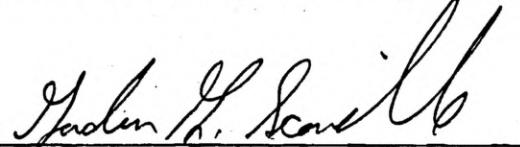


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EXISTENTIALISM AND A UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL:

INTERVIEWS WITH VICTORIA

by

GORDON GARY SCOVILLE

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

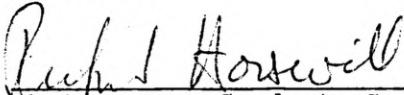
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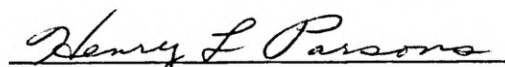
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ABSTRACT

The literature of existentialism stresses the theme of unique individuality. This is done because existentialists fear that modern culture reflects the loss of individuality in prevailing tendencies toward conformity to collectivist manners of behavior. The intent of this paper is to respond to this concern of existentialism by using an interview format to focus on the experience of a unique individual.

Søren Kierkegaard, the "father" of modern existentialism, held that in his time (the nineteenth century) the qualitative uniqueness of the individual was being lost in quantitative abstractions such as the "crowd". Miguel de Unamuno, a twentieth century existentialist, has carried this line of thought forward. In order to grasp the nature of the unique individual he developed the notion of the "man of flesh and bone". For Unamuno this expresses his concern that we should orient our thinking in the direction of the concrete individual. Many other writers have also developed their thought in the direction of concern for the preservation of individual uniqueness.

As a result of respectful consideration of the theme of unique individuality, this writer seeks to develop his own line of thought on the matter. He refers to this development of his as "the simplicity of the study": the provision of the opportunity for a unique individual - Victoria - to talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life - as these issues are occasioned by ten central concepts from existential psychology. Specific interviewing methods are used as a means to elicit this simplicity.

Reveal thy simple self,
Embrace thy original nature,...

--Laotse

You are still. She says for you: I am.
And comes in meaning thousandfold,
at last comes over everyone.

--Rainer Maria Rilke

If the existential terminology appears poetic,
it may well be due to the poetic nature of
man's being; the vagueness may be due to the
vagueness of the subject matter.

--Edward A. Dreyfus

Chapter I

The Argument of the Study Based on the Literature of Existentialism

A. Introduction

Beck (1971) explains one of the most frequent charges made against existentialism: "It [existential thought] would be criticized by many as 'mere poetry,' 'not rigorous in defining terms,' 'unclear,' or 'difficult to use'" (p. 48). Hall and Lindzey (1970) note that for the reader who is scientifically inclined, existential methods of communication will be difficult to grasp; primarily because, "one notes...the use of a very evocative, even poetic vocabulary. Such imagery seems to be a far cry from the sober...vocabulary employed in scientific exposition" (p. 561). Binswanger (1958 b), for example, in his classic Case of Ellen West, frequently resorts to metaphorical language in the attempt to understand Ellen's internal world. He refers to the "constriction and emptying" of Ellen's world, her tendency to make of that world a "swamp or earth" with "gray glooming and black darkening" (p. 310). The "evocative" manner in which Existentialism communicates is, however, particularly well suited for its purpose; which is the exploration of the interior life of the existing human being. Beck warns us of the difficulty related to such an exploration when he maintains that "the human condition does not admit to easy description or discussion" (1971, p. 48). Given this difficulty the existentialist seeks for alternative ways of communicating; and this often entails the use of poetry, metaphor, symbolism, etc.

The most striking example of the existential attempt to communicate the "human condition" is the "method of indirect communication." First used in existential thought by Søren Kierkegaard, this method is employed by the "subjective thinker;" whom Broudy (1961) has defined as the "one who is interested in his own thinking and exists in it" (p. 226). The subjective thinker, in her attempt to analyze human existence finds herself immediately caught up in her own human existence; and

thus is unable to remain detached or "objective" in her investigations. Consequently Broudy notes that the direct or "unambiguous" concepts of objective inquiry are less well equipped to deal with human existence; which cannot be communicated unambiguously (p. 228). In the face of this situation Kierkegaard resorted to a variety of indirect communicative devices: irony, dialectic, anecdote, homely, literary discourse, the use of pseudonyms, etc. (Broudy, p. 231).

If one's purpose is simply to communicate the "hard facts," then objective detachment with its use of direct unambiguous concepts is appropriate. However, if one shares the concern of the existentialist for the interior life of each human's existence, then indirect communication must be utilized. Hallie (1968) has succinctly stated both the nature and purpose of the method of indirect communication:

If your philosophy involves regimenting men so that they speak the same words and hold precisely the same beliefs, direct communication might work. But if your philosophy involves awakening people to their own 'inwardness', their own 'subjective thought', then the laying down of methods and proved, precise conclusions defeats your purpose. What a philosopher of subjectivity needs is indirect communication, not a method and a system that demand that we march in lock-step with the Master. It needs metaphors, ironies, laughs, and it needs irritating paradoxes to arouse men. A philosopher of indirect communication must only suggest, must merely occasion the thoughts and feelings of his reader; he must make his reader teach himself, in his own 'inwardness' (p. 24).

Up to this point you, the reader, should have grasped the notion that existentialism is unique in its communication. It requires a special vocabulary and special methods. This study will share in this communicative uniqueness. For example, throughout the study I will make repeated use of the first person pronoun "I" when referring to myself as the study's author. This way of communicating is in line with a collection of essays on the meaning of existentialism edited by Shinn (1968). In reference to this collection of writings Shinn makes it clear that, "Each of us wrote unabashedly in the first person singu-

lar, unafraid of the pronoun "I." Each of us is opinionated, and we made no effort to hide our opinions... There is something hostile to existentialism in suppressing the idiosyncratic person who is doing the writing" (pp. 20-21). More importantly, when I speak in the first person I'm avoiding the charge that Kierkegaard (1962 a) leveled against authorship in "the present age." "An author is often merely an X, even when his name is signed, something quite impersonal, which addresses itself unseen and unknown, living a life as hidden, as anonymous..." (p. 45).

Also as you the reader proceed through the study you'll encounter a vocabulary containing words common to the language of existentialism, but uncommon in other areas of discourse. Concepts such as being, non-being, being-in-the-world and transcendence are crucial to my intent in the study. You may find these words a stumbling block to your understanding. Dreyfus (1964) has found this to be the case in dealing with the language of the existential psychotherapists. He states that, "Much of this difficulty lies in the poetic-sounding, often vague and ambiguous terminology expounded by these therapists." Even given this difficulty, however, Dreyfus still maintains that "the existential approach has a great deal to offer once the semantic hurdle has been leaped" (p. 114). In any case, I have carefully defined the central existential concepts that I'll be using. Still, however, for those of you who are unfamiliar with this kind of language, they may retain an element of strangeness in their expression. Therefore, as you read this study, I invite you to assume a posture of receptivity. Let that which may feel strange strike you in all its strangeness. For underneath such a feeling, and stimulating it, will be the essential uniqueness of this project of thought.

I would like to spend a few moments now setting the stage for the remaining content of the study. From outside the ranks of existentialism per se some important voices have called attention to the potential

contributions of the existential emphasis in psychology and counseling. Maslow (1968) finds it "extremely important for psychologists that the existentialists may supply psychology with the underlying philosophy which it now lacks" (p. 10). Polster and Polster (1973) have drawn attention to the awakening in existentialism of concern for the simple, more basic, issues of human life. They note that, "It (existentialism) has made us more respectful of the importance of the common, daily issues in living: complications of birth, death, absurdity, confusion, impotence, responsibility, etc.," (p. 316). Other commentators have noted other important contributions of existentialism. Lyons (1961) considers a vital gift of existentialism "to clinical theory" to be "a description based upon a view of culture." This means that existentialism can provide insight into the pathology of a whole culture and how it bears on individual pathology (pp. 243-244). Brammer (1971) views existentialism as providing a methodological promise that "counterbalances" in its emphasis, "the rationalism, reductionism, materialism, empiricism and dualism of eighteenth and early nineteenth century thinking." This counterbalance provided a liberation for some American counselors who wanted to break with the dominance of psychoanalytic determinism on one hand and "trait-and-factor" empirical psychology on the other hand. For while under this two-fold domination American counselors were often led to conclude that, "Puzzling human questions revolving about choice, freedom, meaning, purpose, guilt, love, loneliness, tragedy, change and death were not considered proper questions for American psychology to consider." The "biological orientation" of psychoanalysis and the emphasis of empirical psychology "upon defining, measuring, predicting and adapting" tended to exclude consideration of these "puzzling questions" (p. 37). Finally, Braaten (1961) sees the "cultivation" of individuality as a "main theme" of existentialism; along with the concomitant concerns that are entailed in this: developing "what is unique and special" about ourselves (pp. 11-12).

For Dreyfus (1964) this development of unique individuality "is the basic premise underlying the existential point of view." He goes so far as to say that, "The goal of counseling is the elucidation of this client's uniqueness" (p. 114). This leads Dreyfus to the conclusion that for existentialism, "...man is not an object... nor is he an animal to be experimented upon; he is unique" (p. 117). Bigelow (1961) confirms this view held by Dreyfus. He maintains that "the existentialists in our time renew the protest against any pattern or force which would stifle the unique and spontaneous in individual life" (p. 174).

From this brief excursion into some of the literature we should be able to isolate at least five principle concerns of existentialism: the provision of a philosophical foundation for counseling; insight into cultural conditions that bear on individual personality; focus on the unique individuality of each existing human person; concern for the simplicity (simplicity here meaning to take note of what is basic, i.e. death, etc.) of certain issues that impinge on the life of the individual; and finally, the revolt of existentialism against methodological premises that endanger human freedom by being overly deterministic or threaten human dignity by being overly reductionistic (where the former methodological premise makes me an object having no control over forces that influence me, the latter excludes my interiority or subjectivity through persistent quantification, measurement, etc.).

Note these five concerns. In this study I've sought to develop each of them. My dependence on existential philosophy throughout the study will be evident. For example, many of the concepts from existential psychology, that I've selected as a foundation for the interviews with Victoria, often reflect the enormous influence of Heidegger. This demonstrates my concern that psychology and counseling need to tap existentialism's potential as a philosophical base for our conduct in counseling and therapy. Included in the "rationale for the study" are some reflections on an aspect of culture that bears on the counseling

context, as well as an exposition of the themes of individuality and simplicity. The actual interviews with Victoria in Chapter 3 are, in part, an attempt to carry out methodological premises considered in Chapter 2. These five thematic concerns are, of course, intertwined throughout the study. Their mutual influence on one another will be evident.

Undergirding the entire study is the theme of simplicity. That is, my entire purpose in this project of thought has at its heart the simplest of intentions - the provision of the opportunity for a unique individual to talk about how she's lived her life in the face of basic human issues: death, freedom, guilt, anxiety, meaning, etc. The interviews provided Victoria with this opportunity. Ten concepts from existential psychology did nothing more than provide the occasion for this opportunity. One might call this what Allport (1965) has referred to as "morphogenic knowledge"; that is, "knowledge concerning the way in which a given life takes on its unique shape and form" (p. 159).

As you read the study you will notice the emergence of other elements. But the five interconnected concerns - with special emphasis on the concern for simplicity - mentioned in this introduction form the principle foundation for the entire project.

This overview had as its purpose the provision of two things: one, a brief explanation of the way an existentialist communicates; and two, a brief insight into the constitutive factors of this study.

B. Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to report, without analysis, a unique individual's experience of herself in relation to ten central concepts of existential psychology.

C. Rationale for the Study

Introduction

Facilitating Decision

It is my conviction that in the encounter with another person we are given the opportunity to encounter ourselves. The individuality of the other confronts us with our own individuality. Blackam (1952) says of Jaspers' philosophy of communication: "... my uniqueness is elicited by and requires the uniqueness of others, and is otherwise unthinkable" (p. 56). One of the classic expressions of this position is given in Buber's (1947) emphasis on "genuine dialogue." Here I understand that the other person is "absolutely not" myself, and because this is so, I can engage in a "mutual relation" with she who is different from myself; with the consequence of this being an enhancement of my self-understanding as a by-product of the mutual relation (pp. 19-20).

The interviews with Victoria, then, are an attempt to set before the reader a unique individual person who is "absolutely not" the reader. The interviews are an invitation to self-discovery through an encounter with the unique individuality that is Victoria. You the reader are unique. Victoria is unique. Thus a process of dialogue may begin between you.

The interviews, then, are in no way intended to present Victoria as a model human being - only as a unique one. Her unique individuality should facilitate a decision in you the reader to discover or re-discover your own unique individuality. Encountering Victoria in the interviews can be (if you the reader so choose) the initiation of a process of self-discovery.

This process of individual self-discovery is unquestionably important in counseling. Farwell (1962) maintains that, "The counselor

is, finally, a person of values, feelings and self-knowledge. Know thyself is an admonition of long standing" (p. 31). Encountering Victoria holds out the possibility of beginning the process of fulfilling this "admonition." Encounter, then, is also a key word here. Dreyfus (1962) says of encounter that it is a genuine "meeting of two beings, each trying to understand the other as an individual entity" (p. 130). You the reader will have the opportunity to meet Victoria.

The Danger of the "Mass"

The existentialists fear that contemporary culture is succumbing to the danger of collectivization, with its concomitant absorption of the individual into impersonal collective life. Consequently, the frequently express scorn for what they often refer to as the "mass," the "crowd," the "public," etc. I will leave the more precise definition of these words for the next section. For now it is enough to take a brief glance at some classic literature of the last one hundred years or so. In this literature, which originates in both existential and nonexistential circles, we see the development of concern over the danger of the "mass" (see Hubben, 1952, p. 46).

Beginning with Stirner's, The Ego and His Own (1845), there arose a concern to validate the importance of "The Unique One." In this concept Stirner gave the eloquent cry that, "I am owner of my might, and I am so when I know myself as unique" (p. 386). In Dostoyevsky's, The Brothers Karamzov (1957), the story of "The Grand Inquisitor" is presented, in part, to make the point that people in mass desire only bread and fear the freedom of individual existence. Later in the nineteenth century Nietzsche (1961) wrote Thus Spoke Zarathustra, in which he propounded the virtues of the "higher Man," whom he counseled to understand that, "In the market-place no one believes in Higher Men. And if you want to speak there, very well, do so! But the mob blink and say: 'We are all equal'" (p. 297). Just prior to the twentieth

century, LeBon (1896) wrote his classic "study of the popular mind," The Crowd. In it he declared, "Crowds are only powerful for destruction. Their rule is always tantamount to a barbarian phase" (p. 18). With the advent of the twentieth century came Spengler's (1928) two volume, The Decline of the West. In it he reflects, among many other things, a frequent scorn for the masses. In this century some existentialists began to speak pointedly to this issue of the danger of the mass. Jaspers (1951) drew attention to this danger in Man in the Modern Age. Here he comments that, "... the basic problem of our time is whether an independent human being in his self-comprehended destiny is still possible" (p. 203). Ortega y Gasset (1932), in The Revolt of the Masses, expresses the grave conviction that, "The mass crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent, individual, qualified and select" (pp. 18-19). Fairly recent literature in the social sciences tend, in part, to confirm some of these older fears. Riesman's (1961), The Lonely Crowd, and Whyte's (1956) The Organization Man, both point out threats to the individuality of the contemporary American. Hoffer (1951), in The True Believer, demonstrates how the individual will sacrifice independent thought and judgement in favor of obedience to the "mass movement." And, finally, there is Fromm's (1941), Escape from Freedom, in which he argues that "in our era" the individual has come to be governed by "the anonymous authority of common sense and public opinion as instruments of conformity" (p. 253).

From this brief glance at the literature we can detect a concern that has been growing for decades - the potential loss of the individual in the "anonymous public" or "impersonal mass." As Killinger (1961) has stated it: "The idea of a society without individuals is now regarded as a threatening possibility and not as a mere projection of the imagination" (p. 305).

This cultural wide threat is also a threat that impinges on the

counseling context. If the counselor is not careful, she may inadvertently end up supporting this prevailing cultural trend toward loss of individuality by encouraging conformity in her client. May (1969 a) notes this potential occurrence: "There is a real possibility that we (psychotherapists) may be helping the individual adjust and be happy at the price of loss of his being" (p. 4). Furthermore, I think we can speculate that much of contemporary counseling consists of dealing with people who have either lost or are losing their sense of their own unique individuality. Killinger's earlier remarks would certainly not contradict such a speculation.

This study, then, has found another reason for its undertaking. If individuality is in danger in our culture, what could be more appropriate than the interviews in this project; which themselves have it as a principle purpose to focus on the unique individual, that is Victoria? But we've come to the point where the relationship between the individual and the mass must be further clarified; and who better to turn to than the man who wanted for his epitaph the simple inscription: "That Individual." I mean, of course, the "father" of existentialism: Søren Kierkegaard (1962 a, p. 129).

Kierkegaard's "Single Individual"

Kierkegaard (1962 a) sets the theme for this section of the study with his affirmation that, "'The individual' is the category through which... this age, all history, the human race as a whole, must pass" (p. 128). Kaufmann (1960) highlights this affirmation with the point that Kierkegaard's "central category was that of the individual - as a category that cracks all other categories" (pp. 199-200). I could spend time locating Kierkegaard's concern for the idea of the individual in his own tortured personal existence - from the enormous guilt he felt in relation to his father, his broken relationship with Regina Olsen, to his final anguish filled battle with the Danish Lutheran

Church. But this is not the place for biographical development. My principle concern is with what he means by individuality, what he means when he stresses the notion of the "single individual." For those of you who are interested in Kierkegaard's biographical background, I would recommend Lowrie's (1942) incisive A Short Life of Kierkegaard.

Following the analysis of Hamilton (1969) we can bring Kierkegaard's understanding of individuality into perspective. For Kierkegaard our time is characterized by "the triumph of quantitative thinking over qualitative. The difference between these two types he tried to nail down with his contrasting concepts of 'the single individual' and 'the crowd' ('the multitude,' 'the masses,' 'the public')" (p. 67). Kierkegaard believed that this "triumph of quantitative thinking" reflected itself in the advent of equating what is numerically biggest, strongest and oldest with what is truthfully best. Consequently he noted several categories that he felt were characteristic of quantitative thinking. One of them for example, is "the generation - a collective that found its identity (such as it was) in the fact that it had got 'beyond' the previous generation and so, by quantitative reasoning, must be superior to it" (Hamilton, 1969, pp. 68-69). At the heart of this quantitative thinking process, for Kierkegaard, is a giving ever of the concrete individual to numerical abstractions. We no longer prize the single individual because we have convinced ourselves that truth is embodied in numbers, in vast collectivities which he termed "the crowd," "the mass," or "the public." What is most has become what is best. In the idea of "the generation" what is oldest has become what is "superior." But, for Kierkegaard, the numerical size or age of something does not make it true: "The crowd, Kierkegaard insisted, is untruth. He said so because the crowd represents the loss of the individual, the human, and the embracing of abstractions instead of actual existence" (Hamilton, 1969, p. 71). This is the "embracing" of numbers of people instead of

concrete individual persons. In Kierkegaard's (1962 a) own words the "'crowd' stands for number, the numerical, a number of nobelmen, millionaires, high dignitaries, etc. - as soon as the numerical is involved it is 'crowd', 'the crowd.'" And so Kierkegaard concludes that, "A crowd - not this crowd or that, the crowd now living or the crowd long deceased, a crowd of humble people or of superior people, of rich or of poor, etc. - a crowd in its very concept is the untruth..." (p. 112).

When quantitative thinking, with its concern for the numerical abstraction of people in mass, becomes our criterion for truth we notice another concomitant development - "the levelling process ." Kierkegaard (1962 b) describes this process as follows:

The levelling process is not the action of an individual but the work of reflection in the hands of an abstract power. It is therefore, possible to calculate the law governing it in the same way that one calculates the diagonal in a parallelogram of forces. The individual who levels down is himself engulfed in the process and soon, and while he seems to know selfishly what he is doing one can only say of people en masse that they know not what they do; for just as collective enthusiasm produces a surplus which does not come from the individual, there is also a surplus in this case (p. 54).

In order to more fully grasp this notion of levelling, we should note Hamilton's comment about it to the effect that, "The dialectic of the present age... tended toward equality..." (1969, p. 70). The problem, then, is that the uniqueness of each individual is given up in favor of sameness or in favor of being "just like everybody else." In an essay on Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Lund (1960) states that, "The mass of mankind prefers to drift down the main stream of life, ignoring the lonely-looking branches which break away on either side. ...Mankind preferred to stick together; there was comfort in numbers" (pp. 15-16). Conformity, the levelling out of everyone into sameness, has become the code word of our time---Kierkegaard's time and ours, since as

Hubben (1952) states in his commentary on Kierkegaard and three other existentialists: "All four have contributed to shaping the modern mind and have exerted an influence upon Western thinking that is only now beginning to be recognized in its full dimensions" (p. 5).

A chorus of voices, commenting on Kierkegaard, have expounded upon his insight into the danger of conformity. Fleissner (1955) says of Kierkegaard: "He saw in his day alarming signs of the rapid deterioration of individual thinking, the shallowing of personal feeling, the increasing pull of conformity. Being exceptionally sensitive, he felt these signs as catastrophic." This "pull of conformity" reflects, for Fleissner, the "crisis of individualism which has become the greatest threat and challenge of our own time" (p. 18). Richter (1962) notes that for Kierkegaard, "Our age suffers from crises of collectivization. In family life, in public and social life, and in the life of the churches, the relation of the individual has become problematic" (p. 55). Gardiner (1968) says of Kierkegaard's age that its "people no longer possessed, or wished to possess, a clear conception of their identity as individuals, tending instead to immerse themselves in the comforting anonymity provided by social groups or movements" (p. 213).

Consequences of the levelling process, with its drive toward conformity, are severe. Hamilton states that, "such a process ignored... the recognition of infinite responsibility in the individual - because, having abolished the individual, it introduced the customs of the 'crowd' instead" (1969, p. 74). Kierkegaard (1962 a) himself says of the "crowd" that it "weakens his (the individual's) sense of responsibility by reducing it to a fraction" (p. 112). But even more severe is the reality that once life has been so levelled as to make each person "just like everybody else," all the vitality and excitement of unique individual existence evaporates into apathy; or what "is referred to as boredom, alienation, the death wish, wanting to get out of the rat

• race, hopelessness, meaninglessness, psychic trauma, depersonalization." Kierkegaard found all this - irresponsibility, apathy, etc. - to be the consequence of one thing: "...the victory of abstraction over the individual" (Hamilton, 1969, p. 73).

So there can be no doubt that for Kierkegaard, "The central psychological endeavor... may be summed up under the heading of the question he pursued relentlessly - how can you become an individual?" (May, 1958 a, pp. 24-25). Thus it is important to elucidate exactly what Kierkegaard means by "the single individual." His pseudonym, Johannes Climacus, gives us an indication of its meaning in the following statement:

Ethics concentrates upon the individual, and ethically it is the task of every individual to become an entire man; just as it is the ethical presupposition that every man is born in such a condition that he can become one. Whether anyone realizes this task or not makes no difference, the fact that the requirement is there is the important thing. And if ever so many blind and mediocre and cowardly individuals renounce their own selves in order to become something en masse with the help of the generative process, Ethics does not bargain with them (1941, p. 309).

From this long statement the principle theme that we should grasp is Kierkegaard's emphasis on the "task" of becoming an individual, of becoming "an entire man." Individuality, then, is the potential we are given to "become" ourselves - in our inward uniqueness. As Kierkegaard (1962 a) says in another place: "... it must therefore be in every man's power to become what he is, an individual" (p. 119). Individuality is a given potentiality waiting to be made actual - by the person herself. As Strickland (1966) has stated it: "To become oneself, then, refers to the recognition of one's own potentials and the acceptance of the challenge of realizing them... Thus, individuality is itself a potential. Yet it is a potential that every man possesses" (p. 472).

For Kierkegaard the actualization of individuality is not given

to us by any force or power outside of us. What we do with out potentiality is our responsibility. Individuality must be chosen. As Strickland again notes: "To Kierkegaard, individuality was an accomplishment rather than an endowment; an active rather than passive endeavor" (1966, p. 471). Kierkegaard's individual "is a living, active, self-making, self-choosing, self-renewing energy, genuinely set in time, process and becoming..." (Brown, 1955, p. 42). Moreover this "accomplishment" of individuality must be chosen and rechosen "repetitiously." That is, choosing individuality is not a once and for all achievement. Unless this choice is renewed each day individuality will be lost. Consequently, Kierkegaard emphasized the "category of repetition" as his way of stating that choices for the actualization of individuality need to be continually renewed. Stack (1976) declares that, "Repetition in existence, as a determined resoluteness on the part of an individual, is 'the seriousness of life,' a deepening of the sense of responsibility for one's choices" (pp. 27-28). To fail to make these "choices" is indeed serious, because such a failure represents the tragic loss of one's capacity to be oneself. The fact that one could be a single individual, in all its priceless uniqueness, would be thrown away.

The "triumph of quantitative thinking: of which I spoke earlier represents the gravest threat to our potential to be ourselves, Kierkegaard warns us that our time is one that reflects the ascendancy of the quantitative, collectivistic, numerical abstractions - the "crowd," the "mass," the "public," etc. And he pointedly declares that, "From becoming an individual no one, no one at all, is excluded, except he who excludes himself by becoming a crowd" (1962 a, p. 119). May (1958 a) casts a similar warning:

Every question is the 'question for the Single one,' that is, for the alive and self-aware individual; and if we don't start with the human being there, we shall have spawned, with all our technical prowess, a collectivism of robots who will end up not just in emptiness but in self-destructive despair" (p. 25).

If we were to counsel in light of a Kierkegaardian understanding of individuality, we would seek to generate anti-collectivist behavior in the client. This means the client would move away from living as a quantitative component of the larger mass, toward the qualitative actualization of her own unique individuality. Strickland (1966) has indicated that for the client this would mean behavior that moves away, "From direction-from-without to direction-from-within. Instead of asking others to make his decisions for him, the individual would begin to make his own..." Furthermore the client would move, "From knowledge to self-knowledge. ...Instead of seeking only objective knowledge, the client would also seek subjective wisdom" (p. 474). We know now that the task, for clients and counselors alike, is the process of becoming a single individual. The task is to become who I am. Kierkegaard has told us how important this is to do. Failure to do it is tragic.

Consequently this study makes it a principle concern to listen to Kierkegaard. As such it seeks to focus our attention on a unique individual - Victoria. Kierkegaard, in his category of the single individual, has oriented our attention away from the abstract to the concrete existing human being. The interviews with Victoria are an affirmation of this turn to the concrete.

Victoria is not to be equated with Kierkegaard's single individual, as if somehow she has arrived at the fully actualized state of "being who she is." Victoria is not to be thought of as a model individual after whom others can pattern themselves. I present her only as a unique person who can stimulate the emergence, or re-emergence, of the uniqueness of you, the reader - if you allow yourself to encounter what she says in the interviews.

Why venture the trouble of stimulating you, the reader's unique individuality? First, we can remember from this study's introduction that existentialists (see Hallie's remarks on page 2) seek to do pre-

cisely this. Kierkegaard employed "indirect communication" for this purpose. Anderson (1963) clearly states that Kierkegaard employed this communication in order "to stimulate the recipient into independent activity" (p. 7). Mackey (1972) declares that, "The success of an indirect communication depends upon its capacity to awaken in the recipient an awareness that the possibilities it objectifies - alluring, exciting, or frightening - are his own" (p. 99). Stack (1976) notes that, "Most of Kierkegaard's aesthetic works are concerned with promoting in others the desire to become a unique individual" (p. 29). Kierkegaard (1959) himself says quite simply: "I wish to make people aware, so that they do not squander and dissipate their lives" (p. 118).

Victoria's uniqueness, then, should be a catalyst for your "awareness." It should help to bring you face to face with the need to decide in regard to your own uniqueness, your own potential individuality, and the "possibilities" of actualizing it that lie before you. Encountering her in her differentness from you may serve as the prod to begin or renew the process of "becoming yourself." Victoria, who is not a model, is a catalyst - for our self-discovery if we encounter her uniqueness. Kierkegaard said of people that "they are blinded and do not really know what they are doing. Everything depends upon luring a decision from them" (1959, p. 119). Victoria "lures" us with her simplicity. And to that we now turn.

The Simplicity of the Study

Miguel de Unamuno (1921), the great Spanish existentialist, has long since presented us with a simple, beautifully written understanding of who we should be concerned with in our thinking. He writes of "the man of flesh and bone" as the person with whom we should be most concerned. He states at length:

Neither 'the human' nor 'humanity', neither the simple adjective nor the substantivized adjective, but the concrete substantive - man. The man of flesh and bone; the man who is born, suffers, and dies - above all, who dies; the man who eats and drinks and plays and sleeps and thinks and wills; the man who is seen and heard; the brother, the real brother (p. 1).

As with Kierkegaard, Unamuno is imploring us to turn away from the abstract so that we may embrace the concrete individual. We must renounce the general all embracing categories such as "the human" or "humanity" and instead focus on the particular "man of flesh and bone." He says, "The man we have to do with is the man of flesh and bone - I, you, reader of mine, the other man yonder, all of us who walk solidly on the earth" (1921, p. 1). Under the influence of existentialism, Friedman (1964 a) has noticed a similar development of concern in psychotherapy:

An increasingly important trend in psychotherapy suggests that the basic direction of movement should be toward the concrete person and his uniqueness, and not toward subsuming the patient's symptoms under theoretical categories or adjusting him to some socially derived view of the 'ideal' man (p. 106).

Victoria is one "who eats and drinks and plays and sleeps and thinks and wills ." She was born. She has suffered. She will die. In relation to all these things she is uniquely herself. She is not a general category of philosophic or psychological thought, nor is she the latest advance in the scientific movement toward the panacea. No, she is a person "of flesh and bone ." She is just her unique self. Yet it is with this uniqueness that Unamuno would have us be concerned - the uniqueness of a particular human being in relation to the simple, basic issues of human life: being born, living and dying.

Thus I may state the simple purpose of this entire study: the provision of the opportunity for Victoria to talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life. Nothing more. I have selected ten concepts from existential psychology as the occasion for

Victoria's opportunity to talk about, or give a self-report of, herself in relation to these issues. That is, I have based the interviews in Chapter 3 on these concepts (which will be presented and defined later in this chapter).

So we can see that existentialism - as we have explored it in Kierkegaard, Unamuno, etc. - has within itself a focus on the simple, basic existence of the concrete unique individual. As Unamuno states it: "To be a man is to be something concrete, unitary, and substantive..." (1921, p. 6). Consequently my study turns the attention of you the reader toward the concrete simplicity of Victoria's uniqueness in relation to ten concepts from existential psychology. The simple thrust of existentialism is met with the simplicity of Victoria's experience of herself.

Of course, I want to explain right here that by simplicity I do not mean stupidity. I mean only the straightforward, fundamental reality of Victoria's uniqueness in relation to the "flesh and bones" issues of life - as I've attempted to occasion these in the interviews based on ten concepts from existential psychology. Noting this distinction will help to avoid a confusion.

But we could well ask why we should be concerned with the simplicity of this study's presentation of Victoria's uniqueness. Harper (1972) makes a statement that indicates an answer. He says, "we know best that being that each of us is, and yet it is precisely what is most characteristic of us that we may not know at all" (p. 10). The point is that "we may not know at all" who we are. It may never have occurred to us to ever even ask, "Who am I?"

As Victoria deals with "flesh and bone" issues, occasioned by questions based on ten concepts from existential psychology, her uniqueness becomes evident. As we become aware of her uniqueness we cannot help but entertain the question, "What about my uniqueness?" It becomes much harder for us to take flight into comforting abstractions

in order to avoid facing ourselves. We are confronted with the possibility of actualizing our own individuality. The concrete simplicity of Victoria's uniqueness lures us, if we truly encounter it, into the possibility of making a decision - to begin or renew asking ourselves a very simple question: "Who am I?"

D. The General Question to be Asked

The central question to be considered in response to this study can be stated quite simply as follows: How does Victoria experience herself in relation to the ten concepts from existential psychology? Of course, I made no attempt to answer this question. What Kaufmann (1960) says of Kierkegaard's intention in his writings applies here: "He (Kierkegaard) makes us aware not of facts but of decisions we have made and that we might make. He forces on us not answers but questions" (p. 202). Thus the reader should decide in her own mind how she would like to answer the question occasioned by this study. She is confronted with a question and is given no answers.

You, the reader, may feel left hanging. You may read the interviews and still wonder what Victoria has said. But at least it will be you who is wondering, you who is groping for an answer. It's my conviction, you see, that Victoria's self-report in the interviews is not a "problem to be solved" with the provision of an answer on my part. Rather, I consider her a unique human being to be encountered in all her uniqueness. And everyone should encounter her with their uniqueness. Thus everyone's answer as to what she says should be their own answer. As such, it's my hope that each reader will feel in somewhat of a predicament, wondering exactly what it is that Victoria is saying; but not really knowing for sure. As Tiedeman (1965) says in an introduction to a symposium "on existentialism in counseling" in the Personnel and Guidance Journal: "Furthermore, the symposium is

intended to offer you a predicament, not a problem. Learn to avoid the expectation of solution and to accomodate the dilemma of this symposium within your cognitive structure, and you will have generatively assimilated the meaning of existentialism for counseling" (p. 552). In a similar vein, I would invite you to "avoid the expectation of solution" in regard to what Victoria says. The question is more important than the answer.

