submitted to the Human Subjects Review Board of Loyola University Chicago for approval prior to initiating the study.

Data or textual analysis proceeded according to the suggested guidelines of Heidegger (1953/1959, 1962), VanManen (1990), Benner (1984a, 1984b), and Diekelmann (1989). The qualitative computer software package called MARTIN, Version 2 (for Martin Heidegger), developed at the University of Wisconsin School of Nursing specifically for the purpose of doing Heideggerian hermeneutic analysis, was used in the process of analyzing the interview texts. The use of such a research tool helped to ensure that the ensuing analysis is not sloppy and arbitrary, but instead is rigorous or scientific in a broad sense by being a systematic, explicit, self-critical, and intersubjective study of the lived experience and memories of adult rememberers of family breakdown (VanManen, 1990, p. 11).

A preliminary pilot study was conducted the spring of 1992. Four persons were interviewed according to the guidelines above. The pilot study was conducted to assess the research question, the interviewer's effectiveness, and whether Heideggerian hermeneutics was an appropriate method to investigate the phenomenon of remembering family breakdown. One of the initial verbatim transcriptions was interpreted at the 1992 Nursing Institute for Heideggerian Hermeneutical Research at
the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The institute was led by Nancy Diekelmann, RN, PhD, FAAN, and attended by nearly 30 qualitative researchers. This pilot study was completed successfully and the texts will be included for interpretation with succeeding texts.

In summary, it is important to recall that in hermeneutic phenomenology, the analysis itself is the method. Therefore, Chapter IV of this study, the Heideggerian hermeneutic analysis itself, is the method. This study is not merely about the method of Heideggerian hermeneutics. It is also important to note that in doing Heideggerian hermeneutics, grounded as it is in Heideggerian phenomenology, my own experience before, during, and after the interviews is the instrument.
CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

The philosophy of Heideggerian phenomenology was used in the hermeneutic analysis of the data of this study. Interviews were conducted with ten participants who identified themselves as adult children of dysfunctional families. The analysis examined these texts for salient common meanings either implicit or explicit in the participants' memories of their lived experience of what I have come to call "family breakdown." These common meanings were then systematically compared and contrasted to identify themes which express the relationships between them, as well as patterns that express the relationship between themes. In all, eleven relational themes and three constitutive patterns emerged.

The interpretation which has thus emerged represents my current understanding of what family breakdown means to these adult rememberers. This understanding is far from complete and will continue to evolve in the future research of myself and others.

The analysis will be presented in three parts. The first section of the analysis describes the constitutive pattern Remembering Breakdown and the four themes which led to the unveiling of the pattern. The second section describes the constitutive
pattern Comporting Toward Breakdown and the three themes which undergird the pattern. The third section describes the constitutive pattern Living In Thrownness and the four related themes.

The constitutive patterns, themes, and subthemes are ordered to best capture the "how" of remembering family breakdown. Grammar is in the first person to emphasize the subjective nature of narrative remembering. The use of the "-ing" form of the words is used to imply that remembering family breakdown is a process that is active and dynamic, not passive or static. Liberal use of textual excerpts will be presented to support the analyses and to allow the reader to take part in validation of the adequacy of the data and the subsequent analyses. I have chosen to use the present tense when introducing or discussing textual excerpts to convey that remembering is an activity that is done in the present to connect us to the past and to prepare us for the future.

Constitutive Pattern: Remembering Breakdown

Remembering breakdown emerged as one of three constitutive patterns in the analysis. Each participant remembered many stories about the families they believed to be dysfunctional. Four themes emerged from these stories, and these themes were Remembering Disapproval, Remembering the Ugly, Being Dis-membered, and Being Let Down. In addition to the emergence of the constitutive pattern Remembering Breakdown, a definition of the meaning of "breakdown" also emerged.

Remembering is so basic to experience that it is seldom considered. The participants in this study did not speak much about their awareness of the process of
remembering. Instead, they relied upon remembering to communicate their understanding of the meaning of family breakdown.

The form their remembering took, however, varied greatly. For some, their remembering was in the form of a life story comprised of smaller stories clustered together creating something like chapters. For others, their remembering was in the form of a collection of short stories, all with the same characters and the same general plot line, but taking place at different times. And for yet others, remembering took the form of events, or "snippets" as one participant called his rememberings, keeping more with journalistic reporting than with storytelling.

The content of the rememberings was that of dwelling in breakdown, or the lived meaning of being a rememberer of family breakdown. Remembering enabled the participants to do a phenomenology of breakdown, whereby the phenomena of breakdown are "the collection of what is open to the light of day, or can be brought to light, what the Greeks identified simply with ta onta, das Seiende, what is," (Heidegger, 1962, 28). Dwelling in breakdown is a mode of being, however, and being is not really a phenomenon or an object, but something more encompassing and elusive.

Yet in Being and Time Heidegger finds a kind of access in the fact that one has with his existence, along with it, a certain understanding of what fullness of being is. It is not a fixed understanding but historically formed, accumulated in the very experience of encountering phenomena. Being can perhaps, then, be interrogated by an analysis of how appearing occurs. Ontology must become phenomenology. Ontology must run to the processes of understanding and interpretation through which things appear; it must lay open the mood and direction of human existence; it must render visible the invisible structure of being-in-the-world. How does this relate to hermeneutics? It means that ontology must, as phenomenology of being, become a
For some of the participants, the process of telling their story was a primary act of interpretation which first brought the experience of dwelling in breakdown from concealment to revelation. For these participants, remembering had the character of interpretation. According to Heidegger (1962, 37), each person (Dasein) has a preconscious understanding of being. The process of interpretation is the process through which the preconscious understanding is made conscious. Interpretation allows for the structure of each Dasein's own being and the authentic meaning of being to be made known.

For others, however, remembering did not serve as a means of doing hermeneutics. For these participants, remembering did not further understanding. Remembering did not serve as interpretation which renders possible the disclosure of being of things. Remembering did not render the disclosure of the potentialities of their own being. These were the participants for whom remembering breakdown was not the remembering of a woven piece of cloth, but instead a myriad of loose threads with multiple possibilities but awaiting the weaver to actualize one of those possibilities.

Despite the variety of the forms of remembering, each participant engaged in the remembering of what I have come to call family breakdown. In Chapter II, I showed how the literature has failed to set forth a standardized or universally accepted operational definition of the concept "dysfunctional family." And yet, it is clear from
analyzing the interview texts of these participants that the term "dysfunctional family" is a term they understand. It is a concept that communicated something that is meaningful to them.

Each of the participants came forward as a volunteer in the study, willing and wanting to remember his or her story of what it means to be an adult child of a dysfunctional family. Each relied upon remembering to reveal to me those memories, impressions, feelings, thoughts, and experiences that were part and parcel of growing up in their families-of-origin. Each of them told me in so many words that there was something about his or her family that was not right, that there was something broken. Each person seemed to understand intuitively or preconsciously the essence of a family, how and what a family should be, and each person interpreted how his or her family fell short of that understanding. Family, it seems, is an integral part of each participant's world.

The term "world" in Heidegger does not mean our environment, objectively considered, the universe as it appears to a scientific gaze. It is closer to what might be called our personal world. World is not the whole of all beings but the whole in which the human being always finds himself already immersed, surrounded by its manifestness as revealed through an always pregrasping, encompassing understanding. (Palmer, 1969, p. 132)

Another way to think about "world" is as the sociocultural environment one is "thrown" into. The different social practices of a specific culture make up the "world" of that culture. In turn, each of these larger worlds can be broken down into smaller ones that more specifically define a person. Arguably the most significant of these smaller worlds for the child is the world of the family.

Depending on the particular world(s) in which one happens to be involved,
certain factors become more or less important in terms of one's constitution. So, certain characteristics of temperament and coping, for example, may become more or less important in terms of one's constitution depending on the particular world of the family in which one happens to be involved. It is through the remembering of their stories of being-in-the-world-of-their-families that each participant is able to identify those unique constitutional factors that were more or less important for involvement with their families.

To mark the significance of our existence, Heidegger gave the name Dasein to the type of being we call human beings. Dasein translates as "being there." Before anything else, i.e., before identity, or gender socialization, or knowledge, or understanding, for example, persons exist. For Heidegger, being is Being. We are "there," and that is how we should conceive of ourselves if we are going to understand the "average everydayness" of our lives. Dasein according to Heidegger is that entity which is characterized as being-in-the-world. Human life is not some subject that has to perform some trick in order to enter the world. Dasein as being-in-the-world means being in the world in such a way that this Being means dealing with the world.

Being-in-the-world is what Heidegger called Dasein's activity of existing. He used this expression to stress the importance of the "world." The use of the hyphens is meant to emphasize that there is no distance between ourselves and our world. We are as much a part of our world as it is a part of us. Heidegger believed that no distance, either physical or mental, exists between ourselves and our world. Dasein's interest and involvement with its world is intrinsic to Dasein. There is no existing, no
"being-there," without a world in which to exist. A person without a world makes no sense. The world and Dasein are one in the same.

Being-in-the-world is not meant to convey "in" as a spatial indicator, i.e., it does not mean that human beings exist in a particular country or even the planet Earth. Instead, "in" should be thought of as an indicator of involvement much as "being-in-love" or "being-in-trouble" (Lemay & Pitts, 1994, pp. 47-48).

But we are not in the world by ourselves. For Heidegger, there is a very specific way we make sense of our world: through our relationships with other Dasein, what Heidegger called Das Man, translated rather awkwardly as the They or the One (Lemay & Pitts, p. 51). The They represents all of the possibilities for Dasein’s world as a collective whole. The They consists of other Dasein whose presence creates the world in which an individual Dasein can act. Dasein is always and everywhere in relationship with other Dasein.

Heidegger believed that such social practices which make up Dasein’s world are specifically established by the They. The They is the embodiment of a Dasein’s world and, consequently, of a Dasein’s personal possibilities of what one can be. The They has a normative function in the sense that it shapes Dasein’s behavior.

The They constitutes the human environment in which an individual can and must act. It is what gives meaning and intelligibility to each Dasein’s existence.

Through the They, we make sense of ourselves and the world around us by learning how "one lives." Rather than understanding our world through the laws of science or through some god, individuals make the world intelligible by participating in a social
context, a world, which has certain customs embodied by and expressed through the
They" (Lemay & Pitts, 1994, p. 51).

For the child, the They is predominately the family. It is the family that
specifically establishes a child’s social practices. It is the family that is the
embodiment of a child’s world and, consequently, of a child’s personal possibilities—of
what a child can be. It is the family that has control and authority over the child. It
is the family that shapes the child’s behavior. It is the family that constitutes the
environment in which a child can and must act. It is the family that gives meaning
and intelligibility to each child’s existence. It is through the family that the child
makes sense of herself and the world around her by learning how "one lives." It is the
family as social context that embodies and expresses certain customs that the child
participates in and then beings to make the world intelligible.

Being-in-the-world is Dasein’s most significant activity. For the child, being-
in-the-world is made sensible in terms of interaction with his or her family. The
family represents and embodies the child’s world, according to Heidegger. The child, then, has
a great deal invested in the world of his family.

Only Dasein has world. World is so encompassing and at the same time so
close, that it eludes notice. World is something sensed "alongside" the entities
that appear in the world, yet understanding must be through world. It is
fundamental to all understanding; world and understanding are inseparable parts
of the ontological constitution of Dasein’s existing.

Corresponding to the unobtrusiveness of world is the unobtrusiveness of
certain objects in the world to which one daily relates his existing. The tools used
daily, the movements of the body performed without thought, all become
transparent. Only when breakdown occurs are they noticed. At the point of
breakdown, we may observe a significant fact: the meaning of these objects lies in
their relation to a structural whole of interrelated meanings and intentions. In
breakdown, for a brief moment the meaning of the objects is lighted up, emerging
directly from world. (Palmer, 1969, p. 133)

Just as world and certain objects in the world are unobtrusive, so is the smaller world-of-family unobtrusive. Just as world is so encompassing and at the same time so close that it eludes notice, so is family so encompassing and so close that it eludes notice. And just as tools used daily or the movements of the body become noticed only when some breakdown occurs, so does the world of family become noticed by a child only when some breakdown occurs. In breakdown, for a brief moment the meaning of family is revealed.

This is not a mere intellectual comprehension of family. To use Heidegger’s familiar example from *Being and Time*, a hammer that is not broken and is merely present is something that can be weighed, catalogued as to properties, or compared to other hammers. A broken hammer at once shows what a hammer is. Similarly the essence or being of family is disclosed not to the contemplative analytical mind nor "through an analytical catalogue of its attributes, nor in the full flush of its proper functioning." (Palmer, 1969, p. 133). And yet, this is what family theorists and empirical researchers of the family have devoted themselves to doing thus far. It is no wonder that there is little consensus, therefore, on the meaning of family. The understanding of the meaning of family, according to Heidegger, can best be grasped "when it breaks down, when it comes up against a wall, perhaps when something it must have is missing" (Palmer, 1969, p. 134).

It is the phenomenon of breakdown that momentarily lights up the being of family as family and points to the largely inconspicuous "world" in which we exist.
This world "is the realm where the temporality and historicality of being are radically present, and the place where being translates itself into meaningfulness, understanding, and interpretation. It is, in short, the realm of the hermeneutical process, the process by which being becomes thematized as language" (Palmer, 1969, p. 134).

In choosing to engage through language in the remembering of their stories of family breakdown, the participants in this study are contributing to our understanding of the being of family as family. They are also contributing to the revealing of their "worlds" as the place where their being translates itself into meaningfulness, understanding, and interpretation. These participants are engaged in the hermeneutical process.

Family theorists and empirical researchers who attempt to observe and measure the family in an attempt to catalogue its attributes or analyze its function are considering the family as an object. The disclosing of the family as object is at the same time, a concealing of it as world. The family as object is severed from its living context, and its essence as a world in which family-ing takes place is covered over or concealed.

Let me paraphrase Palmer (1969, p. 138) substituting "family" for "hammer" to better understand this idea. The "as" which merely interprets the family as object on hand, as something before one's gaze and to which one points, is the "apophantic as." The family disappearing into its function as world represents the "existential-hermeneutical as." The "apophantic as" signals a subtle shift in preunderstanding to a stance of objective pointing, a pointing which no longer connects the family with the
primordial totality of a lived, relational context (Bewandtnisganzheit); it cuts it off from the realm of meaningfulness in the ready-to-hand and puts the phenomenon forward as something merely to be looked at.

The reliance upon empiricism and the scientific method in family research has resulted in a shift to the "apophantic as" in the definitions of the family. Science has tried to understand the family basically by looking at it, albeit with great scrutiny. "But the fundamental processes of interpreting the world do not occur in logical assertions or theoretical statements" (Palmer, 1969, p. 137). The meaning of the family which represents the "existential-hermeneutical as" has been missed in this process. Even though each of us seems to know intuitively the meaning of the essence of family, the "apophantic as" has restricted our ability to interpret and understand and communicate with language what we already know.

The meaning of the being of family is that family is a world comprised of a unique subgrouping of the They. Family as world is the very basis of society because it creates kinsmen out of strangers and turns hostile outsiders into "inlaws" (Murray, 1994, B5). And marriage, it seems, is the very basis of family in this context.

Murray (1994, p. B5) speaks to this eloquently in his editorial on the subject. "Anthropology," he writes, "records an interesting variety of marital form and family structure, but no society builds the arch of social experience without the keystone of marriage." The presence of illegitimate offspring, it would seem, is an indication of family breakdown.

A Navajo saying captures well the universal stigma that attaches to illegitimate offspring. Do Ahalyada, they call them, "those who care for nothing." The
worst social characterization the Navajo can offer for a thoughtless, deviant man is the charge that "he acts as if he has no relatives." This phrase tells us that being embedded in relationships, in a network of legitimated and recognized kinsmen, is a powerful reinforcement for moral action.

A man with no relatives, the Navajo feel, is a man with no concern for the shame or honor that his behavior might bring upon those he loves. He acts, therefore, without control or humanity. . . . We see a similar phenomenon in modern America. People concerned about the reactions of relatives behave differently than do people who are "atomized" as anonymous strangers. (Murray, 1994, p. 5)

Therefore, it is not only having relatives which is the issue. It is having relatives who are not strangers, being in relationship with kinsmen with whom one feels care for and cared by.

But having relatives infers marriage. Without a male and a female who take responsibility for childrearing, the stable features of social continuity, of world, are not perpetuated. Without marriage, there are fewer relatives to help when things go wrong and fewer persons to serve as moral examples. The legitimacy that comes from marriage is the source of a child's social identity. "I belong to something larger than myself. I have roots. I am grounded. I am someone. I am connected to others in the past and present, and I will be a connector in the future. I have a legacy in the story of my family." Conversely, the breakdown of marriage is an index of social alienation and rootlessness, the breakdown of world.

"Helping people to marry and stay married," writes Murray (1994, p. B5) helps society to remake itself, to restore in each generation that delicate but essential web in which our humanness is enacted." Marriage is not only for the procreation of children, because children can be born even without marriage. The principal function of marriage is to legitimate the children born out of the formal union, legally, socially
and psychologically. Legitimacy is the orderly transfer of social meaning across generational worlds. It is the provision of a legacy for the child. "This turns out to be the only sufficiently comprehensive definition of marriage that anthropologists, confronting the enormous variety of human social forms, have found applicable to all of them" (Murray, 1994, B5).

In addition to the provision of kinship, roots, and legitimacy, there are economic consequences of marriage. The assistance given by the relatives provides a social stability to the marriage itself. This assistance is not primarily material. Relatives may both exert sanctions on the married couple when they waver in commitment, and they may offer support of all types in times of stress. Being married also has a material component, however. It strengthens the chances for economic success by the family throughout the generations by means of the estates of the parents, grandparents, and so on. For single parents impoverishment, both financial and emotional, is more likely, especially if the single parenting is multi-generational.

Children do not choose their families. Children are "thrown" into the world of their families. "Remember children are the ultimate illegal aliens. They are undocumented immigrants to our world, who must be socialized and invested with identity, a culture, and an estate. By conferring legitimacy marriage keeps this process from becoming chaos" (Murray, 1994, B5).

Human beings are doing something essential when they marry and form families. And though many human arrangements other than marriage exist, the essential point is not the presence of diversity. Rather, it is the universality of the
married state as an ideal for the rearing of children. This is a theme that emerges in
the interview texts of the participants in this study, a grieving for a family in which
the parental marriage was broken, damaged, or threatened in some significant way.

Thus it would seem that every society is threatened by the disappearance of
legitimate marriage and the breakdown of family. What we are losing are kinship,
roots, legitimacy. Or stated another way, we are losing relatives, continuity in a
family story, and identity. The essence of family as world, then, is to provide its
children with kinship (relatives) for economic and social support, roots (story) for a
sense of belonging and continuity, and legitimacy for legal and psychosocial identity
and legacy. It is more meaningful and in keeping with the stories of the participants
of this study to talk about family as world in the existential-hermeneutical sense of
"as" than in the scientific, apophantic sense of "as." Family as roles, or as rules, or as
patterns of communication, or as system, and so on misses the point and fails to
convey the essence of the meaning or being of family.