E. General Procedures

I have devoted the procedural heart of this study to interviews with Victoria. These interviews consist of two basic components. First, is an interview acquiring a historical self-report from Victoria. In it is a reasonably free flowing description by Victoria of her background in several of its aspects - data and place of birth, family of origin, education, work experiences, etc. I say "reasonably free flowing." because as she spoke Victoria was responding to a list of questions, asking for the above mentioned information, which I had given to her in advance of the interview. The questions suggested to her what I thought were pertinent areas of exploration. However, she approached them with great flexibility; highlighting the meaning each particular piece of suggested information had for her, as well as adding information she felt relevant.

Second, are fifty interview questions based on the definitions of ten central concepts taken from existential psychology. These questions were constructed and asked so as to provide Victoria with the occasion for talking about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life - as these issues are understood by and set forth in the ten concepts from existential psychology. From each definition, then, I extracted five questions based on five elements I felt to be present in it. Thus the total of fifty. Asking five questions was

done in order to provide variation on the central meaning of each definition. I felt five responses from Victoria on the subject of freedom, for example, would add more flavor to the interviews than fewer responses.

These interviews as a whole are designed to provoke, in the mind and heart of the reader, the general question of the preceding section: how does Victoria experience herself in relation to the ten concepts of existential psychology?

F. Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of this study can be listed as follows:

1. The study's focus on one unique individual made scientific reliability and generalizability impossible. But, within the context of this project of thought, neither was desired.
2. The vast expanse of commentary in existential literature on the theme of unique individuality made it impossible for me to integrate all of it. For the same reason the ten concepts from existential psychology could not be exhaustively defined.
3. As Moustakis (1956) has made clear, our language is always limited in its attempt to communicate experience. So the interviews are, in a sense, necessarily reductionistic - the attempt by Victoria to communicate her experience is one step removed from the experience itself.
4. My inexperience as an interviewer.
5. The inadequacy of the Montana State University library in the area of existentialism - especially existential psychology.

The delimitations can be listed as follows:

1. My choice to focus on one unique individual.
2. My choice of interviewing as the preferred method of information collection.

3. My choice of concepts from existential psychology as the occasion for Victoria to talk about how she has dealt with some of life's basic issues. Someone else might believe that another area of thought probes or defines these issues more deeply. There is nothing absolute about existential psychology.

4. My choice to use ten concepts from existential psychology and the ten chosen. I could have chosen a greater or lesser number of concepts, as I could also have chosen different concepts. However, the ones chosen, and their number, seemed to me to be adequate for the purposes of eliciting the simplicity of the study.

5. My choice to ask fifty questions. Once again it could have been a greater or lesser number, but the total chosen seemed sufficient for the same reason listed in delimitation number four.

6. My choice of the five elements in each definition from which to formulate each question.

G. Definition of Terms

Experience and Experiences

In this study experiences refer to particular events, incidents, periods or times in Victoria's life that she highlights as singularly meaningful in response to an interview question. Experience refers to the total scope of Victoria's life rather than particular events or periods from it, i.e. the general, more pervasive learning she has acquired over the course of a lifetime. Often in response to an interview question Victoria highlights this more general experience, rather than single incidents. The two are, however, intimately connected in her overall experience of herself; which is the union of the two.

Existentialism

The very title of this study, "Existentialism and a Unique Individual: Interviews with Victoria," assumes that the word "existentialism" has an understandable meaning and import for the investigation herein conducted. However, a quick glance at the labels relating to existentialism that are tossed about, can certainly cast this assumption into doubt: existential philosophy, existential psychology, Dasienanalysis, etc. There are a multiplicity of theoretical and philosophical frameworks that live out an uneasy coexistence with each other under the seemingly all inclusive label "existentialism." In this section I want to demonstrate that this label has had some attempts made to define it, but that it essentially resists any sort of clear cut definition.

To understand existentialism we need to look at existential philosophy; since it precedes the other labels mentioned above historically, as well as serving as their primary place of origin. Binswanger (1963), for example, in the essay, "Heidegger's Analytic of Existence and Its Meaning for Psychiatry," clearly reflects the dependence of his "existential analysis" on Heidegger's existential philosophy (pp. 206-221).

Using the label "existential philosophy" may, however, place us in trouble right from the beginning. Since, Friedman (1964 b), maintains that, "'Existentialism' is not a philosophy but a mood embracing a number of disparate philosophies; the differences among them are more basic than the temper which unites them" (p. 3). And Kaufmann (1975) holds that, "Existentialism is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy." He notes that the foremost "existentialists" disagree "on essentials." Kierkegaard was a passionate Christian, while Sartre is an equally passionate

atheist. And the difference between these two is an indicator of the division running throughout existentialism; all of which prompts Kaufmann to consider that, "In view of this, it might be argued that the label 'existentialism' ought to be abandoned altogether" (p. 1). Elsewhere, Shinn (1959, 1968) seems to indicate that the only thing giving existentialism a common orientation is its characteristic as a "revolt" or "rebellion." Beyond this one wonders if it has anything in common.

Tillich (1952), however, does see in existential philosophy a "content" united in expression with the enduring "existential attitude"; which is the posture "of involvement in contrast to a merely theoretical or detached attitude" (p. 123). Such detachment is "non-existential" because its outlook on "the human situation" is impersonal and uninvolved. The existential attitude and content (philosophy) "conflicts" with this (p. 125).

Beyond Tillich's emphasis, others have tried to assign an even more definitive content to existentialism. Langiulli (1971) offers this definition:

It (existentialism) is an inquiry that understands philosophy itself as characteristic of man in the sense that he is concerned with and asks about the meaning of his existence in particular and as a whole (p. 9).

In the quest for this "meaning" existentialism encounters "a world to be understood", in the face of which, the existential inquirer recognizes the finitude or relativity of all truth claims. The "whole" of existence is always greater than our "particular" attempts to grasp its meaning. As such we have, arrayed before us, vast "possibilities of choice" for the understanding of our existence in the world (pp. 9-11).

And, finally, Shearson (1975) has isolated what he believes are the three "common assumptions of existentialist philosophy" : that (1) "there is no knowledge beyond possible experience;" (2) "the Self

is not a substance but a lived relation to that which situated it" - other human beings, etc.; and (3) "there are universal and necessary limitations to being human and hence to human understanding" (pp. 135-144).

Taking into account the attempts to more precisely define existentialism, I would nevertheless agree with Shian (1968) that, "Existentialism protests against the definitions and categorizations by which men try to simplify life." In a ringing statement he declares the following:

Almost any self-respecting existentialist refuses to call himself an existentialist. He has to make that refusal. To say, 'I am an existentialist,' is to say, 'I am one of that classification of people known as existentialists'; whereas the existentialist wants to say, 'I am myself - and I don't like your effort to fit me into your classifications' (p. 13).

We are, then, left radically on our own - with the necessity of defining our own view of life. Existentialism is not the kind of "ism" that provides us with comfortable "categorizations" to which we can fit all that we encounter in life. Brammer (1971) incisively states it this way:

Another difficulty in grasping the principal views of existential writers by intellectual means is that there is no such thing as existentialism in any uniform sense. While there are common threads running through existential concepts, there are as many 'existentialisms' as writers on the subject. Each counselor, then, must become his own existentialist, construing his experience in his unique way and saying, 'This is what existentialism means to me' (p. 40).

In the spirit of Brammer's statement, I have decided that what's important about existentialism for this study is its concern to protect the salient feature of the unique individual. This concern is right at the heart of existentialism. As Macquarrie (1972) declares:

It can hardly be denied that the mainstream of existentialism, beginning with Kierkegaard's high valuation of the individual, has had an 'individualist' bias, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to lead existentialism out

of this bias and at the same time not to fall into that dehumanizing collectivism against which existentialism has been an entirely justified protest (p. 173).

Furthermore, Nauman (1971) notes that concern for the individual is "one of the key Existential themes, originating with Kierkegaard..." (p. 104).

Certainly my decision to focus on the "theme" of individuality that runs through this diverse philosophy, does not capture all of the "threads" in existentialism; but, then, it is thoroughly existential to hold on to the "thread" of individuality and say, "This is what existentialism means to me."

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a vast movement in its own right, both in philosophy and psychology. There is, for example, no single phenomenological method. Rather, as Ellenberger (1958) has noted, "psychiatric phenomenology" utilizes three basic methods in its approach. First, there is "descriptive phenomenology" which "relies entirely on descriptions given by patients of their subjective experiences." Second, is "the genetic-structural method" which "postulates a fundamental unity in an individual's state of consciousness and tries to find a common denominator" that will help to understand the patient's whole experience. Third, is "categorical analysis" which "takes a system of phenomenological coordinates, the most important of which are time..., space..., causality, and materiality." Based on an analysis of the patient's experience of these "coordinates" the therapist attempts a "detailed reconstruction" of her "inner universe of experience" (p. 97).

Phenomenology is diverse not only in its methods, but its philosophical roots reflect great range and depth as well. Kockelmans (1967) has put together an excellent collection of essays that probe its extensive background and numerous expressions. But, unfortunately,

there is no place in this study for a lengthy exploration into this. Rather, I must restrict myself to a somewhat cursory definition of phenomenology; but one that will, nevertheless, have import for Chapter 2 of the study.

In its simplest form we can understand phenomenology as May (1969 a) explains it:

Phenomenology is the endeavor to take the phenomena as given. It is the disciplined effort to clear one's mind of the presuppositions that so often cause us to see in the patient only our own theories or the dogmas of our own systems. It is the effort to experience instead the phenomena in their full reality as they present themselves (pp. 20-21).

For Friedman (1964) this phenomenological "endeavor" entails, in part, the necessity to "suspend the foregone conclusions and the search for causality that mark the natural scientist in favor of an open attempt to discover what offers itself" (p. 108). At the very least, then, May's definition requires a high degree of personal openness and sensitivity to presenting phenomena. If the phenomena is shown forth by another human being (and in counseling it is), then Havens (1974) maintains that "we are asked to einfuhlen, empathize, project ourselves into the experience of another" (p. 7).

Of course, in a basic way we can never be entirely free of all our presuppositions when engaged in the study of human beings. As Stewart and Mickunas (1974) state:

There are many kinds of presuppositions, and there is even a sense in which absolute freedom from presuppositions is impossible, for the view that a philosophy without presuppositions is possible is itself a kind of presupposition (p. 7).

And so when we utilize phenomenology as our method of approach to human beings we should keep this in mind. More specifically, I will be clarifying the role presuppositions have played in this study at a later point.

The Ten Concepts from Existential Psychology

Introduction to the Ten Concepts

Use of the label "existential psychology" requires immediate clarification. It could be said that those people who are considered representative of existential psychology are in reality representative of diverse labels. There is the "existential analysis" of Binswanger, the "Daseinanalysis" of Boss, others who would prefer being understood as "existential psychiatrists," and still others who would prefer the designation "existential psychotherapist." But, following Hall and Lindzery (1970, pp. 552-581), I have decided to settle on the single use of what seems to be the more inclusive label of the lot: "existential psychology."

The primary source for the concepts is May's (1958 b) definitive essay "Contributions of Existential Psychotherapy." May is the principal translator to Americans of ideas inherited from the European existential psychologists - Binswanger, Boss, et al. As Bulka (1978) notes: "Rollo May is considered the founder of the existential psychotherapy movement in America. The book, Existence, ...represents the first real attempt to bring the thought ...of the European existentialists to America" (p. 45). May's (1967), Psychology and the Human Dilemma, is also a primary source for the concepts of "freedom" and "responsibility", as are the writings of Frankl (1962; 1965; 1967; 1975; 1976) for the concept of "meaning." Frankl has placed special emphasis on meaning in the development of his own branch of existential psychology known as "logotherapy." This is what Bulka calls a "healing-through-meaning philosophy and psychotherapy" (1978, p. 45).

Based primarily on the sources mentioned above I have selected the following concepts upon which to base the interviews with Victoria: being, non-being, anxiety, guilt, being-in-the-world, time, transcendence, freedom, responsibility, and meaning. Existential psychology

takes a special view of each of these, a view that will be elucidated in the definitions following this introduction.

It's important to note that I could have chosen concepts other than these particular ten. For example, existentialists frequently speak with passionate concern about such things as love, hope, commitment, "nausea," despair, etc. No doubt these are very important realities to consider; but, due to time and space demands, I had to constrain myself to a select number of concepts. The literature I've noted tended more often to support selection of the above mentioned ten.

Within the framework of this study, these ten concepts from existential psychology define some of the basic issues of life that any human being must deal with. They are constitutive for human existence. For example, May (1958 b) says that, in the existential understanding, guilt "is also an ontological characteristic of human existence" (p. 52). By ontology is meant the attempt to "show how the various... apparent realities depend on the basic reality or realities" (Glossop, 1974, p. 234). Thus the concept of guilt, in this example, is understood by the existentialist as such a "basic reality." And, furthermore, all ten concepts reflect the desire of existential psychology to point us toward the ontological or basic reality of human existence. The person lives out her fundamental humanity in relation to them.

So, in a word, the ten concepts chosen for this study provide the "flesh and bone" issues that Victoria relates herself to in the interviews. They provide the occasion for Victoria to carry out "the simplicity of the study": the provision of the opportunity for her to talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life.

It should also be clear that the interview questions, which are directly based on the definitions of these concepts, carry with them the presuppositions inherent in the views expressed by existential psychology. More will be said on this matter of presuppositions in Chapter 2.

Two final things should be noted. First, each of the ten concepts is interconnected with all the others. I have arbitrarily separated them for the sake of both convenience on one hand, and so that the distinctive meaning of each might stand out in its special emphasis on the other hand. But the reader should be clear that in the actual life of the human being they have an intermixed import. Second, presented with each definition is an "elaboration on the definition." This is done for the purpose of allowing the reader to grasp the meaning of each concept in a sharper way - avoiding some confusions that might otherwise occur. Note that the interviews are based on the definitions of the concepts, not on the elaborations; and that the definitions state only the necessary rudiments of each concept.

Being

(1) Definition:

Being is that irreducible, inexhaustible whole which constitutes the human being as human being. "Being is that which remains" (May, 1958 b, p. 41). It "remains" because it is that about the human which can't be broken up into parts; whether these parts be emotions, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, etc. Being is more than all these. It is, according to May, what constitutes the "to whom" any number of "experiences happen" (1958 b, p. 41). It is revealed most clearly in the distinctly human quality of freedom, i.e. the capacity to stand back from all deterministic factors (environment, heredity, etc.) and be aware of oneself as the one who acts. In this sense, being is the pre-supposition for all human behavior, emotions, etc. Being is that which allows us to know that it is "I" who acts, "I" who feels this emotion, "I" who holds this belief, etc.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of being:

Use of the concept being is not meant to take us afar into realms of overly abstract speculation. Rather, its use points us toward the

ontological - basic, fundamental - ground for human identity. This ground precedes everything else that we may attempt to identify ourselves with. Kemp (1971) notes that, "it is said, generally speaking, in our Western culture the real is only what is measurable. A thing or experience is not real if we cannot reduce it to numbers." With this conception of reality as its guiding light, our culture has tended to break the human being into parts. We have come to identify ourselves with the particular roles we enact by "emphasizing our function (what we do, or what we are, clerk, grocer, teacher)." We have lost touch with the ground of our existence, with the whole of who we are, which precedes our "function." In response to this Kemp issues a warning to counselor: "When the counselor has diaries, biographies, inventory results and test results before him, he may conclude he knows everything about the counselee, and he knows everything except the 'Johnian in John.'" The "Johnian in John" is the being of the person which "is not comprehended in his attributes" (p. 8).

May (1958 b) describes the case history of a client who had an intense "I am" experience of herself in which she rejects the preliminary tendency to identify herself as just "an illegitimate child" - who is, after all, "not a child anymore." She "was born illegitimate," but that doesn't mean she must persist in identifying herself as such in her present experience. So she asks:

The what is left? What is left is this, 'I Am.' This act of contact and acceptance with 'I am,' once gotten hold of, gave me (what I think was for me the first time) the experience 'since I Am, I have the right to be' (p. 43).

May maintains that, "This one phase of a complex case, ...illustrates the emergence and strengthening of the sense of being in one person" (pp. 43-44). The "I Am" experience was her own intense experience of her being.

From this May reaches four basic conclusions about the "I Am" experience of being. First, it "is not in itself the solution to a per-

son's problems; it is rather the precondition for their solution." Second, the "'I-am' experience is not to be explained by the transference relationship." Third, "being is a category which cannot be reduced to introjection of social and ethical norms." And, fourth, "the 'I-am' experience must not be identified with what is called in various circles the 'functioning of the ego.'" The ego, after all, "is a part of the personality." The "I-am" experience of being refers to the whole that is the "precondition" for all parts (pp. 44-46).

The reader may be saying to herself, "But even after your explanation this 'sense of being' still seems so elusive to me." There could be a number of reasons for such a response. One would certainly be that the experience of being is somewhat like the "self in true experience" of which Moustakis (1956) refers to: "The self is not its definition or description but rather the central being of the individual person. The self is not definable in words. Any verbal analysis tends to categorize or segment the self into communicable aspects or parts" (p. 11). So it is with being. It may seem elusive because it is elusive - when we try to express it in words. It points to the ontological ground that precedes language. We know it primarily when we experience it, as in the case history May cites, not when we talk about it.

A final difficulty in grasping the meaning of being is that we have divorced ourselves from ontology, and thus no longer care about being. We get a sense of this in Benda's (1966) remarks:

Ontology is not as new as some modern readers may think. Ontological thinking was prevalent in the philosophy of the 12th and 13th centuries and is characteristic of philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura until the times of Duns Scotus. However, this concern with Being had fallen in disrepute for the last centuries and it is only now that an understanding of the central problems of Being has evolved (p. 291).

This new "understanding of the central problems of Being" has had its primary impetus in the existential philosophy of Heidegger

(1962). In any case, it may be helpful to think of Laing's (1969) definition of being: "... simply all that a man is" (p. 20).

Non-being

(1) Definition:

Non-being is characterized as nothingness by existentialists. It is seen as an inseparable "part of being." "To grasp what it means to exist, one needs to grasp the fact that he might not exist..." (May, 1958 b, p. 47). Non-being is manifest most clearly in the threat of death or, as May says, in the threat of "possible annihilation" (1958 b, p. 48). Death, therefore, is an example of the clearest threat of nothingness. But non-being is also manifest in conformism, where one's own potentialities are sacrificed to the "collective." One's uniqueness is given up in the face of pressure to be "like others." This spells the death (non-being) of one's unique individuality.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of non-being:

Shinn (1959) notes that, "One might say that Heidegger's favorite subject is nothing. ... The most fundamental fact about selfhood, he says, is that each of us is constantly drifting toward nothing. We shall die,... The destiny of the self is to be nothing " (p. 72). For Heidegger (1962), then, we constantly live in the presence of non-being or nothingness. In this regard death becomes the imminent possibility of our end that is ever with us. Death is the "Being-towards-the-end" of us (p. 289). In the words of Hunsinger's (1969) interpretation of Heidegger: "Death is Dasein's [the being-there of human existence] ownmost possibility" (p. 54). I may die, not at some distant time in the future, but imminently. Non-being is with me as possibility now!

It is good for us to hear these insights of Heidegger. Because, as May (1968) notes, for too long, "Death has been one of the 'taboo topics in psychology..." (p. 194). Existential psychology, therefore, tries to counter this "repression of death" which views it as "obscene,

unmentionable, pornographic, not to be looked at if one can help it, not to be talked about in polite company" (p. 195).

Overcoming this "taboo" has the great benefit of generating a deeper awareness of the finitude of our human condition. Without this awareness we falsely project our lives many years into the future, while operating under the illusion that death waits for us "out there" at the end of our so called "life span." As Shinn (1959) again notes: "But a deeper meaning comes to the person who learns what the death of himself or a friend does to his aims and his achievements" (p. 19). It rudely cuts them off.

Heidegger (1962) also speaks of what he calls "das Man" or the "they-self" (p. 167). This is the "inauthentic" mode of existence, where we sacrifice our unique potential to be ourselves in favor of letting our individual identity be absorbed into the anonymous mass of people. Slote (1975) points to some of the features that Heidegger believed were characteristic of "das Man": "... one important aspect of our average everyday lostness in the 'they' is its typical modes of discourse, chatter, and idle talk, and the busy-body curiosity that characterizes such discourse" (p. 22). What happens is that the person loses herself in the non-being of anonymity - unique, creative discourse (which, for Heidegger, is reflective of "authentic" existence) is given up in favor of what "other people do": empty "chatter and idle talk." Conformity, rather than uniqueness, is the rule of "das Man."

Anxiety

(1) Definition:

The existential view distinguishes anxiety from fear. Where fear has a specific object to be afraid of (fear of heights, fear of stronger opponents in battle, etc.), anxiety is "objectless": "Anxiety is the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual

holds essential to his existence as a personality" (May, 1950, p. 191). This threat can take a variety of different forms: physical threat of death, psychological threat of failure to one who values "success" as "essential to his existence as a personality," etc. But the central point is this: fear is a specific threat to our "security patterns" which can be directly dealt with by the individual (dealing with fear of heights by avoiding the heights); whereas in anxiety "it is the security pattern itself which is threatened" (May, 1950, p. 191). Anxiety is felt as a "threat to the foundation, the center of my existence" (May, 1958 b, p. 50). As such it is much more difficult for the individual to locate the source of anxiety than it is to locate the source of fear. Anxiety hits at the center of a person, fear at the periphery (May, 1950, p. 191).

(2) Elaboration on the definition of anxiety:

The existentialist is quick to distinguish anxiety from fear because anxiety is more directly rooted in our ontological foundations. We experience anxiety in relation to something that we perceive as a threat to our very being - the abiding threat of non-being. As May (1958 b) notes: "Anxiety is the experience of the threat of non-being" (p. 50). In a more precise sense May (1953) says that anxiety "is the human being's basic reaction to a danger to his existence, or to some value he identifies with his existence" (p. 40). In such a case anxiety is a threat to one's whole world, one's entire self-understanding. Our whole being is felt to be in jeopardy. Say, for example, we invest our entire being in the success of the economy, only to have the stock market crash. In such a case our basic value, the value that gives us meaning in life, is endangered. We can then understand Binswanger's (1958 a) view "that anxiety always emerges when the world [in this case our value invested "world" of the economy] becomes shaky or threatens to vanish" (p. 205). In contrast we may, for example, have a fear of dogs. In response to this threat we simply avoid dogs. May (1953) sums

the matter up pointedly:

But as soon as the threat becomes great enough to involve the total self, one then has the experience of anxiety. Anxiety strikes us at the very 'core' of ourselves: it is what we feel when our existence as selves is threatened (p. 40).

This distinction between fear and anxiety has roots planted deeply in existential philosophy. Kierkegaard (1957) treats the matter in his definitive The Concept of Dread. And Brock (1949) has noted the importance of this distinction for Heidegger: "The Phenomenon of 'dread'" ['dread' here has the equivolent meaning of 'anxiety'], though somewhat akin to that of 'fear,' is essentially different" (p. 46). Fear may be "akin" to anxiety in that both are painfully unpleasant; but they are "essentially different" because anxiety threatens centrally, fear peripherally.

This brings us to a final distinction that is important in existential thought about anxiety. May (1950) speaks of "normal and neurotic anxiety." Normal anxiety comes part and parcel with something such as the experience of "human contingency," i.e. death for example. The two kinds of anxiety may be distinguished along three main lines: (1) normal anxiety is proportionate with "objective threat" and neurotic anxiety isn't; (2) normal anxiety does not repress anxiety causing material in the psychic while neurotic anxiety does; and (3) normal anxiety can be "confronted constructively" while neurotic anxiety needs persistent use of defense mechanisms (pp. 193-198).

The point is that human beings must live with anxiety simply because they're finite. The abiding reality of such things as death make life insecure. Anxiety is the "normal" result. We only become afflicted with "neurotic anxiety" when we attempt to escape our radical contingency, with its consequent "normal anxiety" or "existential anxiety." Colm (1966) says, "The neurotic is disgusted with himself and his world because neither is perfect enough. To avoid the negative and its risks, he withdraws to a limited area of living,... This defensive withdrawal

is what keeps the neurotic person from facing existential anxieties" (p. 157). Bugental (1965) finds neurotic anxiety to be "occasioned by" the "illusory hopes of being secure" that the neurotic clings to. So he maintains that as "long as I accept my contingent situation,... I will not know neurotic anxiety: (pp. 24-25).

Guilt

(1) Definition:

The existential view assigns more to the meaning of guilt than just the individual's experience of guilt feelings. Rather, she views it partly as the real human guilt of "locking up our potentialities," of not being what we truly are in the "core" of our being. We could assert Shakespeare's often quoted line as a motto for the existential view of guilt: "Above all to thine own self be true." Another important example of real guilt is "ontological guilt against one's fellows" (May, 1958 b, p. 54). This guilt is simply the result of being a "separate individual" - meaning that we can't help viewing our fellow humans through "limited and biased eyes." A consequence of this, according to May, will be a failure "to understand and meet the other's needs" (1958 b, p. 54). Our limited perspective is one thing that, of necessity, makes us guilty of not being able to fully understand the other person.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of guilt:

Heidegger's (1962) phenomenological analysis of conscience and guilt reveals the foundation for the existential understanding of what guilt is. He says of conscience that "it summons the Self to its potentiality-for-Being-its-Self, and thus calls Dasein forth to its possibilities" (p. 319). As such he is clearly rejecting a view of conscience that sees it as the introjection by the individual, of social taboos. Rather, conscience is the "call" of the individual's "potentiality-for-Being-its-Self." It is our "authentic" uniqueness calling

for actualization, in contrast to blindly fitting in with the "everydayness" of conformist "das Man."

Of guilt, then, we know it primarily to be the reality of not having actualized all our "possibilities: as unique selves. Heidegger states:

...the 'summons to Being-guilty' signifies a calling-forth to that potentiality-for-Being which in each case I as Dasein am already. Dasein need not first load a 'guilt' upon itself through its failures or omissions; it must be 'guilty' authentically - 'guilty' in the way in which it is (p. 333).

Guilt is not something we arrive at by doing bad deeds; primarily it is the way we are. It is ontologically given in the fundamental structure of our existence. Every decision to follow conscience excludes other decisions - some possibilities are forever lost. To know this and accept this is to be "authentically" guilty. At least we have listened to our conscience and tried to follow it, tried to be "true to ourselves" as "potentiality-for-Being." If we were to not listen to the "call of conscience" by seeking "inauthentic" existence in the comfort of "das Man," we would forfeit our unique potentialities; and our guilt would be damningly real.

Based on Heidegger's analysis, Boss (1963) has articulated the meaning of guilt understood ontologically for psychology. For Boss we are necessarily guilty and all "concrete feelings of guilt" are grounded in this necessary guilt. One reason being that "finite man can exist only in one of the world-relations of which he is constituted at any given time, and all other possibilities of caring for something remain unfulfilled at that moment." Our "finite" condition means that some possibilities must always remain outside our capacity to actualize them. We can only fulfill one "at any given time." For this we are a "being-in-debt" (p. 48).

This condition of "being-in-debt" does not mean we are immoral by nature. It only reflects our finitude. And this, as May (1958 b) says,

"is not a question of moral failure or slackness" (p. 54). Being finite primarily means that our perception of the world, including other people, is a dim one. And, further, as Tyler (1971) says of our "finiteness": "... this means... that only a fraction of one's possibilities for development ever come to fruition. ...The idea that an individual can... develop his 'full potential' is an illusion" (p. 31). We can never do anything in full. We are guilty.

Being-in-the-world

(1) Definition:

This concept undercuts the "subject-object dichotomy" and views the individual as inextricably bound with her world. Each implies the other, "They [existential analysts] hold that the person and his world are a unitary, structural whole; the hyphenation of the phrase being-in-the-world expresses precisely that" (May, 1958 b, p. 59). One's world, as May (1958 b) again says, "is the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates" (p. 59). This means that one's world is constituted by such diverse things as nature, society, "interrelationships" with others, etc. The point is this: I am in the world and the world is in me. This union, therefore, means that the person herself also constitutes her world. Relatedness to one's own body is a good example of this, a good example of one's "own world" (May, 1958 b, p. 61).

(2) Elaboration on the definition of being-in-the-world:

Implied in the definition, but not explicitly stated, are the three "modes of being-in-the-world." Based on Heidegger's (1962) initial presentation, existential psychology has made these "modes" integral to its self-understanding. We find excellent descriptions of them in the literature (May, 1958 b; Binswanger, 1958 b; Kemp, 1971; Combs, 1971; and Friedman, 1964).

May's (1958 b) definitive definition of them is as follows:

First, there is Umwelt, literally meaning 'world around'; this is the biological world, generally called the environment. There is, second, the Mitwelt, literally the 'with-world,' the world of beings of one's own kind, the world of fellow men. The third is Eigenwelt, the 'own-world,' the mode of relationship to one's self (p. 61).

For May (1958 b) "one of the most acute problems of modern human beings" is the experience of have "lost their world." He describes this in terms of a three-fold "alienation" from nature (Umwelt), community (Mitwelt), and from one's self (Eigenwelt). It is to this alienation that existential psychology directs the concept of being-in-the-world, which is an attempt "to rediscover man as a being inter-related with his world and to rediscover world as meaningful to man." Without such a rediscovery we will fall fate to increased isolation, loneliness and estrangement (pp. 56-65).

A particularly exicting example of the attempt to overcome alienation from one's self is the existential phenomenological explication of "the lived body." This, according to Wild (1960), "is the discovery of the radical difference between the objective body as it is observed from the outside by a detached spectator, and my body as it is lived from the inside by me as I pursue my projects in the world of which it is the center" (p. 54). When I see my body as an object to be manipulated, rather than as the lived organism that I am, then I'm alienated from myself. Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Marcel (1949) give excellent accounts of this notion of living our bodies.

Time

(1) Definition:

This concept is meant to designate a special focus of the existential viewpoint. That is, from an existential perspective it is crucial to accent the individual's relationship to her past, present and future. A temporal focus such as this highlights the existential view of the human being as emerging. Human existence emerges: "...that

is, it is always in the process of becoming, always developing in time, and is never defined as static points" (May, 1958 b, p. 66). This understanding might be contrasted with the kind of position that takes an accent on space as its point of departure. Such a position sees the human as a particular object in this particular space being pushed forward by this or that deterministic influence. May (1958 b) finds that one of our major problems "has been to think of ourselves primarily in spatialized terms appropriate to res extensa, as though we were objects which could be located like substances at this spot or that" (p. 67). This is an essentially static view of people - each point in space being an arrived at, finished product. Whereas the existentialist views the human as pulled forward by the attraction of future potentialities - a continual process of becoming.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of time:

Heidegger (1962) erected the foundation upon which existentialists have formed their understanding of time. Part of his analysis was to distinguish the existential conception of time from "clock time." As Barrett (1958) says:

Philosophers before Heidegger had constructed time as a series of 'nows' - present moments - following each other like points upon a line. This is what we call clock time - time as measured by chronometers and calendars (0. 228).

In contrast to this there is "'Existential' or immediately experienced time" (Kemp, 1971, p. 13). Here, as Barrett (1958) again tells us, we experience the interpenetration of our future and past into the present: "The future is the not-yet, and the past is the no-longer; and these two negatives - the not-yet and the no-longer - penetrate his [man's] existence" (p. 227).

We live in relation to each tense of time as an inextricable part of our being, not just as the tick-tock of the clock. And, of particular importance to the existentialist, is the future. Kemp (1971) says "the future in contrast to the past or present is the significant

mode of time" (p. 14). In the "not-yet" of the future lies the important tasks we hope to fulfill, or the dreaded threats we anticipate. In a very real sense we live in the future; enough so for Heidegger (1962) to proclaim that, "The primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future" (p. 378).

This accent on the future has led the existentialist to set forth a processive view of the human being. As Kemp (1971) again says: "If the person is always becoming, always emerging, then personality can only be understood as we perceive it on a trajectory toward the future" (p. 14). In other words we are always looking ahead, and emerging into that which lies before us.

Transcendence

(1) Definition:

This is the distinctively human capacity for self-awareness which "qualitatively increases the range of consciousness and therefore, greatly enlarges the range of possibilities of transcending the immediate situation" (May, 1958 b, p. 71). It is the human capacity, as May says, "to stand outside and look at one's self and the situation and to assess and guide one's self by an infinite variety of possibilities" (1958 b, p. 74). The ability to symbolize, abstract, project thought into the future, recall the past, etc., are all examples of this capacity for transcendence - which is fundamental to human nature as such.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of transcendence:

Existentialists speak of transcendence in a horizontal sense, not vertical. They see it, in the words of Frankl's (1966) essay, "as a human phenomenon" (p. 97). Transcendence for human beings is "self-transcendence" horizontally in this world, not transcendence beyond this world into some "other world," e.g. as in some sort of religious transport. May (1958 b), for example, distinguishes the transcendence of existential psychology from "Kantian a priori assumptions," from

"New England Transcendentalism," and from "religious other-worldliness." He notes that, "We [existentialists] mean something different from all of these" (p. 72).

This "something different" is the unique human capacity to be aware of ourselves as more than objects. For example, Kemp (1971) notes that transcendence "reveals itself in all kinds of behavior. They [existentialists] see this capacity [for transcendence] in man's ability to bring the distant past and the long-term future into one's immediate existence. It is demonstrated also in our unique capacity to think and to talk in symbols." As such, in transcendence, human beings get "outside of themselves" in their self-consciousability to be aware of themselves. Kemp again notes: "This capacity to transcend the situation implies that one is able to stand apart and look at one's self and the situation, to consider, to consider the several alternatives and reach a decision" (p. 16). This means, further, that as human beings we are essentially open - to the world with all its possibilities for decision. Frankl (1966) says, "Actually, being human profoundly means to be open to the world, a world, that is, which is replete with other beings to encounter and with meanings to fulfill" (p. 97).

Once again, in the capacity for transcendence, we can see that existential psychologists want to bring us in touch with our ontological foundations. For, as Kemp (1971) notes, "This capacity for transcendence of the immediate situation is not another attribute or faculty; it is given in the ontological nature of man" (p. 16).

We have not really dealt with this concept, however, until we have discussed its implications for a distinctive understanding of the awareness manifested by human beings. May (1969 b) asserts that, "The uniquely human form of awareness is self-consciousness" (p. 77). Our capacity for transcendence means that we humans are gifted with a kind of awareness that, fittingly enough, transcends that of other forms of life. Kemp (1971) states:

The dog is aware that his owner putting on a coat means he is going outdoors. He is also aware that he is hungry, but he does not have the capacity to know himself as the one who is hungry. This capacity of self-consciousness is unique to man. He knows himself as the one who feels joy or fear; he experiences himself as the subject who has a world (p. 15).

Human transcendence, then, implies that unique form of awareness known as self-consciousness; which May (1969 b) describes as our "capacity to transcend the immediate concrete situation, to live in terms of the possible" (p. 77).

Freedom

(1) Definition:

The existential view maintains that the human being utilizes "self-consciousness," the capacity to be aware of oneself as the one acting, in order to make choices from among assorted alternatives. This expresses human freedom; and because the human being can utilize self-consciousness to become aware of the alternatives and thus freely choose in regard to them, the existentialist refuses to accept the person as one who is completely determined - whether by environment, heredity, etc. (May, 1967, pp. 171-175). An extreme example of human freedom is the power of choice between life and death. In any event, an important point is this: human beings do not live and grow by simple organic process as do other life forms (trees, flowers, etc.). Life must be chosen.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of freedom:

Gale (1974) articulates the essential existential view of freedom:

Freedom and choice as related to the nature of man are close to the very core of existential thought since a person's very essence - what he becomes - is created by his choices within a framework of existential freedom (pp. 28-29).

This means two basic things. First, the existentialist refuses to ever accept that we are completely determined by forces over which we have no control. At birth I may, for example, have been thrust into an

"unhealthy" or "deprived" family environment; but this accident of birth does not foreordain the decisions I can make. I am not fated to follow a certain pattern as the result of my birthright. To believe that I am would be what Sartre (1956) has called "bad faith" (pp. 86-116). Of this Barnes (1959) says:

For the individual does not have a fixed nature; to assume that he must continue to be what he is becomes the equivalent of saying that some gift of heredity or previous experience is determining his being, is cutting off his future (p. 54).

The human future is always open. It can be filled in with the choices we deem fit for it. Many of Sartre's literary figures discover this power of freedom only after they face the reality of their capacity to choose suicide. Such was the case with Mathieu Delarue in Sartre's (1947), The Reprieve (pp. 364-365).

We must also consider, however, that the freedom to grow and choose what we are to become is not just given to us by nature, as if our organism automatically becomes free. All that is given to us is the potentiality for freedom. It still remains for us to make it actual. Van Kaam (1966) expresses precisely this point: "Actual freedom in evaluation and behavior does not belong to man from the first moment of conception and birth. Man must conquer his freedom" (p. 64).

Responsibility

(1) Definition:

In the existential literature it has been observed that the human being is partially determined; whether by environmental factors, hereditary influences, or from other forces beyond the control of the individual. It is stated that the individual must use her freedom to relate constructively to the determining influences in her world (family environment, culture, etc.). This constructive use of freedom recognizes human limits, and therefore is not to be likened to licence (doing what we want irregardless of limits). This constructive use of freedom is

responsibility (May, 1967, pp. 175-178). Concomitant with this understanding of responsibility is the willingness to face the consequences of our free actions. These consequences must be "owned" as ours so to speak.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of responsibility:

Heidegger (1962) makes the observation that, "As something thrown, Dasein has been thrown into existence" (p. 321). In brief, what this means is that each of us is thrust at birth into a world not of our choosing - a particular set of parents, in a particular culture, at a particular time. This is the "thrownness" of our human condition. Over it we have no control. It is, therefore, our basic limitation.

The crucial thing is how we respond to our thrownness - constructively or unconstructively? To respond constructively implies a responsible use of our freedom. May (1967) says that, "Freedom is the individual's capacity to know that he is the determined one, to pause between stimulus and response and thus to throw his weight... on the side of one particular response among several possible ones" (p. 175). Or as May (1969 c) says elsewhere: "Man is distinguished by his capacity to know that he is determined, and to choose his relationship to what determines him" (p. 268). Whereas an unconstructive response would be the irresponsibility of just passively sitting back and letting the determining power of our thrownness dictate the acquiescence of our freedom.

Along with the above understanding is the importance of accepting the consequences of our freely chosen decisions. For these consequences we alone are responsible, and cannot escape them. Even if we should want to escape the risky results of certain choices by not choosing, this would be of no avail; since, as Gail (1974) tells us: "... even the refusal to choose involves a human choice" (p. 29). So, as Bugental (1965) makes clear, when making a choice, "I must weigh the advantages and disadvantages of one against those of the other. It is my responsibility" (pp. 23-24).

Meaning

(1) Definition:

"Man's search for meaning is a primary force in his life..." (Frankl, 1962, p. 97). Frankl, in these words, indicates the essence of the existential understanding of meaning: each person is pulled from in front by her logos (meaning). This meaning is the specific question posed by life in each concrete situation of the individual's particular life, a question to which the individual must answer "by answering for his own life" (Frankl, 1962, p. 109). This could entail the fulfilling of a "specific vocation," carrying out an important task, special purpose, etc.

(2) Elaboration on the definition of meaning:

Frankl (1976) anticipates an important question about the concept of meaning:

Now to respond to the question: 'How can a doctor, a psychiatrist, a physician, or a counselor in any of the helping professions give meaning to a client, a patient?' We cannot give meaning to anyone. Meaning can only be found, discovered; it cannot be invented (p. 185).

In these words Frankl is, in part, stressing that meaning for us is to be "found" outside of us - in values, projects, tasks that need to be supported or carried out: "The more one forgets oneself - giving oneself to a cause or another person - the more human he is. And the more one is immersed and absorbed in something or someone other than oneself the more he really becomes himself" (Frankl, 1975, p. 79).

In conjunction with this affirmation, Frankl (1965) wants to make it clear that we do not "discover" our meaning in the abstract. As he states:

...the question of 'the' task in life or 'the' meaning of life is - meaningless. It reminds us of the question a reporter asked a grand master in chess. 'And now tell me, maestro - what is the best move in chess?' Neither question can be answered in a general fashion, but only in regard to a particular situation and person" (p. 61).

Or as he says elsewhere (1967): "... one can search only for the concrete meaning of personal existence, a meaning which changes from man to man, from day to day, from hour to hour" (p. 57). So there is no all embracing answer to the question, "What is meaning?" Rather, there is only the unique answer of each individual in her "search" for the "concrete" meaning of her life in each particular situation - a search which may come to rest with any number of answers: loving another person, fighting for an important value, etc. But the point is that the actualization of each person's meaning is filled with numerous possibilities; as Frankl (1976) asserts: "I immediately perceive, here and now, in a given situation, confronted with this particular reality, that there is a possibility for me, there is something I can and must do. This is the meaning inherent and dormant in the given situation" (p. 186).

Other Terms

Any other terms, of a somewhat technical nature, used in this study were defined at the moment presented.

H. Summary

In this chapter I provided an introduction to the manner of existential communication, as well as a brief overview of the entire study. The rest of the chapter was devoted to setting forth the basic argument and the structural foundation upon which it rests. Included in this argument, as it was primarily set forth in the "Rationale for the Study," were these basic elements: the danger of the "mass," Kierkegaard's response to this danger, and facilitating reader decision in relation to the simplicity of Victoria's unique individuality (to be concretely presented in the coming interviews). In the "Definition of Terms"

section ten concepts from existential psychology, used to occasion Victoria's simplicity in the interviews, were presented. The problem of the study, general questions to be asked, general procedures, etc., were all considered. Their implicit connection with the basic argument was evident. Throughout the chapter relevant literature was reviewed and referred to as support for the intentions of this study.

Chapter II

Procedures

A. Introduction

This chapter seeks to articulate the procedures used to carry out the argument of the first chapter. It will be recalled that the central theme of that argument was the simplicity of the study: the provision of the opportunity for Victoria to talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life - as these issues are occasioned by ten central concepts from existential psychology. This theme was developed in light of the emphasis in existentialism - Kierkegaard and Unamuno in particular - on the concrete unique individuality of the "flesh and bone" person.

A general restatement of the problem of the first chapter serves to draw out the manner in which the procedures of this chapter attempt to carry out the simplicity of the study. The problem, as we remember, was to report, without analysis, a unique individual's - Victoria's - experience of herself in relation to ten central concepts of existential psychology; which is the equivalent of saying that her experience in this regard tells us how she has concretely dealt with some of the basic issues of human life. Sections in this chapter on what is being investigated, the method of collecting the data, precautions, and the method of organizing the data, explain how interviewing methods were used to facilitate the speaking of Victoria about herself, e.g. "This is how I experience myself in relation to time, anxiety, transcendence, etc."

The study stops short however. The procedural considerations in this chapter do not elucidate any method used to "solve" the problem of the study. Rather, these procedures help to set the stage for the provocation, in the mind and heart of the reader, of the general question of the study: how does Victoria experience herself in relation to the ten concepts of existential psychology? Being confronted with a question and given no answers, the reader is left to her own resources so

that she may discover her own answers. It is my hope that the reader will thereby decide to encounter the uniqueness of Victoria's experience with her own uniqueness, e.g. "What about my unique relation to the basic issues of human life as these are occasioned by the ten concepts from existential psychology?"

Thus we can see that the interviews attempt to facilitate a two-fold purpose implied throughout the study: allowing Victoria to talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life, so that you the reader may encounter her unique experience of herself in this regard, by encountering the question as to how she experiences herself in relation to these issues; which has its immediate impact when you ask, "How do I experience myself in relation to these issues?"

Although the mere provocation of a question is faithful to the simplicity of this study's rationale, it departs from the usual scientific procedure of setting forth questions or hypotheses that can be empirically tested. Therefore, it will be necessary to include in this chapter a section distinguishing scientific methodological premises from the premises at work in this study. I will attempt to show that scientific premises are invalid as a means of approaching my subject of inquiry: the uniqueness of Victoria. And it should thereby become clear to us that the premises underlying scientific method have no absolute claim on questions of truth.

Therefore, this basic section on methodology attempts to set forth the premises upon which the interviews are based; and, consequently, why Victoria's experience of herself in relation to the ten concepts from existential psychology was not analyzed - leaving you the reader with only the question of how she related herself to these concepts.

B. A Question About Methodology

Landsman (1965) has articulated the "basic demands of science."

First, is "an empirical basis" upon which research can be "hypothesized into general principles or laws." Second, is the need for "public definition." Of this he says, "It surely does not seem much to ask, that terms and concepts be somehow communicated so as to have a rather common meaning to most reasonable scientists." Third, is the need for "rigorous experiments" that express the scientific concern for the "rigor of methodology." And, fourth, is the opposition of behavioral scientists to "theory that is imprecise, vague, with hypotheses phrased in entirely untestable terms, fashioned apparently only in 'sessions of sweet, silent thought'" (pp. 569-571).

We can find the concern for these "basic demands" to be rooted in the age old method of induction; which, as Roubiczek (1964) notes, is "the 'inferring of general law from particular instances.'" Historically, as a result of the influence of Francis Bacon, induction replaced deduction; which is "an 'inference from general to particular.'" And thus "induction has become the modern scientific method." As a result another impetus was set in motion. Roubiczek describes this at some length:

A further important step in its [the scientific method] development was Galileo's rejection of all speculation about the origin of movement; science should be concerned solely with the observation of existing movements. As a result, science rests on the acceptance of 'brute facts,' on their observation, their weighing, measuring, testing, without further questions being asked (pp. 163-164).

Of these "basic demands" and premises of science, Buber (1970), in turn, would demand they be viewed as representative of the "I-it" relation. This is the objectified realm of the interrelationship between things. As Royce (1964) says: "... Martin Buber refers to the subject matter of science as the I-it, or dealing with things,..." (p. 26). In contrast to this, Buber speaks of the "I-Thou" relation. This is the qualitative dimension of the relationship between persons in which their personhood is enhanced - the realm of the free, inviolable, irreducible human being who cannot be objectified and made the subject of quantita-

tive experimentation (1970, pp. 53-85).

To utilize "rigorous experiments" with the intent of "weighing, measuring, testing," is to deal with a world of "its," things to be quantitatively manipulated as objects. Thus, similar to that of Buber, is Sartre's (1956) distinction between "being-in-itself" and "being-for-itself." The former points to the world of things, while the latter refers to the uniquely human realm of responsible freedom (pp. 24-158). And Tillich (1951) contrasts "technical" with "ecstatic" reason. The first of these seeks to control and manipulate objects, while the second is qualitatively in touch with values that can "grasp" one as "an ultimate concern" (pp. 53-54; 71-75). Berdyaev (1952) says of the "empirical basis" of scientific method that it induces the "estrangement of the object from the subject; the absorption of the unrepeatable individual and personal in what is common and impersonally universal; the rule of necessity, of determination from without, the crushing of freedom and the concealment of it..." (p. 62).

Yet to live in the "it" world, as does science, is not to be thought of as bad in and of itself. As Buber (1970) says, "All response binds the Thou into the It-world. That is the melancholy of man, and that is his greatness. For thus knowledge, thus works, thus image and example come into being among the living." If the purpose of our knowledge is the objective understanding of things - that we can test, measure, and quantify - then the science of "it" relations is indispensable. But if we are seeking to understand the unique "Thou," then our scientific methods are of no value. For the "Thou" emerges from a "relation [with other 'Thous'] which surpasses understanding..." (pp. 89-91). In the presence of the unique individual "Thou" our scientific "understanding" is useless. What can be said of a thing - that it is a certain quantity - cannot be said of an individual. An individual, you see, is a certain quality.

Given the qualitative inability to objectively test or measure the

life of the unique individual, I have decided that any attempt on my part to analyze what Victoria says of herself in the interviews is emphatically inappropriate. I fear that any such movement in the direction of analysis carries with it the threat of potential violence to her dignity as a unique "Thou." For example, Bugental (1963) advocates a "model of man" which views "the total person as the unit" in process. Given this model he concludes that, "Our definition of the human being as the process that supersedes the sum of its factors indicates that there is still a nonmeasurable aspect. There is still the person himself" (pp. 563-565). In a similar way, I am concerned to say that Victoria's uniqueness is a "nonmeasurable aspect" - not to be quantified, measured, tested. Any attempt at analysis of Victoria's presented experience in the interviews, therefore, is fraught with the danger of measurement, the danger of trying "to figure her out" as if she were an object. This would be an unjustifiable reductionist manipulation of a unique human being as if she were a thing.

Consequently, in accord with the simplicity of the study, I have conducted the interviews with the simplest of intents: to let a unique "flesh and bone" woman talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life, as these are occasioned by the ten concepts from existential psychology. That simple. This simplicity of intent is true to Victoria as a unique "thou." Whereas analysis of her presented experience immediately moves toward breaking her up into "the sum of" her "factors."

I consider it my responsibility to let Victoria speak - to let Victoria speak. The interviews are my attempt to fulfill this responsibility. I would invite you the reader to endeavor to listen to her speak - to endeavor to listen to her speak. Your own uniqueness may become manifest in the encounter with Victoria's uniqueness. If I were to analyze her experience, view her from the "outside" as an object of scientific interest, she would no longer speak. My analysis

would speak for each of her analytically reduced parts - the uniqueness of Victoria would be lost. Bigelow (1961) makes the telling point that, "From the outside a man appears to be just another natural creature; from the inside he is an entire universe, the center of infinity" (p. 172). Victoria's expressed experience in the interviews spring "from the inside" of her, from her unique individuality. She is "the center of infinity." Who am I to analyze this?

We have to learn to let people be. The unique "flesh and bone" individuality of Victoria tells us this, tells us that she cannot be quantified, measured, tested. We must let her be. By refusing to analyze the experience she presents in the interviews I have sought to do this. She is a priceless treasure and I have sought not to reduce her to anything less.

My feeling, however, is that some may hold it indispensable that Victoria's experience be in some way analyzed. I reiterate that strict empirical scientific methods are of no value in this. Friedman (1964) makes the point again: "Looking on man in a purely 'scientific' way similar to that which we bring to a non-human entity is not sufficient to understand man" (p. 105). Therefore, what method could the interested reader use to analyze Victoria's experience? I would suggest using the phenomenological approach defined in Chapter I. At least this method strives for the simplicity of appreciating the uniqueness of the "given phenomenon." The existentialist frequently uses it; as Kovel (1976) says: "The existentialist refuses from the start, however, to take that step away from the given phenomenon, ..." (p. 101). Further, the phenomenological approach allows the person interested in analysis to set aside her preconceived bias in favor of greeting what is there. This in turn allows her to set aside the useless premises of the "basic demands of science," and appreciate the uniqueness of the given individual. Perhaps Victoria could be approached in this way.

From my perspective, however, I reiterate that any analysis is too much analysis. The danger of quantification must be avoided.

Victoria speaks for herself. In Allport's (1965) Letters from Jenny, he notes what the "artist" or "humanist" would probably say of her letters: "The artist and the humanist might say, 'I accept Jenny's account of her agony, of her appreciations, of her course of life. What more is there to be said?'" (p. 163). As I reflected on the interviews with Victoria, this position seems quite sound to me.

C. What is Being Investigated?

This study's central subject of investigation is Victoria's experience of herself in relation to ten central concepts of existential psychology; though, as stated elsewhere, this experience will go without analysis. The subject of investigation raises the most important problem encountered in the study's interviewing process. Gorden (1975) has referred to this as "inferential confusion." This happens when "faulty deduction" takes place in giving "concrete examples of certain categories of experience supplied by the interviewer." This means the interviewer must use techniques that help the respondent in the abstract-to-concrete inference process (pp. 115-116),

In the study this problem took shape in relation to the central subject of inquiry - Victoria's expressed experience - in the following way. The central concepts of existential psychology had to be translated from their abstract meaning into questions that Victoria could respond to with her concrete experience. Thus the process of translation followed a pattern that looks something like this: as I approached the interviews I had in mind the basic orientation of existentialism, and existential psychology in particular. From this I selected the ten concepts upon which the interviews would be based. Next I more specifically defined these concepts so that the interviews could be more accurately grounded in these definitions. From here I was prepared to write questions rooted directly in the definitions. And, finally, I isolated five elements of each definition that could be used in the

formulation of each question. Victoria then offered her concrete experiential responses to each elemental question. This is obviously a very difficult movement from abstract thought to concrete experience; and one that was fraught with potential contaminating affect on Victoria's capacity to reveal definite inward experience. Consequently, I had to utilize a number of technical considerations in the actual conduct of the interviews.

First, I strove to select a time and place for each interviewing session that would "minimize inhibitors" in Victoria's willingness to communicate her concrete experience. This was done to insure privacy and avoid external "distractions" (Gorden, 1975, pp. 249-253).

Second, prior to the interviews that you will find transcribed in Chapter 3 of the study, I conducted three "exploratory interviews" with Victoria - touching on her history, general orientation toward life, etc. This was done so that I would have a better perspective on what her concrete world of experience looks like from her point of view. In this way I could better anticipate how my questions would interact with her experience of herself. I could also discover something of her vocabulary and the "paths of association" that she uses to express her experience - the way she symbolizes, reflects on herself, etc. (Gorden, 1975, pp. 345-351).

Third, and perhaps most important, prior to each official interviewing session I administered a set of instructions that established the significance of Victoria being concrete. These instructions are stated as follows:

I would like you to respond to each question in terms of your total personality - behavior, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc. A question may provoke you to select one of these aspects. This is fine. In the event of your doing this, however, I may ask follow-up questions designed to see if we might explore some other aspects that I feel may have been overlooked. It is important for you to understand that I'd like you to locate your responses in experience or particular experiences you've had, are having, or anticipate having. Say, for example, you wish to highlight a particular belief you have

in response to a question. This is fine. At the same time, however, I'd like you to attempt to point out the origination of that belief in your experience. If a question should provoke thought about an experience you'd rather not talk about, feel free to not speak of that experience. In such a case attempt to locate another experience, or inform me that you'd rather not explore any experience in regard to this question. In the event that you'd rather not explore any experience, I'll request that you respond to the question in whatever capacity you feel comfortable with. Most questions ask you if you've had a particular kind of experience. If you answer positively, you are then invited to respond further. If you should answer negatively, I would still invite you to approach the issue or issues the question raises for you from whatever angle you would like. Be as specific as you can about each particular experience that you present - time, place, etc. Beyond these specifics you are free to approach the experience as you'd like (highlighting what you wish, accenting what you think important, etc.). There will be a brief break after every question. Are there any questions? If not, then let's begin.

Addendum: If you cannot isolate an experience or experiences for particular focus, and instead feel that a question can only be answered in light of the total scope of your life, then feel free to respond in terms of that total scope.

In these instructions you will notice my emphasis on Victoria responding "in terms of" her "total personality - behavior, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, etc." I did not include this because I felt she could sum up her whole being in these different aspects. Rather, I mentioned them because I believed that noting these different components of herself would make it easier for her to tie her observations to her concrete experience, e.g. "This is how I felt when confronted with death in that situation." Whereas, as has been noted from Bugental elsewhere in the study, one's view of the human being must always see that a person is "that process that supersedes the sum of its factors."

Fourth, I did not reveal to Victoria the ten concepts from existential psychology during the process of interviewing. All she received were the questions based on the definitions of those concepts. This was done in order to avoid the danger of the interviews turning into theore-

tical discussions on the meaning of guilt, responsibility, etc. I wanted her observations to be rooted in her concrete experience, not in her theoretical perspective on existentialism. Accordingly, I explained to her why I could not reveal the concepts upon which the questions were based until the conclusion of the interviews.

Fifth, following the advice of Gorden (1975), I periodically gave an "introduction" to Victoria in regard to just what my purpose in the interviews (and thus in the study as a whole) were. This was done so that she would not feel the questions had some kind of "ulterior motive" and thus the "'real' purposes" of the interviews were "being hidden" (pp. 263-265). I felt that with knowledge of such information she would be more willing to render her concrete experiential perceptions, i.e. she would trust me more and be ready to share of herself more fully.

Sixth, and finally, I asked "broad questions" in the interviews. That is, questions that did not suggest specific answers. The point of this was to allow Victoria the freedom to explore her experience in any direction she saw fit. This does not mean that the questions were without presuppositions or that their scope was not delimited to a certain area of exploration (Gorden, 1975, pp. 348-352). Always the questions would ask her to present a certain kind of experience, beyond the parameters of which, other kinds of experience were inappropriate for that question. And each question certainly reflected the presuppositions of existential psychology. More will be said on this matter of presuppositions in the next section. For now it is enough to note that the questions were broad enough to give Victoria the freedom to roam her experience, but narrow enough to limit her observations to a certain area. The hope was that she would then find presentable material from her concrete life.

The point of this section was to explicitly state that the central subject of investigation for this study is Victoria's experience of herself in relation to ten central concepts of existential psychology. The biggest problem encountered in this relationship was the contamina-

ting influence, in the interviews, of having to move from the abstract meaning of these concepts to the facilitation of Victoria's concrete expression of her experience. Thus I articulated the six most important technical considerations utilized to deal with this contamination.

Now that the subject of investigation, as well as the process of dealing with its contaminating problem, have been more completely clarified, I would invite you the reader to reawaken in your mind and heart the general question of the study: how does Victoria experience herself in relation to the ten concepts from existential psychology? You should allow this question to be your underlying concern through the remainder of this chapter and on into Chapter 3: "Victoria Speaks."

D. The Method of Collecting the Data

Some of the relevant material on data collection has already been presented in the preceding section. However, a number of other issues remain to be clarified.

The first collection of data is the transcript of a historical self-report given by Victoria. Based on knowledge of her acquired from prior exploratory interviews, I felt the following information would be pertinent for this report:

1. Date and place of birth.
2. A sketch of her educational background.
3. A sketch of her work experiences up to the present
(including an identification of the nature of the work
and some details about what is done on the job).
4. Some insight into her family of origin - mother, father, etc.
5. A description of her marital status.
6. A description of her own family - the number and ages of her
children, etc.
7. A sketch of her religious background.

8. A brief insight into the counseling approaches that she subscribes to in her work as a counselor.

In conjunction with these pieces of information that I had requested, I emphasized that she feel free to add any information that she believed would be of further help to us in understanding the basic outline of her life.

What we receive in the historical self-report is a fairly free flowing description of Victoria's biographical data. In essence it is a combination both of the facts of her life and the meaning she assigns to many of these facts. It requires a careful reading because it is spoken at the moment, not preplanned and written in advance.

The second collection of data is fifty interview questions based on the definitions of ten central concepts of existential psychology. From these definitions five elements were isolated so that five questions from each could be asked. For example, in the definition of non-being, one might see at a quick glance, to elements that become immediately evident: death and conformity. Thus the basis for two questions is promptly formed. In Chapter 3 the reader should be able to follow this process as I used it with the definition of each concept. This procedure allowed for variation of responses in relation to each concept, e.g. questions based on different elements highlight different aspects of each definition.

Interviewing as the method of data collection follows logically from the principle thematic concern of this study's rationale: the simplicity of the study. The intent of this can be restated: the provision of the opportunity for Victoria to talk about how she has dealt with, or experienced herself in relation to, some of the basic issues of human life - as these issues are occasioned by ten concepts from existential psychology. The interviews provided her with this opportunity and thus have obvious face validity. This is not to say, however, that interviewing methods were used without difficulty in this study.

The principle difficulty, as has been noted in the previous section, was making the abstract-to-concrete transition from the meanings of the ten concepts from existential psychology to Victoria's presentation of her experience. Also in that section I presented the primary technical considerations used to deal with this difficulty. But, nevertheless, the transition problem proves to be a threat to the validity of the interviewing methods. Readers can judge for themselves, when they read the transcript of the interviews in Chapter 3, how well this threat has been dealt with.

Another difficulty is what we might call the inherent weakness of interviewing as a method of data collection. For example, as Gorden (1975) notes, any given respondent is not likely to communicate portions of their internal experience because of "inhibitors of communication": where the respondent feels that revelation of certain intimate material will be "ego" or "self-esteem" threatening, has trouble remembering relevant information from the past, has difficulty responding in ways other than those dictated by "unconscious behavior" (force of habit for example), etc. (pp. 107-119).

In response to these inhibitors I attempted to utilize "facilitators of communication": communicating the expectation that the respondent cooperate with the interviewing intentions, recognizing the respondent's need for recognition, giving the respondent the opportunity to do something "altruistic" by contributing to the interviewing process, offering "sympathetic understanding" to the respondent as she seeks to deal with difficult areas of internal experience, etc. (Gorden, 1975, pp. 123-133). In the concrete interactions with Victoria I attempted to help facilitate this "sympathetic understanding" by relying heavily on basic phenomenological counseling techniques: appropriate attending behavior, verbal following, paraphrasing, reflecting of statements and and feelings, etc. On occasion I would make more direct probes into, and interpretations of, Victoria's statements in order to stimulate deeper reflection on her part.

Yet with all this careful response to some of the weaknesses or "inhibitors" in the interviewing method, the reader should be advised that these weaknesses are still a threat to the validity of the interviewing approach employed in the study.

An issue of particular importance in its potential affect on the face validity of the study's interviewing method, is the problem of bias. Gorden (1975) notes that, since the interviewer has knowledge of the objectives of the interviews, there is a tendency to influence respondent answers in the direction of these objectives. First, in the actual interactions with Victoria I sought to use what Gorden refers to as "active flexibility;" which is using "the freedom to motivate the respondent to give valid information rather than to bias his response" (pp. 472-475). On one hand, I wanted Victoria to give responses limited to the particular area dictated by the scope of the question under consideration. But, on the other hand, I wanted her to express her own experiential answers in regard to the issues raised by each question.

The fifty interview questions reflect through and through both the language and presuppositions of existential psychology. Often the wording of the questions is strongly states; as in one of the questions on guilt: "Have you ever experienced yourself as not being 'true to yourself'?" Strong wording such as this was not used in order to "load" Victoria's responses in one direction rather than another. Rather, it expresses the fact that as an interviewer I was working with definite presuppositions that could not help but profoundly affect the questions I asked. Further, given the argument of the study as a whole, I saw no reason to disguise the fact that I had presuppositions upon which all my efforts were being based. As May (1969 b) says: "... every method is based on certain presuppositions about the nature of man, the nature of his experience, and so forth." And further: "The one way we can keep the presuppositions underlying our particular

method from unduly biasing our efforts is to know consciously what they are and so not absolutize or dogmatize them" (pp. 24-25). With a conscious acceptance of my presuppositions guiding me, I sought to write questions that would stimulate the articulation by Victoria of her own experiential presuppositions.

Bias, on the other hand, would be to deliberately attempt to get Victoria's responses to coincide with my presuppositions. This I sought to avoid. The reader should be advised, however, that bias is an extremely difficult factor to weed out of interviewing method. As such it remains a potential threat to the validity of the study's method.

A final issue of concern is the matter of reliability. The simplicity of the study's focus on a unique individual excludes it from consideration. Reliability, by definition, "refers to consistency, to obtaining the same results again" (Oppenheim, 1966, p. 69). Victoria's essential uniqueness negates this. She cannot be replicated, and nor should she be. Thus generalizability of findings is also an irrelevant concern.

E. The Method of Organizing the Data

In Chapter 3 a format will be presented explaining how the data in that chapter will be organized. For now it is enough to note that the interview consisting of Victoria's historical self-report will be presented first. The fifty interview questions will be offered second.

F. Precautions

In acquiring Victoria's experienced relationship to the ten concepts from existential psychology, I had to exercise the precautions listed on the next page.

1. The six technical considerations explained in the section, "What is Being Investigated?"
2. The technical considerations explained in the section, "The Method of Collecting the Data."
3. The interviews were properly paced in order to avoid interviewer/respondent fatigue.
4. The appropriate ethics of interviewing were observed.
5. In accord with precaution number four, none of the transcript of the interviews was edited and printed without first receiving Victoria's approval.
6. Editing of the transcript was employed to insure clarity of the dialogue.
7. The motivational difficulties of opening questions, as well as other motivational problems, were appropriately dealt with (C.F. Gordon, 1975, pp. 279-343).

G. Summary

The procedures utilized to carry out the argument of Chapter I were explained. How they fit within the context of that argument was elucidated. The methodological premises of the interviews were contrasted with the premises of scientific method. Sections on what was investigated, method of collecting the data, method of organizing the data, and precautions, showed how Victoria's experience of herself in relation to ten central concepts of existential psychology was elicited.

Chapter III

Victoria Speaks

A. Introduction

This chapter will present the two basic interview components of the study: Victoria's historical self-report and the fifty interview questions based on ten concepts from existential psychology. The historical self-report will be presented first, and the fifty interview questions second.

Victoria's responses to the interview questions will be advanced according to the following structural format: first, each of the ten concepts from existential psychology will be restated; second, the definition of each concept will be represented; third, each element of a definition, upon which an interview question was based, will be stated ("a" for the first element, "b" for the second element, and so on, until all five elements are mentioned); fourth, following the statement of each element, the question based on that element will be set forth; and, finally, the transcript of the interview rooted in that question will be presented. Thus the format will proceed in structural units that follow a pattern looking like this:

- Statement of the concept (being, non-being, etc.)
- Representation of the definition of the concept
 - Element of the definition (a,b,c,d,e)
 - Question based on the element
 - Transcript of the interview based on the question.

The latter three components of the format (element, question and transcript) will be presented one at a time: element a, question based on element a, transcript of Victoria's response to the question based on element a, and so on, until all the elements of the definition of that particular concept have been presented.

B. Victoria Speaks

Victoria's Historical Self-Report

Victoria speaks the following historical self-report in pretty much a free flowing conversational manner.