The following four themes provide the foundation for the constitutive pattern
Remembering Breakdown, and they support the essence of family as world.

Theme: Remembering Disapproval

One of the most pervasive themes to emerge in the analysis was that of
Remembering Disapproval. Subthemes included Being Disapproved, Being Expected
to Fail, Being the Best, Being Never Really Good Enough, and Longing for Approval.
Every participant shared remembrances of disapproval. In order to allow their
language to speak "for the things themselves," as Heidegger would say, I will defer
my discussion of the themes until they have all been presented.

Subtheme: Being Disapproved

One participant remembers receiving the following message from his mother:

And the fact that whenever Mom came to visit, the atmosphere immediately became, "You know, of course, I'm doing all this for you because you're all messed up" type of thing.

Another participant remembers:

When my father died, I found some papers that indicated that I had been an illegitimate child. I've read some things on how, even in utero, you can get these vibrations that things are not right. . . . I probably didn't feel right about myself before I ever got here. So we start with that. Now, later, you know, I was told that I was so greatly loved, but it didn't ever seem that way to me.

A third participant tells this story:

One of the occasions on which my mother became angry with me was when I was in high school. One of her piano students was the daughter of the Free Methodist Church minister. Free Methodist Church was really a fundamentalist . . . almost could call it a sect. And one afternoon, three of my friends were at the house and one of them brought a deck of cards and we were playing Hearts or some innocent game we played, and this little girl came for her piano lesson. The piano was in the front room and we were playing cards there. My mother was absolutely outraged that I had so shamed her that this girl had been and seen card-playing going on in our house. It was a disaster.

The same person recalls the following:

When I got home, it was in the summertime, and I had a lot of pictures that were taken in strange places in my bedroom. I remember one morning waking up and my mother was sitting there in my bedroom taking a look at my pictures. There were pictures there of a party we had during the last two years I was stationed in Paris, a party we had for one of the guys who was going home, and it was in a little country restaurant and all you could see on the tables were wine bottles and ten or twelve guys who were obviously really hurting. And my mother was sitting there with this picture, tears in her eyes, asking "How could you do this to me?" I was 22 years old. I'd been gone from home for five years. I'm sure it was the church or the WCTU that were of importance.
Subtheme: Being Expected to Fail

One participant remembers the following about her father:

And I was hurt that my father expected me to fail and in a way determined that I wasn’t going to fail. And I think I had a little bit of resentment toward my brothers because I felt like they all disappointed my father so he thought I was going to also.

The same participant recalls:

And what sticks out in my mind the most is my father saying when I was a teenager . . . my father putting us all down and saying, "Well, I knew you’d never amount to anything."

Subtheme: Being the Best

One participant recalls the following:

My father’s motto was "You have to be the best." You have to be the best at everything.

Another participant remembers:

The next memory I have is about maybe four [years old], taking elocution lessons, standing there in my own dress and doing all this stuff. But it was like I had to be perfect; just the perfect little child so that everybody would think I was cute and sweet and wonderful, or I didn’t measure up.

Subtheme: Being Never Really Good Enough

One participant told me the following story:

I remember one time bringing home a card, a high school grade card, and I had made honor roll and I thought, "Oh, my God, wait until I tell Dad this," because he’s always, you know, "You’ve gotta be the best." And I remember, I was never physical at anything; you know, P.E. was just like, "Oh, God please don’t make me go." I was the biggest klutz. . . . But I got a C in gym but it didn’t count towards Honor Roll and everything else was As and Bs and my father, I showed it to him and, without even acknowledging the Honor Roll, he was, "Oh, great! What are you gonna do? Ah, flunk out of high school just like your mom and your brothers almost did? Because you can’t do
anything in gym?" And that really stung when he said that. You were never really good enough to my dad. That was a big, strong message from him.

Another participant described this remembering:

I can remember at the end of my freshman year, I came home with an Honors Society pin and I was really pleased, with the speech contest and I’d made Honors Society and it was a silver pin because I was horrible at math [sic]. I never would have gotten straight As because math just dragged me down. I was lucky it was a B instead of a C and he looked at it and said, "Why isn’t it gold?" And he was trying to motivate me, but it just killed me because it was as if nothing I could do was good enough.

And a third participant remembers the following:

Yeah, I modeled for a couple of years for Harper’s Bazaar. You would think that would make me realize: "Now, [name], you’ve got to be pretty nice in some way, or they wouldn’t let you in the magazine." And I was pretty successful pretty fast. But it’s almost like "I couldn’t be." All the time it was like I could excel in almost everything I did but it was like I could never believe in myself.

Subtheme: Longing for Approval

One participant made the following observation:

It was kind of ironic to me that he could help the other children but he couldn’t help his own. I think it was partially because he expected too much out of us. I don’t think he had that same thing with them. Um, and the fact that we were all constantly looking for approval; we talk about that now, and we never received it.

Another participant recalls this:

And then another thing I remember is one night about dinner time, the cook said we didn’t have any lettuce and he [father] looked at me and he said, "Go and get a head of lettuce and don’t come back here until you do." And I remember walking up and down the streets with the tears running down my face, thinking that I could never go home if I didn’t find a head of lettuce. But the thing is, I don’t know how kids are today, but I imagine they’re the same. This is your parent, and you’re afraid to do anything when a parent does something strange-like. Or you’re afraid even when they beat you, or they send you out for lettuce in the cold. You want to have those parents and you
want to have that love, and you don’t do anything about it.

The same participant continues this subtheme later in the interview:

I had thought of being a psychologist. He was a psychologist, my father. And he told me I could never be a psychologist, that I wasn’t objective enough. I think he was very wrong because it’s been a natural talent. People I write to now, they used to say, "You missed your calling." Maybe I wouldn’t have been a good psychologist, but I think my life could have been that "excellent self."

**Theme: Remembering the Ugly**

A second theme that emerged was that of Remembering the Ugly. The subthemes of this theme included Remembering Violence, Remembering Angry Conflict, and Remembering Coldness. This theme was pervasive across all of the participant’s interview texts.

**Subtheme: Remembering Violence**

This subtheme included three sub-subthemes of observing family members being violent, memories of being the receiver of violence, and remembering being the perpetrator of violence against other persons and/or animals.

**Sub-Subtheme: Being the Observer of Violence**

One participant told me this story:

And I remember looking out the apartment windows... waiting for my older brother... to come home. He had a paper route. And I sensed that there was a lot of anticipation and anxiety in the atmosphere because it was a very severe afternoon storm. It just blew up out of nowhere... And I remember seeing my brother coming up the sidewalk on his bicycle... And he was pumping all he could to get up the street and the wind caught the neighbor’s tree and a large branch came down and dropped on the sidewalk just as he was coming up that way. And I remember, I think that’s my earliest memories of fear. So
here he is disheveled, soaking wet, and probably had the living daylights scared out of him by that hung of tree coming down in front of him, and the only reaction or response from my father at that time was, it was my real father, my brother's step-dad, was that he took his belt off and he always wore large cowboy style buckles on his belt, and he beat my brother mercilessly with that belt and that buckle. And the only thing that I could comprehend out of all the yelling and the screaming that was going on is he was hot at my brother because he was out in the rain.

Another participant remembers this:

And I remember him [brother] yelling at his daughter, she was only a year or two old, she might have just been barely a year, and just being so frustrated with her, yelling and screaming. And he took this doll and was just hitting it on the bed next to her. He didn't touch her but he just was taking all his aggression out on this doll and this doll's head came off and the arm came off; and I thought, even though he wasn't hitting his daughter, it must have terrified her. And it scared me. And he always scared me.

Sub-Subtheme: Being the Receiver of Violence

The following is a remembered story by one of the participant’s:

And I guess they put me down for a nap, and when I woke up, my grandmother wasn't in the house, which is not surprising because the yard was two steps away from the house. I don't know exactly what she was doing, but she wasn't there. I went out looking for her when he had told me to stay in the house. And that was the only time I ever remember being hit as a child. He [grandfather] used a strap, and he beat the living daylights out of me.

Another participant remembers:

And I remember finishing my meal and I had had a glass of milk with it and there was maybe an eighth of an inch of milk left in the bottom of the glass, and I was full. So as I had been taught by my grandmother who was my mother’s mother, in that household when you are finished with your meal, you take your dishes to the sink and you rinse them off, so I took my plate to the sink and set it down and I took the milk glass and poured the little bit of milk that was left down in to the sink. And I heard the whistling sound; before I realized what was happening, my grandmother gave me such a crack to the head and it was as if I had committed some cardinal sin by pouring that little bit of milk out. I mean, she was livid about this event. And I remember from that point on, "I hate you, you old woman. You'll never lay your hand on me."
You're not my mother."

And yet another:

I can remember him [father] hitting me and I can remember when I got stronger than he was and trying to hit me and grabbing his arms. . . . He swung at me and it swung in a way that I caught it with both hands and just brought him right down to his knees and it was such a traumatic thing. I shouldn’t have done it but it really caused that relationship to change. I took that domination away in a way.

And still another that shows how violence may span the generations:

So I met a young officer at a dance and fell in love and got married. He was a young doctor, a lieutenant, and he was sent to Japan. And I married him and went to Japan and I got to Japan and he was an alcoholic. And he was violent and he beat me.

Sub-Subtheme: Being the Perpetrator of Violence

For a minority of the participants, their own violence toward other beings was a major theme. This is especially true of the following participant:

And I remember the very last excursion worth anything or noteworthy with my grandmother was to visit my one aunt. They had several cats on the property and one had just had kittens. And I remember playing in the back yard with the kittens, and it’s as though I went into an acute depression, I don’t know. I’m not going to blame it on anything other than the fact that [this kid] was really getting into his anger, his ugly, and his control. And I grabbed one of those kittens and I strangled it to death and enjoyed every minute of it. And I remember my aunt and my grandmother just went totally insane. . . . And for years I never regretted doing what I did.

And this was after the kitten event, like total time maybe a year. I decided I had enough of Benny. I wanted to see if what worked on that kitten wouldn’t work on Benny. So when he wasn’t looking, I kicked his feet out from under him, knocked him on the ground, grabbed him by those jug ears and started slamming his head against the concrete. And I was having a ball. If it hadn’t been for his mother come runnin’ out in the back yard and pulling me off, maybe I’d a killed that kid. It didn’t bother me. Not at all. And I can
still see that kid. I can see his eyes. Fear, and I mean FEAR, not crying. We’re beyond crying. We’re beyond pain. We’re even beyond confusion. We’re into manic fear in this kid’s eyes. I enjoyed that. I thought that was great.

Subtheme: Remembering Angry Conflict

A majority of the participants remembered angry conflict occurring in their families. Words used to describe this theme included yelling, screaming, arguing, fighting, and anger. For example, this participant remembers the following:

And it was a lot of fighting between my brothers and my father, and some screaming matches between my mother and father.

And she continues:

I do remember their arguing, being in my bedroom and just hearing the screaming of the family. We had an apartment--it was rather a small apartment. I could hear through the vents and everything just being in my bed and listening to that. I was very afraid of the anger. I don’t know why, ah, I was fearful of the anger.

Another participant remembers:

Other early memories: a lot of yelling and a lot of screaming. A full-blown divorce. My mother and my real father divorced when I was six years of age, because I was going on seven when she married my step-dad, her third husband. And I can remember feeling confused and angry and upset, but none of this, "What did I do wrong?" type of thing. Just anger, confusion, anxiety.

And, yet another:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. That [outright conflict] erupted pretty much between mom and dad. Yeah, [they would fight a lot]. I think I grew up with it to a point where it was almost fairly natural and it wasn’t like "Oh, my God, what’s happening now?" kind of thing. I knew what was happening and I knew that the pattern would play itself out and he would go to my mom and say, "Gee, I’m sorry," and she’d forgive him and everything would be all right for a period of time. And that’s just kind of the way it was.
Subtheme: Remembering Coldness

The language for this theme was provided directly by the participants, and particularly by the following persons' rememberings:

The rest of the household was ice-cold. There was no crying; there was no huggin', no kissin', no hand-holding.

He goes on to say later in the interview:

As the years went on, I cared less and less. But again, my environment was very, very cold. VERY cold. There was no shit other than anger, there was no emotion really displayed.

And again he continues:

I couldn't stand my mother 'til the day we buried her. She was very cold. A few years later, she was always threatening to put me in some kind of boys' school or whatever, make me leave the house.

Another rememberer told me the following:

Not a good warm relationship between my mom and my dad. Really never was. I'd say they respected each other and they learned to live with that situation. Um, neither one of them were particularly warm people. They weren't affectionate towards each other or really towards my sister and I or towards the community. Ah, and I don't really mean that in a critical way. It's just kind of the way things were.

He goes on to say:

Um, I guess I'd have to say that our family didn't focus on happy that much. I mean, it wasn't a goal to strive for or anything. It wasn't something that... But I'm not... I don't mean to paint a picture where it was necessarily always unhappy. It was kind of ho-hum. Ah, it seemed like there was quite a bit of stress.

And he adds:

I'd say that [it] would be out of character for both of them [parents], really, [to tell us that they loved us]. I think my dad felt he did [show love] because he was being a provider.... There was a lot of pain and a lot of hurt and
particularly my mom and dad didn’t . . . They shared a life together and they had certain accomplishments that they could look back on later, but I don’t think they really liked each other that much.

Another participant recalls:

And that was fine for them, but there again, I was always looking through the door and never, never had any feeling of love from this woman [her mother].

And yet another participant remembers:

Every night, and this went on until I left home, my mother would come in the bedroom. How my brother could stand this, I don’t know. We shared a room, and she’d sit down on the bed, and we would have to recite a prayer. I don’t recall her ever touching me or kissing me. I hated that, but I had to do it.

Theme: Being Dis-membered

This was another very pervasive theme, appearing within and across the interview texts of the participants. This theme was comprised of three subthemes, including Remembering Dislocation, Remembering Secrecy, and Being Adrift.

Subtheme: Remembering Dislocation

The subtheme of dislocation includes disruptions like geographical moves, losses due to divorce or death, and spoiled special events or holidays, to name a few.

For example, one participant recalls this:

But then after the split-up and the divorce and a couple of years went by that were just real up and down. The only really traumatic thing to me was that my parents sent me away to Florida where my father had lots of family. And I wasn’t real, real familiar with the family. . . . But I was down there for two or three months, went on an airplane all by myself. I was eight years old.

She remembers another story:

So I went and spent Christmas in a bowling alley--sick. And that was like just THE WORST Christmas of my whole life. And we went bowling and then he
brought me home. My mother was drunker than I think I have ever seen her since. She was like falling-down-drunken. And this brother who was out of state had come into town—and his friend. There were three of 'em sitting around, and they had tried to carve a ham and got the grease all over the kitchen. And this spread was on the kitchen table and everything was a mess—but they hadn't even eaten anything because they were so busy drinking. Oh, God. I'll never forget it.

Another participant remembers the following:

I think the thing that motivated Dad and took most of his time was his job. He just was very, ah, maybe borderline workaholic kind of thing. . . . If the family had planned a vacation, we never knew until the morning we were going to leave as to whether Dad could go or not, and we always went if Dad went.

Another participant recalls this:

I can remember having a kitten. It was my pet. It disappeared one day. Nobody ever stayed. Things just kept disappearing out of my life—people and animals.

And yet another participant:

And now I have my own first pet—a wounded pigeon. . . . The pigeon died . . . . My step-dad and my older brother took that pigeon down the stairs and flipped him in that burning trash can. The pigeon was gone. I could have killed that man. . . . They killed my bird. And there was no compassion and there was no tears.

And another participant remembers:

I have never, never been back to [my home town]. And [my husband] keeps telling me, "You can't go back." But that's not right because he lives here in Chicago where he grew up and he sees all these people, and I have never, ever seen anything.

She continues later:

And we met at the funeral parlor and we were the only two people at the funeral. I went in and I looked at this woman. And my mother had had kind of dark-brownish-auburn hair, plucked eyebrows, very glamorous. And it was a white-haired woman with thick eyebrows. And I just stood there and looked at her and I thought, "I haven't even found you in death. You're just gone and I still don't know who you are."
Subtheme: Remembering Secrecy

One participant remembers:

And they had gotten a divorce that summer which they never sat me down and told me that. And it was like six months after this, it was around Christmas time, and my brother mentioned something about them being divorced and I said, "They’re not divorced," you know, "they’re just separated." And he said, "No, they got a divorce." And I thought, "God, nobody even told me."

And another:

The other thing that I realized, now I realize it was a symbol of a dysfunctional family, is that we had family secrets. Everything that went on in our house—my mother was most concerned that it never go outside our walls. We weren’t supposed to talk about these things at school, which I now realize was sort of funny because I had four friends, we ran in a pack, so to speak, during elementary school. All four of us had alcoholic fathers.

She continues:

I’m not saying it was all bad, but there were just so many things that were secretive, and so many things you couldn’t talk about because it wasn’t okay. ... I don’t know why it was so important that everything be smooth on the surface. I mean that was her [mother] way of dealing with conflict or not dealing with it, but it was important to her that we look like the happy, ideal family, and we weren’t. There were so many things going on below the surface.

And yet another:

And then when I was about five or six, my little brother died. I remember they also had wakes in the houses. But we were kept upstairs with the nanny.

Subtheme: Being Adrift

This subtheme has to do with a sense that there was a lack of structure or example for living in the family-of-origin. For example, one participant remembers the following:

I had gone for a walk one day after school. It wasn’t just a stroll downtown. I
had gone three or four miles. . . . And of course, my parents were frantic that I was lost. When I got home, more or less there was some relief. And the Cole Brothers Circus was coming to the state, and I was given a choice: either I could stay home from the circus as punishment, or I could take a licking. Not being a dumb kid I said, "I'll stay home from the circus." So the next morning, the circus parade was taking place. Everybody else was going to the circus. My mother said she'd changed her mind. I'd get a licking and then I'd go to the circus. That stuck with me as such a typical example of the sort of thing that she did, and apparently she and my father did the best they could with what they had, but what they had wasn't very good. It's remarkable, I think, the degree that that has stuck with me as an impression of my growing up with this family. What we missed—what I missed—and my brother and father missed—nobody ever gave us any sense of purpose, for example, the importance of doing a job and doing it well. Something to work for. There was never any incentive to be smart, never any attempt to direct us that if you had a job, how to do it. So the result is that you slide along and do nothing, nobody is going to do anything to you.

And he continues:

And I recall one teacher in high school—because I quit a lot of things in school—the only thing I never quit was basketball. I forget what it was but for some reason, I decided to quit the band. It was Miss Johnson, my English teacher, who remarked one day that I was a quitter, and as far as I can recall, she's the only person who ever called me on it.

And again:

I can't recall any conversation about grades. . . . I can't recall anybody ever talking to me about this is what you should be.