I guess my personal history probably started at the time of my birth. Well, maybe it started at the time of my conception, but I don't know the date for that, so I'll start with my birth. I was born on July 17, 1925, in Leipzig, Germany. My mother and father were both German. They both had Ph.D.s: my father's was in Economics and Statistics; my mother's was in Sociology. I was the second child in my family. I had one brother thirteen months older than I. Then, subsequently, two more siblings arrived, so that it was a family of four kids altogether. At the time that I was born, and for about five years after that, my father's parents shared the home we lived in. Therefore, for the very early part of my life, I was raised in a kind of extended family. Lots of my early, ever day memories involve my grandparents as well as my own parents. This grandfather, my father's father, was a Lutheran minister who had retired from a couple of small parishes in the very northern part of Germany by the time I was born, which was why they were living with my parents. It wasn't a matter of my parents living in their home, but of the grandparents having moved into my parents home. So they were somewhat uprooted. All the years that I knew this grandmother, who got to be my favorite grandmother, she always felt some sense of uprooting being in Leipzig, in the city, when she had lived most of her life in a fairly small village in northern Germany; where she had a very important position as the minister's wife, and where she also was close to farming, and farming people, and was able to keep animals herself. At the time I knew her she was living in an apartment in the city. I think that one reason that I always felt very close to this grandmother, was that she shared with me a very great interest in animals, which I developed later. By the time that I became conscious of this we were no longer living with her, but I would go to visit, and she and I had a very special kind of relationship. My other grandfather was a Prussian general. He was retired all the time that I knew him and I didn't know him nearly as long. He was the first of my grandparents to die. So I only knew him until I was 8 or 9 years old. The relationship I had with these maternal grandparents, although very close and in some ways very warm and meaningful, was always a little

bit more formal; in the sense that I never felt their home was home. It was very different from my home. They lived a much more formal life than we did, and I always felt that formality in a striking way. But I had a lot of very special experiences with that set of grandparents too. Partly because of the roles that my grandfather's assigned to us. He had a very definite conception of what grandchildren should be as grandchildren, and would place very definite demands on us, which we enjoyed very much. I'm talking about such things as rewarding us for certain accomplishments, and placing certain expectations on us in terms of little chores that we were supposed to do for him. I wasn't raised that way in my own family. So that was something that was always kind of special in the relationship with him. My grandmother on that side was visually blind all the time that I knew her, and had been blind since my mother was about 16. Therefore, in my relationship with her, although she was the adult and I was the child, we had a relationship in another dimension, where I would guide her, and take her places, and have a chance to play a protecting role in her life. I guess I'm trying to say that during my childhood I knew all four of my grandparents quite well as separate people.

I guess while I am on my family members, I might talk a little bit more about the people in my immediate family. I've mentioned my mother and father's professions, and the fact that I had an older brother and two younger siblings. My younger sister, and then my younger brother, were born when I was 3 and when I was 7. I can remember both of their arrivals. They were both born at home. Most of their growing up I remember. My older brother and I, he was just 13 months older, grew up, in many ways, as though we were twins. He was a child who learned to talk relatively late. And I was one who talked relatively early. So we pretty much learned to talk together. He had an operation on his legs when I was very young. He was in a cast with both legs for a long time. When he came out of that we learned to run together, more or less. We were very close until he went to school. After he started to school, my brother and I were in that period of childhood when it was pretty normal for him to have a group of friends that were just about all boys. And I had a group of friends that were all girls. Also, by that time, my little sister and brother were on the scene. So that kind of interrupted the very close relationship that there had been between my and my older bro-

ther. I remember, during my grade school years, my older brother was still a very important person in my life. I used to play a lot of games with him and have a lot of arguments with him. But we no longer did everything together, or spent all our time together like twins.

In Germany the school year starts at Easter time, and I started to school in 1932 when I was going on 7. I went to an experimental school, a very permissive, ungraded, very open sort of school. We had a lot of chance at progressing at our own rates, and going further into those things that we were interested in. The school was structured to that the first three grades, or maybe four, shared the same room. It was not specified as to who was in what grade. The kids generally knew how many years they had been there; they kind of expected, therefore, to move out of that room into the next older room within so many years. But, somehow, within the first couple years of school I made up a year I had missed by not going to school til age 7. I just moved on a year earlier. I moved out of that school at the time that I was ready to move into the fifth grade, which in the German system, is the first year of the formal high school. The high schools are a completely separate system, and are not part of public education. The public education system goes through eight grades, but if you go to high school you usually go after the fourth grade. Then I spent a year or so in a high school that was really a boy's high school. There were a few other girls in it. It was called the gymnasium and it was one of the several choices I had. You chose a particular high school by the curriculum. Some of the high schools were strictly classic, and some were more oriented toward modern languages. The school that I started in taught Latin and Greek. The other choice would have been a school that taught French and English. I went to the gymnasium as one of four girls in a class of about 30 kids, so that we girls were very much a minority. I was very close with all the other girls in my room. School generally was always easy for me. The first time I ever took a test was when I moved into high school. Because the school where I had spent those first few years was much more loose and open, we never had tests. We had the kind of curriculum that you moved through yourself, and there were certain checkpoints where you did a page and then you checked your own answers. If you had gotten most of them right, you moved on to the next chapter. If you hadn't, there was some more work on the same subject as the last chapter to do. So it was all self-directed. High school

was a very different experience. The classes were very formal, and our professors called us by our last names. I was there for only about a year.

I guess I should back up here and say that, obviously, those years that I'm talking about in Germany, were the years just before the Nazi regime came in. I lived in Germany until 1939. Both of my parents, in addition to their professional involvement, also were very much involved in the political scene in Germany - as long as there was any way of being politically involved on the other side of the Nazi fence. They were very active in the Social Democrat party and some of the youth movements. They used to give a lot of speeches on the radio and all that kind of thing. When Hitler came into power in 1933, it was well known in town that my parents were not Nazis. This put us very much in the minority, because there weren't very many people who had the courage to stand up and say that they weren't Nazis. At the last election in Germany, when Hitler came to power, you no longer could vote for anyone else. All you could do was to vote "yes" or "no". I remember going with my mother and seeing her make no bones about the fact that she was voting "no". But this was something that very few people had the courage to do, because, even then, there were threats of repercussions against things like that. In this atmosphere the thing I feel it did for me, was to teach me, very early, not to make my decisions about what was right and wrong for me by what other people would think. My parents, through their move to be openly anti-Nazi in a Nazi dominated society, kind of stepped outside of that whole realm of "What is everyone else going to think?" For me, I feel that that was a very positive thing. It gave me a lot of freedom from the feeling of domination by other people, because I just learned so early that it is perfectly possible to live with yourself according to your own convictions, and not be worried by what other people feel is right or wrong. What I was trying to get to, was that there was a real break in my family within a couple of years of the time that Hitler came into power. My father very quickly found it impossible to continue teaching at the University, because it was required to join the Nazi Party in order to remain in the University system. This was something that he refused to do. So he resigned. Then he stayed around for a few years and became very frustrated; because he could see what was happening to Germany, but there wasn't enough going on in

opposition to Hitler and the Nazi regime, in order for it to have any power, or any way of doing anything about the situation. So what my father finally did was to leave and go to Columbia. He worked for the Columbian government for a while. These, I think, were pretty unhappy years for my parents, and for me too. I missed my father a lot. I was very close to him. Then my mother decided to go over and stay a year with my father.

I felt very intensely interested in biology, animals, and in everything to do with the natural world. I had always wanted my parents to move to a farm. It never occurred to me to worry about what the two of them, with their Ph.D.s, were supposed to do on a farm. I just wanted to move to a farm, because that's where I wanted to live; so I could have lots of animals around me. So when the year came along when my mother was going to go to South America to stay with my father, she said one day, "Do you still want to live on a farm like you've said? As I am going to be gone for a year, I have to make other arrangements for you kids. My father didn't want to bring us to South America. He just couldn't see that as a situation in which he wanted to raise his kids. That's why they made the decision for her to go over there, and for us to stay in Germany. So she had to make some kind of arrangements for us. She said if it was still important to me to live on a farm, she would find me a farm to live on. I said o.k., and so she did, and I made another change in school then. I went to a public school that only went to the eighth grade, and had the last couple of grades together. Not because it was an ungraded school like the first school I had been in, but because it was a very small school. Thus, they didn't have enough pupils for each grade to have a teacher. The year that I spent there I spent in the top grade in the school, although I was not actually old enough to qualify for the top grade, which would have been the eighth grade. I guess I was, technically, a seventh grader that year. But I did my work with the eighth graders, because I was academically ahead of the rest of the kids. Then I did so much jumping around that I don't think I can spend a lot of time on each jump in my education. But I did go to another high school back at home for a while. Then we came over to the U.S. We came over with my mother. My father, after having been in Germany for a visit, was back in Columbia. He could see the war coming on, and didn't want the ocean separating us; and didn't feel it was feasible for him to come back to

Germany either. So they decided my mother would come over here with us. It was a hairy experience for my mother, but not for me. The way I reacted to all of the political pressures in Germany, and my father being on the other side of them was simply to turn to my interests in biology and animals; and just tune the rest out. I had no interest in what was going on in politics and I paid no attention to it. I lived with the assumption that my parents were right and everybody else was wrong, but I didn't do anything about it, and it didn't bother me. For my mother, I know it was a difficult experience being responsible for getting five kids out of Germany. There was another boy - he was a close friend of my brother's - who was half Jewish, and whose family was afraid to keep him in Germany. When they found out we were coming over here, they asked if we would take him along. So I picked up another brother. When I was 14 we came over here. When my mother arrived in New York, with the five of us, she made a decision that she couldn't handle trying to settle down by herself with a household of five kids, then get us all into school, try to learn English herself, have us learn English, and try to find a job for my father for when he was going to come over. So she made arrangements for my sister and me to go out and spend some time on my uncle's ranch in Wyoming. We got on the train and went from New York to Medicine Bow, Wyoming; with her speaking about two words of English, and me speaking about three. We stayed out there and didn't go to school at all for about three months. At Christmas time my uncle drove us back to Washington D.C., where my mother had settled down, and where my father was due to arrive shortly. Then, after Christmas, everyone felt it was high time for me to get back into school. In Washington the schools had a semester system, and so I would have gotten there just before finals at the end of January. Instead, I was sent to a school called an "Americanization School" for that month in between. This was a school that took in people of all ages from all different countries. The purpose was to teach enough English so that children who were of school age could move into public school; and to teach enough civics, government, American history, and those kinds of subjects, so that adults who went to school there could pass their citizenship exams. That was a very interesting experience. I had a good time at that school. Then I moved into a public high school and went for one semester. My mother got very worried because, for that whole semester, I never brought any homework home. Once a week, or every couple of days, she would ask me if I had

any homework; and I would say, "No, we had a study hall and I got it done." She was kind of sitting tight to see what would happen. When, at the end of the semester, I came home with all A's and a B+ in English, she decided it couldn't be much of a school. I tended to agree with her. I was not very happy there at all. It was a huge public school in Washington. I didn't know anybody and didn't have any friends. I didn't have any trouble with the work, but neither was it challenging. My mother talked this over with friends of hers, who were also from Germany, and who were involved with the Quakers in Washington, D.C. They made arrangements for a scholarship for me to a Friends school; where I went for two years. Actually I went there for 10th grade and 12th grade. I skipped the 11th grade. By that time I had decided I wanted to head for medical school. This is what had come out of my early interest in biology. When I began to toy with the idea of skipping the 11th grade, my mother very much encouraged that plan. Her own experience had been that, by the time she got her Ph.D., she was thoroughly tired of being a student, even though she was very interested in her professional field. So I just set about talking my teachers into letting me skip the 11th grade. I told them that I had talked to the kids in the 11th grade about what they were doing in their various subjects and that I had all of that in Germany and that I didn't want it again. They said "There is a system here called College Entrance Exams that covers the subjects dealt with in the last three years of high school. We will give you high school credit for any subjects you pass." I just went down and in whatever subjects I needed from the 11th grade I took the college entrance exams and moved into the 12th grade. As I look back on it now, I don't think that was a wise decision. It got me through high school at the age of 16 and still having only a couple of years experience in English I feel now, as I look back at it, that it would have been a lot better for me, in terms of making the cultural jump and coping with growing from a teenager into an adult, if I had stayed in that high school another year. But, academically, it never hurt me.

I went to college in Cleveland, at Western Reserve University, and took a pre-med program and never had any difficulties. In fact, I went to summer school a couple of summers and therefore, graduated in February, a semester ahead of my class. I met Mark the summer right after my freshman year. By the time that I finished college I pretty much knew that Mark and I were going to get married, although he had not

officially asked me yet. We were not actually engaged. I then made a decision not to apply to medical school, but rather I did some graduate work in biology. For a couple of years I worked in the lab at the Babies and Children's Hospital in Cleveland; and I also did some graduate work. I did all of the graduate work, including the research for a thesis, for a masters in biology, but I didn't ever get the thesis written. I worked probably a total of three years there in the hospital lab, on a combination of clinical lab work and research. Somewhere in the middle of all that I got married. At the time Mark was still in medical school. When he finished school and his internship, we moved to Denver for a residency.

We spent the next four years having four pregnancies and four children. About a year and a half of that time Mark spent in the Korean War. Generally, we lived in a lot of different places during those years. Jim was born in Denver, and then when Mark went to Korea, I went back to Cleveland and lived with his mother. That's where Hanna was born. When Mark came back we lived in Bremerton, Washington. That's where William was born. Mark was in the Navy all this time. He was in the Navy while he was in medical school, and that's why, after he finished medical school, he had an obligation of as many years working as a doctor for the Navy as he had schooling. From Bremerton we moved to Jacksonville, North Carolina, and that's where Jean was born. By the time Mark discovered he could get out of the Navy, we had decided to live in the Rocky Mountains in a small town. I had gotten pretty fond of the Rocky Mountain area during all the time that I spent on my uncle's ranch. I spent just about all of my summer vacations at the ranch, as well as any other time that I wasn't in school, working a team of horses in haying and roaming the prairie in lambing. When we decided later to move West, we had a list of seven towns in the Rocky Mountain area that we liked. So Mark took a leave, and visited the seven towns, to see what kind of opportunities there would be; and came back with an offer of a job or a partnership in every one of the seven towns. Bozeman, Montana was the combination of job and place that seemed most appealing to us. So we picked it out of the United States to come here and raise our kids. We arrived in Bozeman in 1954, on Labor Day, with four children - the oldest of whom was four.

For another ten years I was pretty much involved with raising the kids, with hobbies like carpentry, masonry, etc. The whole family was very much oriented toward the mountains. We pretty much raised our kids carrying them around on our backs in the mountains a lot of the time, both skiing in the winter, and climbing in the summertime. We also did a lot of that kind of thing without the kids; because when they were little we were into the kind of mountaineering that children can't do.

Now I need to back track a bit. You have something down here about religious background; and that, of course, is a thread that goes clear back. Very briefly, although my one grandfather was a Lutheran minister, both of my parents had rebelled against the church; which, in Germany, was a state church. They went pretty far out of their way to raise us without any prescribed religious convictions. They worked hard at keeping me out of all religious training. When I was a child, my Catholic friends all thought I was Protestant; and my Protestant friends all thought that I was Catholic, because religion, in Germany is taught as a subject in school. Whether it's Catholic or Protestant, goes according to the state religion. We lived in a Protestant state, so that Protestant religion was taught in school and the Catholic kids were excused and went to Catholic church. I was excused too, but all the Catholic kids knew that I didn't go to church with them. I never worried about religion in any formal sense. My parents, particularly my mother, had a very strong feeling that it is wrong to ridicule, make fun of, or refuse to take seriously, anything that is important to someone else. It was always very important to her, although she didn't want us to have any religious instruction, for us not to make fun of other people's religious beliefs. I very much internalized that attitude. It has become important to me also. But other than that, the subject of religion as religion, didn't raise it's head for me; except in my grandparent's house. There were prayers at mealtimes and at bedtime. I could see it as being important to them, and see them gaining a real strength from it. It was something that I didn't want to belittle, or refuse to participate in; but, at the same time, I felt that it didn't have any real meaning for me. I tended to look at everything I knew about in the Bible pretty much the same way that I looked at the Santa Claus myth. My parents never tried to "pull" Santa Claus on us because they were very realistically oriented; but, at the same time, they

cautioned us not to ruin it for any other kids that did believe in it. It was treated very much the same way that religion was treated. So I put them in the same category. I felt what was said in the Bible was a lot like Santa Clause: - there was some grain of spiritual truth in there, and the rest of it was a story that had grown up around it. Beyond that, the subject of religion didn't raise it's head for me until I was in college and was asked by an English professor to write a theme on "What Religion Means To Me." Then I had to sit down and try to fit something together. I discovered I really had built up a very strong system of personal beliefs; but the stones out of which I had built it mostly came from Biology and I knew about the natural universe. I did do some shopping around among churches when I was in college, visiting various kinds of programs. When Mark and I became closer, I made a decision, before we were married, to join the Presbyterian church, because it was the church that he had been raised in; and it was very important to him. There was a very liberal minister, with whom I enjoyed dialogueing. Then, as we moved around the country, I involved myself in the Sunday School of the Presbyterian church. As a matter of fact I taught Sunday School in the Presbyterian Church before I joined. So, in a very real sense, it was the Sunday School that brought me in. After we moved to Bozeman, it was also the Sunday School that brought me out. At this point, our own children were of early school age; and Jim came home one day announcing that he was never going back to Sunday School. He had run into a teacher who had tried to convince him that there actually, physically, were angels; and this was something that he wasn't prepared to believe. At the same time, Mark was an elder in the Presbyterian Church here; and had asked for the Sunday School committee as his particular responsibility. We got together with a group of parents, and tried to do some reading into what we thought religious education should do for kids. During this process we ran into some Unitarian materials that created a real sense of coming home for me; in that I could see, in the Unitarian approaches, a lot more of the approaches to basic questions about life that I had seen in my parents. Even though my parents had not been Unitarians, I had the feeling that they might have been, had there been a Unitarian Church for them to join in Germany. Finally, we began to use some Unitarian materials within the Presbyterian Church; and that turned out to be very threatening and uncomfortable for some of the other Presbyterians. They liked it fine, as long as we were

just trying something different; and it was going over well with the kids. We introduced a lot of nature study and those kinds of things; which, of course, fell right into my own way of getting at my religion; and was very meaningful to me. But when the rest of the parents found out that the materials we were using were Unitarian, they became very uncomfortable with it. We finally reached the conclusion that it wasn't right to make them uncomfortable, and so we seceded along with a group of other parents, and formed what eventually became the Unitarian Fellowship here. While all this was going on, I had discovered that there was a small Friends Meeting here in Bozeman. Although I had never had a lot to do with Friends meetings, I had had some contact with Quakers through the Quaker School in Washington. I became interested and attended the meeting here for a while, and eventually became a Quaker; because it suited my particular ways of going at things even better than Unitarian ways did. At the moment I am a Quaker and, obviously from my history, I consider religion a very fluid thing. So I don't consider it inconceivable that I might end up something else yet.

Now, I want to get back to the educational thing as far as my counseling education is concerned. My decision to move into that was triggered by the fact that I found out Mark wanted a divorce after 23 years of marriage; and so my response was to make an immediate decision to get back into school in order to prepare myself for some way of making a living. My children, during all the years that they were growing up, had often told me that I should be a teacher; because of the ways that I had interacted with them, the ways I had stimulated them in their education. That's what prompted me to go back and look into things in the education field; and, as I got into things, I very quickly decided that counseling was more interesting, and suitable, to me than straight classroom work.

Some years before we made the decision for the divorce, Mark had made a decision to retrain in pediatrics from general practice; and so we lived in Baltimore for two years. There I had worked as a social worker. At that time I ran into a lot of challenge, but also a great many frustrations. My own approach to working with people was what I later learned to classify as "nondirective." I was working in protective services, which was a much more aggressive service that was comfortable for me. Also, I had a supervisor who

had a much different approach to working with people than my own, and I had constant run ins with her because I was trying to get people to make up their own minds about what they wanted to do. While she wanted me to decide what they should do. When I got into the counseling curriculum here at Montana State, it was very much a feeling of "coming home" to suddenly discover that there were people who believed in approaching others non-directively. The whole Rogerian approach, and client centered counseling methods, were what I had been struggling my way toward on my own. It felt very good to be told that that's the way you "should" be doing it. I finished the degree in counseling here through an Indian education program; because of some experiences that I had through the Friends' meetings in working with Indian people here in Montana - summer camps and things like that. As soon as I finished my degree, I felt some real challenge, and some obligation, to put to work the Indian education part of it. I became part of a team that went from here to the Crow reservation, to get a bilingual program started there. I taught in the classroom for one year, and did counseling for four years; and then got tired of commuting back and forth. So I came home to Bozeman to take the job that I now hold at the Help Center.

I guess I should shed a little bit of light on what that job is: Basically, we are working with a couple of staff members and a lot of volunteers in order to operate a 24 hour crisis program. My job is both relating to the volunteers - providing training and support for them - and working with clients who come or call the Help Center on a 24-hour basis. We deal with people that are there for counseling, or counseling referrals, in crisis situations, and with people that are caught on the road, and come in as transients - to spend the night and have a couple of meals. I find it a very good combination of challenges for the particular way in which I like to work with people. It is a hard job, but one that is well suited to me; and brings me many satisfactions, as well as plenty of challenge.

Victoria's Response to the Fifty Interview Questions

Being

Representation of the definition of being:

Being is that irreducible, inexhaustible whole which constitutes the human being as human being. "Being is that which remains" (May, 1958 b, p. 41). It "remains" because it is that about the human which can't be broken up into parts: whether these parts be emotions, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, etc. Being is more than all these. It is, according to May, what constitutes the "to whom" any number of "experiences happen" (1958 b, p. 41). It is revealed most clearly in the distinctly human quality of freedom, i.e. the capacity to stand back from all deterministic factors (environment, heredity, etc.) and be aware of oneself as the one who acts. In this sense, being is the presupposition for all human behavior, emotions, etc. Being is that which allows us to know it is "I" who acts, "I" who feels this emotion, "I" who holds this belief, etc.

Element a: the matter of wholeness.

Question based on element a:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you would describe yourself as more "whole," more complete, more integrated, than at other times? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like you to tell me if you have ever experienced moments or periods of your life in which you would describe yourself as more whole more complete, more integrated than at other times? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

Victoria: Well, yea, there have been such experiences. But those that struck me most as having brought about that kind of feeling are really impossible to capture in words. The experiences that have made me feel most that way are all what I would have to call mystical experiences, for lack of a better term. And those are famous for being impossible to capture in words. You can try to put them into a poem. Even then I think the best you can do is to recognize, in some writings of other people, efforts to express those kinds of experiences. And the only reason you can recognize it in their writings is because you can tie it into having had similar experiences like that yourself. Even among the experts, I think it's not really the words that convey the experience. There are other experiences that are not so hard to grab a hold of, that have made me feel that way. Some everyday experiences can suddenly have that kind of feeling about them. I can remember them from when I was young; just feeling so whole because the sun was hitting me just right that day. Or, you know, sitting in a swing; and I can remember feeling that way dashing around on horseback. I feel that way working with groups of children when something just comes out right. There is nothing dramatic enough about the experience to warrant the strength of that sudden feeling of wholeness they elicit.

C: It's like the experience of wholeness, for you, has not always been signified by a dramatic experience of one sort or another. It's been much more ordinary.

V: Yea, they've all been ordinary experiences.

G: But they seem to have, for you, a special quality?

V: Yea, but now you're going to ask me to describe that; and I don't know that that's possible to do.

G: Like we can take it for granted that you are not going to be able to capture these experiences in words; and I certainly wouldn't expect you to. I would have a great deal of difficulty in doing that myself with some experiences that I have had. Perhaps you could get at these experiences of wholeness more indirectly.

V: Well, I would say that more than half of them have been experiences that were strictly by myself. I was either actually alone, or I was experiencing something that didn't have anything to do with other people who may have been around. Some other examples have been experiences of communication with another human being or a group of human beings. Then, of course, the mystical experiences I was talking about earlier are pretty individual sort of experiences. I can divide those between times when I was actually by myself and times when I may have been sitting in a meeting with a group of people. (Subject is a Quaker and the term Meeting as used in these interviews refers to a Quaker Meeting for Worship.) I don't know exactly what the rest of the people have to do with the very individual experiences that one may have in Meeting. I know their presence is not insignificant. When I am talking about experiences of a deepened sense of communication with somebody else, it's obvious, of course, that other people were a part of that.

G: But, I think you are telling me that at times this sense of wholeness that you have derived from an experience, or comes out of an experience, has a quality of solitude to it.

V: Sometimes it has, but I think the thing that is common about the experiences is that they elicit a suddenly stronger sense of belonging, although it may be a belonging to the universe. It's not necessarily belonging in a social sense. I feel that, compared to a lot of people, I carry a pretty strong sense of belonging around in side of myself. I tend to be pretty comfortable, and I don't think of myself as being particularly social. I am not antisocial, but I'm a pretty asocial sort of being.

G: So this experience of wholeness, this sense of belonging, doesn't necessarily have a social connotation to it.

V: No, it doesn't have to. The experiences themselves don't happen in words and they're hard to put into words. Sometimes the experiences have been very physical, other times they may seem to have no physical

component at all. I sometimes have woken up early in the morning with a strong sense of resolution. I couldn't tell you, or even myself, what was working itself out. I just knew that something was, and that I could just let it go ahead and work itself out and it would come out alright, and maybe someday I would know what is was, and maybe I wouldn't. A lot of things are resolved in the process of dreaming. And my feeling is that you don't necessarily have to be aware of what you were dreaming. You don't have to remember it the next day, or be conscious of it, in order for the dreaming to be able to do its work. That's kind of what I'm talking about with that sense of wholeness. I don't know how to put that into words. The only thing that I can say is that some passages in books are favorites of mine, because I recognize them as attempts to put into words those same kinds of experiences. I think that somebody else could read the same passage and it might say something completely different to them, because I don't think that the experience is really there in the passage. I think that all the passage can do is to trigger a memory of something you have experienced yourself.

G: It's like favorite passages will capture in words things that you struggle with and find difficulty putting in words, or things that you just don't think you can put in words.

V: Yea.

G: I am going to take kind of an adventurous stab here, in terms of what you've been telling me, and if I am off base, then you should tell me that too. But, as I hear you talking about this quality of wholeness, of being integrated, and that sort of thing, I hear you telling me that sometimes the proper stance for you in relation to these experiences is a quality of silence, a stance of silence.

V: Yea, all you can do....

G: Is that a fair statement of where you stand?

V: Yea. Yea. Those are some of the things I've tried to write poems about. But it doesn't ever do the job.

- G: There is something about this kind of experience that defies words.
- V: Yea, I may have a different sense of how important words are to things than many people.
- G: Could you explain that?
- V: I remember, within the first few years of moving to this country and changing languages from German to English; being asked what language I thought in and what language I dreamed in. "When I got to thinking about it my answer was, "I don't always think in words, I don't always think in a language and I don't always dream in a language." There are a lot of things that have happened to me - and I kind of know what they're all about, but I have never tried, or when I have tried, haven't really found it possible to express them to somebody else; because you have to capture them in words to do that.
- G: And that's the difficult thing to do (long pause). Can I take the silence to mean that that states pretty much what you would like to state in regard to this?
- V: Yea. That's all I can think of to state.

Element b: the matter of "I".

Question based on element b.

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you had a "strong sense of yourself," so to speak; in which you stepped back from an experience and said, "This is I who did that," or while engaged in an experience said, "This is I who feels this,"? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

The interview based on element b's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you had a strong sense of yourself, so to speak; in which you stepped back from an experience and said, "This is I who did that," or while engaged in an experience said, "This is I who feels this,"? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

Victoria: I think I'm more likely to say that in regard to relatively less important things. Sometimes I step back, either by myself or when someone is at my house, and say, "I built that fireplace." I'm likely to do this with anything I have made - with something I've built, clothes I've sewed, or something like that. I get a real sense of joy out of having made something. I like to create things with my hands, and I like to have a feeling that something came out just right. If it didn't come out just right, I like to have it around and share that with other people too. I can't remember standing back and saying that to myself with what I might consider more important, but less a physically concrete accomplishment. Partly that's because it's much easier, with physical accomplishments, to be sure what I have done and what somebody else has done. In non-physical accomplishments, there usually are other people involved. Even when other people are not directly involved, it is not nearly as easy to be sure of what's my doing and what is somebody else's doing. In any event, I've often had the feeling I think you were trying to get at. But the feeling didn't express itself by saying to me "I did this," as much as it said "Isn't it great this happened or isn't it great the way it came out." I think I can identify with the sense of joy in accomplishment that you're trying to get at in this question. Only it doesn't necessarily come through to me in terms of "I". In most anything worth doing there's a lot involved besides me, or even besides just people.

G: Could you go further with that line of thought? I'm not sure it's clear to me or that I follow. You just said there may be more involved that you and other people. What does that mean?

- V: Well, in plain physical projects I get a real sense of joy of having built something. In non-physical projects, there is a real joy of accomplishment for me when something gets done or works out right, but it's not a sense of, "This is what I have done," so much as, "This is what I've been a part of." In more complex accomplishments, there have been other people involved too, and other forces besides people.
- G: When you're doing a more mundane thing, like sewing, your sense of "I have done this" would be stronger. Is that what your saying?
- V: Well, there my sense of accomplishment would be phrased more appropriately in terms of, "I have done it." So it would more easily fit the way you phrased your question.
- G: Doing something mundane or physical carries a sense of "I have accomplished this."
- V: Yes, though when I get to thinking about it, the nice thing about my fireplace is the rocks. All I did was put them together. You phrased this particular question with a very strong "I" in it. I'm trying to tell you that many times there is that sense of accomplishment for me, which I think you were trying to get at, but it may not have an "I" playing a big role in it. It may be more a sense of having found a good way to interact with something that was going on, becoming a part of it and feeling satisfied with what was accomplished. I often experience a satisfaction of accomplishment without having such a strong sense of "I" about it.
- G: Say that we were to set aside the word "accomplishment," and say you were involved in a group task or something that a group is participating in. Have you ever had the experience of saying, "This is I who participated in that," with the accent on "I"?
- V: Well, I'm not sure what you're asking. I think I have a relatively firm sense of who I am, but I think I diffuse myself fairly fast into the world. I don't think I give a sense of boundary to this "I". At least not the way you have in your question. It

- V: It doesn't quite fit in with the way I feel when I'm doing something.
- G: You're saying that, although you have a strong sense of yourself, at the same time you don't see yourself as an isolated "I".
- V: Yes.
- G: When you get away from an ordinary task and start thinking about some of the bigger things, like interacting with the world, the sense of "I" becomes more diffused.
- V: Yea, the more important things are more intertwined than the ordinary things. So, I don't have an easy time separating the "I" from what I'm intertwined with.
- G: I see. That comes through more clearly to me. Is that pretty much what you'd like to say about this question?
- V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of more than parts.

Question based on element c:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you perceived yourself as more than a collection of fragments, so to speak? That is, have you ever experienced yourself as a person constituted by more than isolated component parts; whether these parts be particular emotions, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, etc.? If so, could you elaborate for me as fully as you can on what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

The interview based on element c's question:

- Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you if you have ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you perceived yourself as more than a collection of fragments, so to speak? That is, have

G: you ever experienced yourself as a person constituted by more than isolated component parts whether these parts be particular emotions, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, etc.? If so, could you elaborate for me as fully as you can on what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

Victoria: I guess I have trouble with your phrase "isolated parts." I'm always aware of being more than just a collection of isolated parts, and I don't usually focus on the isolated parts. One experience that made me think of this early on, was when I first became aware that I could dream. I don't remember how old I was at that time. I do remember thinking it was a really neat thing, because that was me doing the dreaming; and yet me as I was usually aware of myself, wasn't aware of doing it until later. Another experience I remember very clearly was more a feeling kind of experience, with everything being together. It was one of the first days of spring, when I was about 8 years old, and I had shed the long wool stockings that we used to wear in the winter. I just remember walking down the road toward town and having this feeling of everything just feeling so together, so neat. I sort of felt both inside of myself and outside of myself at the same time. Again, this points out how shady the boundaries can be between self and not-self. However, I wouldn't say these experiences are the only ones in which I feel more than the sum of isolated parts. My whole view of anything alive, myself include, is that it is more than the sum of its parts. Quite a lot of times I may not be thinking about this. Yet I'm not unaware of it either. It's just a basic truth that's underneath most of what I do.

G: An operating presupposition.

V: Yes. It's like an interaction between persons. When something has gone on between two people that is worthy of the term communication, more has passed back and forth between them than can be captured by writing down the words, the gestures, or taking a video tape of what has happened. I think, in that same sense, I feel I'm more than just the sum of all my reactions and interactions. There's a part of yourself that is part of you, but that can also step outside of yourself and take a look at you.

G: Would you care to talk about what that would be, how you try to visualize it or capture it? What is that something which is outside of you and looks at you? It seems to me, as I listen to you, that that is connected with what this "something more" is.

V: Well, it's connected with it, although I don't know what it is. Dreaming was the first time that I remember being aware of that kind of thing. There are other things I used to do as a child sometimes. I used to be able to lie in my bed and walk across the ceiling. Yet, I could create, and sometimes purposely created, experiences where I felt as though I was really walking across that ceiling. The experience felt just as real as walking down the street, even though in my head I knew there was a difference between the two. Anybody else could see me walking the street. But I knew that nobody else could see me walking across the ceiling, nor would they agree that I was doing so. So I never tried to tell anybody that I was walking across the ceiling, but I knew I could. I don't know how to define what that is.

G: Pinning down that something outside of yourself, or that something more that is beyond the fragments, is very hard to do.

V: Yes, it's very much there. But I think it varies as to how easily available to myself it is. I haven't spent much time walking across the ceiling lately. It is there. It is certainly a part of me. It's something more than the sum of the fragments like you're talking about in your question. So is the thinking self. I guess the difficulty is that, in the ordinary ways in which we talk about ourselves, or about other things, if there is a particular function going on and a particular action happening, then we assume that there is a particular organism, thing, machine, something that we can ascribe that action to. I would say that that kind of assumption about the "real" world is just not true. There are lots of functions going on where it isn't that easy, or maybe not even possible, to point to some physical entity and say this is a function being performed by this particular part. We all know that there are lots of things we

do that can't be located in a particular part of us, but still we do them.

G: Are you saying that there are those moments in the ordinary course of affairs, or events, in which people will isolate a function just for reasons of utility; but in reality that's not necessarily true? Is that what you were saying?

V: Yes, I think that a lot of the basic assumptions that we make about the world aren't true. Also it seems to me that your question was saying, "put your finger on some isolated instances when you felt as though you were more than a collection of isolated parts." I guess my answer to that would be, "I'm always more than a collection of isolated parts." I can't cite any rare awarenesses of this, because I'm aware of it as a basic assumption and have been aware of it for most of my conscious life. I was trying to give you some extreme examples because you were asking for examples, but those examples are just extreme. What we're trying to get at is something which is much more ongoing, much more underlying.

G: And so these examples would be highlights of something that is a persistent thing for you. I see. It's not like you're always walking across the ceiling, but that highlights a persistent theme for you.

V: Yes. As I say, I don't really spend time walking across the ceiling at all now. But when I was little there were lots of things I could do. I could walk in the air too. I used to really enjoy doing it. I don't do it lately, but I think that's an easy way to illustrate what I mean. I do other things like that now, but they're much more complex, internal and harder to express in words. Yet they're all functions of our being more than the sum of our parts.

G: And so those highlights that you pointed to are what you would call clear examples of our being more than isolated parts.

V: Yea, we started to get into that aspect of ourselves that can step outside of ourselves, and take

a look at ourselves, ways of sort of being in two places at once. I can be the me that I'm observing at the same time that I'm the me that's doing the observing. I don't feel alone in that. I think that's something that human beings can do.

G: Kind of like you can be you, and you can be you observing you.

V: Yea. We don't know whether other forms of life do that or not. I think it's perfectly possible that they do, but there isn't any way we can prove it. After all we don't have the kind of communication with other forms of life that would enable us to talk about that. I think it wouldn't be hard to get agreement among human beings, at least enough human beings, to be able to pin-point it as a fairly frequent, if not universal, human characteristic. I think it's frequent enough for us to make the assumption that all human beings can do it, whether they all actually do it or not. But with other forms of life we just don't know.

G: That's an open question.

V: Yes. In terms of this question, if you feel that explains to you what I mean in my answer, then I feel we've dealt with the question.

G: It comes through pretty clear to me.

Element d: an extension of the matter of "I".

Question based on element d:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you discovered, in whatever way this discovery might have taken place for you, an essential "core" of yourself, so to speak? A core that goes beyond yourself as an "ego," or as a "subject" in subject-object relationships? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you discovered, in whatever way this discovery might have taken place for you, an essential core of yourself, so to speak? A core that goes beyond yourself as an ego, or as a subject in subject-object relationships? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what subject experience or experiences entailed for you?

Victoria: It's hard for me to put my finger on specific experiences that relate to that question. I don't think that's because the feeling you're talking about is vague. I feel very firmly rooted in a core of myself; more so than many other people with whom I have tried to talk about such things. This, however, relates more to the whole sense of myself and the ongoing discovery of who I am. I would say that most of my experiences contribute to it. Most of the time, if not all the time, I'm pretty aware that that core of myself is there; but I don't know that I can tell you of isolated experiences of it. I can tell you of some experiences that make me more aware of it than I am at other times, but I don't feel these experiences necessarily are the ones that were most instrumental in creating that sense of a centered core.

G: Whatever you would like to highlight is fine with me.

V: Experiences that make me more aware of my core are those which make me feel at one with things that are outside of myself. This can be a matter of being in the mountains, feeling in close communication with another person, doing something that I'm good at doing, creating something; or it can be a matter of sitting in a room and having the sun shine on me.

There are other experiences that, at the time, may not make me aware of that core of myself; but they may be just as instrumental in contributing to it. For example, experiences of getting into an argument with somebody or a philosophical discussion can make this sort of contribution. Any experience where I have to think about such questions as you're asking me are good examples. They don't necessarily make me aware at the time of my

core, but I think they may contribute to this core sense of myself more than the experience that make me aware of it. But, basically, that sense of core has been with me as long as I can remember. It's not an ecstatic thing. I don't feel I'm ever at the point where I can say, "This is who I am and who I'm going to stay." Rather, the most I want to do, is to say, "This is how I am becoming." I don't think I can think of any particular experiences where I can say, "This is where my sense of myself started."

G: Can you carry this line of thought a bit further?

V: Basically, your question was asking about a core sense of myself, something more than just an ego. My answer would be that I do feel that in myself, but I can't cite particular experiences that bring it about. However, there are two kinds of experiences I can think of in relation to this issue. One is reflected in the moments of experiencing a sense of unity with my surroundings and with other people. I think these comfortable unifying experiences tend to make me aware of the core of myself. On the other hand, if we're trying to talk about how I came by this core, or how it developed, then some of the less comfortable growing sorts of experiences contribute to the development of that core in an indirect way. Engaging thoughts or feelings with somebody else in a conflict or challenge requires me to pit my mind against another mind and form opinions that are different from the opinions of the other person. That kind of experience doesn't give me that centered sense of unity at the time, but it helps me to figure out who I am. Consequently, it does contribute to the solidity of the core.

G: I see. That's much more clear to me now. I'm wondering if there might be some particular emotions that go along with sensing a core within yourself.

V: Yea, I try to include emotions, as well as thoughts or intellectual things, in who I am. Again it works in two ways. I think there are unifying emotional experiences. Some of the things I was talking about - being in the mountains or feeling the sun shine on me - are emotional experiences of fitting in, and they make me very much aware of that

core of myself. Whereas in conflict experiences it works in a different way. It could be an emotional conflict with someone else or an intellectual argument. Neither of these conflicts would make me feel aware of a core of myself at the time. But both kinds of conflict experiences contribute to my having a stronger sense of who I am in the long run.

G: If you were to describe the kinds of emotions that you have on both sides of that spectrum, what words would you use?

V: One would be a flowing sense of fitting in and the other would be a much more pinpointed sense of hitting a boundary. Maybe that's why I feel, in the long run, both intellectual and emotional conflict experiences help to establish the sense of who I am. They are instrumental in distinguishing me from other people. The more flowing, fitting together experiences don't distinguish me from others like this, but they make me aware of myself in a central way.

G: I see.

V: One experience helps me to distinguish myself from others and the other gives me a strong sense of belonging. Both are important to my central sense of self. One gives it substance, the other calls it into awareness.

G: I see. Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes.

Element e: the matter of presupposition.

Question based on element e:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which, prior to any overt behavior, emotion or belief, you found yourself presupposing a more essential capacity to be the one who behaves, the one who feels an emotion, or the one who holds a belief? If so,

could you elaborate for me as fully as you can what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which, prior to any overt behavior, emotion, or belief, you found yourself presupposing a more essential capacity to be the one who behaves, the one who feels an emotion, or the one who holds a belief? If so, could you elaborate for me as fully as possible what such experience or experiences has entailed for you?

Victoria: I'm trying to think if I can really lay claim to any such experiences. I don't recall ever being conscious of myself in that particular way. I think I live on an underlying assumption that I am the one that holds the beliefs that I act on; but I really can't think of any experiences in my life where I was particularly aware of going through that with myself.

G: You feel like you can't be pinned down to a particular point in time.

V: Yea, I really can't. I can remember, quite vividly, some experiences that I sometimes had as a child. They were usually not significant experiences. They were funny little garden variety experiences, like coming down a stairway in a place I hadn't been before and suddenly knowing exactly what was going to happen a second before it happened, just like I had run through it before. I remember thinking about myself, who I was, and where that kind of foreknowledge of something could come from. But that kind of experience is a little different from what's in your question. I really don't remember having the kind of conversation with myself that would fit your categories.

G: If you'd like to approach the question from a completely different angle and pinpoint a specific experience more in accord with your life, you're welcome to do that.

- V: Well, I don't know that my experiences are that related to your particular question, other than that they did bring about a kind of a dialogue with myself.
- G: The "garden variety" experiences you spoke of don't gel with the presupposition in my question.
- V: No, they don't seem like the same thing you're trying to get at. All I can say is, "I can hear what you're talking about and I can say that to myself, but I don't remember ever having set myself down to say to myself what your question says. I can't find an experience quite like what you're asking for.
- G: If you'd like to speak to this question from a completely different angle, from a non-experience angle, in terms of what you believe about the question or your attitudes toward the question, that would be fine.
- V: As a philosophical/spiritual dialogue with myself, there may be times in my life when I could very suitably say, "I'm about to act in this particular way because I am the person who holds this belief." But there are other times when I don't approach it that way. It doesn't always feel so much as though I am the person holding these beliefs and living my life this way. Sometimes it feels as though you should turn it the other way around: These beliefs are holding me and my life is living me. Just as a philosophical issue I would say, although there might be times when the way you have put your question would be applicable to my thoughts, there are other times when I'm approaching things from the other end.
- G: Could you carry that line a bit further? I'm interested in that.
- V: Well, it's a matter of "is the dog wagging the tail, or the tail wagging the dog". And I can't point to experiences where I have looked at it through the telescope you're using. Just as a philosophical issue, I think if I were to start looking through that telescope I wouldn't always use the end you're using in the question. I would be very likely to turn the telescope around and look the other way through it.

- G: I think the phrase you used was "life living me." Could you help me with that? I'm wondering what that means to you.
- V: To me life, in a way, is something that exists not only outside of me, but outside of all of us. So there is a force called life that is expressing itself by living through us. It doesn't all originate from me and move out toward life. There is a lot going in the other direction.
- G: That's what you're talking about when you say you'd turn the telescope around and look the other way.
- V: Yea, if you turned the telescope around that's what you would see happening. In your question you're looking at us as being conscious of ourselves as individuals who hold beliefs and are living our life on those beliefs. I'm not trying to say that doesn't happen. I'm just saying that's one way of looking at what is happening. Another way of looking at what is happening is to see life living itself out by using people.
- G: That's more clear to me now than it was earlier when you were talking about it.
- V: I think that's an interesting philosophical issue and, to my mind, it isn't necessary for one of those conclusions to be true and the other one to be untrue. I think it's perfectly possible that there is an interaction going on between us and life which makes both ways of experiencing available.
- G: I have a strong sense that the presuppositions in my question didn't immediately trigger off any kind of answering presuppositions for you. There's a gap there that isn't about to be crossed in the short span of this interview.
- V: Well, when that happens, my experience has usually been that it's because you're up against something more than a vacuum. I suspect we harbor opposing beliefs on some of this.

- G: It's like we've got two differing view points on the matter.
- V: Yes.
- G: Does that capture this one for you?
- V: Yes. Let's leave it at that.

Non-being

Representation of the definition of non-being:

Non-being is characterized as nothingness by existentialists. It is seen as an inseparable "part of being." "To grasp what it means to exist, one needs to grasp the fact that he might not exist..." (May, 1958 b, p. 47). Non-being is manifest most clearly in the threat of death or, as May says, in the threat of "possible annihilation" (1958 b, p. 48). Death, therefore, is an example of the clearest threat of nothingness. But non-being is also manifest in conformism, where one's own potentialities are sacrificed to the "collective." One's uniqueness is given up in the face of pressure to be "like others." This spells the death (non-being) of one's unique potentiality.

Element a: the matter of death.

Question based on element a:

Could you tell me if there have been any times in your life when the reality of death was particularly pressing or urgent for you? Whether in the form of a threat to your own life, a threat to the life of a loved one, an actual death of someone you cared for, or in any other form the reality of death may have taken for you? If there has been such a time for you, could you tell me as much as possible about how you reacted to it?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: Could you tell me if there have been any times in your life when the reality of death was particularly pressing or urgent for you? Whether in the form of a threat to your own life, a threat to the life of a loved one, an actual death of someone you cared for, or in any other form the reality of death may have taken for you? If there has been such a time for you, could you tell me as much as possible about how you reacted to it?

Victoria: I wouldn't say there has been any one particular experience, or even several particular experiences, that have brought home to me the reality of death. I did a lot of studying and thinking about biology and nature from the time I was quite young. And so, in a biological sense, death was much a part of my thinking. I can remember an experience when I was seven or eight, when we had some rabbits. The female rabbit had had babies that she had somehow killed. I am not exactly sure whether she laid on them or what. But I can remember my Mother being somehow very impressed with the idea that dead things quickly developed a poison. She was so concerned about the poison that she asked me to bury the little rabbits before my sister and brother would discover them. Here death was treated as a very matter of fact kind of thing. Those little rabbits weren't anything that I had ever seen alive. We never saw them until they were dead.

It's hard for me to think about any particular ways in which I developed a philosophy that death is very much a part of life, but that's the philosophy I now hold and have held for a long time. My first experience with the death of a person was when one of my grandfathers died somewhere around the time when I was eight or nine years old. I don't remember being particularly shocked. I was surprised about the timing. I always knew he wasn't going to live forever, but I wasn't expecting him to die right then. Otherwise the only thing I remember about it, in a social kind of sense, is that my Mother felt some compulsion to stick with some social customs that I didn't feel were really very important to her. I remember how glad we were when she finally appeared again in something other than a black dress.

I don't remember how long after her father had died she wore that dress. But I just remember that we were glad to have her back to normal. But, it was strickly a feeling about the custom of this dress. What was bothering us about it most was that it didn't seem to mean a heck of a lot to her. We didn't have a feeling that she was all broken up because her father had died or anything like that. My other grandfather was my next experience with anyone dying whom I actually had known very well. And that was a very distant experience. We were in this country by that time, and he was in Germany. Since then there have been a lot of people whom I have known who have died. But those are the main ones I can remember knowing about when I was a child.

G: You spoke earlier about a particular philosophy that you have. You said that you felt that death was a part of life. Could you explain what that means, in terms of some of these experiences that you have been talking about?

V: Yea, I don't remember thinking about that as a philosophy and applying it to these particular instances. I don't remember voicing that as a philosophy until somewhere around the time I was in high school or college. And, probably, a better way of expressing it would be to say that death and life are all part of the same thing, rather than that death is a part of life. I remember running into the Hindu ideas of several lives when I was in college, and making up my mind that my own feeling was different from that. But my feeling is also different from just thinking of death as an absolute end. I don't believe in reincarnation in the personal sense that one soul keeps it's entity, it's identity, as separate from other souls and is reborn again in another person. I do believe that what we call soul, or that in a human being that is not a physical part of them doesn't end when the person ends. Nor does it begin when that person begins - any more than the atoms that are involved in making up the body do. I don't know if you want any more detail on this or not. I don't know if this answers what you had in mind.

- G: Could you speak a bit about the kinds of feelings you've had about death? Feelings in relation to the experiences you've cited? You talked about some people, with whom you were related, who had been dying and had died. Could you talk a bit about the kinds of feelings this provoked in you?
- V: You mean about particular people dying?
- G: Did that trigger off any particular feeling in you or not?
- V: Well, there are some people I have known that have died; and I have very much had the feeling that I liked the world better with them in it, than I liked it without them. I think that I tend to feel more that way when somebody dies at an early age, than I do when very old people die. The death of some people has made me very sad for a while; but I don't have any particular struggle with the idea of dying. Otherwise it really doesn't bother me. I think it is a very natural process.
- G: That strikes me as an important statement. Could you speak about this feeling of it not being a struggle, this feeling of it being a natural process for you?
- V: I think of life as a process and dying is a part of that process. And dying that happens as a natural part of that process doesn't particularly disturb me. A death that happens as a result of an accident or something like that, at a time in a person's life that you would not expect them to be dying, I find more disturbing. I think of a lot more things I would like to see that person still around for. Their life seems somehow so unfinished.
- G: Death is more tragic when it's earlier in a person's life. Is that it?
- V: Yea, although this tragedy is not just the function of age; because people age at very different chronological ages. For instance, when my father died that wasn't a difficult thing for me because he was very ready to die. He had been saying for

several years that he felt as though he was getting three days older every day. It didn't bother him and it didn't bother me. I find it more disturbing if somebody is plucked out of the middle of things.

G: Kind of like when they're not ready.

V: Especially if they're not ready. I have known some people that have committed suicide. My own feeling about that is that, although I feel very badly that somebody can't find a way of enjoying life more, I still feel that's a choice an individual has a right to make. I don't feel that's a sin. The terrible part about it is for someone to be in such a despairing position. But there is nothing terrible about the suicidal act itself.

G: In light of that, could you speak about the values that this kind of experience has generated in you? I heard you say that death isn't "bad."

V: I think that death, in my scheme of things, doesn't have a negative value judgement on it.

G: Has there been anything in your experience as a counselor that might have helped formulate some of your views in regard to death? In regard to how you feel about it, how you think about it?

V: No, not that I can think of. I think my ideas were pretty well formulated before I took the training as a counselor; so that as long as I have been doing counseling in a professional sense, I already had those ideas. There hasn't been anything in my experience as a counselor that has caused me to change them. Since I have been a counselor I have talked with people who were somewhere in the process of dying and knew about it. My experience in these situations has been that it's often a great relief to people to be able to talk about dying to somebody who isn't just going to say, "Oh no your not." There is a lot of denial going on in our society about death. Then, of course, I have talked as a counselor, to people who were contemplating suicide. My own ideas about death are enough a part of me, so that they can't help but be a part of me in the way that I respond

to anybody that I am talking about death or dying with. I was quite conscious of having my ideas about death before I ever started training as a counselor.

G: So you were pretty sure how you stood in relation to it before you became a counselor.

V: Yea, and I don't remember that it particularly came up as a philosophical issue during the period when I was taking by counseling training. It only came up when we talked about suicide, depression, and that kind of thing. Another way in which it came up for me, was my involvement with a group that was trying to get some abortion counseling established in the valley. That's another crack at the same issue. I imagine how I feel about death very much colors how I feel about abortion.

G: Kind of like you would take the same nonjudgmental stand toward abortion that you take toward death. Is that a fair statement?

V: I don't consider death a bad thing. I do, under other circumstances, consider killing a bad thing. I am generally opposed to capital punishment, war, or various other forms of killing. But, in the issue of abortion it seems to me you are talking about a conflict between at least two rights to life. It's not only the fetus's right to life that's involved. I would be in favor of giving that fetus any rights to life that were available to it. But I feel, even with children, there are lots of rights that I would love to grant to them. Sometimes there is no way to grant the rights I would like for them to have. There just is no way of guaranteeing a human being as dependent as a child, a certain kind of treatment, even though I might like to do so.

G: It's like I have heard you saying there are two postures that you have in relation to death. One would be that it is a natural process, very much a part of the way we live, very much a part of life. The other would be that sometimes death is a result of unnatural things like war and crime. Do you see yourself as having two postures in relation to it?

V: No. I think that my feelings about war and capital punishment come from attitudes about an individual's right to try to govern his own life, and lead his own life. I don't think they are attitudes about death.

G: I see.

V: I am sure death is involved in these issues, but my attitude toward them does not come from any attitude about death. Unless you want to argue that you can't separate death and life. I might have to concede that. But that would really get us into a philosophical argument.

G: Do you think it would be fair to say that death is something that doesn't disturb you? Something that doesn't shake your foundations?

V: Yes.

G: That death is a natural thing. It's not something to be afraid of.

V: Yes, very true.

Element b: the matter of conformism.

Question based on element b:

Have there been moments or times in your life in which you've experienced a pressure "to be like others," so to speak? This pressure could have come from a variety of quarters - whether from friends, classmates, the surrounding society, or any others you may think of. If you've experienced something like this pressure, could you elaborate for me as fully as you can how you reacted to it?

The interview based on element b's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you if there have been moments or times in your life in which you have experienced a pressure to be like others, so to speak? This pressure could have come from a variety of quarters - whether from friends, classmates, the

surrounding society, or any other quarters that you may think of. If you have experiences something like this pressure, could you elaborate for me as fully as you can how you reacted to it?

Victoria: As general overall reaction, let me say that I think there are lots of pressures on all of us to be like other people. I imagine that I have done my share of reacting to those pressures by trying to conform, by not sticking out, especially as long as the process was unconscious and I wasn't aware that I was reacting to a pressure. I think at the point when I became aware of such a pressure I tended to say, "Nuts to that." Then I rebel, either by not doing anything, or by doing something in the opposite direction. Pretty quickly, however, I became aware of the fact that reacting to a pressure in the opposite direction is another way of reacting to the pressure. I used to do a lot more of that than I do now.

In any case, I used to do a lot of thinking about this when my kids were little. Parents are under an awful lot of pressure to get their kids to conform, because that's what the socializing process is, basically. You want your child to be able to be a member of society on some kind of level. The child has to learn to conform to some social pressures. Yet some people, including my parents, believe you also have to learn to resist some of them. I think that few people would conform to every pressure. In my particular instance a lot of the pressures that were out there, outside of the family, were pressures in a direction that my parents very much didn't believe in, and were resisting. I think their action allowed me to deal with pressures differently than might have been true if I hadn't been raised in that particular time and place. What happened in my case was that I generalized a good deal from seeing my parents resist the very great pressures of the Nazi regime. It not only important to my parents that I have my own free choice in regard to these pressures, but I think it was pretty important to them that I resist those pressures that were put directly on school children by the Nazis. In the process I was given more freedom that kids usually have to make up my own mind about all other pressures.

There were other pressures that my parents probably would have just let pass onto me the way it usually happens with socializing pressures. But my parents couldn't be the reasonable people that they liked to believe themselves to be; and say, "Well, this pressure to join the Nazi youth organization is wrong; but you should comply to other pressures, (like wearing your coat to school, or whatever it was). So they more or less had to say "Just because everybody else is doing it, that's never a good enough reason for you to do it too." As a result, I did my own choosing about what I wanted to comply to and what I didn't want to comply to at a very early age. Having taken away the great pressure to comply to what was going on in Germany at that time, and having taken their own stand against it, my parents couldn't ask me to conform to other pressures, even if it might have been more convenient for them if I had so conformed.

By the time I became an adult and was raising my own family, I used to wrestle with this a lot. After all, here in the United States I wasn't trying to raise our children to protest against this society in the same sense that I was raised to protest against what was going on in Germany. Moreover, I didn't want to make protesters out of my kids. Yet, I wanted to give them some of the same freedom that I had been given. I didn't want them to make their moves just because of pressures, unless there was some good reason to accept that pressure. I probably had more decisions to make, and more pressures to sort out, in figuring out how to walk my way through this tension, than other young parents may have had. I didn't want to subject my kids to pressures just because everybody else was doing it, or just because it would have been the easiest thing for me to do. Yet, I was still faced with having to help my kids become social human beings, so that they would be well accepted by other people. I used to do a lot of wrestling around with that. At what point do you teach your children things like modesty about their bodies, for example? That tension was a pretty complicated thing for me to work out. I didn't believe in passing the pressures to my kids that they had to do this or this or this, just because it was the way everybody else did it. At the same time, I felt it

was not in my children's best interests for them to act differently from everybody else in some of these areas. I think all parents have to wrestle with this to some degree, but I felt that I was more aware of what I was wrestling with. I knew what some of the results could be of doing it the easy way, of just going along with the crowd, Nazi Germany was sitting in my background.

But my reaction individually, for myself, has never been a hard topic for me. A theory that I've developed, for example, is that I want to make an issue only out of those things that are really important. I go ahead and conform in things that are unimportant. It isn't worth the hassle to make a hassle out of everything. Besides, people are going to take my making an issue out of more important points more seriously, if I don't make an issue out of everything. Hopefully I'll carry more weight on important issues if I don't go around being a nonconformist just for the sake of being a nonconformist. So, for me personally, although there have been a lot of decisions I've had to make just like everybody else, these decisions haven't been a problem. Whereas it was hard to make the decision about how I was going to help my children in this area. I felt that no matter what I did, I was constantly making choices for them. I would rather have left the door open for them to make their own choices more often. But you just can't do this when your kids are little. You're making choices for them even by making a choice not to make a choice. You're still making a choice. For myself, that's a process that I enjoy. For my children it wasn't a process that I enjoyed, because I kept wanting them to make the choice.

G: It's much more enjoyable for you to make a choice for yourself, than for somebody else - especially your kids.

V: Yea. Yea. I can give you one good example. I recall one real hassle I got into with Jim, when he was about 9 or 10. He wanted to know, one day, what I thought about God. I gave him a very careful answer on how I thought that it was an important topic, but that I wanted him to be free to make up his own mind about it when he was older. I didn't

I didn't want to tell him what I thought at that point, because I didn't want to influence him. He just blew up! He said, "What do you mean you don't want to influence me? Don't you realize you're the single most important influence in my life? And there's no way you can get out of it!" And, you know, when I thought about it, I realized that he was right. I was just evading a responsibility by pretending I wasn't influencing him. In fact, I really was. So I told him what I thought about God, but I didn't feel good about it. I would rather not have told him, would rather have let him make up his own mind. All the same, he's never been that easily influenced. I'm sure he's going around the world making up his own mind now. So it really wasn't such a big issue. But it was something I used to worry about when my kids were little.

G: Influencing your children was an inescapable choice. Choosing not to influence them was still another choice.

V: Yea. In all kinds of things, from God to whether you wear clothes when you go outside, you just can't help influencing them. After I thought about it some more I realized that I wasn't the only one influencing my children. There were all kinds of pressures coming at them, no matter how hard I tried to protect them. So I felt I might as well get in my fair share of the weight. Yet, there again, only because I felt that they were not going to be able to escape all the other pressures. There's all kinds of pressures coming from other places. So my pressure may as well be in there with the rest of them. Otherwise I would end up subjecting them to everybody else's point of view, more than my own. I don't know. That's a general way of answering your question. I didn't get down to any specific kind of pressures. We can take that question apart and get at some specific pressure if you want to.

G: Would you like to name some specific pressures that have troubled you, or that you have had to deal with?

V: There was the thing we talked about a little

bit ago. When we were living in Germany there was the pressure from school to conform to the Nazi ideas. Those pressures never really bothered me very much. I think, in an earlier question, I alluded to the fact that some things I dealt with by just shutting them off; and that's what I did with this whole idea of politics. I do remember those pressures being really difficult for my younger sister to handle. I can remember her coming home in tears. She didn't know whether to believe her teachers or my parents, and they were obviously saying two different things. There was never much question in my mind that my parents were right and my teachers were wrong. So the political picture in Germany didn't bother me.

Then, when we came over to the U.S. I was 14; which is an age when you ordinarily are very much influenced by peer pressures. I remember that as being a difficult time in my life. I was changing cultures and languages, and needed some time to deal with all this. At the same time my parents were in a situation where they were suddenly parents in a different culture, and they didn't have the change all figured out. First of all, they didn't know exactly what the peer pressures were in this society, as they had in Germany. But I think I dealt with a lot of things at that point by just putting them off, and deciding not to deal with them right then. I did this to the disgust of my younger sister. I can remember, a few years later, when I was in college, getting desperate letters from my sister. We were very different personalities. She was trying to cope with our move to the U.S. by jumping in and being part of the crowd. She wanted nothing so much as to be a typical American teenager. She ran into constant conflicts with my parents, whose answer always was, "Well, that can't be the way you have to do it over here. Victoria didn't have to do it that way." So there was poor Maria: stuck with the fact that I had dealt with a lot of the same things by just withdrawing from them. But I was a different person, and at a different age, when we were brought over here. We had been here a few years by the time Maria got to high school, so it was very hard for her. Her trials made me more aware of what the pressures had been;

and how I had not really dealt with them, but had withdrawn. I realized that there were a whole bunch of pressures that I had just put aside, and not done anything with until I had figured them out internally. Then I made a better decision as to what I wanted to do. I think I do that with pressures a lot. I don't react immediately. I churn it all around a while before I come out with some decision that I feel comfortable with; in regard to how much I want to conform, and how much I don't want to conform.

G: You withdraw into yourself and evaluate what's going on inside before you react outside.

V: Yea. I find it personally satisfying. I am quite aware of the fact that people who are caught up with me in whatever the pressure is, find that very frustrating.

G: Could you elaborate on that a bit now?

V: Elaborate?

G: You said that people sometimes find this frustrating.

V: Yea, because it takes so long, between the pressure hitting me and my reaction, that other people who are caught up with me in the pressure, usually want to react sooner. The fact that I'm not going to react immediately, and take it all in and churn it over, is frustrating to other people. I don't blame them, I can understand how it's frustrating. At the same time I feel this is the only way I can deal with it. So that's just something they have to live with. I tend to refuse to react to pressure as soon as I feel it as pressure. If I feel that someone is putting pressure on me in order to try to get me to do something, I tend to just cut things off right there. Then I try to get a different basis for communication. Or I just dig in my heels.

G: By "dig in your heels," I take it that you would fight against the pressure or oppose it?

V: Yea, but digging in my heels meant staying where I am. I don't oppose it by making a move in the opposite direction.

G: I see, so you just hold your own ground.

V: Yea, and that may be happening a lot of times while someone else is getting frustrated waiting for my reaction. But I don't like to react to anything off the top of my head.

G: Does that capture your answer?

V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of not existing.

Question based on element c:

In your experience have there been moments or times in which you've wondered what it would be like to not exist, what it would be like to have your life all gone? If so, could you tell me as completely as possible what such moments or times have been like for you, what they've entailed for you?

The interview based on element c's question:

Gordon: In your experience have there been moments or times in which you've wondered what it would be like to not exist, what it would be like to have your life all gone? If so, could you tell me as completely as possible what such moments or times have been like for you, what they've entailed for you?

Victoria: You probably mean the two halves of that question to be asking the same thing. To me they don't. The first question asks what it would be like not to exist and the other question asks what it would be like to have my life all done or all gone. Those two questions are asking me to imagine two different things. If I'm imagining not existing it means I'm imagining either what it would be like for me to be dead, or what the world would be like without me in it. The other question conjures up imaginings of what it would

be like to have lived a long life already. That "all done" phrasing makes me attack it from a different angle. Either way you're asking if I have done this imagining.

G: If you'd like to approach it from both sides, that would be fine.

V: I've never done much imagining of what it would be like for me not to exist. I've done some thinking on what I believe about death, but that's a different question. I used to do some imagining of what it would be like to exist a very different way. For example, I used to imagine what it would be like to be an ant. I can put myself into that position and try to imagine it, but I can't tell you what the experience has been like to have imagined it, because I don't recall doing it before now.

G: From whatever angle you'd like to approach it would be fine.

V: Uh, huh. I haven't tried to imagine what it would be like to be dead. I've always assumed it would mean not experiencing consciousness. So it would be like being asleep, except that you're not going to be dreaming and you're not going to be aware of being asleep. Usually when I'm asleep I'm aware of being asleep. I have a belief, suspicion, or whatever you want to call it, that that isn't all there is to it. It could be that it's more a matter of entering some other part of the cycle. I would expect this other part of the cycle to do something different with individuality.

G: Could you help me with what you mean by "cycle"? That's unclear to me.

V: I feel that I am part of a large cycle. When I die I expect the parts of my physical body to become part of something else - soil, plants, or whatever. I also believe that part of me, which is more than the sum of my parts, becomes part of something else. In other words, that's also part of the cycle; just like my body is part of the cycle. The cells in my body are going to do something after they're

no longer doing me and so is the rest of me; my soul or whatever you want to call it. My personal belief is that the other part of the cycle will not maintain the individuality of my soul, or whatever term we're going to use for that part of me. I don't expect the cells in my body to maintain the individuality of me either. In other words, I expect to become part of the larger cycle in some way, and I expect that for all of me. I don't expect my soul to survive death as the entity of an individual. I expect it to diffuse into other souls. Somehow the thing we call life goes on in some way. My own personal expectation isn't for it to go on in an individual way, anymore than I expect my body to do that. So that's what I imagine it would be like not to exist. I think I wouldn't cease to exist, but I would cease to exist as me.

G: I see. That's reasonably clear to me. When you first responded to the question you also mentioned what you referred to as "the second part of the question."

V: Yea, the second part of the question conjures up a very different kind of image in my mind. It conjured up an image of what it will be like to have lived my life.

G: The phrase "all gone" conjured that up.

V: Yea, all I can say to that is, barring accidents, I've come from a long-lived family and I would expect my life to go on another thirty or forty years. I can't imagine where that will take me anymore than I could have imagined years ago where I'd be now. If I were to do such imagining I would have to look in many different possible directions. I know I can't tell today which way I'm going to go tomorrow and I don't expect to. So all I can do is imagine some circumstances. I expect to get a lot older than I am right now, but what those circumstances might entail I really wouldn't want to predict. I think it's much more fun to wait and see what's around the next corner, then it is to determine where I'm going to go.

G: What feelings are triggered off as you try to imagine the things inherent in the question?

V: Not any particularly strong feelings of any kind. I feel like I didn't know what I was getting into when I was born, but I was perfectly happy to take it as it came. I feel that way about dying too. I don't have any idea what it's going to be like, but I didn't have any idea what it was going to be like coming into this world either. I didn't feel particularly hesitant about coming into it and that's the way I feel about leaving it.

G: That's very clear to me.

V: I kind of feel like living in this life is all that's required of me right now. If there is anything I need to know in order to deal with things on the other side, then that knowledge will come along when I need it. I feel confident that might be the best way to describe it.

G: Does that wrap up what you'd like to say?

V: Uh, huh.

Element d: the matter of nothingness.

Question based on element d:

In your life experience have there been moments or times in which you were confronted with the completely unknown, with nothingness, so to speak? In such experience you might not only have been confronted, but may have done the confronting yourself. In any event, could you tell me as completely as possible what such moments or times have been like for you, what they've entailed for you?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: In your life experience have there been moments or times in which you have been confronted with the completely unknown, with nothingness, so to speak?