Another participant recalls the following:

Not that my life isn't good, but I don't think I lived up to the potential, the talents that I had that God gave me, and nobody was interested in developing those. Nobody gave a damn. It was like, "Let her go. At least she's out of my hair." That's the way it, I felt. And it's not just me feeling—having a pity party over here. It's real, because I've sounded these things off to my sister and she says it's right. You know. She got through nurse's training but she said nobody ever bothered to ask her what she wanted to do or anything. She'd go down and sign herself. It was like we were weeds or something.

And yet another says:
I guess I never really thought in terms of an ideal relationship with my dad but I think, ah, one would include reasonable give and take within the confines and discipline of a family structure, and we never really had that.

And yet another remembers:

But she didn’t really make me work hard either. I didn’t have a lot of chores. I don’t know if she was trying to—she felt that kind of guilt, I guess, from being a working mom and I was the only child that it was like that with. You know, I’m reflecting now that I’m a working mom, but I got a lot of what I wanted and I’m just starting to touch that lately. Because I’m pretty spoiled. I’m not real good about structure and scheduling and time management. And to this day, it’s a big thing for me. If I come home and the television is on, I’ll sit down in front of the TV and I don’t get things that I think need to be taken care of. I don’t have a lot of self-discipline at all. And, you know, I had a couple of easy chores, like putting the dishes away out of the dishwasher and maybe vacuuming, and that was about it. I didn’t have a whole lot of responsibility. And I had a girlfriend whose mother didn’t work. And she just about did everything with her mom in some kind of way. I don’t remember anything being bad between my mom and I.

And yet another:

No. I was never taught the facts of life. No one read to me. Well, my mother—my grandmother could hardly read English; it was all she could do just to speak English, you know. And everybody else was too busy or whatever. Everybody had their thing to do.

Theme: Being Let Down

This theme is comprised of the subthemes of Being Trusting, Being Wary, Being Embraced, Being Vulnerable, Being Rejected, and Being Taken Advantage Of. This is another highly pervasive theme.

Subtheme: Being Trusting

I never got into drugs... because of the fact that I didn’t have that curiosity, and one of my brother’s told me, "If you ever want any drugs and want to
experiment with drugs, get them from me. Don't get them from anybody else or off the street or whatever." And ah, I just, I don't know. I guess there was a comfort in the fact that I had somebody that I could trust to go to and talk about it and everything like that.

Another participant remembers this:

That was probably some of the best memories of my life. Grandma bought the delicatessen from a guy . . . and when they opened it, it was Grandma's. And my grandmother used to put up fresh deli stuff. And of course, I died and went to goodie heaven because I'd help out in that store and it was like the penny candy land was right there. And my grandmother trusted me. Now this is a memory that's just coming back. My grandmother trusted me. She'd let me go behind that counter and she'd say, "Don't overeat the candy." And I would just take one or two, because she trusted me. However, if my mother would have put me back there, I'd have probably stuffed myself until I died or exploded; I don't know, you know, just to be contrary, argumentative and ugly. So I don't know if that's significant or whatever but there was a trust thing and I never wanted to hurt my grandmother.

Subtheme: Being Wary

An example of this subtheme is the following:

I never felt like anything that worried me could be taken home and I couldn't, didn't feel like I could trust my mom and dad.

She continues:

I never knew whether he would be too inebriated to recognize something that I had done, some honor that I had gotten or whatever . . . . One minute he'd tell me he was so proud of me or . . . . The next time I could do . . . . have the same achievement or reach something even better, and he wouldn't be there for me. He would either ignore it or not even be there. He was drinking so heavily that he missed my elementary school graduation, which was a big deal, wearing cap and gown and the whole works. And he wasn't there. . . . His reaction would depend on whether he was sober or drunk. That had to have a lot of influence on my trusting authority figures. And that's been a problem in my adult life. So, trusting people in general has been a problem.

And she continues later in the interview:
The trust situation is another thing. I nearly messed up the most important relationship of my adult life because of a lack of trust. Five years after [my first husband] died, I met [name], and I couldn’t believe that somebody could love me exactly as I am, and I’m still having a hard time believing it, but I nearly wrecked the relationship. It was as if I set out to destroy it; that I had to be perfect. And I obviously wasn’t perfect so I couldn’t be loved.

Subtheme: Being Embarrassed

One of the participants recollected the following example:

And also then there were times when I was embarrassed. One of the Saturdays that I worked over at the school, I stayed later than I usually did. He [father] decided he would walk over, but he had been drinking. And after I think about it, the nuns had probably seen things that were ten times worse than this, but it really embarrassed me. It was a long time before I went to work there on a Saturday again.

Subtheme: Being Vulnerable

The following is a remembered example of being vulnerable:

I ended up going out with him after that because I think I was just vulnerable and it was like, "Fine, you want somebody to go out with you and you say you care about me so much. I need to be cared about right now. That’s fine with me. Let’s go out." And he ended up... he was stationed in Philadelphia so we had to have a long-distance romance, which was a big reason why my girlfriend had broken up with him.

And another story:

And he was 28. I was 17. And he was going through a rough time. He was going through a divorce. He went and got us some Kahlua and we all sat around and drank... It was a place to go and he needed companionship and the next thing you know, I’m going out with him. I’m 17 and he’s 28 and I end up going out with him. I was just very naive, very innocent. I didn’t know a lot. I really didn’t know a lot for what was involved with.

And another participant remembers:

And it seemed to me that the infraction wasn’t worth it... And the other thing I can remember is that my grandma didn’t protect me.
Subtheme: Being Rejected

The following stories suggest that this subtheme was remembered as being a threat of the greatest magnitude.

And my father took my mother away on a long vacation to Bermuda, as I recall; I'm not sure, but it was Christmas, and there again, I felt like I was left. I was afraid that these parents weren't going to come back. I had just lost a brother and he wasn't ever coming back and then I thought maybe they weren't either. But there again was always the thing where I was rejected. I guess... it seemed that way... It's like we were pets or something. Sometimes people treat their pets better. We were well cared for physically but not psychologically.

And she continues:

Then, let's see. When I was ten, they got divorced and she [mother] had met a younger man she fancied herself in love with. And I came home from school and my mother was loading her luggage into a taxi, and I was screaming... and she just drove away. So there was total rejection.

And again:

They [the church members] had a Mother's Day program and we made little nosegays with the little doilies and everything for our mothers and we had a tea. And I invited my mother to come and she was the only one that didn't show up. And I remember sitting on the steps of the church. And the rector had a daughter just my age and without him, I don't think I would have made it through that time. I was probably ten. Eleven. And she came later when everybody else left, and she was drunk. And I think that's when I realized that... Maybe I knew it from the time of the accident, but I think I was too young then 'cause I was like five, and I think maybe around ten or eleven I started to realize why she was always so strange.

And again:

When I see women that go to lunch with their mothers and Christmas shopping with their mothers, I feel a great sense of loss. I never had that. Even when we were living with our father and we would meet Mother every Saturday at an Italian restaurant, that was it. We'd have lunch, and nine out of ten, she'd find something to criticize. You know. And then she'd to away and we'd stand there and I'd have my little sister to take back home.
And again:

I felt like I didn’t have a family like they had anymore. I didn’t have a mother and father, and I think I was ashamed of that. So I opted for friends that maybe were from dysfunctional families or didn’t have one parent or another. It was like I got a whole different set of friends; you know, the raggle-taggle.

Subtheme: Being Taken Advantage Of

This subtheme was similar to being vulnerable in tone but to a greater degree.

But this other event was... my father had been working nights. I can remember that... And he came home. And I used to sleep in the same bed with my dad, or I’d take naps with him. He always insisted on that. And this one particular morning when he came home, I’d been listening to the radio and he said it was time to take a nap. So we climbed up in the bed... My father was a very, very talented man. He could not read or write or even understand sheet music in any way, shape, or form, yet he could pick up any instrument, fiddle with it a few minutes and play... And he played one of those harmonicas that had like 15 rows and 27 buttons on them like the Harmonicats used to play. And he was laying stretched across the bed with his feet dangling off the side... And he finished [playing] and he looked at me kind of funny and patted the bed and said, "Come on, let’s take a nap." So I curled up next to him and it seemed like he was trying to make up his mind about something. And finally, he rolled over on his side and he looked at me and he said, "I want to introduce you to my buddy." And you can just about guess what happened. And he fondled me, ah, there were some more gestures and there was an actual sexual act and he had me do the same. And this kid was gone. I couldn’t wait to get the phone... One of the side-effects of this incident, I’m almost positive, is that I’ve had a blood loathing for gay people ever since then, and yet, on the other hand, I ask myself, "Well, am I latent homosexual?" You know... And it’s one of those things that, for years, I can look down and not see the scar; I can still see an open wound. Okay? So it was a very ugly event, and yet, I still loved that man; he was my father. There’s some magnetic draw thing there. Ah, a lot of what I am today is him, still.

And another remembers this story:

We went to live with my father and then, as I entered my teens, he and I started having a real hard time. Although, when I was about twelve, he said to me... We were feeding the canaries. We had a lot of canaries. And he said, "Let me show you how big people kiss." And he made me feel squeamish.
He never actually tried to penetrate me or have actual sex with me, but he wanted to kiss me and hold me, and it made me feel very, just, I don’t know, strange and dirty, weird, and afraid of him. And I didn’t think of it as abuse. You never read anything like that. But I started to get very rebellious and he started to get very cruel. He would use a strap on me a lot of times.

Constitutive Pattern: Comporting Toward Breakdown

The second constitutive pattern to emerge in the analysis of the interview texts was that of Comporting Toward Breakdown. Three themes were identified which were represented by this pattern: Guessing at Normal, Remembering Concealment, and Navigating Without a Compass. A discussion of the pattern will precede the description of these three themes and the associated subthemes.

Heidegger proposed that hermeneutic phenomenology is the method most appropriate to the study of human action. "In hermeneutic inquiry and the ontology that grounds it, the primary origin of knowledge is taken to be practical activity: direct, everyday practical involvement with tools, artifacts, and people" (Packer, 1985, p. 1083). Heidegger’s notion of modes of engagement is helpful in understanding the hermeneutic interpretation of practical activity more completely, and this precedes an understanding of his concept comporting.

Heidegger developed three modes of engagement or involvement that people have with their surroundings. The basic or primordial one is the ready-to-hand. This is the mode we are in when we are involved in practical activities such as talking with a friend baking a cake, or, to use Heidegger’s well-known example, using a hammer. The skills and practices we bring to such everyday activity are, for the most part, so rehearsed and familiar and taken for granted, that we are unaware of their existence.
We are not even aware that they are invisible to us. Indeed, if we were aware of them we would be overwhelmed and unable to act. "Generally, it is only when we reflect on what we are doing, prompted usually by confronting a problem, that we begin to see the network of interrelated practices, skills, and habits that supports all our apparently simple everyday actions" (Packer, 1985, p. 1083). This is the mode of emotions, skills, and habitual practices in which we actually do much of our everyday living. For Heidegger, this mode of practical activity amounts to the same as describing human being. "People both constitute and are constituted by cultural and bodily skills and practices with which they make tacit connection in their everyday activities" (Packer, 1985, p. 1084).

We enter the unready-to-hand mode when we are confronted by a problem or breakdown in our practical activity, such as trying to use a broken hammer to pound a nail.

Our experience changes as we become aware that there is a problem and then recognize something of its nature. The source of the breakdown of action now suddenly becomes salient, in a way it was not in the ready-to-hand mode. (Packer, 1985, p. 1083)

The present-at-hand mode gives access to phenomena by means of theoretical reflection. We enter this mode during times of breakdown, when we detach ourselves from a project at hand, usually because we have been unable to find a satisfactory way of dealing with a problem that arose. "On such occasions we have to ‘step back,’ reflect, and turn to more general and abstract (i.e., situation-independent) tools such as logical analysis and calculation in order to solve the problem" (Packer, 1985, p. 1084).

The ready-to-hand mode of engagement, therefore, is the starting place for
hermeneutic inquiry or analysis. The object of study in hermeneutic inquiry or analysis is the semantic or textual structure of everyday practical activity. What the hermeneutic investigator studies is what people actually do when they are engaged in the everyday activities of life. Hermeneutics is concerned with the explication of meaning, "as a sensibleness that can be found to be present or absent in a course of action or in an account of that action" (Packer, 1985, p. 1086). This assumes that practical activity always has a perspective or point-of-view, and understanding a particular act requires understanding the context in which it occurs. We understand human action within a background of bodily, personal, and cultural practices that is always present, although it can never be made fully explicit.

In short, we have practiced ways of orienting ourselves in our world that are taken for granted until they break down. These practiced ways of orienting ourselves with other beings is what Heidegger calls comportment. We always comport ourselves with other beings. We are continually comporting ourselves in given ways with beings simply because of our relationship to Being itself. Our mode of comportment reveals our mode of being. Our mode of comportment is our way of encountering beings, or the way Dasein is involved with beings. Comportment is the "how" of our involvement with beings, and it is the "how" and not the "why" that matters according to Heidegger.

"The description of average everydayness leads us to see that what is most basic is a world of ‘significance’ in which things show up as counting or mattering in relation to our practical affairs" (Guignon, 1993, p. 11). What makes agency possible
is the way our life stories unfold against the backdrop of practices of a shared, meaningful world. Comportment is the way we cope with the beings we encounter in the unfolding of our stories. We can be the kinds of people we are in our everyday affairs only by virtue of the practical contexts of worldly involvement in which we find ourselves.

To begin with, we need to recall that the stand Dasein takes on itself, its existence, is not some inner thought or experience; it is the way Dasein acts. (What makes a Japanese baby a Japanese baby is first and foremost what it does and how things show up for it, and only derivatively its thoughts, assuming it has any.) Dasein takes a stand on itself through its involvement with things and people. "In everyday terms, we understand ourselves and our existence by way of the activities we pursue and the things we take care of. (BP, 159) To exist then means, among other things, relating to oneself by being with beings" (BP, 157). So Heidegger begins his phenomenological account of Dasein by turning to the beings with which Dasein is involved and the way in which it is involved with them. (Dreyfus, 1993, p. 61)

Comportment is the way in which Dasein is involved with the beings in its world. In this study, the Dasein are the participants and the beings they are involved with are their families. The constitutive pattern Comporting Toward Breakdown is a description of the comporting done by the participants in their involvement with their families, and in all cases, they interpreted their families as being in breakdown.

It is precisely because of a "breakdown" in the average everydayness of these participants’ lives as children that they are able to step back and describe the comportment used in their involvement with their families. As was pointed out in the earlier discussion on breakdown, when everything is running smoothly in one’s world, for example the world of the family, the ready-to-hand and the surrounding family-world remain unobtrusive and unnoticed.
The ready-to-hand must "withdraw" into its usability, Heidegger says, "in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically" (BT, 99). . . . It is when things are temporarily unready-to-hand in this way that we can catch a glimpse of the web of functional relations in which they played a part. Thus, a breakdown makes it possible to catch sight of the worldhood of the world. If the breakdown persists, however, items can begin to obtrude in their unusability, and we can look at things as brute present-at-hand objects to be investigated from a theoretical perspective. (Guignon, 1993, p. 12)

It is clear, therefore, that as Dasein, we have access to both worlds, the theoretical and the practical, and that we encounter both present-at-hand and ready-to-hand objects and observations. The breakdown of practical activity, such as daily family goings-on, is a major access to the present-at-hand. For this reason, the following themes that refer to the constitutive pattern of Comporting Toward Breakdown included both present-at-hand and ready-to-hand observations.

However, even though the participants share present-at-hand observations with their emphasis on the cognitive, i.e., the attempt to explain their behavior in terms of what they believe about their experiences and how they consciously represent things to themselves, the present-at-hand does not account for the implicit familiarity and competence conveyed by their accounts of everyday practical activity in their families. Ready-to-hand observations are also common in these accounts, as it should be since readiness-to-hand is tied to specific familiarities and skills for coping in specific practical environments, such as the world of family breakdown.

There is, however, a background of familiarity and associated competence for dealing with things and with others that is even broader and more basic than those associated with specific practical activities and settings. Just as we have a specific familiarity with the carpenter’s workshop and specific skills for coping with things in the carpenter’s environment enabling us to encounter the hammer as a hammer, so we have a general familiarity with things and others and a set of implicit skills for dealing with them that form the necessary
background for our encountering anything at all. Heidegger's discussion of practical activity and the relations that constitute the practical world were meant to prepare us for grasping the more general "activity" of being human and the "worldly" structure it presupposes. This sense of the world as the most general structure of involvements that enables and "calls forth" all human "comportment" is probably the central contribution of Being and Time.... (Guignon, 1993, p. 132)

It can be argued that the family-world is an example of a specific ready-to-hand environment. However, it can also be argued that for the young child, the family-world is the world. It can be argued that the skills and familiarity involved in coping with the family-world are just particular cases of our human way of being, in the broadest sense. And yet for the young child, the particular ways of coping in the family-world constitute the human way of being in the broadest sense. We cannot learned about dealing with violent or alcoholic parents, for example, may be just a specific case of the more general skilled "comportment" of dealing with others. Our experience of and our sense of "at home" is just a specific case of our more general being at home or "dwelling" in our everyday environments as adult children, knowing or not knowing (in the sense of possessing or not possessing the skill or competence) how to position and move ourselves, what to do and say, and so on.

The good news for adult rememberers is that these most general skills for and familiarity with the world of family breakdown does not need to remain invisible or preconscious. Through the process of remembering, these persons have an opportunity to attend to their familiarity with and skills for living with their families-of-origin.
may have believed. Once this understanding becomes visible or conscious, adult rememberers are able to become more familiar with the world and the skills necessary for living in it. Some of the skills for living with their families may be transferable. Others may need to be learned and substituted for those skills which no longer serve them well.

Breakdowns of practical activity can give us an opportunity to grasp the background of practical familiarity, competence, and concern associated with specific systems of practical relations and roles because the world of the carpenter for example, is not the entire human world and being a carpenter is not the whole of being human. We have a broader and more basic background to fall back on. Attending to or grasping is a human activity. All human activity is worldly; that is, it requires a background of implicit familiarity, competence, and concern or involvement. But when it comes to our broadest and most basic sense of things, our sense of human being and world, there is no broader context from which we could attend to or grasp it. We cannot abandon our most general skills for dealing with things in order to make them reveal themselves as we can with the skills of the carpenter. Human being is skillful coping all the way down, and this broadest level of familiarity, competence, and involvement is rock bottom. We do not even consciously acquire such things. We grow up into them through socialization or enculturation. They are what we are, not what we are aware of. It is this last point that Heidegger seeks to capture when he says that human being is its world ("existentially") and that the world has our ("Dasein's") way of being (BT 92, 416). We just are our most general and fundamental way of "comporting" ourselves toward things and human beings, and these same manners of "comportment" are the background without which things and others could not be encountered, namely, the world. (Guignon, 1993, p. 133)

What follows are the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand stories and examples of the participants' practical ways of comporting themselves. What is also communicated, however, are the participants' general and fundamental ways of comporting themselves. It is clear that their comportment is the background without which the world could not be encountered. These ways of Comporting Toward Breakdown include the themes of Guessing at Normal, Remembering Concealment,
and Navigating Without a Compass.