In such experience you might not only have been confronted, but may have done the confronting yourself. In any event, could you tell me as completely as possible what such moments or times have been like for you, what they've entailed for you?

Victoria: I think of instances where my whole life, or an important part of myself, was being confronted with a completely new set of people. That happened to me several times. It happens to everyone when they first start to school. It happened to me many times during my childhood, because I changed schools pretty often; and then I spent a year on a farm in a completely different part of Germany. At this time I was about ten and my parents had left the country for that year. Coming to the U.S. from Germany was the most complete change. Not only was there not going to be anybody over here, other than my family that I had ever seen; but it was a different language and a different culture. So that was the greatest experience with the unknown that I ever stepped into. I've moved many times since then, in terms of going to college and living in many different houses and parts of the country. Often these experiences have involved me alone and often they involved me and my immediate family.

I guess the experience of going to school for the first time, going to a completely new school, or going away to college, were all experiences of being alone. When I changed schools there was never anyone at the new school that I knew before. On the other hand, although these were experiences of being completely alone in facing the unknown, they don't encompass all of my life. Thus the experience that felt more like stepping into the unknown was the move to this country; even though I was coming with my brothers, my sister, and my mother. This move encompassed a whole lot more of my life than going away to a new school. I might be going to another school by myself, but there was still home in a familiar place.

I felt good about these moves into the unknown, and excited about them, because they provided an opportunity when I could decide pretty much what I

wanted to take with me. I didn't have to take other people's expectations into consideration. If there's not going to be anybody there who knows you, then presumably nobody is going to have expectations of you. Everybody always has expectations of everybody else; but I didn't feel I had to watch out to avoid disappointing other people or take their expectations into consideration, if I was just meeting them for the first time.

G: If they don't have any prior experience with you, then they're not going to have many expectations to lay on you in regard to your performance.

V: They may have them but I don't feel any obligation to expectations that were made in a vacuum, so to speak. I do feel some obligation to expectations people have when they know me. I feel more free to change direction in a new situation. It's easier to do this when you're faced with the unknown, than when you're in a familiar situation.

G: For you the completely unknown has been a moving to new places and encountering new people.

V: Yea, a whole new territory. And, basically, I find that a positive experience. Of course, the unknown is never completely unknown. It seems to me that the only completely unknowable unknown that we all face is death. Outside of that I've had many experiences of stepping into the unfamiliar, but it's never been completely unknown.

G: I see. There's a distinction between the unknown and the unfamiliar.

V: Yea, I guess I probably step into more unknown territory inside of myself than I do in outside situations.

G: Can you carry that a bit further?

V: When I discover something new inside myself it's usually something that I knew less about beforehand. Whereas this is less true with places I can go to or people I can run into, that I haven't known before. There again, however, I like exploring

the unknown both within and without.

G: Could you highlight some examples of what an unknown "within" would be? You've already pointed to some good examples of the unknown "without."

V: For example, there are things I've known about in an abstract sense, in terms of having heard about them or read about the, but never having experienced them myself. Then some experience suddenly makes them part of myself. It's an exciting experience. Religious experiences would come into this category. Although, in that particular instance I think it would be almost the other way around for me - it was more a matter of having some religious experiences and then finding out that this happened to other people and what they thought about it, rather than having read about it before hand. Also having a baby, or feeling a baby moving inside of you the first time, is the kind of experience you hear about before you have your first baby; but it affects you more profoundly when it actually happens. The first time I really felt stirred sexually was another experience like this. Other examples are more difficult for me to find words for, but sometimes you just have an experience of something suddenly striking a spark inside.

G: Kind of an "ah, hah!"

V: Yes. Generally, I find those experiences of the unknown exciting and very positive. I guess this is because most of the time, when I have experienced something that was unknown to me before, it has turned out positive and exciting. If I'd had some very terrifying experiences with the unknown I might not feel that way. Generally, when I have experienced the unknown, both inside of myself and outside of myself, it's added to my sense of fitting. This probably relates to why I don't have negative feelings about death. That is the greatest unknown of all, but since I've stepped off the edge into the unknown many times before without being sure what I was going to run into -

and I've been glad I did it - I feel that death will be part of the same arrangement.

G: You said at one point that this relationship to the unknown connects with your "sense of fitting." I'm a bit fuzzy on that. Could you help me with what that means?

V: My sense of fitting in with other people and with the universe is probably the most important basic sense I have of what life is all about. Most of the time when I have stepped into the unknown it has given me one more dimension in which it's possible to fit, a dimension that I wasn't aware of before. Does that explain it to you?

G: Yes, it's more clear to me. Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes.

Element e: an extension of the matter of death.

Question based on element e:

Could you tell me how you experience yourself in relation to your own eventual death? Comment, if you could, as completely as possible in regard to what this relation entails for you.

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: Could you tell me how you experience yourself in relation to your own eventual death? Comment, if you could, as completely as possible in regard to what this relation entails for you?

Victoria: I really have to turn the wheels around in my head to try to answer that question. I don't spend a lot of time pondering death, but I feel pretty accepting of it. In terms of what I feel my death might be like, I guess there are two aspects of it. There is the experience of dying and the fact of being dead. Both of those are involved in how I might see myself related to my own death. As far

as the experience of dying is concerned, let me say this: biologically, it's something that begins at the moment of birth. So it's a process that I am somewhere in the middle of. It's not a process that's separate from the other processes involved in living. So the only thing that makes it different, or identifiable, is that it leads to some kind of an end of life. As far as the experience of being dead is concerned, I can't say much about that. I expect to experience dying, but I don't know if I expect to experience being dead. As far as experiencing dying is concerned let me say this: I know, in my head, that depending upon how I die, the process is going to be very different. If I die of old age, it's likely to be something that I'm increasingly aware of over a longer period of time. But I could die of something more accidental. I'm not particularly afraid of dying. Other than in biological terms, death is something that I feel I know nothing about. It's not something that I have to prepare for consciously. After all, nobody taught me how to be born, how to turn ten, or how to turn fifty. And it wasn't necessary that anybody should. So I don't think it's necessary that I learn how to go about dying. It's something that will take care of itself. In terms of being dead, I guess the only culturally accepted doctrinal beliefs about death that I know very much about, are either within the Christian doctrine, with its variations on the heaven and hell themes, or the Hindu doctrines of re-incarnation. My personal belief doesn't fit either one of those. I don't know whether you want me to take another stab at trying to state this or not.

G: At trying to state what? I'm not sure what you mean.

V: What I believe about what happens to life after death.

G: I guess what I am interested in, in terms of this question, is how you feel about your own eventual death: the fact that it's coming, and what that fact triggers off inside you, while you're still here.

V: I feel fine about it. I never expected to be around forever. I also feel that I would have the right to end my own life at any time. I would have no compunctions about doing so. If I got to feeling that was the right step to take, I would take it. I don't necessarily anticipate reaching such a point; but I don't find it inconceivable. I feel it's more likely that I will decide to go along with the natural process until it plays itself out. But I don't have any particular compunctions about intervening in this process through suicide - especially if I should feel drawn in such a direction.

G: For you, there's a focus on death as a natural process. I'm wondering if the reality of your own eventual death has any particular influence on your behavior?

V: Knowing I'm going to live for a limited amount of time, influences me to get busy and do the things important to me. But I don't believe the fact that I'm going to die is the major influence in that. There are other things saying the same thing to me. The reality of my death is one contributing factor to an attitude of, "Whatever you want to do, you ought to get busy and do it." For me, a more important push in this direction can be summed up in a sneaking suspicion of mine, that the day after tomorrow I may want to do something else.

The other influence of death on my behavior is to make me feel an obligation not to make myself indispensable. That's not a difficult obligation any more. It's pretty obvious that my kids don't need me. We're at a point where we all enjoy the relationship we have. But we all know we could get along perfectly well without each other. When the kids were younger I felt a need to help them be as independent as possible, to give them whatever coping strength I could. But I don't have to worry about that any more. So the only thing that I would worry about now is the possibility that I might become a burden to them. That would be one of the points where I would feel perfectly justified in doing something about my own death. Both

job wise and in my relation to my kids, or my mother, or anybody else I really do feel no one should play the kind of role where another human being couldn't possibly get along without them.

G: You used the word "indispensable." I wasn't sure how that related to what you were talking about.

V: That relates to it directly. I mean that I shouldn't encourage anyone to become so dependent on me, that it would be very difficult for them to get along without me. But I balance that conviction with the fact that I enjoy being supportive to other people. However, I don't think you should ever overplay the role of being supportive. And the knowledge that I'm not going to be around forever, is one of the things that puts some curb on that. I accept the fact that I'm going to die some day. I even expect it to teach me something. I don't know what - but I'm in no hurry for it.

G: Does that wrap up the question for you?

V: Yea, I think it does.

Anxiety

Representation of the definition of anxiety:

The existential view distinguishes anxiety from fear. Where fear has a specific object to be afraid of (fear of heights, fear of stronger opponents in battle, etc), anxiety is "objectless": "Anxiety is the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality" (May, 1950, p. 191). This threat can take a variety of different forms: physical threat of death, psychological threat of failure to one who values "success" as "essential to his existence as a personality," etc. But the central point is this: fear is a specific threat to our "security patterns" which can be directly dealt with by the individual (dealing

with fear of heights by avoiding the heights); whereas in anxiety "it is the security pattern itself which is threatened" (May, 1950, p. 191). Anxiety is felt as a "threat to the foundation, the center of my existence" (May, 1958 b, p. 50). As such it is much more difficult for the individual to locate the source of anxiety than it is to locate the source of fear. Anxiety hits at the center of a person, fear at the periphery (May, 1950, p. 191)

Element a: the matter of threat.

Question based on element a:

If you have had moments or periods in your life in which you've experienced threat to your personal security - however you may want to regard such a threat (economic, emotional, etc.) - could you tell me as much as you can about how you reacted to that threat?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: If you have had moments or periods in your life in which you have experienced a threat to your personal security - however you may want to regard such a threat (whether that be economic, emotional, etc.) - could you tell me as much as you can about how you reacted to that threat?

Victoria: I've experienced some threats to my personal security in terms of uprooting I guess. And a couple of threats to security in terms of just physical dangers or accidents as well as some threats to my financial security, although I don't ever take them very threateningly.

G: Could you locate some of those threats, and how you reacted to them in the kinds of things that you did or felt?

V: Yea, well, I guess uprooting kind of threats probably bother me the most. And the first of those I went through, although I don't ever remember taking it as a threat in anticipation, was when we moved from Germany over here. Partly I didn't take it as a threat in anticipation because I didn't know about

it. The political situation in Germany was such that my Mother was afraid of telling us we were coming to stay in the U.S. This couldn't get out officially and she figured the best way to keep it in was to keep it to herself. Generally that was a sort of threatening, traumatic experience in my life. I think I reacted to it more by withdrawing into a shell than any other way.... Let's see, the next really threatening uprooting experience I can remember was when we moved to Baltimore for two years. And I reacted to that partly by withdrawing into a shell and partly by just objecting to it.

G: Could you describe the difference between withdrawing into a shell and objecting to it? Could you describe what constitutes both of those and how they differ for you in reacting to this kind of thing?

V: Well, by objecting to it, I mean voicing my objections loud and clear: complaining. And, you know, finding as much as possible wrong with the new situation and refusing to like it. Whereas, withdrawing into a shell the way I do it, is eventually a much more positive reaction. I withdraw into the shell until I am accommodated to the change and have sort of figured out what to do with it. This, according to my Mother, I have always done with difficult kinds of experiences. My Mother told me this when I wrote and told her that Mark and I were going to get divorced. She wrote back and told me that she felt it had been characteristic of me, for as long as she had known me, that when anything was really bothering me, I would tell her about it after I had figured out what I was going to do about it. So that's what I am doing in the shell. And the divorce with Mark was another such uprooting experience. It also was probably the main experience I can think of that could be interpreted as an economic threat; although the economic threat involved in it really didn't bother me very much. It certainly did change my economic status, but not enough to be really threatening. As long as I can eat and I have shelter, economics really aren't that important to me.... And the physical kinds of threats that I am

talking about... you have to separate those into potential and actual threats. Mark and I used to kid about this. When you kid around, there often is a lot of truth in it. We used to say, when we were in the mountains that the difference between us in regard to what we found threatening was based on this fact: I mind the idea of getting hurt, but the idea of getting killed doesn't bother me. For Mark it's just the other way around. It doesn't bother him as much to take a chance on something that might hurt him, but it bothers him a lot that he might be killed. I've been in a car a few times when it's gone out of control. It felt as though there might be a serious accident coming. And I've taken one spill off a mountain that gave me enough time on the way down to wonder whether I was going to be able to end up at the bottom all in one piece. I react to those kinds of things in a very physical way. I get pretty shakey and pretty bruised in such an instance. Let's see, were there other kinds of threats you were talking about in your question that I haven't touched on?

G: I mentioned in the question that the threats could take any form. The two examples that I highlighted were an economic kind of threat or an emotional kind of threat. But the threat, for you, could take any kind of form.

V: Yea, I can't think of other things that I find that threatening. I'm not fond of interpersonal conflict or conflict in job relationships. And I sometimes catch myself in some avoidance techniques for those. So I suppose that is a kind of a threat, but it feels more like something that I am not fond of: something that I would just as soon avoid when possible, rather than something that I find threatening. I avoid it when convenient, but I don't avoid it at the cost of stepping on anything I consider important.

G: Does the avoidance kind of think that you're talking about now... does that relate at all to what you mentioned earlier about withdrawing into a shell?

V: No, I don't think that's at all the same thing. When I am withdrawing into a shell I am cutting outside influences and stimuli off until I've had a chance to get myself together inside. The other avoidance techniques consist of not bringing up subjects or not placing myself into confrontations that are going to be very conflicted. It's something I am willing to do when it's going to accomplish something important, but I readily avoid it when it is not going to make any real difference. Otherwise, I think the main thing that I do with threats that are really important or serious, is to meet them head on.

G: Could you describe an instance in which something like that happened?

V: Yea, this relates to the divorce. I accidentally discovered that he was thinking about divorce by reading a letter from his mother to him. He had left it out on the desk, and I thought he wanted to share it with me. It made it obvious that he had been talking to his mother about this idea, and so I confronted him with it. That's how it first came up between us. If that had been a minor irritation at stake, I would not have confronted him. I would have just let it go.

G: But, it was much more important, so you felt the best way to deal with that was to confront it directly.

V: Otherwise, I don't feel threatened easily. I don't tend to take things in a threatening way. My own conviction is that that's very often all it takes to keep things from being threatening. Like at the Help Center, we often deal with people that some people there find threatening. Anytime somebody feels something to be threatening, just feeling that way about it is so much more likely to make it actually threatening. Consequently it is a very good thing to pay attention to. But I find that the reverse of that is also applicable: as long as I don't really feel threatened, I'm less likely to be in danger from anyone down at the Help Center. (The Help Center is a 24 hour Crisis center that provides lodging for transients.)

- G: From the transients that stop in and that sort of thing.
- V: Yea, and some of the disturbed characters that come through and some of the people that get angry at us. I think that how you take what's coming at you has a lot to do with what you get. (As was noted in the historical self-report, Victoria is the present director of this crisis center.)
- G: Kind of like, if you're going to feel threatened, then there's a greater likelihood that there is an actual threat that's going to get you.
- V: Your feeling becomes part of the whole interaction. Therefore, you are in much more danger. But I don't think that that's anything that you can necessarily do anything about. You can't just say to yourself, "OK, I'll be much safer if I don't feel threatened and so I am not going to feel threatened." I don't think it works that way.
- G: How does it work for you? You spoke earlier about your not feeling threatened and so there's less to be afraid of. How have you established that in your own mind? That you're not going to feel threatened by this particular situation or person or whatever.
- V: I don't think it's a decision that I am not going to feel threatened. I think it's just one of the accidents of nature that I don't feel threatened easily. I think that not feeling threatened can have something to do with what happens, but I don't feel that it is something that you can necessarily bring under conscious control. I think that not feeling threatened comes from something else. Just as feeling threatened probably does. I think that they both come from things within the person that may not necessarily be related to that immediate experience. But once they're there, they're there. And then you have to deal with the feelings. Whether they are related to that immediate experience or not, they have become a part of it.

- G: Could you speak a bit about where you think that "something else" in you is? Where you would guess the origination of not feeling threatened by circumstances and things comes from?
- V: Part of it just comes from a general sense of inner-strength. I think of myself as a pretty secure person and I think that has a lot to do with it. Some of it may also come from philosophical orientations. You are only going to be threatened if there is a danger that something that is important to you is going to be taken away from you. There aren't a lot of things that are important to me which anybody else can take away from me, least of all the people I run into that might be threatening. What is a threat? It is an attack upon your person, possession or upon something.
- G: Are you saying that you are a secure person, irregardless of those things, irregardless of the possessions you might have, or the dignity you might have?
- V: I don't think its irregardless of the dignity. I don't think my security has a lot to do with my possessions, no. It's a hard question. Some people's dignity is just more easily threatened. It's one of those situations where the means and the ends are terribly hard to separate. I think that I don't feel threatened because there isn't much that is important to me that people could take away from me in most situations. Is that because I have a stronger sense of security or dignity or whatever you want to call it? I don't know. I just don't feel threatened easily. But there have been some experiences in my life that have presented major kinds of threats. I deal with these by pulling my horns in and dealing with them inside, until I've got myself put back together again. I don't know how I do that.
- G: Kind of like the source for that is a question mark for you. Is that it?
- V: Yea.

G: Do you feel that you've had a chance to pretty fully respond to this question, or would you like to reflect a bit more?

V: Yea, you know, I think that that's my way of meeting threats. The way I deal with them is different from how some other people that I know do it. One very different approach would be to meet a threat on a fighting front. I think I do very little of that.

G: On a fighting front?

V: Yea.

G: Could you help me there?

V: Well, you know, I have friends who I see fighting their way through to gain ends that they want in small disputes and big disputes. That is not how I relate to life, and it's not how I react to threats most of the time either.

G: Could you distinguish for me that approach which is a fighting approach, and the method that you talked about when you said that you pull your horns in and face the situation directly? Could you help me with the difference that you see between those two approaches?

V: Yea, in a fighting approach, people are trying to deal with the threat by changing things that are outside of themselves. I don't feel that I do very much of that. I tend to do it by making the changes on the inside, in how I relate to the situation rather than trying to change the things outside.

G: I see.

V: Does that make sense?

G: It makes a good deal of sense to me.

V: It sounds like a platitude, but I think that it's possible to get satisfaction in life either by going after what you want, or by learning to

want what you get. And I think that I do more of the latter.

G: Of wanting what you get?

V: Uh huh. And for me that's a pretty satisfying way of doing it.

G: Do you feel like you have had a pretty adequate chance to respond?

V: Yes.

Element b: the matter of anxiety's objectlessness.

Question based on element b:

Have you ever experienced moments of panic, moments in which you felt an attack of fear, so to speak; but was unable to locate, in that moment, the source or cause of the panic? If so, could you tell me how you reacted to that experience or experiences of panic?

The interview based on element b's question?

Gordon: For this question I'd like to ask you if you have ever experienced moments of panic, moments in which you felt an attack of fear, so to speak; but was unable to locate, in that moment, the source or cause of the panic. If so, could you tell me how you reacted to that experience or experiences of panic?

Victoria: Yea, I've experienced some physical moments of panic.

G: Could you help me with what "physical" would mean in this cast?

V: Like falling off a mountain. Being in a car that turned around a couple times on the ice - those kinds of things. There haven't been a lot of these moments. But I've taken one spill off a mountain that came close to being serious. I remember thinking, on the way down, that that might be it.

Do you want to know more about such incidents?

G: I'm wondering, if in the case of these incidents, the source of your fear was something that you were able to locate; in the sense of their being a physical threat to your person?

V: Uh, huh.

G: I'm wondering if you've ever had a moment of panic in which you didn't know where its source was coming from?

V: I'm not sure whether I'm interpreting your question right. I can remember a couple interactions with other people when I had a panicky feeling. When I would think about where it was coming from, I found it originating in the fact that there was a lot of anger, or hostility, between myself and the other person. But this anger wasn't out in the open. The only thing I had to go on was a strong physical reaction to the situation. It seems I identified the anger present in the situation by my physical reaction; rather than knowing why this person was really angry. I would find myself reacting in this way, and then I would say to myself "Why are you reacting in this way?" Then, by noting my physical reaction, I would proceed to identify the anger. I don't know if that is what you were trying to get at.

G: That would be a very good example to use. Because, it seems to me, you're saying, prior to identifying the anger, you really didn't know what was going on in terms of your reaction to the situation. If you'd like to explore that, I think that would be a good approach.

V: As I look back, the funny thing is that I can still remember my physical reaction and my later conclusion that there was a lot of anger involved in the situation. I remember less the specific incidents as to who I was talking to when this sort of thing happened, or how it came up. But, for one example, I can remember arguments with Mark; about passivism. It took me a while to realize that the subject of passivism

was very threatening to Mark. It made him very angry. He's a very non-violent sort of person, and doesn't always know when he's angry. I, too, didn't always know it. I learned to identify his anger, when talking to him, through physically reacting to the situation first.

G: Prior to a clear identification of the anger, you felt a strong physical reaction to the situation, in this case involving the argument about passivism. Could you describe the process you went through in identifying the anger?

V: The process would be concerned with a lot of unrelated interactions. Because it wasn't all worked out in one interaction. But the process would look something like this: it would start with situations where Mark and I disagreed about something. This would end up with us either deciding not to talk about it, or by me being unable to talk about it. Because I would be crying or something like that. Much later I began to realize there was often a lot of anger on Mark's part. He wasn't necessarily conscious of it. I hadn't been conscious of it either. After I began to become aware of the anger, I began trying to bring some of that out with Mark; so we could talk about it openly. I could recognize the same kind of physical reaction, like crying, occurring when trying to deal with other people in similar situations. I still don't feel like I have worked out a good way of dealing with anger from another person. It's a hard thing to do. Particularly with anger the other person isn't aware of. People usually have some very good reasons for hiding awareness of anger from themselves.

G: Is that the major example you would highlight in answering the question? Or, would there be more?

V: On the feeling of panic?

G: Yes.

V: The experiences of dealing with anger in

certain situations, is about as close as I can get to that feeling of panic. The only other kind of panicky reactions I've had, would be things like being scared of the dark. Like walking through a very dark place, or dark room, when I was a kid. Otherwise I can't particularly think of moments of panic.

G: I see.

V: Those are experiences that are most likely to bring on a panicky feeling for me.

G: Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes, I think so.

Element c: an extension of the matter of threat

Question based on element c:

Have you ever experienced a moment, or time, in your life in which you perceived something, or anything, you value as central to your "existence as a personality," as being in danger of being diminished or destroyed by what you perceived as a menace of some sort? If so, could you tell me as fully as possible how you reacted to that experience or experiences of danger?

The interview based on element c's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which you perceived something, or anything, you value as central to your existence as a personality, as being in danger of being diminished or destroyed by what you perceived as a menace of some sort? If so, could you tell me as fully as possible how you reacted to that experience or experiences of danger?

V: OK. You're not talking about physical danger.

G: Not so much as I'm talking about something central, a value perhaps, that you hold to be vital

to your existence as a personality, vital to what makes you you.

V: The main example I can think of is connected to the marriage between me and Mark. That's very complicated, and also very personal, to talk about. But I can't think of another good example. I guess there were some things I found threatening about staying married to Mark. That's why I went along with and even encouraged his idea to get a divorce. The divorce was threatening, too; but not as threatening as staying married. What threatened me most, I would call possessiveness on Mark's part, for lack of a better term. I felt threatened by his feeling that in all the different aspects of life we had to be together in order to be a family. I felt threatened by his presupposition that all our decisions, on what I considered individual matters, should go the same way. That made it impossible for me to be free to follow my leads. And it didn't leave him free to follow his leads. I just feel it's important for me to follow my own direction. And it was also important, to me, for Mark to follow his, whether he wanted to or not. He was often perfectly happy just to follow me, but I found that just as uncomfortable.

G: So the element of danger here, is the danger of having to give up a very important element of freedom.

V: Yes. The danger was that I was going to swallow him up, which I didn't like. Or else, in order to avoid this, I would have to give up the freedom to follow my leads. I found that much more threatening than the idea of the marriage breaking up. Losing the marriage was also a threat. So I was choosing between threats, but the former threat felt bigger.

G: Losing your freedom, in order to maintain the marriage, was a bigger threat.

V: Yea. I didn't feel I had to be free to do whatever I wanted about everything. The important factor was that if I can't follow my inner leanings, I can't be me. And if I can't be me I can't be

anybody. I didn't feel that I could be satisfied if I had to be somebody that wasn't a real expression of me.

G: That felt more dangerous to you than losing the marriage.

V: It's hard for me to know whether it's going to be possible for anybody to hear this the way I mean it. It may sound as though I was afraid I couldn't be somebody and remain married at the same time. Rather, I simply felt the marriage required me to be somebody other than who I was. To stay married would have meant adopting a pretense. I wasn't afraid of being swallowed up by Mark. I always felt that inwardly I was really the stronger person. So the threat was not that I would be swallowed up. Rather, I would have to have swallowed him up; or else do a lot of pretending not to be strong. I didn't want to try to pretend to be somebody I wasn't.

G: "Swallowing up?" That phrase is unclear to me. Could you help me with that?

V: For example, there was Mark's supposition that it would be necessary for us to go in the same direction in choosing a Church affiliation. I felt much more strongly than he did about following some internal direction, following my own inner experiences. His primary concern was that we had to go in the same direction. So I ended up making choices for both of us. I was very uncomfortable with that.

G: And that's what you meant by swallowing up?

V: Yes.

G: A while ago you expressed a concern, that somebody listening to this might not understand what you intended. By that do you mean that they might hear what you're saying as, "look my free autonomy is more important than the marriage?"

V: No, that wasn't my concern. You see, my autonomy operated for me previous to the marriage,

within the marriage, and outside the marriage. I didn't feel that there was a choice to be made between autonomy and marriage. I always live within a framework of making autonomous choices.

G: Of being an autonomous person.

V: Yes.

G: I see.

V: What I don't want to be misconstrued is this: staying in the marriage would not have meant losing my autonomy. That wasn't the danger. I'm always autonomous. The threat was that, if I stayed in the marriage, I might have had to force Mark to go along with me. I felt uncomfortable with that prospect. Or I would have had to live a false role: in terms of follow him superficially. While the "real" deeper part of me was not involved.

G: But at no time, did you feel the danger was that you would lose your identity, that you would lose who you were.

V: No, I was much more afraid he would lose his identity.

G: Rather, you were afraid of having to pretend to be following the course he chose; or of swallowing him up in your course.

V: Yes.

G: Does that wrap up what you'd like to say?

V: Yes.

Element d: the matter of anxiety striking at the center of the person.

Question based on element d:

Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which

a failure or failures on your part challenged a value or values you held, and may still hold, right at the center of your person, so to speak? If so, could you tell me as fully as possible how you reacted to the experience of such a failure or failures?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you if you have ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which a failure or failures on you part challenged a value or values you held, and may still hold, right at the center of your person, so to speak? If so, could you tell me as fully as possible how you reacted to the experience of such a failure or failures?

Victoria: I've certainly had some failures that challenged some values I've held. I wouldn't say that I have experienced failures that challenged values that I held right at the center of my person. I don't know whether that's being picky, but sometimes, in fact usually, if I've let something go as a failure it's been because of some other choice that was more important. Usually the reason that the other choice was more important, even though the one that I let go as a failure might have been the one I was more involved with, can be sort of summed up like this: if you're failing a test, or an exam, or something like that, you're just failing it; but otherwise, if you let anything slide by as a failure, to my way of looking at it, it involves some kind of a choice to do that. Because something else, which may be very tenuous, is in some way more important. To me those values that I would locate at the center of my person, would lie in the direction of the choice that made the failure necessary. It doesn't seem to me that failures just happen or that they're a one sided kind of thing.

G: They're the result, if I hear you right, of other kinds of decisions. They're the consequence of having decided to do one thing rather than something else. Kind of like "you can't have your cake and eat it too."

V: I don't think that failures are something that just happen from the outside, any more than successes are. I think that failures involve a choice to let something go, and usually there's got to be some kind of reason for that. The reason, as I look at it, would involve the value that may have been less obvious, but closer to what I would call the center. That's one reason why you make the choice to let something fail, because it's incompatible with something else that's more important.

G: That comes through quite clear to me. There was a distinction that you made very early. That was between values at the center of your person and just values. Could you carry that a bit further? I'm wondering about that.

V: What I was trying to say was that when you let go and become a failure, it may very well entail some things you hold as values; but somehow you hold other values as more important, or closer to the center. So if the two values become irreconcilable, then you let go of the one that's further from the core. Your question had talked about failures that involved values at the center of my person. My feeling is that I choose the failures, and the reason that I choose them is because the values that are involved in them are not the most central for me.

G: Can you highlight that from a situation, or experience that might come to mind? Can you get it down to a concrete example?

V: I can highlight it most easily with the two choices that I made at the beginning and end of my marriage. At the beginning of my marriage I definitely decided to let go of something which had been very important to me up to that point. This was the idea of going to medical school. Forming a life with Mark was more important, and I felt that the two would be irreconcilable in the sense that it wouldn't be possible to be deeply involved in both. I don't like to do things without getting all the way involved. So I let my plan to go to medical school fail. At the other end of my marriage, I chose among my values again. My marriage certainly

involved some values that were important to me. There were some things involved there that I didn't want to let go of; but there were other things in terms of values about my having to be myself, who I really was inside, that needed to be considered. At the same time it was also important to let Mark be himself. When those things became irreconcilable with keeping the marriage going, even though it was an important value to keep the marriage going and carry out our plans and promises to each other, we made a decision to end the marriage. You know, the marriage didn't fail all by itself. We both had to make the decision to let it fail, and I think we both did it because there were things that were irreconcilable with it that were more important. To me they felt more important because they felt closer to the center of my person.

G: So it's like you can let some things fall by the wayside that are not close to the center.

V: Yea, and I'm not trying to negate a sense of failure there. That sense of failure is there and was there very strong at the time. There were values involved that were important to me, but as I came right up to the crunch, they were not the most important values; and that's why I made the choice to let the marriage fail. I can't think of any failures, except minor ones, that come down on you from the outside - like failing an exam. Otherwise, I chose my failures. Even if I didn't want to fail, there was still something else that made it necessary.

G: One of the main themes that I hear in what you're saying is that failure, in the case of values that we hold to be important, is not just something that happens to us. It's also something that we choose.

V: That's the way it is for me at least. I always feel hesitant to speak for everyone else.

G: That is very clear to me. Could you tell me a bit about the feeling quality that goes into "letting certain things fail?"

V: I think, for me, it involves a strong feeling of regret. And maybe a sadness that can contain a lot of pain. But more basically than that, there is a very sure sense that I have to do it the way I'm going to do it. Even though I may not be very clear about just what it is that I'm going to do, there's still a very sure sense that somehow this is the way I have to go and it feels right. I don't go where it doesn't feel right. If necessary, I can sit for a long time without making a move at all; until something opens up to make one fork or the other have that feeling that it's right.

G: Could you describe that feeling?

V: The feeling of failure or the feeling that it's just right?

G: The feeling that it's just right.

V: It feels as though it fits. Even though I don't know where it's going to take me, it feels as though it's some place that I can go. It isn't really that clear, necessarily, but there is a sort of confidence underneath that it will resolve itself, and after a while I will find out where I'm going, or where I've gone. I think that's as close as I can come to describing how it feels.

G: It's quite clear to me.

V: It can feel pretty shattered in the process, but somehow I know that there is solid ground underneath the quicksand.

G: Kind of a foundation beneath the flux of all that's going on. Have you ever experienced one of the failures we spoke of previously as having shaken the foundation beneath the flux, the foundation beneath the quicksand?

V: No. I mean it's shaken up a lot of me up above, but not enough to take away that sense that the right solution is underneath somewhere; and that the choice I finally feel right about making is going to lead to it. I'm not saying that there was only one possible solution. There might have

been other ways I could have gone that would have lead somewhere else. That could have been right too.

G: So that foundation stays intact.

V: Yea, it stays intact. I don't really know for sure what keeps it together or what sustains my faith in it. Save that I've been through a lot of choices by now, and they have always worked. So that kind of gives me the confidence that it will work the next time I have to make a choice. But it's not a matter knowing exactly what you're doing all the time. A lot of the time I don't know what I'm doing, but I sort of know I'll find out eventually; and I'll be pretty happy with it.

G: Does that capture the question for you? Or would you like to take it a bit further?

V: No, I think we've already taken it a bit beyond the question. We've really been talking about where you go from a failure, rather than what the failure is like itself.

Element e: a further extension of the matter of threat.

Question based on element e:

Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which you perceived your own "security patterns," however you may want to define these, as being threatened; such that you experienced the foundation of your existence as thrown into question, so to speak? If so, could you tell me as fully as possible how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which you perceived your own security patterns, however you may want to define these, as being threatened; such that you experienced the

foundation of your existence as thrown into question, so to speak? If so, could you tell me as fully as possible how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

Victoria: I'm not sure I'm clear about what you mean by "security patterns."

G: I mean those things that you identify yourself with, whether the values you identify yourself with, or whatever you identify as giving you security - fundamental security at the foundation - the things that hold you up.

V: I'm having a hard time trying to figure out how to answer that question, because I don't recall any experiences that were as shattering as you are stating it in your question. That's why I wasn't sure what you meant by security patterns. Certainly, early in my life, those security patterns came to me through my parents. I was very close to my father. Hitler came to power in Germany about the time I was turning eight. Very soon after that my father resigned from his position at the university, and then made a decision to leave. He lived in Columbia, South America, for several years. I wouldn't say his departure was an experience as shattering as what you described in your question. I didn't feel threatened or shattered, as though the rug was pulled out from under me. I certainly didn't like the prospect of living without an ongoing relationship with my father.

G: This threat would not necessarily have to have shattering connotations, so much as it would be the kind of thing that throws your foundation into question.

V: I haven't had many experiences where my own sense of security felt that doubtful. That's always been a hard thing for me to puzzle out. I grew up with a sister who is three years younger than I am, who was very insecure as a child. I can remember sympathizing with her when we were children, because experiences of having my parents gone on a trip were very difficult for her. I was able to understand because I knew her, knew where she was

coming from. It was really hard for her. Yet, in another sense, I was never able to understand her fully, because I always felt so secure. Her insecurity, although I knew it was terribly real, was kind of unreal to me. I've since talked with my sister and my mother about this. For a long time my mother has felt very guilty about a decision she made when my sister was very young. She must have been under two at the time, and we were making a move from one German city to another. My sister had been a delicate infant and it was a time in Germany when there was much emphasis on the physical needs of infants, and not as much on their emotional needs. So my mother, with the advice she was getting from professionals and friends at the time, made a decision to place my sister in an infant home of some kind for a period of time. I don't know how long it was, probably a couple of months. Mother felt that it would be hard for her to handle the move and the getting settled down, and she felt she could get better care for my sister in this place. Then she could be picked up and plunked back down into her own family life, when it had been reestablished. Mother was trying to save her some trauma, but it turned out to be a very traumatic experience for my little sister. She began to show some "failure to thrive" symptoms. She just plain got physically ill, because she felt so deserted. It was something she never quite got over. So as I look back at it now, I feel that kind of an insecurity was something that I never went through. I always have felt very firmly based in who I am and how I am going to make it. When my father moved away from our family I had thoroughly internalized my sense of self. I think very early, much of this security had come from who my parents saw me to be and what they saw in me. I think that's how we get much of our sense of self. When my father left when I was eight, it was something that I didn't like, but certainly not something that shook me in any kind of basic way. Even at that time I was aware of the fact that I'd already derived a whole lot more from my father, in terms of strength, than many people I knew got in their whole life. I've never really felt insecure.

G:

It sounds to me like your answer to this question

is that your security patterns, as you understand them, have not been shaken all that much; not in the sense I've stated in the question.

V: Yea, I think that's true. Most people I know feel more threatened than I do with the prospect of being uprooted, having their economy threatened, or those kind of things. I consider these external threats. I don't like them. At the same time I don't feel very threatened by them.

I'm turning the wheels around in my head, trying to figure out if I can tell you how it feels, how I react when some particular value or ideal that I hold important is threatened. Telling you this might be another way of getting at what you were trying to pinpoint in your question. (Long pause.) I guess I'm not sure I can say any more about how I react to these threats. I'll have to keep turning the wheels.

G: Your parents have played an important role in this firm sense of security that you've referred to often.

V: Yea, I guess the best thing that I can say about my own sense of security is this: somehow I was given a very secure childhood in a very insecure situation. A lot of it was luck, because these very strong parents evidently weren't able to manage the same thing for my younger sister. So somehow my security just fell together in good fortune between me and my parents; I'm sure it isn't that they didn't love my sister just as much as they did me. They would have been glad to do the same for her if they'd known how to do it. Somehow they did it for me without really knowing they were doing it. I think that's about as close as I can come to answering this question.

G: Is that the extent to which you'd like to answer the question?

V: Yes.

Guilt

Representation of the definition of guilt:

The existential view assigns more to the meaning of guilt than just the individual's experience of guilt feelings. Rather, she views it partly as the real human guilt of "locking up your potentialities," of not being what we truly are in the "core" of our being. We could assert Shakespeare's often quoted line as a motto for the existential view of guilt: "Above all to thine own self be true." Another important example of real guilt is "ontological guilt against one's fellows" (May, 1958 b, p. 54). This guilt is simply the result of being a "separate individual" - meaning that we can't help viewing our fellow humans through "limited and biased eyes." A consequence of this, according to May, will be a failure "to understand and meet the other's needs" (1958 b, p. 54). Our limited perspective is one thing that, of necessity, makes us guilty of not being able to fully understand the other person.

Element a: the matter of not being "true to yourself."

Question based on element a:

Have you ever experienced yourself as not being "true to yourself," so to speak, as not having fulfilled something about yourself that you felt it extremely important to fulfill? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like you to tell me if you have ever experienced yourself as not being true to yourself, so to speak, as not having fulfilled something about yourself that you felt it extremely important to fulfill? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

Victoria: The first thing I should make clear in relation to that question is that I feel, compared to almost everyone I know, I am extremely easy on myself. Beyond that I would say there are two parts to that question. One is, "Have I had the sense of not being true to myself?" How did you phrase the other part of the question?

G: As not having fulfilled something about yourself that you felt it extremely important to fulfill.

V: I would say, yes, I have had some experiences like the second half of your question; but they didn't evoke the sense of having let myself down that's in the first part of your question. Well, for instance, when I was in college the first time I was in a premed program. At the time I thought that it was extremely important to me to go on to medical school and become a doctor, which I then didn't do. But I have never been disappointed with myself for not doing this. I simply changed my mind. There was something else I wanted to do more and did it. There are a lot of things I have thought it important to do that I haven't done. But I don't experience those things as being untrue to myself. It hasn't always been a matter of my changing my mind. Sometimes something else made the original goal impossible or unobtainable.

G: Some pressures outside at some points have prevented you from accomplishing something.

V: Yea. That kind of thing. But I don't tend to react to even major changes in goals by bawling myself out.

G: Having not fulfilled a certain project or a certain something or other, is not a sign that you have been untrue to yourself.

V: No. It doesn't feel that way to me, because I've usually done it with the full agreement of all the different parts of myself.

G: Have you ever had an experience in which you did feel untrue to yourself, even though that experience didn't have anything to do with not having fulfilled something?

- V: No, I can't really recall any experience that I would use that strong a term for. Sure, I have had lots of experiences where I've done something I wished later I had done a different way. But not to the degree of feeling I had been untrue to myself. I can't recall one. I have done a lot of major changes of direction, but they haven't been associated with a sense of being untrue to myself.
- G: So just changing direction or not having fulfilled a particular project, is not a signal to you that you have been untrue to yourself. I believe the phrase that you used was that you don't "bawl yourself out" if you make a change, do something different, or if you don't fulfill something.
- V: I am basically very stubborn and I don't change unless I want to. In my counseling experiences I have found that one of the areas that is hard for me to work with is a sense of guilt which many people carry around, I can hear them... But, I have a hard time getting a real internalized understanding, because it is not something that I do with myself. The kinds of things that I feel guilty or dismayed about, wished I had done differently, or feel regretful about, are all relatively minor things. They just aren't earth shaking. And the major, sort of 180° turns, involve enough concentration and working my choice out with myself, so that I really don't feel regretful about them. That's one of those issues that I know is often big for other people, but has never been that much of an issue to me.
- G: Do you feel, then, that that captures the way that you would like to respond to this question? Or would you like to reflect on it a bit more?
- V: Well, in response to the first half of the question, about really feeling as though I have been untrue to myself... I just can't come up with any experiences where I have felt that way. In response to the second half of your question, I am perfectly willing to give you other examples of major plans I haven't followed through on other than the medical school one, if it would help you to know these.

G: If you would like to trace some of those that would be fine, but you shouldn't feel that your purpose is to help me with your answers.

V: Well, I never intended to get divorced after 23 years of marriage; but, having done it, I don't feel that I have been let down or let myself down. I really feel that as things worked out, it was a very good solution. Although I don't feel regretful about the 23 years of marriage either. I feel they were good too. As for those things that were imposed upon me from the outside, I probably feel much more resentful about those. There are a lot of mountains I'd still like to climb, but arthritis keeps me from climbing them. There are a lot of other things as well. But nothing ever works out completely the way one would like to have it. Yet, I don't think those are earth shaking events.

G: I hear you telling me that when you change your direction in life or fall short of getting something done, you're not going to bawl yourself out for it, you're not going to assume any guilt for it.

V: Yes.

Element b: the matter of being untrue to one's "core."

Question based on element b:

Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which you did something, whether to yourself or to someone else, that you perceived as not representing the deepest "core" of yourself, so to speak? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

The interview based on element b's question?

Gordon: For this question I'd like to ask you if you've ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which you did something, whether to yourself or to someone else, that you perceived as not representing

the deepest core of yourself, so to speak? if so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

Victoria: Yea, the most obvious, easiest examples for me to think of on this matter, are in relation to my children; but, you know, there are other incidences between me and other people whom I crossed. But most often I can remember hassles I got into with the kids as they were growing up. Usually what I have done is to backtrack and try to undo whatever damage got done through the missed communication, through being hard on somebody, or something like that. Sometimes this is so productive that you can't necessarily be sorry you made the mistake in the first place. My experience with my kids, or with other people that I've been close to, is that backtracking to try to undo the results of missed communications can lead to better communication than you might have been able to achieve by trying to deal with it right the first time through. So that, looking at the total event, it's not... you know. I think that you can better get to where you're trying to get in terms of communicating with somebody in the long run if you go ahead and let each of you pull a few goofs. In going back and trying to take those goofs apart, it's sometimes easier to get to know each other than it would be if you'd just done it perfectly the first time. In the situations I'm talking about, for instance, maybe I would realize after it was too late to stop it, that something I was saying was really hurting somebody's feelings. What I usually do would be to tell the other person that I feel that I hurt their feelings. But it may be that what I said that hurt their feelings I still believe to be true, and I may not be "sorry." After all I can't change what I believe about it; all I can do is express the fact that "I'm sorry that it hurt their feelings and that that wasn't my intention. Other times I have had instances with the children where I've said something which, on thinking it over, I didn't mean; and in that case that's pretty easy to deal with. I backtrack and correct myself. But generally my reaction would be to try to reestablish communication. With people other

than my kids, I've quite often done that by letter. If it's somebody I don't run into all the time, and I don't necessarily see them again the next day, I've often written a note or something like that. It quite often happens to me that, when I'm washing dishes the next day, I can think of all the things I wish I had said to open up a conversation. So sometimes we're not talking so much about something I have already said or done that I would like to undo, as something that I wish that I had done or said that I didn't do. But I treat the two the same way. I'm very likely to write a note or bring it up.

G: Kind of bring it out in the open and express the way that you felt about what you did. As I listened to you it sounded to me like there were two parts to your answer. One part was sometimes, "I've hurt somebody or I've done something to somebody that they didn't feel good about, but it was an expression of what I believe and was an expression of who I am in the true sense." Whereas in another context maybe you said something to somebody or did something that didn't express a true core of yourself. Would it be appropriate to say that you felt more sorry for the latter than for the former?

V: No. I think that kind of a mistake is easier to undo because you're not stuck with the fact that whatever hurt the person's feelings is still so. So all you have to do is say, "I've changed my mind on this." So I think that's easier to deal with. The other kind of a hassle with somebody is more complicated. Since what you have to do if you really want to establish communication is to insist that you still hold the same opinion that you held; but that you didn't intend to hurt any feelings. You must somehow grant the other person the right to a different opinion. It's just a more complicated situation.

G: Kind of like in this sort of situation you've got a view that really expresses something true about yourself that might actually clash with someone else who holds a similar kind of conviction. Whereas the other case was more easy to rectify because there it was a goof, there is was a

mistake that you hurt somebody.

V: Yes, but I think either way I tend to deal with it by trying to bring it out in the open. It's easier for me to bring it out in the open if I realize that I may have hurt somebody's feelings, than it is for me in a situation where somebody else hurt my feelings or somehow stepped on something that's important to me. Theoretically I think that the thing to do about it is to let them know, but it's harder for me to do.

G: It's harder for you to let somebody know that they have hurt your feelings than it is for you to let them know that you have hurt their feelings.

V: Yes. So what I theoretically believe should be done about it isn't different, but what I actually do about it sometimes is.

G: Kind of the old difference between theory and practice.

V: Yes... I don't know whether you feel that deals with your question or not?

G: Do you feel it deals with the question?

V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of "limited and biased eyes."

Question based on element c:

Have there been moments or times in your life in which you experienced a real failure on your part to meet the needs of another person, whatever those needs may have been in the particular situation? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences of real failure on your part?

The interview based on element c's question:

Gordon: Have there been moments or times in your life in which you experienced a real failure on your

part to meet the needs of another person, whatever those needs may have been in the particular situation? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences of real failure on your part?

V: There have been some experiences of failure in my life. The main failure, in line with your question, is the one of my marriage. I don't think I feel ready to discuss how I felt unable to meet the needs of another person in that particular situation. There have been some other experiences of a more temporary failing to meet the particular needs of my children. Those I can think of were not failures to work something out between me and one child. I really don't remember any enduring conflicts like that. But there were instances of my failing to help the kids work out things between them. How did I feel in such situations? I felt like a failure. If things fell apart and the kids were fighting, or I lost patience with them, or really stepped on them, then I felt like a failure. The situations I can remember always involved more than one child; although there may be instances when they might have felt that I'd failed them in one-to-one encounters.

 There are some needs of other people I have failed to meet that don't particularly make me feel like a failure, because it may have been on purpose. Maybe I didn't think it was good for that other person to have that need met. There have also been situations where I've warned someone not to expect me to satisfy a particular need. Where I gave such a warning, and then failed to meet a need, I didn't feel like a failure. I felt that I had not made any promises about taking that need on my shoulders. I may have been aware that the other person was hurt by this, or at least felt very needful in the situation, but it didn't make me feel as though I had failed. It wasn't a bargain I had ever struck. For example, with my children some of my failures to meet a need were on purpose. I don't think it's good for children to have mothers who are going to do

everything for them. But, I guess what you're trying to get at in the question, is how I cope with the sense of having failed.

G: Yes, can you describe, in those instances when you did feel like a real failure, how you reacted to that, how you dealt with that, what you did?

V: In instances where I feel I have failed in something that I have taken on as my responsibility, I tend to react by figuring I have to do something about it. In the case of the marriage, I finally did get together with Mark and come to the agreement that we should get divorced. This was a way of doing something about it. With the kids I would often react by locking the door for a while and saying, "I've got to have time to get my head together about this." Or I would turn to the kids and get them to solve the situation. I can remember turning to Jim, who was the oldest of the children, and simply say, "We've gotten to a point where I don't know what to do. What would you do if you were a mother in this situation?" Then he would sit right down and solve the problem. If he was a major factor in the problem, then his having to solve it gave him an added dimension of responsibility. I don't know how fair that is to do but I remember doing it occasionally. It worked very well. I guess that's the way I remember responding to anything that gave me any sense of failure. In these situations I felt some responsibility. Whereas if I fail to do something that someone else would like to feel is my responsibility, but that I don't feel I have assumed as mine, then I cope with that in a different way. It doesn't really elicit that feeling of failure in the first place. I sense that I may have let somebody down, but it doesn't make me feel like a failure if I don't believe I ever made any promises to hold them up. However, if I really feel like a failure, then I stew around about it until I think of something to do about it, something to get the situation resolved in some way. On minor things feeling like a failure can push me into doing something about it, and then after I've finally thought of something to do, I may feel like a success. Motivation wise, that probably is what

makes me try to do something about it. After all, it feels a lot better to be success than a failure. But with major, or deeper issues, it isn't quite that easy. I can feel I have discharged my responsibility, but it doesn't keep me from still feeling the failure.

G: How would you distinguish between the major and minor things?

V: If it was mostly a situational problem, then I feel I can rectify it by eventually bringing about some kind of fair solution. I can feel successful about the solution because there was never much of an issue except the problem situation. But if it is a real problem that goes deeper than that, in terms of relationships like the marriage, that's one of those things where I don't think finding a workable solution erases the sense of failure. The sense of failure would persist to the degree that I felt there was a basic underlying relationship problem. I don't feel this kind of failure can be erased by a reasonable solution. You can get to a point where you get it resolved enough that everyone goes on from there, but it doesn't erase the sense of failure.

G: Failures tied to brief situations can be erased. Failures in a deeper sense - those tied to long-term relationships - are more persistent.

V: Yea, and I think the difference between the two is how deep it went emotionally, both for me and the other people involved. The minor one is like having burned the dinner. That's a catastrophe until you can think of someday to make it edible or think of something else to serve, and then afterwards no one has to sit around and cry about the dinner that got burned. But the other situations involve persons...

G: Those are not easily dealt with.

V: Yea. (Long pause.)

G: Does that state what you'd like to state about this question?

V: Yes.

Element d: the matter of "locking up our potentialities."

Question based on element d:

Have you ever experienced yourself as not having actualized some of your own potentialities or possibilities that you felt it important to actualize? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences of not having actualized a potentiality or potentialities?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you if you have ever experienced yourself as not having actualized some of your potentialities or possibilities that you felt important to actualize? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences of not having actualized a potentiality or potentialities?

Victoria: Well, my reaction to that is that, sure, I'm always falling short of actualizing all of my potentialities. I don't have any feeling that it's necessary, or even particularly important, to actualize all of those potentialities. Your question noted a potentiality that was important to me. I think my attitude is that all potentialities are important, but it's not important to actualize all of them or half of them, or whatever. I think that the important thing is to be able to feel that I am actualizing one of them at any one time. I don't have a feeling like, "here are these ten potentialities and so I've got to divide up my time and make sure that I spend some time actualizing each of them" The thing that's important is that I'm actualizing a potential. It doesn't matter whether I get so caught up in potential #1 or #3, or whichever one I'm charging away on, that I never get to any of the others. Because, no matter how long I live, I'm never

going to get to all of them. And that's not what matters. What matters, is that I'm not just treading water. The important thing is that I'm actualizing some potentialities. Beyond that, I don't set the kind of standards for my self that say, "You've got all these various potentials and you'd better do something with them: I think that it's the process that's important, the quality of involvement at any particular moment. At any point in time I think it feels good to be engaged with the world with your talent, or your potential; and if I feel engaged, then I feel challenged and satisfied. So I don't worry about other potentials that may be sitting around not doing anything. I'm too busy doing what I'm doing to worry about that.

G: Would it be a fair statement to say that you're more concerned about the engagement than the actualization?

V: Yea, I guess that would be one way of putting it. I do my choosing by whether or not something seems to fall in with my potential. It must be difficult enough to have challenge in it, but not be impossible to do, and it must be related to those things that are important to me. Other than that I don't worry about whether or not there are potentials around that I'm not doing anything with. I think that there are lots of them. Some of them I may do something with some day. I feel it's sort of a good thing that there are lots of them. Then, when one thing gets cut off, there's something else to do.

G: Could you highlight for me what some of those would be?

V: Well, one of the potentials that I used to get a lot of feeling of satisfaction from was using my body to do what it could do. Since I developed arthritis, I've had to put a lot of that aside. So now I'm feeling "thank goodness there are other things to do in life." Another of the potentials that I used to play around with quite a lot, but that I haven't done anything with for the ten years or so, is writing poetry. The reason that I haven't

gotten around to it is that I've just been too busy working on other things. It's one of those nice things I'd really like to do something with, but in the meantime, I don't feel like I'm "wasting" a great potential. I feel very involved where I am. This is the way I tend to be. I tend to feel 110% involved in whatever I am doing at the time.

G: So your experience has been that it's ok to let some potentialities, or possibilities, lie dormant for awhile?

V: Yea, it's alright to let some of them go and never do anything with them. I feel like most of us would have to have two or three lifetimes if we were to develop everything that's in us. I don't feel particularly driven to even develop one potential to its highest possibility. It really isn't important to me. It's much more important that I feel that sense of engagement when I'm doing it. Beyond that, tomorrow will take care of itself.

G: That 110% involvement that you spoke of.

V: Yea.

G: That gets back to the earlier point that I heard you making: that the engagement is more important than the result. Does that cover the question?

V: It does for me.

Element e: an extension of the matter of "limited and biased eyes."

Question based on element e:

Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which it was particularly clear to you that your view of another human being was limited and biased, such that you could not fully understand that person? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced a moment or time in your life in which it was particularly clear to you that your view of another human being was limited and biased, such that you could not fully understand that person? If so, could you comment as completely as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

Victoria: I should say that that's not a rare experience in my life. I think that there are lots of people who stand in a different place from where I am in regard to how they see life - what they might do with it, what they feel is important, etc. I'm quite aware of the fact that I usually don't, and probably can't, understand those people any better than they can understand me. Most of the time, in my private life or in any concern that I believe in putting time into, my immediate reaction is to let them go their way and I'll go mine; especially when I run into basic differences in outlook. I have been in a situation where I felt, for one reason or another, that wasn't right, wasn't what I should do. Then I struggled to look for some way to engage with the people. Let me note some instances that will make this concrete. For quite a few years I and several other people from a small Friends meeting here in Bozeman, had an ongoing involvement down on the Cheyenne reservation. My gut level reaction was always that I didn't have any trouble understanding the Indian people. I felt very comfortable and at home with them. I had a lot of affinity for them and understood where they were coming from. I found it much more difficult to relate to the white people working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs and in similar positions. We often felt that those from the Bureau were people that needed the same opening up of communication, some building of bridges. We often felt that such help was desperately needed by some of the white people caught on the reservation, caught with what looked to us like narrow attitudes about the Indian people. It was a great deal more difficult to figure out how to approach them, and not nearly as

rewarding. It just wasn't as much fun to work with them as it was to work with the Cheyenne. It was more difficult for me than for some of the other people in our group because my orientation. For a while there was a sociologist involved in the meeting. From somewhere he had a test, or instrument, that was supposed to measure how atuned different Indian people were to the white culture. I remember making a crack, saying "I would like to see that instrument used with some non-Indian people, and see how atuned they are to the white culture." One person turned to me and said, grinning, "Well, I know exactly where you would score." And he didn't mean that I would be very atuned to the white culture, because I feel deep affinity with the Indian culture. White people in these positions often assume things about how to live in this world that are pretty different from Indian conceptions, as well as from some of my own ideas. This is one example where my instincts said, "Let them go their way and you go yours." Yet conscience said, "That really isn't right." I guess there are two situations where I might run into people whom I really feel unable to understand, situations where my own preconceptions would be different from theirs. One would be contexts where the people are clients. There are a lot of people in this world very different from me. This is something that took me a long time to learn, by the way. I think I used to assume that other people were more like me than I believe now. Anyway, when I run into this kind of situation with a client, I find that it's often quite possible for me to crawl in and understand that client; and be able to do quite a bit of interpreting of that person to himself from his own point of view, which may be very different from my point of view. The process I'm going through in my own head when I'm doing this, is a conscious recognition that such and such wouldn't work for me, but this guy is pretty different from me; and it looks to me like this is how it may look to him. Thus, it may be helpful for me to explain that to him. I don't find that not having an internalized understanding of people who are different from myself hurts me professionally. I'm sure there are people for whom I'm just the wrong person to work with. I always like to leave that door open. I wouldn't

blame any client who felt toward me what I feel toward many people; such that he would say, "That Victoria, just let her go her way and I'll go mine." Any client should certainly have that right.

The other instance of running into that kind of situation is much more complex and much more difficult to deal with. A basic difference in outlook can happen with a person you're closely involved with in your life. Mark turned out to be, in many many ways, one of those people. There were lots of areas in which Mark and I had common interests and common outlooks and got along really well. That's how we made a good thing of twenty out of twenty-three years of marriage. But in some deeper, more basic ways, the more I got to know myself and Mark, the more I found some real incompatibilities. I have other friends with very different outlooks. With them it doesn't bother me. In other words, most friendships don't have to entail such close dovetailing that there isn't room for some real personality differences. Some people I enjoy in my friendships have completely different outlooks on life, and I wouldn't want to crawl inside their skin; also they probably wouldn't want to crawl inside of mine. Yet there somehow is enough that we share, are in communication about, or are working in the same direction on, that it makes for pretty close friendships. I guess I'm outlining a continuum from just letting them go one way while I go the other, to wanting to let them go; but realizing that it isn't right to do that in such and such a situation - like with a client who is very different from me. There may be some things about a client that I am never really going to understand; but I can accept them without understanding them.

G: It's like there is a continuum from complete disagreement to complete agreement and everything in the middle. Is that how you were stating it?

V: Well, no I wasn't.

G: I guess I lost touch with what you were saying.

- V: No, on this particular continuum we're not lining out agreement and disagreement with people. We're lining out how I react to them and what I do with my reaction. On one end is the guy that I'm happy to let go his way while I go mine. Then there are all the other stages in between. Then I guess this continuum is a circle, because with Mark I decided that the best thing to do was to let him go his way and I go mine; but in a very different way from the fellow that I just recognize great differences with. I guess we're looking at a continuum where the ends meet.
- G: It's like there are some people for whom you would say there is no way you're going to understand that person. You're just too far apart.
- V: Yes, where I'm happy to let them go without making any effort, and therefore, without any struggle.
- G: Whereas in some cases, though you may not fully understand that person, you are willing to still try to interact; even though you do feel apart.
- V: Yea, and sometimes the decision about whether I'm going to do that or not may be made by something quite apart from the degree of differences. It may be that that type of person is working for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and because that's a situation in which I'm striving to build some bridges, I just feel more of a sense of obligation to try to do something. Whereas someone else may not have been as hard to understand, but they weren't engaged in anything that I was engaged in, and so I let them go without any compunction. I don't feel any obligation to try to make friends with everyone in this world. In some situations I do feel I am obligated at least to make a try. The motivation to stay in contact can come from what the reason for involvement is, rather than from how distant I feel from a person.
- G: I still have a question that's lingering inside me. While I understand pretty well what you're saying, I'm wondering how that relates to the matter

of bias, of limited perspective that you might have?

V: If the person that I feel biased against is involved in a situation such as the Cheyenne reservation, and I am establishing a relationship with the Indian people for the purpose of seeing if the walls can somehow have a few holes punched in them, then I feel a moral obligation to make an effort to try to work with the white people too, even though I may feel very biased against them. I don't feel very biased or prejudiced against the Indians. I have no problem there. It's some of the white people on the reservation that I feel very biased and prejudiced against. But if they are caught in a situation that I want to work in, then I feel an obligation to make some kind of an approach toward them. Of course, you can never make an approach to a person that you feel biased against without struggling very hard with your own biases first. It would be pretty silly for me to approach anybody I feel biased against, without first trying to struggle with some of my own biases. Otherwise I'm batting my head against a stone wall. If that stone wall is inside of me, then I'm not going to get anywhere. So in that case I will work to overcome my biases. Whereas in other cases I won't bother.

G: I see. That's very clear to me now. I've a much better sense of how those things are related.

V: And I guess that's different from working with a client. With a client I feel that I have to crawl inside his skin and understand him from where he's at, but this doesn't require me to try to overcome my biases. After all it is defined in the counseling relationship that it's not going to be a personal relationship. Therefore, I don't find that I have to struggle to overcome my own biases. They really don't get in the way with trying to do my job. However, it sometimes happens in the process of climbing inside a client's skin, that I find I diminish some of my prejudices about that person. I don't find it necessary

to start there, because we're not really establishing a personal relationship.

G: The relationship is not going to reach the point where your own biases are going to be that much of a thing to struggle with. Is that what you are saying?

V: In a personal relationship or a working relationship, it always has to be a two-way process. There has to be some give and take.

G: So biases can get in the way in that kind of a situation.

V: Whereas in a counseling relationship, though it's not a one-way process, it's a two-way process of an entirely different nature. What I think, where I'm at, and what I want to do, has nothing to do with it. You just keep all that out of the relationship to start with. So, therefore, prejudices don't interfere as much in that kind of a relationship. Your task is to communicate with the other person only about what's going on with him. You don't need to communicate with the other person only about what's going on with him. You don't need to communicate about what's going on with you. The only obligation I have about what's going on for me is to either keep it out of the relationship, or if it's in there, to be aware that it's there, so I don't put the load on the other person. I guess it's a two-way street, but it's a two-way street in a different dimension.

G: You still have to be aware of your biases so they don't get in there, but your responsibility is not to get in there the way you would in another kind of relationship.

V: Yes. I don't have to share with a client the fact that I'm in disagreement with him on almost any subject that might come up. Whereas with another person I'm trying to work with in the other kind of two-way street, I certainly do have to let us both know that.

G: Does that wrap up this question?

V: Yes, I think it wraps it up pretty well. The other thought that occurs to me is that I learned a lot about tolerance from having my Cheyenne friends practice their tolerance on me. In some ways they are the most tolerant people I have ever run into. They manage to do it without being condescending. Also many of the Indian people I know live with very strong prejudices against white people, and at the same time they manage not to apply those in a person to person situation. Some of the Indian people I know are very prejudiced against white people. Yet, they are very tolerant of me. They are so tolerant that I hate to use the word tolerant. It's like the word patience. When you're aware of being tolerant, you're not really as tolerant as when you're not aware of being so. Just like when you're aware of being patient: you're not really being as patient then as when you're just being patient without knowing that you're being so. Those words get in the way of describing the quality that I'm trying to describe. But that's just an aside. I think that's where I learned a whole lot about both prejudice and tolerance, and what my own prejudices really are.

G: Does that capture it for you?

V: Yes.

Being-in-the-world

Representation of the definition of being-in-the-world:

This concept undercuts the "subject-object dichotomy" and views the individual as inextricably bound with her world. Each implies the other. "They (existential analysts) hold that the person and his world are a unitary, structural whole; the hyphenation of the phrase being-in-the-world expresses precisely that" (May, 1958 b, p. 59). One's world, as May (1958 b) again says, "is the structure of meaning-

ful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates" (p. 59). This means that one's world is constituted by such diverse things as nature, society, "interrelationships" with others, etc. The point is this: I am in the world and the world is in me. This union, therefore, means that the person herself also constitutes her world. Relatedness to one's own body is a good example of this, a good example of one's "own world" (May, 1958 b, p. 61).

Element a: the matter of nature or the natural world.

Question based on element a:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you would describe yourself as bound closely with nature, as united in some way with the natural world around you? If so, could you elaborate as much as you can on what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you if you have ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you would describe yourself as bound closely with nature; as united in some way with the natural world around you? If so, could you elaborate as much as you can on what such experience or experiences entailed for you?

Victoria: The best way I can answer that is to say that I can hardly separate out experiences when I felt that way, because that's my life. There are very few times in my life when I don't feel that way.

G: So the question captures more of the whole of your life?

V: Yes.

G: Could you talk a bit about that?

V: I don't know exactly what you mean by "nature."

G: The world of animals, trees, plants, mountains.
That sort of thing.

V: In my book man belongs in there too, although some men are more aware of it than others; and it's more meaningful to some people than others. But I can't separate man from nature anymore than I can separate myself from it. When I was younger I used to pursue the feeling through studying a lot about animals. And I always spend as much time as possible outside. Nature is where my intellectual interests, my scholarly interests during the first 20 years of my life, were centered. My religious philosophies have come from there.

G: It captures a great deal of you.

V: Yea, I can't just put that into a couple of experiences.

G: It's been more like the essence of who you are.

V: Yes.

G: Taking it for granted that you can't isolate certain experiences, can you talk somewhat about the flavor of what your life has been like in relation to nature, in relation to the natural world around you?

V: That's where I've always wanted to live my life. When I was a kid I used to do a lot of poking around in the hills and a lot of studying about nature. The thing I wanted more than anything else for my birthday, when I was 8 years old, was a high school zoology textbook. I used to sit and read it until I knew the thing practically by heart, cover to cover. When we were children I used to have long arguments with my brother, whose passionate interest was history; which has always been one of those subjects that I didn't get much out of. He felt you couldn't possibly know who you were if you didn't know anything about history. I felt the same way about biology. I just couldn't see how you could know anything about yourself if you didn't know anything about biology, which left my brother entirely

cold. So, we used to have long philosophical arguments about that. When I first came to this country one of the things I really like about Wyoming and the West, was that the landscape and the vegetation wasn't anything like Germany. When I was in the Eastern U.S. things kept being just enough like the hills of home, so it made me homesick. Out in Wyoming it was a completely new experience; nature there was so different. It didn't take very long to get attached to it. That is what eventually brought me to Montana. For many years I probably spent as many nights sleeping out in the hills as I did sleeping in a house. I packed my kids around in the mountains before they could walk. It's kind of where my life's at when possible.

G: So, it's kind of a continuous flow, that sort of thing. Always being in nature. To the point where you would include people in it. Could you talk more about this inclusion?

V: Well, I think that the philosophical point of view that comes closest to how I feel on that subject, is the American Indian point of view. Several times in my life I've had experiences of running into a philosophy that had a real sense of homecoming for me; and the American Indian point of view offers that in relation to my feeling about nature, about being part of it. I only discovered this the last 20 years or so. That isn't what I thought the Indian point of view meant when I was a kid, when we used to play "cowboys and indians." That ties into some of my ideas on eating. When I was a child I wouldn't eat any meat, because I thought animals were friends of mine. So I wouldn't have anything to do with eating them. The point of view that I can be most comfortable with, in terms of what you're really doing when you are eating something, is the indian one - the whole idea that you and the animals are all part of something, and you make the animal part of yourself because you need it to survive.

I'm aware that a lot of people don't have the tie to what we're calling nature, as strongly as I have. To me that's always been very much a source

of strength, and part of my sense of belonging. The fact that I don't feel misplaced in the world fits in with my close ties with nature.