**Theme: Guessing at Normal**

The language for this theme was provided by the participants’ themselves.

I got fixed up with Paul and it was just a real fast crowd. They were all, you know, my girlfriend herself when she was 14 years old wasn’t a virgin anymore. And they were doing drugs and, like I said, to me that seemed normal because of my brothers. And everything had just seemed real--none of it seemed really out of place.

Another participant gave the following account:

I have to tell you that at the time I was growing up, I didn’t think we were any different than anyone else, and we may not have been because there was a lot of alcoholism in my immediate neighborhood and that was the neighborhood that I knew. . . . So for me, it [living with alcoholism] was kind of normal.

She continues:

The thing that I as an adult look back on and realize, was that our whole family’s existence was centered in the alcoholism. My father was a binge drinker which, to me, means a lot of the time he lived a scheduled life. He went to work. He came home. We had dinner. Um, we were kind of an old-fashioned family in that we were expected to do our homework after dinner around the dining room table with one or both parents there to answer questions or help us look things up and so on, so we had this appearance of, you know, being the All-American family. But something would happen, some crisis would happen. My mother would get sick, or maybe something went wrong at work. I never really was quite sure of why my father would start drinking, but when he did, all of the superficial things would go on as usual except that he would not be there for dinner and my mother would become very agitated. She would run to the window and continue to look down the street to see if he was coming. She would never go to sleep when he wasn’t there. She would sit and look out the window.

And later she adds:

When I finally started going to ACOA, there’s a list of characteristics of the adult child of an alcoholic. One of the things that I kept remembering about that was when I first saw that list, the one statement on there that rang big bells was the adult child of an alcoholic guesses at what looks normal. And, I
think, I was a loner. Even though I had the four friends that I was close to later in school, I always felt like I was different. As an adult, I don’t think that’s so bad—to be different—but I did feel like I was different, and yet I probably wasn’t. I, you know, it’s hard to go back and reconstruct, but I doubt that I was. I was just muddling along like everyone else. But I felt it.

Theme: Remembering Concealment

Within this theme, four subthemes emerged, Being in Costume, Being Numb, Being Mute, and Being Secretive.

Subtheme: Being in Costume

One of the participants remembered:

And I was always kind of like the Goody-Two-Shoes in the family. And I was the one that answered the phone when my brothers called and they were in trouble and this and that although I wasn’t that old to help them, but I did covering up for them and stuff like that.

Another participant remembers:

And then I went through kind of a rebellious stage. I dated anybody who came along and I wasn’t terribly free sexually, but I thought I was. I was determined I wasn’t going to be the good little girl anymore.

Another participant told me:

Already I’ve got this problem with authority. Already I had this problem with my own identity. "Who in the hell am I anyway? Where do I belong in this Earth? I don’t fit anywhere and I don’t belong anywhere. Give me an identity. Give me a suit of clothes to wear. You know, I’ve gotta have a costume. Everybody’s got a costume. I’ve got no costume. I’m like nobody here. I’m just bouncing around here, you know?"

The same participant continues:

Now, I end up in this parochial school. We had a principal. His name was Mr. [name] and he was a Mr. [name]. You get out of line, he had this plastic desk ruler. You got out of line, which was just about to do or say anything, and it was "palms up" and flat smack. I remember severe pain because I’m
always a clown. That's the only thing I can manage to do. See, I could fit in with groups of people if I clowned a lot, you know? So I was always out of line and pulling something stupid.

He continues later in the interview:

Um, I want it understood that I'm not proud of my past, not the least bit proud of my past. Who and what I was yesterday is an old suit of clothes in my closet. There ain't no Salvation Army or Amvets spots gonna get them. That suit still fits very well and it's always in style and anytime I want to be fool enough, I can go to that closet and pull that suit off the hanger, and I put it back on. It fits and I go right back out there and be what I was. I'm not proud of that suit; I'm not the least bit proud of that suit.

Another participant remembers his sports persona:

Sports had an enormous profile and just from a personal perspective, I played football there, played basketball there, and went to college because I had a football scholarship. So, it was really one of the focal points for civic pride--the high school sports teams.

Another remembers this about concealment:

And I keep thinking it was almost like I had to destroy this budding career. And somewhere along the line, even at school, you know, I was a straight A student, I always got to carry the flag in the Girl Scout parade, I always got the lead in the play, and I always thought about "my excellent self." I thought, "There's an excellent self in here," but it was like, it kept getting smashed.

And yet another:

My work as a salesman--that's something that came by accident. You know, "You get along well with people. You ought to be a salesman." You know, that was all... I really should have done something else with my life. And I've been doing this for 35 years.

Subtheme: Being Numb

This was a fairly common subtheme. Sometimes it occurred simultaneously with rememberings of the next subtheme, Being Mute.

And, ah, my sister can talk about her anger. I never even knew I was angry
until a few years ago.

Another participant’s reflection suggests that he may still be numb as he remembers:

I think typically we had behavioral patterns that as individuals are not focused, that sometimes we’re on the spectrum and sometimes we’re really very good and sometimes we’re not so good. I guess I’m thinking of those times when I wasn’t so good, that I was probably, maybe even subconsciously doing it out of spite or something. I don’t know. Who knows?

And another adds this:

It just seems like I have scattered memories, that I don’t know why that is unless I’m just blocking things. Maybe there’s a lot I can’t put together, but I feel like my family was extremely dysfunctional... I don’t think I’ve wanted to look at any of this.

Subtheme: Being Mute

This was a very common subtheme, spanning across each of the interview texts. You don’t say anything at the dinner table. No dinner conversation, nothing. Sitting around the radio, listening to Jack Benny. We were sitting around the box; don’t say nothing because they’re listening to the show. Reading the paper... "Can’t you see I’m reading the paper? Could we talk about it later?" It seemed that there was no convenient time to talk.

And another participant remembers this:

And there were times when all of us were very disturbed. We could have been supportive to each other, I suppose, if kids can do things like that, but none of us wanted to admit that there was anything wrong. None of us ever talked about it as a group, ever! Never. I talked about it with my friend, [name], after we were both out of college.

She continues:

My two brothers absolutely refuse to discuss it. My younger brother and I were talking last summer after his wife’s death. It was the first time he ever admitted that he was angry with my dad because of his drinking.
And again:

And I never did tell my mother. To this day, I’ve never been able to tell my mother that this happened to me. And, I think, as I look back on it, somebody probably said, "You don’t tell your mother. Your mother’s been sick. She has a new baby and..." Ah, you know, "This is something that you did and you were wrong." I don’t know whether that was said to me or not, but I know there’s something that goes deep inside me that I still... My mother’s 87 years old and I’m 57 and I still can’t tell her. I still don’t feel comfortable telling her that. And I’ve talked to my sister about it and she said that one time, when she was much older, he did the same thing to her, when we were living down there with them for a couple of years. At that time, she had to be in fourth and fifth grade. So again, my mother wasn’t around, but my sister was told not to tell that he had hit her.

And another remembrance is:

We had already had to move down to my grandfather’s, and I was living with friends, so I felt really, I was in eighth grade, and I felt really abandoned because I would try to get hold of him and I couldn’t reach him by telephone. We weren’t living in the same place. I was staying with a girlfriend’s parents. And my mother was 70 miles away. So that was frightening. And again, it wasn’t that I could ever say. "I’m scared that I can’t reach Dad." It was swallow it. Keep it to yourself. Yeah, yeah. "You’re a big girl now."

And still another:

I lost a friend, our next door neighbor. When I was 11, she was 12 and she died of complications, I guess, from rheumatic fever. She lived to be 12 and one morning, it was early Thursday morning and ah, my mother told me that Margaret had died during the night. And I started to cry and she said, "Now, you don’t cry. You’re a big girl." This was my friend. And the same thing with my grandfather. I don’t remember crying then. And my grandfather was my pal... But when he died, I don’t remember ever crying for him where anybody could see me. I cried into my pillow at night but not in front of anybody else. Somewhere along the line, I got the idea that it would upset my dad or my mother if I cried, so I didn’t cry in front of them.

And yet another:

I didn’t put it this way to myself, but I felt like it was really important that I break that non-communication cycle. And my husband kept telling me over and over, "Do you people ever talk about anything important?" And for many, many years I didn’t see it, but then I realized that you don’t talk about death
and you don't talk about love and who you care about except in the most superficial way possible and you don't talk about the things that are important to you politically. You don't talk about money or when you are hurt or in pain. You don't talk about anything important.

And still another:

He [dad] had a stroke. And I said, "Yeah, you're doing pretty well." I said, "You're speaking much more clearly than you did a week ago." He said, "I knew something was happening. I didn't know what it was, and I was afraid." That's as much . . . that's as intimate a conversation as I ever had with my dad.

Another participant remembers this:

For whatever reason, probably emotional, my father suffered a very severe speech impediment which meant communication was done by writing. He kept a diary, beginning just a month or so before I was born until his death, and it was written with the expectation that people would read it—that the family would read it. His approach to telling what was going on with his life can best be described as revisionist. For example, there was a woman—a young woman whom I met in college and my father thought she was terrific, and shortly after getting out of college, she and I eloped and married and the marriage lasted about six months and she disappeared. Father went back in volumes of the diary that showed any mention of her and rewrote the books, leaving out any mention of her.

And another remembrance:

I couldn't ever get angry. I could never express anger. Just another layer of guilt. I'd been a bad boy again and that's the tape that I played. I still can't—I have trouble shutting off this tape.

Subtheme: Being Secretive

Secrecy is a significant theme in the rememberings of the participants. Unlike the theme of Remembering Secrecy that appeared within the Remembering Breakdown constitutive pattern where secrecy was being observed in the family by the participants, in this subtheme the participants are engaging in secrecy themselves.
My mother for her part was as much addicted to fundamentalism as an alcoholic is to drink. It was just as damaging; so that you always had to be putting on a front or hiding something. You had to keep up the front.

Theme: Navigating Without a Compass

This theme is comprised of the two subthemes of Being Unprepared and Growing Up Too Soon.

Subtheme: Being Unprepared

This subtheme refers to a sense that the participants have not been adequately prepared to leave the world-of-the-family and enter the world-beyond-the-family. One participant remembers the following:

I guess now I’m a little angry with my mom because, I don’t know how she did it. Everything was, um, looked so easy. . . . She made it look so easy. And I said later, I said "I remember going shopping every Sunday and I don’t remember ever wanting, you know, hearing you say, ‘No, we really can’t get this and we can’t get that and we can’t get this.’" When I say I was angry with her because I felt like I was very unprepared when I went out into the world. Because I didn’t understand anything about finances or how rough it was or bills...

Another participant remembers the following:

And it was terrible to be in Japan and not be able to say anything or do anything again. It was almost like Daddy all over again. And I often wonder if you just choose these people in your life and it went back to the turmoil that probably surrounded me when I was even born. I probably didn’t have a chance without knowing how to combat things or overcome them.

Another participant remembers this story:

When I got away from home, I thought that college was the place for me, which I had no business doing because I wasn’t equipped for college either academically or emotionally at that point. . . . And ill-prepared as I was for college when I got out of high school, I think my best grades were D’s and F’s, I’m still wrestling with the same problem. Lack of self-worth. Everybody
else thinks I’m terrific; I don’t know why I don’t agree.

And he continues:

I loved the service. It was orderly, I always knew what was expected of me in the job I had as weather forecast officer, and I was good at it. . . . I really like it. And one of the things that I seem to do is to do things for the wrong reasons; you do them for other people rather than for yourself. So here I was, really happy in the military. I even like marching. I really like it. And I decided I was going to re-enlist for another three years and stay in. But I didn’t and the reason I didn’t was because I felt it was really expected of me that I go to college. This was what I told myself, that you should go to college and make something of yourself, and that being in the service was sort of second-class. Even though I loved it and it gave me fulfillment.

Subtheme: Growing Up Too Soon

The language for this subtheme was provided by the following participant:

And that’s the other thing, I think, that at least happened in my case. You’re expected to grow up way too soon. I felt like I wasn’t allowed to be a kid. I, again I didn’t think of it in those terms, but it was like I was the oldest and I was the girl, and boy, you’d better be responsible because no one else was going to be. Like dealing with things that happened at school, with my younger brothers and sister. This, I think, was probably more because my mother was sick at the time than because of my dad’s alcoholism. Well, my dad was unreliable and my mother was sick, so it was something that probably would have been—there would have been a trade-off; if my mother wasn’t able to do it, my father would have been—if he had been sober, but he wasn’t. And if my mother became ill, and there was one winter when she was bedridden for almost the whole time . . . and if anything happened with my younger brothers—they used to get in trouble in school all the time—I was the one that had to deal with it.

Another participant recalls this:

I was trying to make it all hang together with this woman [mother] that I was sure was going to attack me any time I came through a door, and also try to keep the world together for my sister. . . . And I would watch her go, and I always wished so hard that they [parents] would get back together and we would be a family and I would try to take care of my sister. Every Sunday, I would take her on the trolley and go to church, and it was like, you know, "Everything’s gonna be all right." Hold it all together and it never was, but I
never wanted to look at the fact that it wasn’t.

Constitutive Pattern: Living In Thrownness

The third constitutive pattern that emerged from the analysis of the data was Living In Thrownness. Four themes were associated with this pattern: Being Cared For, The Glue that Holds the Family Together, Remembering Acceptingly, and Being Other Than. I will begin with a discussion about this third pattern and follow with textual examples of each of the themes.

The word "thrownness" (Geworfenheit) is used by Heidegger to refer to the "there" of Dasein, the actual situation in which Dasein finds itself. This characteristic of Dasein’s Being—this "that it is" is veiled in it "whence" and "whither," yet disclosed on itself all the more unveiledly; we call it the "thrownness" of this entity into its "there"; indeed, it is thrown in such a way that, as Being-in-the-world, it is the "there." (Heidegger, 1962, p. 174)

This disclosure of thrownness is the result of mood, according to Heidegger. It is mood that discloses to Dasein its situation among things. In its mood, Dasein is aware of its being, of the fact that Dasein is. Dasein’s being appears to it as "being thrown"; it appears to itself as thrown among beings. "In mood, man not only becomes conscious of the fact "that he is," but also of the fact that he "has to be," that his being has to be realized by himself as a task" (Kockelmanns, 1965, p. 664).

Another way of understanding this is to say that Heidegger thought that every person (Dasein) is completely shaped by the culture he or she is born and raised in. No person has control over who he or she will be born unto, where he or she will be born and raised, the circumstances of the family-of-origin he or she joins, or the social
environment he or she finds him or herself in. One is thrown into and becomes part of a culture, and one's behaviors are consequently learned from that culture. The social environment proscribes everything one could possibly do. No one is an autonomous agent, free to choose his or her own way of existing.

We have always already been thrown into our world, and are indeed always "in the throw," which we can never get back behind. Not only our moods, but even our understanding, is something we find ourselves already in, with no possibility of originally producing it. At every moment we find ourselves already in the midst of a certain style of concern or involvement in our world; all of our striving or projecting proceeds on the basis of this given situation, and cannot turn back behind it to serve as its prior source. (Richardson, 1986, p. 34)

But thrownness is not the end of the story for Dasein. Another characteristic of Dasein, Heidegger tells us, is a disposition or essential tendency to "press forward into possibilities," a characteristic that Heidegger refers to as our "projection" (Entwurf) (Heidegger, 1962, pp. 184-185). We are always projecting toward some end, towards certain possibilities. We are always pressing ahead into our future, and it is this pursuit of ends that makes up our understanding of ourselves.

And now Heidegger claims that this thrust towards ends proceeds from a momentum we have not produced, so that while it defines who we are, this is not ultimately a self-definition. That way of projecting which constitutes our understanding of ourselves and our world, is one we have been thrown into; we can never fully generate our momentum for ourselves. (Richardson, 1986, p. 34)

Therefore, thrownness refers to the way we always find ourselves already involved in a world, yet our involvements are ones we have not ourselves constructed or chosen. However, to understand adequately the sense in which we, because of thrownness, can never choose or construct of bring within our power our Being-in-the-world, we must understand the contrasting notion of projection.
Projection refers to the way we press ahead towards some possible way to be or towards some end by which we understand ourselves. However, our projection is dependent upon the way we already have been. Projection provides us with our identity, but it is not an identity that has arisen from a blank slate.

Our struggle towards ends determines who we now are, but is due to a who we have been. And this stands always before any current determination of a self, showing that this self we define ourselves as, can never be simply identical to that self responsible for the defining. We 'make' ourselves by the activity of stretching ahead towards ends, but producer and product are continually distinct, and the responsibility for what we are slips always away from us, into our past... The basis for one's pursuit of just these ends stands always behind the person one becomes in this pursuit. (Richardson, 1986, p. 131)

Therefore, self-creation is an impossibility for us. Not only are we never able to choose our possibilities before we are even born, we are also limited in the possibilities we may choose after those possibilities have already been decided. Dasein, as it actually exists, is certain possibilities and consequently excludes others.

By choosing this particular possibility, Dasein has to abandon others. Dasein is "thrown possibility through and through" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 144).

And again: "Freedom, however, is only in the choice of one possibility—that is, in tolerating one's not having chosen the others and one's not being able to choose them." (BT, 331). Thus, while the first nullity lies in our inability to choose the basis responsible for the choices we make, the second consists in a limitation built into these choices themselves: That they inherently involve a ruling-out of alternative possibilities, and dictate that we now cannot be in those other ways. (Richardson, 1986, p. 133)

Our remembered stories, therefore, are the stories of our thrownness, of the reality of the unchosen basis for choicemaking each of us has been granted as an aspect of Being-in-the-world. They are also the stories of the possibilities that were ruled out and of the possibilities that were chosen.
Our world—that which is constituted by our aiming towards certain ends, and knowing certain ways to pursue them—is only one among many possible worlds. And just as it is not picked out as that one which we have chosen for ourselves, so it is not picked out as intrinsically finer or more worthy than any of those others. (Richardson, 1986, p. 133)

According to Heidegger, we have two modes or means of dealing with our throwness. One of these is an unauthentic or "falling" mode, and the other is an authentic mode. The former mode is chosen because our throwness is disturbing to us. We have been thrown into the world with a past that limits our possibilities. We cannot choose who we will be, "from the ground up." In falling everydayness we respond to the givenness of this limitation by avoiding it.

We ignore the role played by what we have been in determining what we now are, and renounce any effort at continuity with our past, preferring to detach ourselves from it by absorbing ourselves in immediate concerns. This falling mode of our past ecstatic is "having forgotten" [Vergessenheit] (cf. BT, 389; BPP, 290); in it our throwness is hidden or avoided. (Richardson, 1986, p. 200)

In contrast, authentic throwness comes to terms with and gives adequate regard to what we have been, and to the role this plays in determining who we are and where we are going. "The authentic mode of the past ecstatic is 'repetition' [Wiederholung] (cf. BT, 388; BPP, 287); it is that way in which throwness can acquire a similar transparency and adequacy" (Richardson, 1986, p. 199). This is a mode that involves acknowledging that our past has a presence now, because it guides the path to the realization that we are what we have been. It involves recognitions that this effort involves a 'repeating' of what we already have been. It requires maintaining a relationship to what we have been and done, despite the admission that many of our possibilities were and will continue to be fixed. Repetition reaches back to our past, and grants it a
place in what we now are. "Our involvement in some present concern has the character of . . . repetition when we explicitly come to it from being who we have been" (Richardson, 1986, p. 200).

The constitutive pattern Living In Thrownness is related to the themes that emerged from the stories of the participants. These themes include Being Cared For, The Glue that Holds the Family Together, Remembering Acceptingly and Being Other Than. These themes speak of the authentic and unauthentic modes of living with repetition of remembering thrownness. They speak of the possibilities chosen and the possibilities missed because of the reality of thrownness. They speak of having forgotten and of the
texts. This theme has to do with the participant remembering someone who cared for him or her and made him or her feel special. The subthemes are Caring Relatives and Caring Others.

Subtheme: Caring Relatives

One participant remembers that for her, this person was her grandfather:

When we lived with him [grandfather] up till the time I started school, he had been semi-blind in an industrial accident and he was never able to work again. So the only thing was that he was a worker. . . . So that house that we lived in . . . with all the relatives in it, he was the resident maintenance man, and I can remember him telling me what the pliers were and what hammers were and what a screwdriver was and the difference between a Phillips screwdriver and a regular
And I used to follow him around and when he gardened, I would hand him the garden tools, and when he was working in the house, I would hand him the other tools. He used to come out to our house when we finally got the apartment. He’d come out to dinner and I remember making my first cake for him which was probably a real impressive cake, but I do remember I wanted to bake a chocolate cake for Grandpa and so my mother taught me how to bake a cake. And there was just nothing he wouldn’t do.

And later, she adds this story:

I remember my brothers had been pestering--God knows what they wanted--but they had been pestering my mother for mousetraps. She said, "You can’t have a mousetrap. You’re liable to snap your finger off in a mousetrap." My grandfather went to the dime store and he patiently fixed it so the spring wouldn’t work. They didn’t care whether it worked or not. All they wanted was a mousetrap. . . . I remember there was nothing my grandfather would not do for us kids. He was just, you know, anything we wanted. He was the typical grandparent who spoiled us. And as long as there was nothing we would hurt ourselves on, it was okay.

Another participant remembers his grandfather, also:

His father, my grandfather, was a man of very direct action. He was a terrific, terrific man. I adored my grandfather. . . . One saving part of the whole thing was living next door to my grandfather. His wife died in ’22 of cancer. And my grandfather owned a coal yard and lumber yard and contracted it. That was about three blocks from the house. When his wife became ill, he sold the business so he could spend his time with her, and it was only three blocks away. And then from then on as long as I knew him, he always had some job; he was the health officer, he was the chief welfare officer, all sorts of things. There was a store across the street and they had ice cream and bread and also there was a beer garden in back of there. We could have been starving to death and the only food in the world could have been in that store, but my mother would not have gone in there. Every evening, my grandfather would come with ice cream cones for a treat. He didn’t care about her. She wasn’t his mother. He gave her a house.

Another participant remembers this story:

So Grandma was from the old country, right off the boat. And she’d lapse into Flemish, which is the language of her area and her people, and I remember whenever I’d hurt myself or whatever, she always cuddled me up in her arms and put me on her lap and she’d sing a little Flemish song, some of which I remember even ’til today. It’s "Kirkestol," which means like God be with you or the love of God be with you, this type of thing. And I truly, truly loved my
grandmother. . . And I remember she used to go out of her way to just do little things. So whenever I'd make excursions with my grandmother, it was neat. It was special. It was dreams come true. It was really neat.

And another participant also remembers her grandmother:

He sent me away to school, and my grandmother, my mother's mother, was my rock. She really was. All through the years, she was the one I would turn to. And so, when I finished high school, I went to finishing school, junior college, with my grandmother. I never went back home. . . . And that was the only person I ever remember playing with us. Doing anything with us. And she always seemed to take a great interest in all my little drawings. She'd have them up in her bedroom always, and I was always very pleased that she cared.

Subtheme: Caring Others

These are persons other than relatives who cared for the participant in such a way that they felt special. For example, one participant experienced lengthy hospitalizations as a child, and he remembers a caring physician:

Dr. H. had stopped by one night to see how I was doing. When was the last time you heard of a chief surgeon stopping in just to chit-chat with a patient, just to see how I was doing? He used to read to me. He was the one that got me interested in "Kon-Tiki."

For this same participant, there was also a caring stranger:

Another incident when they were putting up the expressway is I tried to dive bomb a little old woman with a piece of pipe. . . . He [policeman] took me down there and the little old woman, I remember, asking me, "Why did you do that?" And I said, "I just thought it would be cute, I thought it would be funny." And all she did was forgive me. You know, they say that God appears to every man at one time in his life or more. I just wonder. She said, "I forgive you, but don't ever do that again."

Another participant remembers this story:

Then when I was in the service, the squadron commander, terrific guy, I just admired him no end. In fact, I saw him just a couple of years ago down in Florida. I began fantasizing. I would have loved to have had him as a father. And I told him.
Another participant remembers her teachers in this way:

I remember a couple of teachers who were very kind, very kind. Not too many. I also remember that some were very mean.

And another was cared for by his coach:

In fact, I basically left home or home left me when I was 16 because my dad was moved to another state, and I moved in with the high school football coach and that was all done very amicably. There was no "If you don't go with us, you're gonna get disinherited" or anything like that. It was all done very amicably but that was kind of where I, ah, kind of stopped being their child, so to speak. Not a bad arrangement. The high school football coach had other kids, they were a lot younger than I was at the time, and a big house. That didn't seem like an imposition. I worked in the grocery store and I paid rent and stuff, so it wasn't a big deal.

And another participant remembers her relationship with God and the church:

I'll tell you something. I was very, very devout as a child and I think that was one of the ways I've always survived. . . . And I remember, and I don't know what the Bishop's name was, but he took my face in his hands and he looked at me and he did not hit me. He did not hit me. He just looked at me a long time and held my face in his hands. I've always remembered the way he did that. He must have in his spirit gotten some message. But I feel that the Lord has really looked after me.

And she continues later:

I just felt good. I felt peaceful and loved and comfortable and I loved the music. I loved the church.

Theme: The Glue that Held the Family Together

This theme emerged across all of the interview texts. Most of the participants remembered something that made his or her family feel like a family. For example, one participant remembered this:

But I remember having family get-togethers and my father would still come to them, and everything would be fine. And supposedly my father had had an affair and this had happened and that had happened, but my father still came
around and he still remained friends with my mom. They had known each other, actually the year they got divorced would have been their 25th wedding anniversary. And they had known each other since my mom was 14. I mean they had known each other all their lives. And they remained friends and came together for family get-togethers and everything.

Another participant remembers this:

No, we hugged. In fact, that was one of the real healthy things about my family. My father never, even when he was mad at my mom and even when my mother was mad at him, he never left the house without at least dropping a kiss on her head. Ah, they hugged in front of us. We kissed them goodnight every night. We kissed them in the morning when we left for school. That was, I think, that was maybe some glue that kept things together because my dad said when we were small, he'd pick us up and swing us around, always very gently but definitely, and especially when he was sober. And he had pet names for us, you know.

And another told me this:

The only time that I felt, and this went on for years, that I was part of a family and a family who was doing things together was, my mother was an avid fan of opera and every Saturday afternoon, she listened to the broadcast live from the Met in New York with Milton Cross. And I love opera. I was raised with it. I love it.

Still another remembered in this way:

Mom went out of her way to make Christmases nice and birthdays nice. She being from New Jersey and my dad from Detroit, there wasn’t a family type of feeling, no cousins and stuff like that at holidays. We didn’t have that. Mom, in terms of birthdays, Christmases, holidays, those kinds of things, she went out of her way. Like I said, she was a den mother when I was in Boy Scouts. She went out of her way to try to help with things and make things pleasant and that type of thing. ... We went to Florida for a vacation one time. I remember that. I can remember going on picnics over in the National Park, day trips and things like that. Mom would make a big fancy picnic and stuff and do that. Mom really encouraged having friends over to play. I’d say that usually in the summertime we’d play outside and wintertime play inside.

And another participant tells of the glue that holds his current family together:

One thing was, I’d go to work every day. They understood there were a lot of
days I didn’t want to go to work. Days when I didn’t feel well. I never
preached about it but I made sure that the example was there, or if there was a
job to be done in the house, I’d get it done.

Theme: Remembering Acceptingly

This theme was remembered by most of the participants. It refers to
remembering with acceptance or taking the ups and downs of their childhoods in
stride. For example, one participant has this to say:

Well, um, it hasn’t been until recent years that I really realized I was an adult
child because I didn’t have a lot of active drinking in my house when I was
growing up. As a matter of fact, it wasn’t extremely violent and some of the
other things—misconceptions that I had in my head—so I didn’t really think that
that was my situation. My father is the main person that has problems in my
family, although out of the six people in my original family, I am about the
only one that I would say is not chemically addicted.

She continues:

And my mom had quite a bit to deal with in those days. And I know my
brothers were experimenting with drugs. They were teens and it was the late
60s and the early 70s, and they were starting to experiment with drugs and
everything. And I was aware of that, but I didn’t really correlate any problems
or anything—just his temper that one of my brothers had and the fact that he
drank quite a bit. Then, as I was growing up, my mother drank on a very
regular basis, but she didn’t get drunk or she didn’t get real obnoxious or
anything like that.

And again later:

I was young. I was six when they split, when they separated, and eight when
they divorced. And, um, it wasn’t that big of a deal to me.

Another participant remembers this:

You know, he was my dad and I was so proud of him when he was sober. He
was a very good-looking man and he was very bright. There were a lot of
things that he loved, that he shared with me, like music. . . . He had goofy
nicknames for every one of the grandchildren and the other thing was he never
got dead drunk when his grandkids were around.

Another participant remembers this:

Well, but in that town, I mean, kids did that, worked on farms and did those kinds of things. Wednesday was double green stamp day so I didn’t go to school normally on Wednesdays. And that’s the way it was. And it wasn’t thought of as anything that was—I didn’t feel imposed upon or anything. In fact, I was also able to save money and I bought an old car and, you know, and I thought life was going along pretty well. I didn’t have any big hang-ups about it.

And again later:

I tended to have a pretty high profile in high school and so it was sort of a glory-years days for me, and it was, you know, it was kind of a little bit surreal type of thing. And it was a real challenge for me when I went off to go to college. I broke my—I’m left-handed—I broke my left hand before school ever started during football practice, so here I am starting school, writing with the wrong hand. I had to drop out of graphics design and things like this, so it didn’t start out real well and it took me a while to get my feet back under me again and stuff, but that all, you know, kinda worked out. I’m basically a striver. Things tend to be a process to me rather than an event.

And yet another participant recalls the following:

In those days, nobody told you that people didn’t have good parenting skills or that people were in dysfunctional families. You just lived it and you got through the best way you could.

She goes on to tell this story:

And when he [father] died, there was such a peace in the room that I sat there and drank a cup of tea off his tea tray which he hadn’t touched and said goodbye to him. And I never felt such peace. And I don’t think, for some reason, I disassociate that one episode, that one time in my life when I was maybe 12 to 15 [canary episode], and I didn’t seem to be so unforgiving of him as I did my mother. His ashes are in the outdoor altar and I talk to him when I come and go. . . . So I think I really held it against her more than him, but really, I don’t think she was any worse. You know, now I can say I don’t think she was any worse than he was. I think they were both a couple of really poor candidates for a family and children. . . . Maybe in my dotage I’ll finally have some peace. . . . I don’t know how to get over these things, but I know God will help me. That’s all that counts. And maybe I won’t. Maybe
there'll always be those little places that are painful. I’m sure there will be. I don’t think that you ever get completely healed. ... It’s the process that counts; it’s not the product.

Another participant sums up his interview with the following statement:

I guess the thing that amazes me is that I could do as well as I’ve done.

Theme: Being Other Than

The last of the four themes is Being Other Than. This is a theme of wanting to be someone or be somewhere or have something other than what is. This is a theme of escaping. This theme emerged in every interview text. For example:

But the thing I think of the most is just being so fearful of the anger. I think I cried. I’m pretty much of a crier. I know I lived in my room a lot, not necessarily during those times, but I had my ways of escaping, and I was very much into television and made my little empire in my room. I had a TV and a radio and I lived out a lot of fantasies. When I needed to escape, I would pretend in my head that I was part of the TV shows and put myself as a character into 'em, like "Eight Is Enough," and I would sing and dance a lot to the music and that was my happiness. But I don't know exactly what I was escaping from because those angry times were mostly when we had family get-togethers for birthdays or holidays of whatever.

And she continues later in the interview:

And I don’t remember any reason why I needed to escape. I just remember that I had that bedroom and it was my place to go. I think it was mostly because of loneliness that I was trying to escape from. My brothers were all so much older than me and my parents were split when I was so young. I didn’t have that family, you know, where people went on trips and, um, just family things. It was just me and my mom most of the time. And that was really neat. And she did the best she could do, and we were very close. But there is just that family part missing.

Another participant remembers the following:

I can remember my father. I was helping the nuns on a Saturday, and that was one of my escapes. I stayed in school as much as possible. I escaped to the public library. ... We only lived a half a block from the school, so I could
escape there any time I wanted to. Um, even on Saturday. If the nuns were working over there, I would go over and help, in quotes. Uh, it was just a more comfortable place to be. It's appalling to think that an 11 year-old girl could babysit, but I started babysitting when I was 11, just in the neighborhood taking care of toddlers. And that was another way to get out of the house. Anything so that I wasn't at home. And now I realize I was escaping. Then I thought I was being responsible and keeping busy and earning money for myself and I thought I was behaving really appropriately. And I realize that I didn't have much of a childhood. . . . I had a terrific imagination and that was another method of escape. When I was at home, I read. I had my nose buried in a book constantly. It was great. I developed a terrific vocabulary. But all, none of these, I think they were, you know, there were a lot of negative reasons for doing some positive things.

She continues: But I used to think that family was wonderful because they had a lot of things...
going for them that my family didn’t, that I wanted. You know, the storybook things that, they sort of fulfilled my fantasies. Ah, her dad would come home from work every night at the same time. And, actually she had four brothers, twins who were younger than I was and Jim and Donnie were much older. But Donnie would run down the stairs and meet his dad and give him a hug, and he was in his teens. I mean, teenage boys at that age, in that day and age did not go giving their father hugs. And I used to think that was so neat.

And another story:

One time when he [father] had been drinking, I don’t know whether I was angry or whether I was frightened, but he said he wanted to talk to me and I wasn’t wanting to find out. I just went into a closet and I hid. You know, whatever was going through my mind at that time, I think as I look back, it had to be that I’d had it..."I can’t stand this anymore; I’ve got to hide from it," because I didn’t know how to deal with it when he was drinking. I never knew, His behavior was so unpredictable and so bizarre that I never, never, you know, I never knew what to expect when I was talking to him.

Another participant remembers these stories:

Poetry has been a marvelous escape for me. I can disappear inside poetry. I can be whatever I want to be. I can do whatever I want to do. I can go anywhere I want to go inside of a poem if it’s a good poem. And occasionally I’m lucky enough to write one of my own and that’s twice the fun because I can ride there and come back all in the same day. I first got the love for language when I first was taught to read. Actually, back then they started to teach you how to read in kindergarten. By the time I was six, I was reading a newspaper front to back. Reading little books. And the first full-length novel I ever read cover to cover, I was seven, and it was "Kon-Tiki."

He continues:

So again, I’m prone to really wild imagination. I dream in color. I experience all my normal senses in my dreams and I remember I’d say at least 80% of my dreams. I always wanted to be something other than what I was, somewhere other than where I was, doing something other than what I was doing. The penultimate dreamer. I didn’t like where I was.

And again:

So after the surgery and stuff like that, it was a very confusing time for me. I decided I just wanted to be elsewhere. I did a lot of running away.
He continues:

And it was shortly after that there was this whatever it was, for whatever cousin, at my aunt's, and I got to drink a big old glass of Mogan David blackberry wine. Something went off in my skull. And when that wine exploded behind my belly button, that was it. I had arrived. All of a sudden, I was very comfortable, very warm, very relaxed. I could dance. I was glib. I was articulate. I was funny. I could pay attention. It's like lights went on all around me and I was in the center. And everybody was there to see me and I was so smooth and so liquid, I'd flow right up next to you and be the young man you wanted me to be. Elysium. I have found Elysium. And I'm in high school. . . . Now see, our drinking was wrapped around whole things, and whole things were wrapped around drinking. . . . I could not stand the daylight. The last five years of my drinking and drugging, I rarely went outside, but for five years we never opened the drapes in the apartment.

Another participant remembers this:

Books were very special. I was an avid reader. But that, too, was not only me losing myself in fantasy; we entertained ourselves well with books then. . . . I used to love my dolls.

She continues later:

And that's the way I've spent my life, raising my children, but always, always, I want to do something. I like to learn. I like to grow. I've taken art classes, I've taken nutrition classes; then I decided to get into travel. I went to everything I could and went as far as I could. But I keep wondering what kind of a life it would have been right from the beginning. And I had a hard time forgiving her, Mother. And then I realized that I have to deal with Father.

Another participant tells me this:

A lot of times, I'd like to be back in the service. Take away every responsibility, didn't have to make decisions.

Summary of Chapter IV

The literature reviews of Dysfunctional Families and of Adult Children of Alcoholics considered both the clinical literature and the empirical literature. It is important to note, therefore, that the emergent constitutive patterns and themes in the
data analysis of this study are more supportive of the clinical findings than of the empirical findings in the literature.

Whereby a number of empirical studies (Alterman, Searles & Hall, 1989; Barnard & Spoentgen, 1986; Calder & Kostyniuk, 1989; Goodman, 1987; Seefeldt & Lyon, 1991; Venugopal, 1985) have not supported a "core constellation" of the adult-child syndrome, clinical evidence for such a profile is substantial. Many authors (e.g., Beletsis & Brown, 1981; Black, 1981; Cermak & Brown, 1982; Gravitz & Bowden, 1984; Seixas, 1982; Wegscheider-Cruse, 1985; Woititz, 1983, 1985) have attempted to describe personality traits of "typical" patterns of dysfunction characteristic of adult children of alcoholics. Often these personality traits are used to describe adult children of all types of dysfunctional families.

According to Vannicelli (1989), the most commonly identified problems or issues that appear in the clinical literature for adult children include:

1. Difficulty with intimate relationships (Ackerman, 1987; Black, 1981; Cermak & Brown, 1982; Gravitz & Bowden, 1984; Wegscheider-Cruse, 1985; Woititz 1983).


4. Conflicts of personal responsibility, characterized by super-responsible and/or super-irresponsible behavior (Ackerman, 1987;


Before comparing and contrasting these issues which are most commonly identified with adult children in the clinical literature, there are three things which make this task awkward. First is the fact that these seven characteristics are viewed from a problem perspective. This is unlike the way in which the constitutive patterns and themes of this study came to be. In this study, the themes that were identified by the participants and the patterns that emerged were not necessarily considered problems or assets; they just were.

A second and related fact is that the language used in the clinical literature implies the application of value judgments to the experiences, observed and lived, of adult children. For example, words such as "difficulty," "lack," "fear," "conflicts," "super-responsible and super-irresponsible," "denial," "uncompromising," and "problems" each communicate a judgment about the nature of being an adult-child. This is because the clinical (and empirical) literature is trying to provide the forms of
explanation that we have been taught to consider characteristic of scientific rigor.

This is in contrast to the end product of a hermeneutic analysis which is more modest in its aims than is a formal set of rules or a causal law. The end product of an interpretive account is more subtle and complex, reflective of human action, "embracing the historical openness, the ambiguity and opacity, the deceptions, dangers, and delights that action manifests" (Packer, 1985, p. 1092).

The third and last fact is that most of the literature that was reviewed by Vannicelli to derive these seven key problems or issues was the alcoholic and adult children of alcoholic literature. The participants in this study identified themselves as adult children of dysfunctional families. A number of these families did live with alcoholism, but not all of them. Keeping these three things in mind, let us compare and contrast the results of the clinical literature with the analysis of the data of this study.

Difficulty with intimate relationships did not come up in the texts of the participants of this study as it did in the clinical literature. This may be either because it was not a theme vibrated with their experience. Or it may be because most of the participants focused on their childhoods rather than their adulthoods, and intimate relationships in the sexual sense were less of an issue.

Lack of trust in others did emerge as a subtheme in this study. It was called Being Wary, and it was part of the theme called Being Let Down. In addition to Being Wary, there were three other subthemes including Being Trusting, Being Embarrassed, Being Rejected, and Being Taken Advantage Of. Being Let Down and
the four subthemes that undergird it seem to be a richer and deeper description than Lack of Trust. It seems to communicate that adult children have more variety of encounters with other beings than Lack of Trust alone communicates.

Fear of loss of control was not a common theme for the participants of this study. However, one participant did speak about having had suicidal thoughts on occasion in the past, one participant told about his own violence and addiction, and one participant related having an eating disorder. None of these participants spoke about fear when describing these things, even though they suggested that they experienced loss of control.

Conflicts over personal responsibility may have emerged in this study, but it was not called anything that resembles this issue. The sub-subtheme of Being in Costume related stories of participants who felt remembered roles of being perfect, or good, or rebellious, or a clown, for example. The subtheme of Growing Up Too Soon included stories of being responsible for things and people that were perceived as being age-inappropriate. The subtheme of Being Unprepared included stories of having difficulty with responsibility as an adult and the sense that it was related to having had inadequate opportunities to be responsible for things and people as a child. The "super-responsible" and "super-irresponsible behavior," however, was only one piece of each of these other themes.

"Denial of feelings and reality" may have emerged as two themes in this study. Being Numb was a subtheme of Remembering Concealment, and it communicated a notion of being out-of-touch with one's feelings. Being Mute was
also a subtheme, and it was related to the notion that participants were unable to talk about their feelings. The subthemes of Being Other Than and Remembering Acceptingly might be considered to be indicative of denial of reality. However, once again the clinical label of "denial" gets in the way of understanding the experience of these participants. For them, Being Other Than has to do with escape as a means of living with their thrownness, but it is not necessarily either a positive or a negative thing. It just is. Similarly, clinicians might call Remembering with Acceptance a form of denial of reality, but for these participants it was a means of dealing with the everydayness of thrownness.

"Proclivity toward uncompromising self-criticism" did not emerge as a theme per se. Instead, these participants told stories of Remembering Disapproval, and the disapproval was both internal and external, with an emphasis more on the latter.

The same may be said about "problems with self-esteem." This did not emerge as a theme in this form. Instead, it played a part in several different themes, including Remembering Disapproval, Remembering the Ugly, Being Dis-Membered, Being Let Down, and Navigating Without a Compass.

Perhaps there was the most support in this study for the work of Claudia Black, specifically her 1981 book, It Will Never Happen to Me!. In this book, Black relies heavily upon vignettes (stories), pictures drawn by children, poetry written by children and adult children, and quotations to support her clinical observations and theorizing. She probably did not know it, but she was being influenced by richness of stories to capture human action and Being. She identifies what she calls the three
family laws of alcoholic families: Don't talk about the real issues; Don't trust; and Don't feel. These may be comparable to the subthemes in this study of Being mute, Being wary, and Being numb.

In addition, Black proposes several family roles, including the Responsible One, the Adjuster, the Placater, and the Acting Out Child. Several of the "costumes" that were identified by the participants in this study loosely fit these role descriptions. One role that is not identified by Black but was identified by Wegscheider (1981) is that of the Mascot. This is another role that loosely fits the "costume" of the clown that was described by one participant.

In general, the empirical research on adult children has been inconclusive. For nearly every type of study undertaken, including those that investigate various psychological and/or environmental correlates of being raised in a dysfunctional family environment, there are valid studies which show support for both sides of nearly every research question. However, Woodside (1988a) in a review of the literature found support for the notion that the emotional neglect and abuse that occurs in alcoholic homes is best understood when one considers that the primary focus of an alcoholic family is the alcoholic. The children often feel unwanted, unloved, unimportant, and invisible. This notion is supported by the each of the themes within the constitutive pattern of Remembering Breakdown, including Remembering Disapproval, Remembering the Ugly, Being Dis-membered, and Being Let Down.

Brown (1988, p. 27) in her review of the literature, including both clinical and empirical findings, characterizes the alcoholic family environment as one of "chaos,
inconsistency, unpredictability, unclear roles, arbitrariness, changing limits, arguments, repetitious and illogical thinking, and perhaps violence and incest. The family is dominated by the presence of alcoholism and its denial." A number of these characteristics emerged in this study, but not in the form of a list of characteristics. Instead, these characteristics fall within any number of themes and subthemes, including most of themes supporting the patterns of Remembering Breakdown and Comporting Toward Breakdown.

In summary, it can be seen that hermeneutics differs from the other two major ways of studying human conduct, rationalism and empiricism, in at least three major ways (Packer, 1985): (1) in terms of their view of the form and origin of knowledge; (2) in terms of their view of the proper object of study, and (3) the type of explanation each seeks. Even so, the results of many of the rationalist and empirical approaches to research in the area of adult children of dysfunctional families in general and adult children of alcoholics in particular, serve to validate the constitutive patterns and themes which emerged in this study.
CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS

It has been said many times before that the ready-hand-mode of engagement is the starting point for the hermeneutic investigation of human action. First, the ready-to-hand mode is the proper object of inquiry for such an investigation because it is the mode we are in when we are actively engaged in practical projects in the world. Second, it is the primary source of a hermeneutic researcher’s understanding of whatever human action he or she is studying. Dreyfus (1979, p. 213) put it in the following terms: "In general, we have an implicit understanding of the human situation which provides the context in which we encounter specific facts and make them explicit." The hermeneutic method aims at a progressive uncovering and explication of the investigator’s practical understanding of what is being studied. This process is, of course, never fully completed, but the investigator does become more aware of some of the interests, habits, and practices that form the background against which the phenomena appear and take form (Packer, 1985). In Chapter IV, the ready-to-hand mode was relied upon as the primary mode of engagement.

However, when breakdown occurs, we enter the unready-to-hand mode as we become aware that there is a problem. The source of the breakdown now becomes
important. When we are unable to find a direct way of dealing with the problem that arose, we enter the present-at-hand mode. This is the mode of engagement that provides access to phenomena by means of theoretical reflection. It relies on tools such as logical analysis and calculation in order to try to solve the problem. It removes us from the situatedness of the ready-to-hand, and we become aware of the phenomena as independent entities.

Obviously, when doing hermeneutic analysis, we strive to remain in the ready-to-hand mode of engagement as much as possible. In the story of this study, however, I as the investigator encountered breakdown, and as a result, I found myself entering the modes of unready-to-hand and present-at-hand. The result was that for a time I was removed from the direct access to the phenomena I was studying, remembering family breakdown. But another result was that I engaged in theoretical reflection about the diversity in the forms of remembering used by the participants in this study. I will share these theoretical reflections in this chapter.

Specifically, the breakdown occurred when a deeply held assumption on my part was challenged. My assumption was that narrative remembering or telling one’s story was a universal experience. I believed this meant that anyone asked to tell his or her story who wished to do so, could do so. Imagine my surprise, then, when one of the volunteer participants in my study who had known in advance that I would be expecting to hear the telling of his story, was not able to do so. The problem was not with his ability to remember. He was able to remember events and dates and happenings very effectively. But the form this remembering took was not in the form
of a story. It did not have a beginning, a middle, or an end. The events were not linked together in a thematic way. He did not seem to have any sense of continuity with his past, or any knowledge that this past has a presence now. In Heidegger's words (1962, p. 389), this falling mode of our past ecstasis is "having forgotten" (Vergessenheit).

None of the other participants seemed to "have forgotten" as dramatically as in this case, but I became aware of the fact that there were some participants who clearly could tell me their story in the way I had expected and there were others who did so with varying degrees of effectiveness or completeness. It was at this point, when I was clearly in the present-at-hand mode, that I began my own theoretical reflection and returned to the memory and narrative literature for some assistance. I did eventually return and was able to remain in the ready-to-hand mode for the remainder of the interviews and the analysis of the data. All the same, the results of my theoretical reflection were at least thought-provoking, I believe, and perhaps even insightful, and I would like to share them. This thinking has arisen out of interpretive inquiry and, therefore, does not have explanatory power. However, it raises some interesting ideas and suggests possible directions for future nursing and multidisciplinary research in this area.

**Implications Related to Heidegger and Discourse**

It was noted in Chapter II that most of the systematic empirical research done on memory in the Western world has concentrated on the individual aspects of memory. Recall Weintraub's observation that over time, Western autobiographers
have focused increasingly upon the individualism of their personal rememberings. Perhaps that is why despite the breadth of the literature that has been analyzed, the question of why some people seem to have difficulty telling about their personal past in story form remains unanswered. I would suggest that the reason for this is that focusing only on the individual aspects of memory will not provide the answer to this question. The answer to this question lies primarily in an increased understanding of the social, or ecological, aspects of memory.

I believe this answer is in keeping with Heidegger's thinking. Heidegger, according to Richardson (1986, p. 36) calls the a priori familiarity with other Dasein who are each Being-in more or less the same world, pursuing largely the same ends, through similar means, which grounds the encountering of others, our "Being-with" (Mitsein). He calls the Being of those others, which is familiar to us, their "Dasein-with" (Mitdasein). Heidegger's account of our everyday Being-in-the-world holds that in addition to tools and other beings, we encounter other Dasein. Such encountering depends upon a familiarity with them that is also prefigured in our ontological understanding, i.e., our understanding of the nature of Being.

Thus Dasein's world frees entities which also—in accordance with their kind of Being as Dasein themselves—are "in" the world in which they are at the same time encountered within-the-world, and are "in" it by way of Being-in-the-world. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 154)

One of the aspects of Being-in has to do with the possibility of sharing
elements of this world with other Dasein. This is what Heidegger calls "discourse" (Rede). Writes Richardson (1986, pp. 36-37):

His discussion of this notion is more than usually obscure, but the point seems generally to be that while the involvement structure or world is always disclosed as well to the other within one's world, it can on particular occasions be explicitly shared with or "lit up" for these others. . . . This activity of "lighting up" aspects of the world for other Dasein, and of making explicit a common understanding of that world is what Heidegger calls "discourse": "Dasein-with is already essentially manifest in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding. In discourse Being-with becomes 'explicitly' shared; that is to say, it is already, but it is unshared as something that has not been taken hold of an appropriated." (BT, 205)

The disclosure of Being is the means of sharing those aspects of the world.

Being-with, then, becomes explicitly shared in discourse, and discourse is, according to Heidegger, one of the four aspects of Being-in-the-world. We are created to be in discourse with other human Beings as part of the nature of our Being-in-the-world. Storytelling, or narrative remembering, is, I believe, an example of discourse. It is the sharing with other Dasein the nature of our Being-with and our Being-in-the-world. It is a mode of discourse possible only in authenticity, by "Authentic Being-one's-Self."

Perhaps it is this type of discourse, the type that Heidegger calls "idle talk" (Gerede), the mode of discourse Heidegger claims to be typical of our everydayness.

In idle talk, then, we align ourselves with a common way in which things are spoken of, and acquire a facility at speaking of them so ourselves. And this talk embodies a particular understanding of ends and world, which we inevitably take on in the course of such interaction. But because this understanding is acquired in this indirect and artificial way, it is characterized by a certain detachment from its subject-matter. Thus even the speaker may not stand in that concerned relationship towards his topic, which his assertion implies. Indeed, if he has himself grasped the entity and the involvement only in such idle talk, he does not, in Heidegger's sense, genuinely understand this segment of the world at all; he
understands, i.e., has mastery over, only the procedure for speaking of these involvements to others, and not over the involvements themselves. . . . The structure and the quality of their concerns are thus understood only indirectly, or artificially. (Richardson, 1986, p. 41)

Heidegger describes idle talk as a mode of discourse in which Being is not "lit up" or disclosed but rather concealed:

Discourse . . . has the possibility of becoming idle talk. And when it does so, it serves not so much to keep Being-in-the-world open for us in an articulated understanding, as rather to close it off, and cover up the entities within-the-world. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 213)

The disclosure of Being is the result of another of Heidegger's four structural aspects of discourse: the subject's mode of existence as Dasein. One of these aspects is more fully basic to Being-in-the-world: Dasein's falling. This falling is a flight from disclosure of our Being as Being-in-the-world, into an absorption in entities within-the-world and in a certain way of Being-with others that is characterized by idle talk. The motive for this flight, Heidegger tells us, lies in the way(s) our own Being is inherently dissatisfying to us. This falling is a tendency or temptation for Dasein, but it is an avoidable condition.

Perhaps it is this type of discourse, i.e., idle talk, that is the type of communication used by the participants who, for whatever reasons, did not engage in narrative remembering or storytelling with me. It certainly did seem to me that the structure and quality of their "concerns," in this case their personal story, was understood only indirectly or artificially. There was a distance between themselves and the content of their remembering. It was a mode of discourse that did serve to close off their understanding of Being-in-the-world as a rememberer of family breakdown. Perhaps it was because their own Being was dissatisfying to them.
Whether a person uses idle talk or other more authentic types of discourse is not exclusively an independent choice. No one is an autonomous individual, free to choose his or her own way of existing. Human beings are constituted to a large degree, according to Heidegger, in terms of their environment or world. A child learns how to behave from social interaction with the adults in his or her world.

The use of the word "learns," though, is misleading, because it presupposes that there is someone who learns. Adults who interact with the child do not teach, but create behaviors within the child which eventually form what one would call a "person." Only when a newborn has been sufficiently formed by its environment does it become a Dasein. These behaviors--moving, thinking, speaking, etc.--which make up our existence, are so basic that we never fully recognize their significance. (Lemay & Pitts, 1994, p. 45)

Once again, the importance of the family on the formation of the child is reinforced, this time by Heidegger. Along with the behaviors of moving, thinking, and speaking listed above, I would add "remembering." A child’s remembering behaviors are dependent upon the remembering interactions of the adults in the child’s world. Remembering persons or Dasein are constituted in terms of their remembering world(s). To the extent that their world is a remembering world or not, to the same extent will the child be a remembering Dasein or not.

Implications Related to Narrative Remembering

Stern (1985) has developed an approach for thinking about the development of the infant’s sense of self that is helpful to understanding the development of autobiographical memory. He believes that there are two views of infancy which together can illuminate the development of the infant’s sense of self. I believe these two views can also shed light upon the development of autobiographical memory.
Stern (1985) distinguishes between the "observed infant" and the "clinical infant." The "observed infant" is the actual infant who is observed in experimental settings by developmental psychologists. The "clinical infant" is not an actual infant but a self-construct clinical psychologists, nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, and others create from their adult clients' reconstructive accounts of their childhoods.

A clinical infancy is a very special construct. It is created to make sense of the whole early period of a patient's life story, a story that emerges in the course of its telling to someone else. This is what many therapists mean when they say that psychoanalytic therapeutics is a special form of story-making, a narrative (Spence, 1976; Ricoeur, 197; Schafer, 1981). The story is discovered, as well as altered, by both teller and listener in the course of the telling.

The observed infant is also a special construct, a description of capacities that can be observed directly. . . . These observations themselves reveal little about what the "felt quality" of lived social experience is like. Moreover, they tell us little about higher organizational structures that would make the observed infant more than a growing list of capacities that is organized and reorganized. As soon as we try to make inferences about the actual experiences of the real infant—that is, to build in qualities of subjective experience such as a sense of self—we are thrown back to our own subjective experience as the main source of inspiration. But that is exactly the domain of the clinical infant. The only storehouse of such information is our own life narratives, what it has felt like to live our own social lives. . . .

Each view of the infant has features that the other lacks. The observed infant contributes the capacities that can be readily witnessed; the clinical infant contributes certain subjective experiences that are fundamental and common features of social life. (Stern, 1985, pp. 15-19)

The adult equivalent of the "clinical infant" implied in this study is the self-defined "adult child of a dysfunctional family." The adult equivalent of the "observed infant" is the adult child of the research literature who has been in therapy or has in other ways been observed as a means of learning about his or her development of self.

There has been relatively little research done with the "observed infant" in the study of autobiographical memory. Fortunately, the work of Katherine Nelson et al.
Building upon Oakley’s (1983) functional and evolutionary view of memory in which each of the four levels are viewed as ways of dealing with the stresses of environmental change, Nelson delineates between the individual memory system and the autobiographical memory system:

The proposal here is that whereas general event memory is a product of the individual memory system and is derived from the organization of information from the personal experience of episodes, the autobiographical memory system is a product of social and cultural construction. (Nelson, 1988, p. 266)

Nelson further differentiates between the individual memory system and the autobiographical memory system by suggesting that in the former, remembered events have no value simply as memories, whereas in the latter, the memories appear to be valued for themselves. Nelson suggests that the function of the general event memories of the individual memory system is to provide information to be organized "with other such experiences in order to form a functional 'world model' that could be used to interpret and predict events in the future" (Nelson, 1988, p. 266). The function of autobiographical memories, on the other hand, is not merely to increase predictability in an adaptive sense, but to provide social and/or personal meaning.

The source of autobiographical memory, therefore, is social and cultural memory rather than individual memory:

As such, it is a uniquely human system, dependent on language and the sharing of experiences between individuals. This view is in accord with Tulving’s claim: "Remembering past events is a universally familiar experience. It is also a uniquely human one. . . .Other members of the animal kingdom . . . cannot travel back into the past in their own minds" (1983, p. 1). I would add to this that establishing a past that can be traveled through probably depends on socially shared remembering experiences. . . . Sharing memories with others is
in fact a prime social activity. The suggestion here is that this activity is learned in early childhood, and the result of this learning is the establishment of a store of memories that are shareable and ultimately reviewable by the individual, forming a personal history that has its own value independent of the general memory function of prediction and preparation for future events. (Nelson, 1988, pp. 266-67)

The autobiographical memory system, therefore, is unique to humans, but it is a capacity that must be learned and cultivated. It is possible for persons to have a highly functioning individual memory system and simultaneously have a lesser functioning autobiographical memory system. This would be one explanation for why some of the persons I have interviewed were able to remember facts and events of their lives, but unable to create stories or make meaning out of those facts and events. The function of their memory talk was to organize knowledge, to adapt to the environment, and to predict future events. Their memory talk was not shared reminiscing as a social or interpersonal activity; it was not for the purpose of social bonding or meaning-making. It was instead a function not of the autobiographical memory system, but of the individual memory system.

The gaps in some of the participants' memory talk can also be explained by this theory. According to Nelson (1988, p. 268), solitary memory talk, as opposed to shared reminiscing, consists primarily of specific episodes. As those specific episodes become integrated into the general event category and the personal knowledge system, they are likely to disappear as specific episodes in the individual memory system. "In contrast, socially shared memories are expected to be retained in specific narrativized form" (Nelson, 1988, p. 268) in the autobiographical memory system.

The social uses of memory begin in the family. "Every family has its own
history, and frequent recounting of that history strengthens the family’s sense of
community," writes Neisser (1988, p. 555). Not only is the family strengthened by the
recounting of the family narrative, but the autobiographical memory system of the
children is dependent upon it for development.

The family whose identity and experiences are not organized by means of
narrative (the stories it tells) is a family whose identity or meaning system may be
static. A meaning system that is static may be experienced by the family as an
unsatisfying and less-than-meaningful system.

Meaning-making is a constantly changing enterprise. Recounting the family
narrative implies that the family is continually reinterpreting its experience as a means
of actively maintaining its meaning system. Stories continually change as time passes
and the ending continually unfolds. The past is reinterpreted in light of the ever
changing present and future. A family that does not continually interpret how its
experience is endowed with meaning is at risk for becoming static and/or fragmented,
a family whose sense of continuity may be damaged. Garrison Keillor says it so well:

The one crucial thing that binds a family together is the faith of each member
that when he or she has something to say, the others will listen. You shouldn’t
have to yell in order to be heard. You should be able to say, "I went
downtown today and I saw these interesting people," and give an account of
your day, and the others should pay attention. This sort of everyday
storytelling is what holds people together. We can endure terrible privations if
only we get to tell somebody about them . . .

We need our stories in order to survive. We need to tell them in order to
remember them: Who were your people and how did you get here? Each
person has a large secret life, dreams, stuff we don’t know how to tell yet, and
if we are in a family or community whom we can’t tell our stories to, then
we’re not really related, we’re just polite strangers sitting down to dinner. We
are all more complicated than we appear to be, even the ones whom everyone
makes fun of or pities, and all we ask--all we need--is the chance to say our piece and tell who we are. (1994, p. 20)

It cannot be presumed, however, that all families can create narratives, at least not without some assistance. Those parents who themselves have underdeveloped autobiographical memory systems, and predictably less highly developed meaning systems, will be less equipped to foster the development of their children’s autobiographical memory systems.

There are additional routes besides that of the family narrative that enhance the development of the autobiographical memory system. One of these routes is reminiscing. According to Casey (1987, pp. 104-105), reminiscing is both social and verbal. It is co-remembering, i.e., remembering that occurs between rememberers, not solitary remembering that occurs in isolation from others. It is similar to story-telling (narrative remembering), and yet they are not equivalent activities. Families, and other social groups, can reminisce without telling stories and tell stories without reminiscing. In reminiscing, there need be neither a manifest nor a latent narrative structure.

Casey (1987, p. 107) enumerates four characteristics of reminiscing which may assist families and other social groups in establishing a structure in which reminiscing may occur: (1) reliving the past, (2) reminiscentia, (3) wistfulness, and, (4) the communal-discursive aspect.

To relive the past in reminiscence is more than merely re-presenting to one another certain experienced events or previously acquired items of information or searching for these things in memory, (presumably functions of the individual memory
system, not the autobiographical memory system in the theoretical framework being proposed). Reminiscing entails actively re-entering the worlds of the past, not just as they were, because that is not possible, but as they are now. "Or more precisely, the revivifying of the past that occurs so prominently in reminiscing is at the same time a revitalizing of the present in which the reminiscing is taking place" (Casey, 1987, p. 110).

Reminiscendia refers to any physical objects that have survived from the time period being reminisced about, including letters, photographs, souvenirs, etc., and serve as inducers of reminiscence. Such objects are not necessary to the activity of reminiscing, but they may serve as supplements and signify that the particular past being reminisced about did indeed exist.

The word "wistful" derives from the word "wishful." The basic wish in reminiscing is to fuse fully with the past being reminisced about. It is an openness to the disclosure of the past, rather than Heidegger's falling mode of 'having forgotten', which is a concealment of the past. There is ambivalence that is experienced upon realizing that the past is irrevocably past, whether that past was pleasant or painful:

The ambivalence is such that we can be wistful even when reminiscing about difficult or painful events. . . . It is a peculiarly reflective or "ruminiscent" pleasure that is composed equally of an acceptance of past pain and of a determination not to be overcome by it. Precisely the finality of the past itself . . . comes to our aid as we realize that the pain, however excruciating it was, is now over: now that we can reminisce about it in the present, taking pleasure in this very activity and perhaps gaining a sense of minor triumph as well. (Casey, 1987, p. 112)

Reminiscing, like story-telling, is a social activity, but unlike story-telling, it matters a great deal who is together in the company of reminiscers. Reminiscing is
always interpersonal, and it may involve partners who experienced events together, or shared in a conjointly experienced era of their lives, or are drawn into the reminiscing as if it were their own (as in the case of children listening to their relatives reminiscing about their lives as children).

Reminiscing is most fully realized in language. Through language, families and other social groups can re-share already shared experiences. "The primary thrust in reminiscing is toward others . . . For the most part, reminiscing is talking the past out; it is teasing the past into talk, reliving it in and by words" (Casey, 1987, pp. 115, 117).

We reminisce, therefore, to understand, or re-understand, the past more fully; to transform a general event into an autobiographical memory, and in so doing, to gain an intimate perspective not otherwise attainable (Casey, 1987, p. 117). The social and verbal nature of reminiscing enables this to occur:

Without words to specify various parts and points of an experience, it tends to fuse with other experiences in a flux of indetermination. Thanks to its discursiveness, reminiscing transforms mere experiences into articulate and enduring wholes possessing sufficient integrity to be understood in memory. (Casey, 1987, p. 117)

Social interaction is the fertilizer required for the development of the autobiographical memory system. Once established, however, the autobiographical system need no longer be dependent on social sharing; "that is, after early childhood, an experience does not need to be socially shared to be retained in the system, although it frequently will be, and may be held longer if it is (Nelson, 1988, p. 268). After early childhood, being alone does not prevent children from thinking about other
people or engaging in reflection, retrospection, and introspection.

Not only do children learn how to develop their own autobiographical memory from interacting with other people early in childhood, but from their culture as well.

It is from other people that children learn the memory metaphors that their culture takes for granted: that memory is like a wax tablet, or a camera, or a tape recorder, or a video replay, or whatever. . . . It is also from other people—their parents and their peers—that children learn how one should talk about the past: sparsely or elaborately, carefully or casually, in generalities or in narratives (Engel, 1986). (Neisser, 1988, p. 556)

Remembering is not, it has been shown, merely an individual enterprise. Our experience of the present is dependent on our interpretation of the past.

We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects. . . . And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present. (Connerton, 1989, p. 2)

Furthermore, our images of the past were not created in isolation. Social and cultural memory is the precursor and marriage partner to our individual autobiographical memory.

Concerning social memory in particular, we may note that images of the past which commonly legitimate a present social order must presuppose a shared memory. To the extent that their memories of a society’s past diverge, to that extent its members can share neither experiences nor assumptions. . . . Across generations, different sets of memories, mentally and emotionally insulated, the memories of one generation locked irretrievably, as it were, in the brains and bodies of that generation. (Connerton, 1989, p. 3)

Therefore, in order for the memory of social groups to be transmitted, it appears that recollection and human beings must be brought together. Neither physical proximity nor individual recollection in and of themselves is adequate. Recollection in
Fig. 2. Evolutionary Development of Memory (Oakley, 1983; Bruce, 1985; Nelson, 1988)
all its possible forms must occur within social groups, like families, if socio-cultural memory, and therefore autobiographical memory, is to be conveyed and sustained (Connerton, 1989).

**Implications Related to Psychiatric Nursing Practice**

Three essential characteristics of human Being according to Heidegger and important for nurses to remember are: (1) persons are always in the world "worldingly," (2) persons build themselves into the world by creating meaning, and (3) the world (culture) gives meaning to action by situating underlying states in an interpretive system (Saleebey, 1994; Bruner, 1990). Nursing practice is an intersection where the meanings of the nurse (theories), the client or patient (stories and narratives), and culture (myths, rituals, and themes) meet. Nurses must open themselves to their patients' constructions of their individual and collective worlds. The major vehicles for this are stories, narratives, and myths (Saleebey, 1994).

For psychiatric nurses in the field of psychotherapy, both individual and family, there is debate over interpretation and reality. Some systems of psychotherapy, such as structuralism and constructivism, conceive of therapy as correcting a script or helping the client(s) rewrite a better text for their life. Critics like Minuchin (1991), for example, argue that reliance on stories in therapy ignores "the social context that may actually dictate the 'plot' of [clients'] lives--the institutions and socioeconomic conditions that determine what they do and how they live" (p. 49).

Saleebey (1994, pp. 353-354) responds to this as follows:
The problem with this criticism is that it misses a crucial understanding: Interpretation and story are the essence of culture. They are not trivialities unrelated to circumstances. Rather, they are serious and essential creations that grow out of the experiences people have in particular environments. Stories may instruct individuals on how to survive or how to accept—even how to overcome—difficult situations. And at the least stories reveal to individuals considerable information and perspective about the nature of their circumstances. . . . Consider the opposite: Individuals and cultures whose stories have been appropriated or suppressed forcibly are in dire straits because they cannot reliably and safely construe circumstances to their advantage. People can surmount the most distressing of conditions given the uplift and guidance of stories and narratives.

The danger in any nurse-client or helper-client interaction is if the helper, clumsily or deftly, imposes his or her version of the situational story or recasts the client's version into theory-sense, not common-sense (Saleebey, 1994). Clients surrender their own narratives (or suppress them) and accept the professionals' theory, thus becoming more receptive to technique and more compliant with regimen. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders, Third Edition—Revised (DSM-III-R) can be understood as a text for the translation of an enormous variety of human predicaments, follies, emotional and cognitive states, and social conditions into a standard "accounting" and, eventually, numbers (Cutler, 1991). There is an inherent dualistic tension in the DSM-III-R. On the one hand lies the subjective and narrative presentation of the client, on the other, the "objective" and numerical pronouncements of the professional using the diction of DSM-III-R (Cutler, 1991). In this way, however benignly, the client's story is subjugated, made fugitive (Foucault, 1980; Weick, 1983). (Saleebey, 1994, p. 355)

What, then, is the nurse or helper supposed to do in the helper-client interaction? The answer, in short, is to be in the ready-to-hand mode of engagement, i.e., to begin where the client is. This requires the helper to be as informed as possible about the context and meaning system of the world of the client. The helper would listen to the stories of the possibilities that were limited because of the world the client was "thrown" into. The helper would listen to the possibilities that were open to the client, which of those he or she chose, and the "how" of the choosing.
The helper would encourage the client's hopes, aspirations, possibilities, and immanent meanings and actions in light of an understanding of the reality of the client's world. And the helper would understand and "light up" the client's storied situatedness by means of discourse fired by moral imagination and the values of the profession (Saleebey, 1994). Saleebey (1994, p. 355) quotes Goldstein (1991) who quoted Fibush in this regard:

If one truly listens to what a client is saying—not for the purpose of pigeonholing him into a diagnostic category or pinning a sociological label on him—one begins to know some of the basic recurring questions arising out of the human dilemma. . . . My understanding . . . comes in the interchange between me and the client. . . . A diagnosis can be as stereotyping as a racist slur and even more dangerously prone to becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. (pp. 4-5)

This is discourse in the Heideggerian sense, "lighting up" aspects of the world for other Dasein, and of making explicit a common understanding of that world (Richardson, 1986).

Dasein—with is already essentially manifest in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding. In discourse Being-with becomes "explicitly" shared; that is to say, it is already, but it is unshared as something that has not been taken hold of and appropriated. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 205)

Meaning can inspire or oppress. Helpers need to know how meaning, whether manifested in story, narrative, vision, dream, or language, affects intention and action, feeling and mood, relationships, interactions with the world, well-being, and possibility. They also need to know how meaning can get people into trouble. Saleebey (1994, p. 356) tells us a number of ways in which meaning is related to human dilemmas:

1. Stories, narrative, and meaning configurations sometimes are not one's own or
even those of one’s culture. Rather, they are composed by and imposed from
the outside. The individual and the collectivity have no ownership of these
meanings. Thus, resonance and vitality of action are subverted.

2. There is an "impoverishment of narrative resources" (Bruner, 1990, p. 96)--
that is, the stories that come from lived experience, individual and collective,
are few or are not compelling; they lack symbolic power or subjunctive
intensity.

3. The stories that people tell, the constructions they devise about their lives,
sometimes propel them down dead ends or dangerous paths. Occasionally
such stories assume the status of myth (Laird, 1989). For example, "All the
men in this family are hell-raisers. You can't tame them, you've just got to
accept what they do or get out."

4. The meanings through which people try to construe their situations and their
lives do not account for the exceptional, only the expectable. When the
ordinary does not pan out and the unique or unbidden occurs, it cannot be
made comprehensible or given coherence. As a result, it is ignored, or it
causes fear and maybe the paralysis of will or action.

5. The stories that some people tell have no currency in the larger world of
people and events, particularly the stories of individuals from cultures and
subcultures outside the dominant institutions. To traverse and traffic in the
dominant world they have to surrender to other interpretations of their lives,
often adulterated and corrupt (White & Epston, 1990).
Knowing that meaning, depending on its context, symbolic nature, and origin has the power to inspire or oppress, the helper can take the time to work with clients to articulate those meanings, those stories, those possible narratives that elevate spirit and promote action (Saleebey, 1994, p. 357).

**Conclusion and Recommendations for Nursing**

In the introduction to this chapter, I described how one of the participants in particular, and several others to lesser degrees, were able to relay information about past events, but were unable or unwilling to tell internally coherent stories about themselves. The analysis and synthesis of the literature has focused on many aspects of memory from a variety of theoretical perspectives as a means of considering possible explanations for this phenomenon.

The question that directed this inquiry was whether there was a relationship, not necessarily causal, between the interviewees' experiences of being-with their families-of-origin and the development of their capacity for autobiographical remembering. The results of the analysis and synthesis of the theoretical literature have lent support for an affirmative response to this question.

Because of its explanatory fit, I proposed a theoretical framework that was derived from the developmental and social psychology perspectives. The thesis of this framework is that the origins of autobiographical memory are primarily social in nature. Other kinds of memory, such as those that comprise the individual memory system, are far less reliant on social interaction for their development.

Sharing past experiences serves to remind the co-rememberers of the common
moments in the past, to extend the moments into the present, and to strengthen their relationship in the present (Neisser, 1988, p. 555). Social remembering becomes a way to transform the present interaction and to make new claims on it by appealing to old experiences (Neisser, 1988, p. 554).

It is clear that adults raised in families that did not provide opportunities for social remembering, for whatever the reasons, could still have highly developed semantic or generalized event memory, i.e., recall of places, facts, routines, and what is likely to happen next. In order to adapt and survive, people need to know the stability of the environment in which they find themselves. For this reason, persons from unstable or unpredictable environments who work hard to adapt and survive, may have even more highly developed individual memory systems than persons from more stable environments.

It is also clear that these same adults may have less highly developed autobiographical memory systems because they had insufficient opportunities to remember shared past events with their parents and/or other significant others. Or, perhaps, because those significant others possess underdeveloped autobiographical memory systems themselves.

The earliest function of autobiographical memory, therefore, is to support social interaction by enriching, maintaining and strengthening relationships in the present. And, social interaction is a necessary precondition for the development of autobiographical memory. Another early function of autobiographical memory is the production of a sense of self, "a self in the present who is engaged with another
person, and who is aware of the feelings being invested in that transaction" (Neisser, 1988, p. 554).

Later, if the autobiographical memory system has had the necessary opportunities to develop, it becomes useful in additional ways: (1) by enabling the creation of the remembered self; (2) by sustaining a sense of unique personal identity; (3) by sustaining interpersonal relationships; (4) to solve some types of problems; and, (5) to cross-check the semantic and generalized event memory by reconsidering the sources (Neisser, 1988, p. 555).

If the autobiographical memory system does not develop because the necessary social learning does not occur, then the person is deprived of its many useful functions. What is not yet clear from the literature is whether or not it is possible for the autobiographical memory system to develop post-childhood, and if so, to what extent. Intuition suggests that the success of such resources as psychotherapy, support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.), and reminiscence groups has been due in part to the provision of social memory contexts in which autobiographical memory can develop.

The format of A.A. type support groups, for example, centers upon members sharing their "leads," i.e., their personal stories or narratives, with the group. Such support groups often advocate lifetime membership, and this may be viewed as an opportunity for members to reinterpret the past as a means of better understanding the present and visualizing alternative futures.

Psychotherapy may be viewed as a scene of reminiscence that provides the
individual and/or family with the opportunity to transcend the historical and perceptual limits of the immediate situation, and to return to a past that has been forgotten. Through psychotherapy, individuals and families may recover an acquaintance with the past which has long been forgotten, and through social interaction, begin to create meaning out of experience. Clinicians may attempt to help their clients, whether families or individuals, view their pasts from a point of view that makes their desired future more possible (Saari, 1991, p. 160).

Clients whose autobiographical memory systems are developmentally emergent may have difficulty retaining a sense of meaning when moving from one context to another. Clinicians may need to "transcontext" meaning in such cases (Saari, 1991, p. 174). Transcontexting meaning may take the form of the clinician offering a rendering of a client story, narrative, or reminiscence from a different perspective. Or, it may take the form of helping the client imagine a future in which more of his/her goals have been met.

Reminiscence and life review groups are another means of providing the social interaction that may very well stimulate development of the autobiographical memory system. Nurses, social workers, and others have been involved in such groups, particularly with the elderly, for a number of years. If one accepts the premises of the proposed theoretical framework, then reminiscence and life review groups may be recommended for client peer groups of all ages because they provide the social context and interactions necessary for autobiographical memory development.
Perhaps the most important intervention in the promotion of autobiographical memory development is to address the problem of American society having forgotten the value of remembering, and particularly the value of social remembering. The decline in the value of remembering does matter because we are a society "stymied in the present and altogether uncertain of the future" (Casey, 1987, p. 11). With the "diminution in esteem and enfeeblement in use" (Casey, 1987, p. 11) of memory in general and of autobiographical memory specifically, we as individuals and members of social groups are experiencing a disruption in our sense of identity, continuity, and meaning.

Anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, and moral theologians throughout history have argued that the capacity to "re-member" our experience is fundamental to our humanity. It is time for nurses to do the same. In the postmodern world, a time when our individual, social and global structures of meaning appear fragmented and incoherent, a deepened awareness of the unifying power of remembering our stories seems to offer new resources for living. Otherwise, the poet may indeed be correct in saying that we may be remembered throughout history as the society that "had the experience but missed the meaning" (Eliot, 1941, p. 194).

Nursing Comportment as Hospitality

How can nursing promote the value of re-membering in our selves, our patients, and our world? I believe the answer lies in examining what Heidegger would call our "comportment" as a profession. I believe that nursing's mode of comportment is unique within health care. I call this unique mode of comportment hospitality.
provision of hospitality.

Nursing comportment is hospitality. It is our way of encountering others, of Being-with. All comportment is a standing open towards that which-is-open, towards beings. Hospitality is nursing's standing open towards patients, families, and colleagues. Hospitality as comportment is the "how" of nursing, and according to Heidegger, comportment (how), not intentionality (why), is what matters.

Hospitality is the translation into action of our understanding that we are in and a constantly potential to be in the world with others, or body the world with others. It is an active extension of our a priori familiarity with those others we encounter and the Being of those others:

The world is always the one I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a with-world. Being-in is Being-with Others. Their Being-in themselves within-the-world is Dasein-with. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 155)

The corner of the "with-world" shared by nurses, patients and colleagues is the world of the hospital, hospice, nursing home, clinic, office, private home, and anywhere nurses encounter those they serve. Later I will show how hospitality concerns itself with the creation of this with-world into a "free and friendly space" for encountering others and listening to their remembered stories.

Hospitality as comportment, and the transformation of the "with-world" into a free and friendly space, promotes discourse. Discourse, as previously discussed in this chapter, is the "activity of 'lighting up' aspects of the world for other Dasein, and of making explicit a common understanding of that world" (Richardson, 1986, p. 37). This is a reciprocity between the Being of the nurse and the Being of patients, colleagues and other, which arises from the way in which an understanding of one
always involves and understanding of the other.

Dasein-with is already manifest in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding. In discourse Being-with becomes "explicitly" shared; that is to say, it is already, but it is unshared as something that has not been taken hold of and appropriated. (Heidegger, 1962, p. 205)

It is through the sharing of remembered narratives and reminiscences that the nurse and the patient share their understanding of Being and Being-with Others in-the-world.

Unfortunately, the concept of hospitality has lost much of its original depth and evocative potential in our culture. It conjures up images of hosting teas, or baby showers, or Tupperware parties, replete with superficial conversation, and all within an atmosphere of coziness. Hospitality has become a function of the social life of persons. It has been replaced among the helping professions by theories of interpersonal relationships and therapeutic communication techniques. This has taken helpers out of the ready-to-hand and into the present-at-hand mode of engagement.

The concept of hospitality should not be limited to its literal sense of receiving a guest into one’s home. An etymological word study, in the tradition of Heidegger, reveals that hospitality is more than an important virtue. Instead, it is a fundamental attitude toward our fellow human being in which guest and host can bring new or deeper meaning to each other.

The Indo-European word ghostis denoted "stranger." From it were descended the Germanic gastiz (the source of the English word "guest"), the Greek xenos (meaning guest, stranger), and the Latin hostis (meaning stranger, enemy). This original meaning is retained in the derived adjective, hostile.

But Latin had another noun, hospes, meaning "host," which was probably
derived from hostis. Its stem form, hospit-, passed into Old French as hoste (whose modern French descendant, hote, means both "host" and "guest"), and as hospital (from medieval Latin hospitale, a noun use of the adjective hospitalis meaning "of a guest." English borrowed this in the thirteenth century as the nouns "host" and "hospital."

Originally, hospices, hostels, hotels, and hospitals were simply places at which guests were received. In English, "hospital" began its semantic shift in the fifteenth century, being used to refer to a "home for the elderly or infirm, or for down-and-outs." The modern sense as a "place where the sick are treated" first appeared in the sixteenth century. The original notion of receiving guests survives in "hospitality" and "hospitable." Hospice come via French from Latin hospitium meaning "hospitality," another derivative of hospes.

In addition to the derivatives of the Latin hospes, the Greek word for hospitality is philoxenia meaning "love of strangers" (philos, loving, and xenos, a stranger). However, the Greek word xenos denotes not only the meaning "stranger," but one or other of the parties bound by ties of hospitality, i.e., the guest and the host. The other Greek word for host is pandocheus which means "one who receives all" (pas, all, and dechomai, to receive).

The German word for hospitality is Gastfreundschaft which means "friendship for the guest." The Dutch word for hospitality is gastvrijheid which means "the freedom of the guest.""}

Hospitality, therefore, means primarily providing a free and non-hostile space
where the stranger can enter and become a guest instead of an enemy (Nouwen, 1975, p. 51). The nature of the host/guest relationship is such that the host will pay attention to the guest. Hospitality is a fundamental attitude toward our fellow Dasein in which both host and guest can reveal their understanding of the world and themselves to one another. Hospitality is the way we comport ourselves with those we encounter.

Creating a free and friendly space refers both to physical and psychological space. A free and friendly physical space is a place where the guest feels welcomed and senses that his or her physical needs for safety, comfort, nourishment, cleanliness, and rest are attended to with interest and regard by the host. A free and friendly psychological space is a place where we can reach out to our fellow human beings in the ready-to-hand mode of engagement and invite them into remembering, discourse, and a new relational understanding. Hospitality is not about the task of changing people, but it is about offering people space where new possibilities can be ventured or new understanding can be achieved. It is not about trapping people in a corner where there are no alternatives left, but it is about opening a wide spectrum of possibilities for the choosing:

The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality if not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own. (Nouwen, 1975, p. 51)

Nurses are simultaneously occupied with the demands of modern-day nursing
care, and preoccupied with worries, concerns, unresolved questions, and open-ended situations of both a personal and professional nature. Occupation and preoccupation is more likely to result in hostility than hospitality. Creating space is far from easy in our occupied and preoccupied profession. Technology and theory-based thinking has depersonalized the interpersonal aspects of nursing to a high degree. Increasing demands often force the nurse to keep some emotional distance to prevent "overinvolvement" with his or her patients. A move away from discourse toward idle talk, and from remembering to dis-membering, is also inevitable.

Even in these challenging circumstances, however, the nurse must strive to provide hospitality by which interpersonal estrangement, dis-membering, or violence can be prevented. He or she must strive to create the space in which nurse and patient can reach out to each other as fellow travelers through life, or Dasein with whom we share Being-in-the-world. He or she must also seek to offer hospitality to other nurses and other helpers with whom he or she works. To choose hospitality over hostility is to choose relationship over estrangement. Hospitality is the movement away from hostility and dis-memberment towards the creation of space whereby physical and psychological healing can take place within the nurse-patient relationship.

Therefore, nursing needs to claim the comportment of hospitality. Nursing needs to be about the business once again of creating a free and friendly space where those who suffer or whose meaning is oppressive can share their remembered story with someone who can listen and observe with authentic attention, i.e., with the ready-to-hand mode of engagement. "In this way, as these "acts of meaning" (Bruner, 1990)
edge into the larger world, the self is strengthened and the folklore of the group is emboldened" (Saleebey, 1994, p. 359).

Nursing comportment as hospitality is acting to create a free and friendly space where remembering and discourse are fostered. It is the willingness to stand open to others and to know the other fully. It is the Being-with our patients and our colleagues. It is more than merely the technique of listening. It requires the full and real presence of the nurse to Be-with the other. Nurses are "hosts" who patiently and carefully listen to the remembered stories of their "guests." Nurses receive the stories of their guests with humility and compassion and without judgment or condemnation. Patients and colleagues are fellow Daseins who rediscover their selves in the re-telling of their stories to the nurse who offers them a free and friendly place to Be, whether that be a hospital, a hospice, a nursing home, an office, or a private home. In the remembering and the telling of stories, the patient or other befriends not only the host, the nurse, but also the past. And in the befriending of the past, he or she befriends the present and the future. The gift of the patient or other to the nurse is the recognition of how that person's remembered story is the human story, and how it connects with the nurse's story.

Nursing comportment as hospitality is the humble but also demanding activity of creating and offering a free and friendly space where patients and others can remember and reflect upon the meaning of their human dilemmas without fear or embarrassment. In so doing, patients and others can find the confidence to articulate those meanings, those possible endings or narratives, that elevate spirit and promote
understanding. Nursing comportment is indeed one of the highest forms of hospitality. The creation of a free and friendly space offers safe boundaries within which both the patient and the nurse may search for new meanings in their remembering.

In addition to asking questions about how to create a free and friendly physical space for the guest-patient, the nurse must also ask, "How can I create or discover enough inner space where the stories of my patients can be received?" The cultivation of such an inner space is not only the personal responsibility of each nurse, but also the responsibility of the profession. Nurses need to be encouraged and taught to offer free and friendly space to one another and to other professional colleagues, as well as to patients. Hospitality as comportment is an attitude, a mode of Being, that must transcend the nurse-patient relationship and be cultivated at the institutional and professional levels. This does not mean marketing hospitality as a commodity. Physical space does not become free and friendly merely as the result of advertising it as so. Psychological space cannot be created on demand from hospital administrators trying to keep the census high. Hospitality as the comportment of nursing is the provision of free and friendly space, both physical and psychological, by nurses for patients, families, and colleagues.

Hospital administrators, housekeepers, dieticians, and others may all be concerned to some degree about the creation of a free and friendly physical space. Physicians, social workers, psychologists, and others may all be concerned to some degree about the creation of a free and friendly psychological space. But it is nursing alone among the health care professions and support services that sees its
comportment, its mode of encountering others, as the creation of a free and friendly physical and psychological space in which remembering, healing, and meaning-making can take place. The comportment of nursing, nursing's way of Being-with Others, is hospitality.

Specifically with regards to this study, hospitality can assist adult rememberers of family breakdown to remember and make meaning of their stories. Providing a free and friendly space and a caring listener in the person of the nurse invites adult rememberers to remember who, what, and where they have been, are now, and may go. Hospitality is essential for all rememberers, but perhaps most of all for those rememberers with an "impoverishment of narrative resources" (Bruner, 1990, p. 96). These are the persons who rely on event memory rather than autobiographical memory. They are not able to tell coherent stories or their stories are few or not compelling because they lack symbolic power or subjunctive intensity (Saleebey, 1994, p. 356). Many adult rememberers of family breakdown fit this description.

Hospitality may be extended beyond the nurse-patient dyad. Every
opportunity for sharing remembered stories is of potential benefit to adult rememberers of family breakdown. This includes groups comprised of other rememberers. Comfort levels may be enhanced by groups whose membership includes other adult rememberers of family breakdown, but remembering groups need not be limited to members who are "alike" to foster narrative capabilities.

Many things get in the way of storytelling. Garrison Keillor addresses this in the following excerpt:

Authoritarian fathers get in the way of storytelling, and so do overanxious mother and satirical siblings, but mostly what defeats us is noise and busyness. The people around us deserve our best attention sometimes, and then we have to shut the world out. Turn off the television. Turn off the radio. Don't read the newspaper. Live a smaller life. . . . [The] media tend to remove us from direct experience. When we are fascinated by television and accept it as reality, the tangible and visible world around us pales. . . . We have more information than any other people in history, and we need a little less of it and a little more experience. We need to see London and also Nebraska. The terrible danger of media is their power to diminish our pleasure in the ordinary day, the richness and the goodness of a simple landscape and ordinary small talk and stories. (Keillor, 1994, p. 20)

Hospitality enables nurses to give adult rememberers of family breakdown and other clients their best attention. In so doing, hospitality becomes a way to promote storytelling. We all need our stories in order to survive. We need to tell them in order to remember them. Many adult children of family breakdown have had little or no opportunity to tell their stories. Many of them, therefore, do not remember their stories. Many of them are afraid to remember their stories because they are painful. And yet untold stories only haunt us and prolong the inevitability of remembering the pain. Adult rememberers of family breakdown need to remember in order to do more than merely survive, as event memory has enabled them to do.
need to tell their stories to make the past understandable, the present meaningful, and the future possible.

Memories of events is not enough. Neither is possessing knowledge or even wisdom. Edwards (1994, p. 23) reminds us of two poets who challenge us to remember. Edna St. Vincent Millay, in her sonnets, spoke of it: "Wisdom enough to leech us out of our ill/Is daily spun; but there exists no loom to weave it into fabric."

And in Russian, another poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, told us what must be done:
"There can be no rebuilding/without rebuilding memory,/and without rebuilding monuments/to those who build us." Nurses, by means of hospitality, can enable adult rememberers of family breakdown to rebuild memory. Hospitality is a loom upon which adult rememberers of family breakdown can weave their remembered experiences into the fabric of story to clothe them for the future.
CONSENT FORM

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGNED TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ADULT CHILD OF A DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY AS TOLD BY YOUR LIFE STORY. PARTICIPATION IS COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY.

What does the study consist of?

The study consists of audiotaped interviews, lasting about 90 minutes. Interviews will be conducted by the principal investigator. During the interview, you will be asked to share your life story. It is possible that you might be contacted by telephone following the interview for clarification or review of the interview text. If so, you will receive no more than two calls. If you would prefer not to be recontacted, please indicate by placing your initials here: _____________.

Are there any risks?

It is possible that through discussion and recollection of your story, sad memories could occur. You may stop the discussion or change the topic at any time.

Are there any benefits?

It is possible that you could experience some degree of improvement in your well-being as a result of telling your story.

When and where will the interview be done?

The interview will be scheduled at a time and place that are convenient for you.

Who will have access to the interview material?

The audiotaped interviews will be transcribed by the principal investigator or trained transcriptionist, and then destroyed. Any identifying information from the interview will be removed or altered on the written transcript. The transcripts may be shared...
with the study committee consisting of the principal investigator and three faculty members familiar with interpretive research. Transcripts will be identified anonymously with numbered codes. No individual identities will be detectable in any reports or publications resulting from the study.

**What if you change your mind?**

You are free to withdraw from this study or to refuse permission for the use of your audiotaped interview or transcript at any time.

**YOU MAY TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS YOU WISH TO THINK THIS OVER BEFORE YOU SIGN THIS FORM, PLEASE ASK ANY QUESTIONS ON ASPECTS OF THE STUDY THAT ARE UNCLEAR. **I, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, WILL ATTEMPT TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE PRIOR TO, DURING, OR FOLLOWING THE STUDY.

**AUTHORIZATION:** I, ____________________________, have read this form and have decided to participate in the research project described above. My signature indicates that I give permission for information I provide in the interview or the transcript to be used for publication in research articles, books, and/or teaching materials; as well as for presentation at research symposia. Additionally, my signature indicates that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Telephone Number ____________________________

If you need further information, please contact the principal investigator:

Janet Nelson Wray, RN, Doctoral Student
Loyola University School of Nursing
Damon Hall, 5th Floor
6525 Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626
(708) 677-7458
APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date

Dear Mr./Ms. XXXXX,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study of what it means to be an adult child of a dysfunctional family.

This letter is a written confirmation of our appointment to tape-record your interview on (Month, Day, Year) at (Place). If you find that you have to cancel our appointment, please notify me at (708) 677-7458 (answering machine after 4 rings).

To help you prepare for the interview, I am sending you a copy of the question I am going to ask you at the beginning of the interview. There are no other specific questions which will be asked after that; subsequent questions will depend on what you tell me, and what I need to ask to clarify what you tell me so that I understand what being an adult child of a dysfunctional family means to you. Now here is the question I hope you will use to prepare yourself for our interview:

Please be prepared to tell me your life story. This may include times you will never forget because they remind you of what it means to be an adult child of a dysfunctional family, or what I prefer to call an adult rememberer of family breakdown. Include as much detail as possible and stay in the telling of your life story, rather than stepping back and analyzing it or describing it from afar. After you have given the details of your story, please describe why this story cannot be forgotten and what it means to you. Your story can be from the distant past or the recent past, sad or happy, a story of breakdown when nothing went right or one when everything went right. If possible, please use as few names and references to specific places as possible. If you agree, I may re-contact you for clarifying information after I have read your story, if that is necessary. Or, if you agree, I may re-contact you to have you read an interpretation of your story to see if you agree or can help clarify the meanings of your remembered experience. With your help, the narratives of adult rememberers of family breakdown can reveal the unique and common meanings of the experience of remembering family breakdown. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am most appreciative of your participation in this study. If any of your friends or acquaintances have remembered stories of family
breakdown, please share this letter with them and encourage them to contact me at 708-677-7458. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Janet Nelson Wray, RN, MN, CS, CARN
Doctoral Student
Loyola University School of Nursing
REFERENCES


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VITA

The author, Janet Nelson Wray, was born in Detroit, Michigan.

In September, 1976, Ms. Wray entered the University of Florida, Gainesville, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Science in nursing in June, 1979. In 1979, while attending the University of Florida, she was elected to the Alpha Theta chapter of Sigma Theta Tau and to Phi Kappa Phi.

In September, 1980, Ms. Wray was granted a traineeship in substance abuse nursing at the University of Washington, enabling her to complete the Master of Nursing in 1982. Her Master’s thesis was entitled Developmental aspects of young adult drinking and drug-taking patterns.

In January, 1984, Ms. Wray was certified as a Chemical Dependency Counselor III by the Chemical Dependency Certification Board, State of Washington. In January, 1985, she was certified by the American Nurses’ Association as an adult Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist. In April, 1990, she received recognition as a Certified Addictions Registered Nurse from the National Nurses’ Society on Addiction.

She continues to maintain these certifications as well as membership in the American Nurses Association, the Illinois Nurses Association, the Kappa Nu chapter of Sigma Theta Tau, the National Nurses’s Society on Addiction, the Midwest Nursing Research Society, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, the Society for

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In September, 1989, Ms. Wray began her doctoral studies at the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, Loyola University Chicago. She was granted a Research Assistantship from the Graduate School of Nursing, enabling her to complete the Doctor of Philosophy in nursing in January, 1995.

Ms. Wray is an Assistant Professor at North Park College and Theological Seminary, Chicago where she has been on faculty in the Division of Nursing since 1986. She is the Coordinator of the RN to BSN Completion Program, a position she has held since 1990. She teaches in the Basic, Completion, and Graduate Nursing Programs, and she is a member of numerous division and college committees.

Ms. Wray is married to The Rev. J. Thomas Wray, an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Chicago. The Wrays have a daughter, Kathleen. They reside in Skokie, Illinois.
The dissertation submitted by Janet Nelson Wray has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

Nov. 30, 1994

Date

Donna J. Rankin, D.N.Sc.
Director's Signature