G: You're saying that your feeling of being connected with nature has been a real source of belonging.

V: Yea, I guess so. I draw on that strength without even thinking about it.

G: Nature has been so much a part of you. Is that the essence of what you would like to say?

V: Yes.

Element b: the matter of "interrelationships" or the social world.

Question based on element b:

If you have tried to establish some kind of union or intimate fellowship with other human beings in your life experience, could you elucidate for me as fully as possible what such efforts have entailed for you?

The interview based on element b's question:

Gordon: If you have tried to establish some kind of union or intimate fellowship with other human beings in your life experience, could you elucidate for me as fully as possible what such efforts have entailed for you?

Victoria: Wow! You don't want much do you! Yea, this is one of the big things, if the The Big Thing, that life is all about. Sure I've tried it. The conclusion that I've come to is that it's probably not possible or necessary to form that kind of communion with one person in regard to all the different parts of me. I think such communion is hard to achieve by setting out to do it. I can't say, "I really need

somebody to communicate with about this and so I'm going to find somebody." I think it works better the other way around - you run into people and if you begin to find an area that you have in common or that you're kindred spirits about, then that adds an important dimension to the relationship. Certainly, the most meaningful thing about living this life lies in all those little pieces of deep communication with somebody else. I don't think I have a method or even a pattern for doing it. It's just something you have to discover about each other as you meet other people.

G: Do you find, then, in your experience that this communication has occurred spontaneously? Is this a spontaneous thing or has it been planned through deliberate effort.

V: I think it takes a lot of effort, but it doesn't necessarily benefit by planning.

G: I see. You see a difference between those.

V: Yes. I think that any meaningful communication involves an effort for both parties, because I don't think you can automatically communicate. However, there probably has to be something that indicates an area that you and someone else have in common, to make it likely that an effort will be productive. First of all, there definitely are some areas in my life that are important to me to be in communication with somebody else about. They may be very different from the areas for some other people, and so that automatically would exclude many people from an intimate relationship with me. However, even though two of you are into the same thing in one area or another, you're still a long way from being in communication. In my life I put most effort into trying to be in communication with my sister and brothers as I was growing up, and then some friends I had in college. One of the reasons why - well, I don't know if I should mention one of the reasons why Mark and I broke up - anyway one of the reasons why, to me, it seemed right for me and Mark to break up was that there were some

areas that are very important in my life that I really couldn't communicate with him about. This was one of the things that caused problems for us. There were many other areas that we were in communication about.

Sometimes some of the selecting of close friends is done for you. This is often one of the major functions of various groups that we join or decide not to join. By choosing to relate to groups of Quakers, for instance, as far as organized religion is concerned, I've already done a whole lot of selecting. I have a much better chance of communicating among a group like that. This doesn't mean that I can automatically be in close, good, or even any communication, about spiritual things with every other Quaker. But I certainly have a better chance among Quakers to find people whose approaches fall in with mine so that we can communicate - not only in religion, but also in social action and that kind of thing.

Another thing that's important to me is nature, the mountains, and the natural environment. There, too, I select the kind of people that like to associate with. Poetry is another thing. I'm not into it very much right now, because there are too many other things churning around for demands on my time. But for a long time I worked with a poetry writing group. Again, I didn't feel close to all of the people in that group, but belonging to it certainly did some selecting for me - so that there was a chance of establishing some communication. That's always part of the value of workcamps or any of those kinds of efforts that I have gotten into through the Friends service committee. Very often doing something together, being involved in something together, makes it possible for communication at a deeper level to happen between people. We get to know a lot about each other. The same thing is true of climbing mountains together.

G: As I listen to you, I get the impression that you'd say communication with somebody just happens. You put effort into it, but either it happens or it doesn't happen. You can't make it happen.

V: Yea.

G: Is that a fair statement of what you said?

V: Yea, it's one of those things that you can do better when you're not trying too hard to do it. It seems to be if I'm working hard at trying to communicate with somebody, I'm not as likely to communicate at those deeper levels. It works better if we find ourselves doing something together, and then it sort of happens. It doesn't happen without effort, but it doesn't happen best with effort in the specific direction of trying to make it happen. It's a by-product of doing something else together.

G: It's a by-product of effort extended in a common task or in a common participation.

V: And it's not a by-product in the sense that it's less important. I think it's one of the most important results, or one of the best harvests you can reap from your effort. But it's a by-product in the sense that it will happen better if you just let it happen while you're doing something else rather than if you're working at it.

G: So then...

V: So the by-product can be more important than the crop you originally planted.

G: As I listen to you a question comes to mind for me: as you look back across the span of a lifetime, could you say there was a time when you felt a unique kind of union with someone else?

V: Not in the sense that I can pick out one experience. I sometimes have experienced a deep sense of communion between me and one other person or occasionally a group, although with a group it's much more rare. I've sometimes had moments of feeling real communion going on between me and a group of children I was working with. I've also had some instances like that between me someone that my life has crossed paths with. In regard to personal ex-

periences in this area, the only instances I could pick out would be more personal that I want to talk about. They would be something I would only want to talk about with the person that it happened with.

On a group level, I can think of a few times when several of us, after Meeting, would agree we had been in communication. There had been nothing said, nothing going on that you could point your finger at or grab a hold of, that indicated deep communication. Some meetings were entirely silent. Yet the people that were there would agree afterwards that it was a very close meeting. Other times it didn't feel that way, and none of us would be able to say what made the difference between the one and the other. It was just kind of a feeling of deep communication, and it was obvious to more than one person in the group.

With groups of children I've also had close experiences. Children sometimes have a way of letting you in on an experience that has been an eye opener for them. A few times when I have worked with groups of children, that's happened. It wasn't always about something important, but it became important because it was really important to them. Do you want instances of those kind of things? Those are not so private and personal that I would mind giving examples if you want them.

G: If you'd like to mention one or two, that would be fine.

V: I can remember working with a group of kids in a Sunday School. We were trying to hatch chick embryos. We were incubating some eggs, but they didn't hatch. So after a long enough time had gone by, I had to tell the kids we were not going to get anywhere with that batch of eggs. The children decided if those eggs weren't going to hatch, they wanted to open them up and see what had happened. So we did. We opened the eggs and found chick embryos in various stages of development. It was a very interesting experience for the kids. They really marvelled at it. They decided to put all these half developed chick embryos into little

bottles and take them home. All of a sudden, while we were opening up these eggs, one of the little girls said, "Gee, we wouldn't do this if they were alive." A hush just fell over the whole group and it was just really neat. Afterwards I had to get on the phone and reach all the parents so I could tell them, "When your child comes home with this half-hatched chick, don't you dare say 'Yuk' because this was really important to them."

G: That was a close experience of communion.

V: Yea... If I had tried to share my sense of reverence for life with those children in words, I couldn't have done it. This experience communicated it for all of us.

G: Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of society or the social world.

Question based on element c:

How have you experienced yourself in relation to the society around you? In your comments about this relationship you might want to include early life experience, later life experience, or any experience in between. In any event, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what experience such as this entailed for you?

The interview based on element c's question?

Gordon: How have you experienced yourself in relation to the society around you? In your comments about this relationship you might want to include early life experience, later life experience, or any experience in between. In any event, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what experience such as this has entailed for you?

Victoria: First of all, the society around me affects me in layers. So my most immediate society is the one that I live in, like my family. And then it goes out from there. I'm very much influenced by, and also at the same time, have a lot of influence on that first layer. Then as the layers move outward, I feel less interaction or close connection with them; except - and here's the strange part - I do feel close to a larger framework. In other words, I feel very much a member of the human race and a part of the universe; sometimes more so than I feel a part of Bozeman, Montana.

G: Can you carry that line of thought further?

V: In my immediate family I feel very much as though I'm a part of a constant ongoing interaction, but beyond that I feel more as though there are many connections. Some of those connections are very important to me. Yet there are spaces in those connections, too. There are things that are unimportant to me in some of the layers. A lot of things are going on that I'm not necessarily in agreement with, or don't feel a part of. So I pick out those elements that I have in common with other people, and stretch them out further beyond the immediate limits of people that I'm physically in touch with.

G: You can identify with larger groups or layers if you want to. However, your primary concern is with the people around you. Is that what you were saying?

V: Well, no. I guess your question seeks to ask how the society around me influences me and how I interact with it...

G: How you've experienced yourself in relation to it...

V: There my feeling is that the smaller society around me, in terms of my family, is one that I experience myself in constant relation to. But the society around me, in terms of Bozeman and the United States of America, are layers where I've

experienced myself in relation to only some aspects. There are some things going on that are very much a part of Bozeman, or a part of the United States of America, but I don't feel a part of them at all. There are other areas where I feel very much a part of the whole human race or the nonhuman universe, which are all part of the society around me.

G: Could you give an example of what you're speaking of?

V: I feel a part of one of those larger connections with the whole human race in asking the basic questions about life, by groping and searching for answers that I feel all people are interconnected in - even many people whom I don't know and never will know. Now let me think of something that may be going on as part of Bozeman or part of the United States, that I don't necessarily have a connection with. An example that might mean something to you, for instance, is that I've been completely outside of what's going on in baseball (the interviewer is a baseball fan,) in Bozeman, in the United States, in the world, or wherever baseball happens. I'm aware that baseball is a part of the society I live in. It's a part that may be very important to some other people and I'm not trying to make a value judgement. I'm making a personal judgement that that's something I'm not connected with in my society at all.

G: That aspect would be a remote concern for you.

V: Yea. My own feeling is that, compared to other people, those things that I feel connected with are very close connections. They do a lot to hold me up. I feel very supported by my connections with other human beings, in terms of common interests. However, in those things where I feel disconnected, I'm probably more unconnected than most other people. I think that almost everyone knows a little more about baseball than I know, in spite of the fact that I played baseball a few times. There are many other examples of things that I completely stand outside of, as well as things where I'm very much within the circle.

- G: It's like when you're connected, you're closely connected; and when you're disconnected from a certain part of society, you're very disconnected.
- V: Yea, and the same thing is true with people. Mark and I used to feel that this was one of the basic differences between the two of us. It was important to him to have many friends, but not so important to have close communion with any of them. Whereas it was not important to me to have many friends. I've talked with people in Bozeman who feel really lonely because they don't have fifty people they share a common point of view with. The fact that there may be one or two people in Bozeman who share their point of view just isn't enough for them. I don't feel that way. I don't need fifty people to share my point of view. I really wouldn't know what to do with that many. Many things that people do in groups, in terms of political interests, partying, or those kinds of things, I stand quite outside of. They haven't ever been a meaningful part of my life. This doesn't make me feel disconnected from people, because I feel very much connected with some people that are important to me.
- G: It's like you're saying that in your experience in relation to the society around you it's the quality of the interaction that's worth something, not the quantity.
- V: Yes.
- G: Did this view begin to develop very early or was it a later development?
- V: I think it developed very early. I was even more onesided when I was young than I am now. I never have been particularly social, in the sense of being very much in with the crowd. I've sometimes related this to the fact, as I've touched on before, that I grew up in Nazi Germany with parents who were very much anti-Nazi. Yet I don't think this accounts for the whole thing. I think that much of it is a personality factor of mine,

because my sister and brothers were all raised by the same parents; and this approach of mine is not necessarily true for them. I think we all grew up feeling that you can't assume the society is right. So in that sense I think it's something we all shared, but not in the more personal sense of choosing not to be part of a crowd. My sister, for instance, was always much more a part of the crowd of her peers than I ever was. She would have been very unhappy if she'd been excluded from the crowd. I never felt isolated, nor did I mind not being a part of the crowd.

G: This is the way you responded to the society, the crowd, the circle of people around you.

V: I've had many experiences of being a member of the minority. I've experienced a minority as being a small number, but I don't feel less valid, powerless, or any of the other things that often go along with the term. When I went to high school in Germany, I went to a school that was originally for boys. So there were only four girls in a class of 25 or 30, and some of the girls felt very much like a minority; more so than I did. When we first came to this country I didn't speak English and was in a minority in that sense. Quakers too, are a minority religious group, in terms of numbers. I feel that suits me well.

G: You feel at home in a minority situation.

V: Yes.

G: Does that capture this question for you?

V: Yes.

Element d: the matter of the "subject-object dichotomy."

Question based on element d:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you felt lonely because you perceived yourself as a "subject" estran-

ged, in a sense, from others whom you perceived as "objects," so to speak? As if you were saying to yourself, "Here I am and there they are. Why are we so far apart?" If so, could you elaborate as much as you can on what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you felt lonely because you perceived yourself as a subject estranged, in a sense, from others whom you perceived as objects, so to speak? As if you were saying to yourself, "Here I am and there they are. Why are we so far apart?" If so, could you elaborate as much as you can on what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

Victoria: I guess I have trouble with your question. I'm not sure what you mean by seeing myself as the "subject" and other people as the "objects."

G: I mean a separation or a division between yourself and others. Does that help you with that part of the question?

V: Are you asking me if I have experienced that particular kind of loneliness then?

G: Yes, a loneliness or estrangement resulting from a feeling of being separated from others.

V: My answer would be that sort of enstrangement - seeing people as objects, seeing a distance between us - doesn't make me lonely. The times I feel lonely are the times I feel separated from somebody I feel a close relationship with as a person. There are plenty of people I feel separated from in the former way, but I don't remember that ever making me feel lonely.

G: If you want to approach the question in light of the clarification that you just made, that would be fine.

V: There have been experiences in my life where I have felt lonely because I was separated from someone

I felt close to as a person. Some of those times it has been because someone I felt close to died or moved away. Or there have been a few times in my life when I've come to know someone quite well whose path didn't cross with mine very often. Then there's been a sense of separation there just because our lives were pretty separate to begin with. I think I feel the loneliness more when it's a situation where someone that I have been very close to, for one reason or another, isn't around or isn't a part of my life anymore. I don't know what else there is to say about this.

To get back to the first part of your question, I try not to relate to people as objects. I try to relate to people as persons, or I just make the decision not to relate to them at all. There are many people that I make a decision not to try to relate to, but that doesn't make me lonely. There have also been many times when I've had the sense of being a minority, and sometimes a minority of one; but that's different than feeling lonely. I don't know if that deals with what you're trying to get at or not.

G: It touches on it well, I think. You said at one point that when you're separated from somebody who was close to you, you do feel a loneliness. I'm wondering how you react to that loneliness?

V: Differently in different situations. It depends on what kind of a function the relationship with that person was filling in my life. With some people I will keep up a correspondence, even though that isn't like having them around. Still it's better than not being in communication with them at all. If the situation was a very personal friendship and the person had been taken away through their choice to get involved in other things, then there isn't much point in trying to carry that kind of thing on from long distance. What I do about it, besides getting lonely, is to find other people to get involved with in other ways. There are many things you can do, but they're not really ways of doing anything with that loneliness. I don't think there's much you can do with

that. The friendships that were personally important enough to me to make me really feel lonely when they're no longer available are not really possible to substitute for. So it just leaves a hole.

G: What is it like to live with that kind of a hole?

V: It hurts. You live with it because there isn't anything else to do with it. I don't know if I care to explain this any further. There are some things that you just... (long pause).

G: I think your brief sentence, "It hurts," captures the answer to that question pretty well. Is there anything else you'd like to say about other parts of the question?

V: No, I guess the only other thing I would say is that I'm not a person who feels lonely easily. I need more time to myself, and by myself, than many people do. So most of the time to be alone is not a negative thing.

G: Can you carry that a bit further? I'm interested in that.

V: I find it both very comfortable and often necessary to my well being to have some time to myself, and so I've always arranged my life so there would be time to be alone. When my children were young it was difficult to get away by myself. Once we were settled in Bozeman we made arrangements to have a baby sitter one afternoon a week, and I always used that time to do something all by myself. I never used it to do something with a friend, because I felt I needed that time to be alone. Now I don't have that problem. My life is arranged in such a way that I have plenty of time to be by myself, but I don't think of being by myself as being lonely. It's not the fact that there's nobody else there that makes me lonely. The thing that makes me lonely is missing some connection with somebody that's important, but the fact of spending time by myself is a positive thing.

G: It can be a positive thing as well as a negative thing. There's a balance there between the two poles.

V: Well, to me the word lonely has a negative value attached to it. If it was not a negative thing, then I would call it being alone; but not being lonely.

G: That's how you prefer to phrase it.

V: Yea, to me the word lonely has an implication in it that you're missing something. The word alone doesn't have this implication.

G: That's much more clear to me. Does that capture this question for you?

V: Yes.

Element e: the matter of the body or one's "own world."

Question based on element e:

How have you experienced yourself in relation to your own body?

In your comments on this relationship you might want to include early life experience, later life experience, or any experience in between. In any event, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what experience or experiences such as this have entailed for you?

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you how you have experienced yourself in relation to your own body? In your comments on this relationship you might want to include early life experience, later life experience, or any experience in between. In any even, could you elucidate for me as much as possible that experience or experiences such as this has entailed for you?

Victoria: Generally, as an overall kind of thing, I feel that I'm not particularly physically oriented to my own body. As for different times in my life, my earliest memories go back to when I was two; I can remember the summer that I turned two. I still carry a memory of what my body was like then, and of that stocky little two-year old being me. As I was growing up from that age I don't have a lot of memories about my body. I have a couple of memories about how good it felt in the spring time, shedding the long winter stockings. I have a couple of memories of walking down the road and physically feeling myself in the spring after all the extra layers of winter clothing had been shed. The other thing I can remember is from the time I was 9, 10, or 11. I've always disliked fat as a physical thing and around that time I remember liking muscles, both my own and others. I can remember a picture I was fond of. It was a picture of an Indian boy that was painted so that he was standing against the wind with the leggings he was wearing being pushed back by the wind, and you could clearly see the muscles in the legs. I remember feeling very positively about my own muscles in my legs then. As I grew up there were a lot of things I liked to do that needed a well controlled body, and I enjoyed my own body in the sense that I could get it to do a lot, more than many other people. It took me up a lot of mountains, let me go skiing, and things like that. So I enjoyed my body in those ways.

The other thing I liked about my body was doing things with my hands, building things through carpentry. I find it very frustrating that I can't do a lot of those things now because of my arthritis. The arthritis has brought a lot of frustration, but also a realization that I took for granted things from my body that a lot of people never had. I remember when I first developed arthritis. At the time I knew there was something wrong, but I still had a body that was functioning better than most people's, so the doctor couldn't believe there was anything wrong. He didn't have any awareness of what my body was like before I started developing arthritis to compare with. So after he did some lab tests I got a couple apologetic letters. He had told me

there wasn't anything wrong based on what I could do, and then found out there was something wrong. In a way that gave me an appreciation for my body that I hadn't had at the time it was working well.

G: The arthritis tunes you in to the advantages you'd had prior to it.

V: Yes. But running all through my life there has been the awareness that my thoughts and my feelings that are also me, which are not directly my body, are more important to me. I would have a much greater sense of loss if I thought my mind wasn't working, than I do with the fact that parts of my body aren't working.

G: So things like your mind are still more important.

V: Yea, things like that are a more important part of what's me.

G: Could you carry that a bit further? I'm wondering about that.

V: If you were to ask me who I am, it's not my body that I would think of first. I feel the essence of myself can be captured more in terms of nonphysical things. What I like best is to strike a balance between all those things. I don't want to leave my body out of it, but I also don't feel it's the only important aspect of me to be considered.

G: Could you help me a bit more with that distinction between the physical and the nonphysical?

V: Maybe one way I could explain it to you would be to say that some of the memories of my experiencing myself and living my life that are very important to me, really don't have much to do with my body. They are memories of ideas and things like that. Other things, of course, involve my body more, in that it goes where I go and many times it is what takes me there. I guess all of what is me is not confined to my body, although most of the time the body is part of what I am and what I'm doing.

- G: But there are things like ideas, and the things that you can't pin down to the body, that are very important to you.
- V: Yea, and I guess I don't mean to say that you can necessarily separate those things out from the body, but their tie-in with the body isn't a primary thing. I ignore my body a good deal if I'm caught up in something else. It takes me a long time to remember that I haven't thought about eating. Some mornings I'll get up and get into things and not eat; and I may not remember that I didn't do it until late that afternoon. I don't know. I guess my feeling about my body is that it's part of me, an important part of me, but it's not all of me.
- G: If you could sum up your relation to your body, how would you do it?
- V: Basically I like my body, but I don't think it's a big deal. That's about the best way I can sum it up.
- G: Does that sum up the question for you too?
- V: Yes.

Time

Representation of the definition of time:

This concept is meant to designate a special focus of the existential viewpoint. That is, from an existential perspective it is crucial to accent the individual's relationship to her past, present and future. A temporal focus such as this highlights the existential view of the human being as emerging. Human existence emerges: "... that is, it is always in the process of becoming, always developing in time, and is never defined as static points" (May, 1958 b, p. 66). This understanding might be contrasted with the kind of position that takes an accent on space as its point of departure. Such a position sees the

human as a particular object in this particular space being pushed forward by this or that deterministic influence. May (1958 b) finds that one of our major problems "has been to think of ourselves primarily in spatialized terms appropriate to res extensa, as though we were objects which could be located like substances at this spot or that? (p. 67). This is an essentially static view of people - each point in space being an arrived at, finished product. Whereas the existentialist views the human as pulled forward by the attraction of future potentialities - a continual process of becoming.

Element a: the matter of emerging.

Question based on element a:

Have you ever experienced a moment or period of your life in which it became clear to you that your life is an "unfolding process," so to speak? If you have, could you speak as thoroughly as possible about the full dimensions such an experience or experiences has had for you?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: For this question I'd like to ask you if you have ever experienced a moment or period of your life in which it became clear to you that your life is an unfolding process, so to speak? If you have, could you speak as thoroughly as possible about the full dimensions such an experience or experiences has had for you?

Victoria: Well, that my life is an unfolding process is, on one level, something I've always known. On another level I've had some experiences where something just suddenly comes to me as a new revelation. The best way I can describe those experiences is that you suddenly come to a realization that you've always been there, but you didn't always know that you were there. I don't know if that makes any sense at all, but that's the best way I can think of to describe it.

G: Granted, that from what I hear you telling me, you're not going to be able to get inside this experience totally and dissect it; but could you describe what the contours of those experiences are? Maybe get at

them indirectly? Maybe note some of the events that lead up to them, or some of the things that happened to you while in them.

V: Well, no, because the contours for several experiences like that, would be very much the same thing. You know, it's like sitting in somebody's living room with a group of people and suddenly arriving at a major insight. Obviously this doesn't happen every time I sit in Meeting, but there's nothing about one Meeting or the other that you can put your finger on. Something really happened inside, one time - but it seems useless to try to describe any of the exterior circumstances, because I don't think they have much to do with it.

G: Is it that, in those particular moments, something happens, something takes hold of you; and, if I hear you right, that's as best you can get a hold of the experience.

V: Yea, it's not as though something comes home and suddenly you realize that something is true that you thought wasn't true before; because you thought it was true before too. But somehow, all of a sudden, you know it's true in a different way from how you knew it yesterday; even though yesterday you would have said you believed it too.

G: Kind of like it hits you in a new way?

V: Yea, it's not as though you always thought that life was one thing, and all of a sudden this experience comes along and teaches you that it's something entirely different.

G: Would you say, then, that experiences like that reconfirmed something that you always felt or something you always knew? Because one of your opening statements was that, at one level, you had always known this.

V: Yes.

G: The thing that struck me in my mind when you said that was, and I don't want this to be a prying kind of question, but the thing that struck me was: how did you know that?

V: I don't know. I guess that the only thing I can say is just from what I know about the nature of life, from my studies in biology, or what have you. You know, on a more superficial level, all I can say is I can't remember the moment in my life when I became aware of myself as a person. All I can say is that, as early as I can remember being aware of myself as a person, I was aware of the fact that I was in the process of becoming somebody. You just don't think that you're all there when you're 2 years old, anymore than I think that I'm all here when I'm 53. I don't know how to answer how I knew that because to me that's just one of basic assumptions that is so obviously so that you couldn't help knowing.

G: That basic assumption is for you, if I can restate it: "I have not arrived but I'm on the way." Is that a way to put it?

V: Yes.

G: And that's been an assumption you've operated with for a long time?

V: Yea, I didn't even think it was an assumption. I just thought that it was a basic truth that everybody knew.

G: And so it's like a previous question we talked about. I think it was nature, your relationship to nature, some questions ago. Your feeling then was that nature was so much a part of your life that you had never thought to pin it down to a particular event or experience. Are you saying something similar now?

V: Yea, except even broader than that, in that in my relationship to nature, although that's always been a very basic part of my life, I haven't always assumed that it's necessarily the same way for everybody else in their lives. Whereas with this question my assumption would be, not only that that's something I've always known, but that's something that's always been true for everybody else too - whether they know it or not. I'm not saying that everybody has always necessarily always known it. I just never thought about how you arrived at knowing it. It's just true about me and about everybody else.

G: At one point in our talk you talked about this subject of process in relation to your experience with biology. That's been an area that's come up many times for us. What did you learn from biology about this particular aspect of life as process?

V: That life is a process and that it's part of a cycle and that things unfold.

G: As do plants and animals, so do people.

V: Yes. So I don't know, you know, that's a short answer to a big question, but it's... It just seems so obvious to me that neither we, nor anybody else, nor anything else, arrives in this world as a final product. I just can't conceive of any other way for it to be.

G: I see. Would you like that to be your answer?

V: Yea.

Element b: the matter of attraction of future potentialities.

Question based on element b:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which the "attraction of your own potentialities," so to speak, called you forward to the completion of some new task, the achievement of some new awareness, the accomplishment of some new goal, or called you to the satisfaction of any other new enterprise that you may think of? If so, could you respond as fully as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

The interview based on element b's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which the attraction of your own potentialities, so to speak, called you forward to the completion of some new task, the achievement of some new awareness, the accomplishment of some new goal, or called you to the satisfaction of any other new enterprise that

that you may think of? If so, could you respond as fully as possible in regard to how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

Victoria: I feel the attraction of my own potentiality is a very important part of my decisions to do almost everything I do, as well as why I do it. Both in little decisions and in big decisions I tend to do those things that I feel challenged by, but also the things I sense I'll be good at doing. My feeling is that both I and the world are better off, if I do what I'm good at doing and let somebody else do what I'm not good at. That's how I operate. But the particular kinds of things this way of operating has drawn me into have been very different. The categories I think of are the sorts of things I have been drawn into studying - intellectual kinds of things - and physical things like creating something with my hands. Another thing I'm good at, and enjoy very much, is the whole field of listening to other people. That involves counseling, raising my children, and relating to my grandchildren. Then there's the category of written expression I've gotten into that a bit. Those are some of the big categories that I've been drawn into because they're things I feel good at doing.

G: Could you elaborate more on any one of those areas. Where do you see your own potentialities in relation to those categories and how you feel attracted by them?

V: I guess I see my potentiality through successful previous experience and I know I'm good at doing a particular thing, because I've been able to do a similar thing in the past. Sometimes I also see my potentialities in terms of certain traits being called for in certain kinds of challenges. If the things that are called for in that task are qualities which I possess, then that influences my decision. Often times it's a matter of weighing not only my own potentialities in relation to a task, but sometimes there is something that needs doing by a group I'm a part of - either a family group, a group that I'm working with, or whatever. In such cases I make my choices by what I know I would be good at doing, and by what things I feel somebody else would be better at doing than I am. Or I may choose something that would be more difficult

for the other people than for me. I should note one of my qualities here: In doing things I'm basically interested in doing, I have a good deal of tolerance for frustration - more than many other people. So I quite often will take the frustrating end of a task. Another one of the qualities that helps me choose from potential tasks is patience. That's something I'm long on that other people may be short on. So I'll pick things on the basis of my patience. Anyway, the challenges I rise to divide in to the categories of something I'm doing simply because it's something I want to do, or things I'm choosing because I can do those better than somebody else.

G: Could you recap, if possible, instances where tolerance for frustration or capacity for patience - those potentialities - became important to you?

V: With patience there are many instances involving little things. When I was a child I would get the assignment of untangling the tangled up ball of yarn, looking for whatever couldn't be found, or something like that. I enjoyed unravelling a tangled up mess of yarn until it was completely untangled, but it was something that most other people in my family hated doing. My mother, particularly, is impatient. So when I could see her get impatient, I would take over. I enjoy doing things meticulously and taking time with them. I'm a perfectionist about having it done right once it gets done, but it can stay undone for a long time. That doesn't worry me. For another example, I had a very close relationship with my little brother. He had a pretty violent temper and most people had difficulty working with him. I had a very patient relationship with him, where he could work things out, and keep from flaring up or falling apart as he otherwise would. That patience continued in my own family as I was raising the kids. I would simply take over those tasks...

G: That were frustrating to other people.

V: Yea, because I don't get frustrated as easily and I enjoy untangling things - more than just balls of yarn.

G: You mentioned some time back that one of your favorite potentialities is listening. You enjoy listening. Would that be similar to the untangling process that you were just talking about.

V: Well, it has some of those aspects. I like to read mystery stories because I like to untangle things - particularly the kind of mystery stories that give me the clues, but don't make it easy to find the answer. That's a habit I picked up from my father. He would read mystery stories and leave notes in them for me. But I like to untangle all kinds of things, both emotional and otherwise.

G: Does that fit in with your role as a counselor? When you're dealing with people with emotional problems or something like that?

V: I enjoy counseling even when it doesn't involve untangling, but often it does and I do enjoy that aspect of it. I think listening and untangling are sometimes related, but not always. I think listening can be something separate from untangling. I also enjoy building things and creating things, and I often attack that as a puzzle too. I like to see what I can make out of what I find around. I do my carpentry that way. I don't just decide what I want to make and how I want to make it, and then go out and get the materials for it. Rather, I enjoy taking a look at what is already around and how I can incorporate that into whatever I want to build. I do that in sewing and cooking also.

G: It seems to me, as I listen to you, that you've done a fine job of covering the "attraction of potentialities" part of the question. I'd like to explore another aspect of the question. When you're getting ready to do something have you ever felt that your potentialities, as you understand them, have attracted you to do something new?

V: Yea, many times in the experiences I've noted, the challenge is that it's something new. If it's something completely new, if it isn't related to other things that I've done before, then there isn't that feeling of choosing it because I feel I'll be good at it, because I don't know if I will. In such a case, I choose it because it's something I really want to try - mostly because I want to know what it feels like.

G: In a case like that the element of the new becomes important enough to lure you into something different.

V: Yes. There are also the challenges of completely new things that come along that I don't try. I'm not sure why I make the decision that I don't need to try some things. Some things hit me as something I really want to try and other things just don't.

G: Could you go further with that?

V: Well, I'm trying to think whether I can categorize the things I don't bother with. Competition isn't much of a challenge to me. That's one thing I sometimes see as a major challenge drawing other people into something, but it doesn't grab me. I sometimes do things that are competitive, but I'm doing them because there is another element in there. The fact that it's competitive or that you can win at it seldom is a drawing card for me. I enjoy games for their puzzle aspect, rather than for their competitive nature; although the two may be in the same game.

Other things I turn down involve talking people into something, or trying to get people to do something. I would much rather work with trying to help people figure out what they want to do, rather than being too directive with them. Many people decide to do things because of a social significance the thing has, or due to the social involvement that is entailed in it. I don't see myself doing that very much.

G: Can you kind of help me with what "social significance" means here?

V: I guess I'm talking about something involving a lot of people, knowing a lot of people, knowing people that are well known, or meeting people that are well known.

G: You don't necessarily feel attracted to something simply because it's tied to a certain area of social prestige.

V: No, although there may be someone that's well-known that I would want to meet. It would be because there's something they're into that I want to pick their brains about, or something I feel we have in common; but not just the fact that they're well-known or important people. I don't know whether that makes any sense or

I don't know whether I've explained what I mean.

G: It's much clearer to me now than when you first mentioned it.

V: I guess the completely new challenges that interest me are places in the world that I've never been to and cultures that I've never been in. I would be very interested in going someplace just because it's completely different from any place I've ever been, but I don't feel I'm very good at going somewhere just as a tourist. I feel I wouldn't learn what I want to learn about a place, unless I can find a way of going there that gives me an involvement.

G: At one point you mentioned the word "creative" in reference to what you do with your potentialities. Could you speak a bit on how your potentialities are tied to what you understand by creativeness?

V: Well, what I mean by being creative, as applied to me, are things like writing poetry. Also, I like to be creative in terms of not following directions when I'm making something. One of my daughters, Hanna, can do a beautiful job of sewing by very carefully following directions. I could never do that. I can do a beautiful job of sewing, but I'm never going to make it exactly the way the directions say. And I never follow a recipe when I'm cooking. So Hanna and I create things very differently. When she is creating something she enjoys making it just the way it's supposed to be. I have to invent along the way. That's what I mean by my own particular creativity.

G: That's much more clear to me now. I feel like I'm touching a whole panorama of things with this question. Would you like to explore the feeling quality involved in this creative actualization of your potentialities?

V: Yea, I get involved and absorbed in what I'm doing, I resent it if I'm called away and I lose track of time. I'm not terribly time oriented anyway. I don't like to set up a schedule for myself that says, "I will do this for so many hours and then I will do something else for so many hours." I would much rather operate by saying I will do this until I'm done and then I'll do something else.

G: So the time element is more insignificant in light of the task that you just want to get done.

V: Yea, and it doesn't bother me at all to let tasks sit undone for a long time. I can let dishes sit for two days, until I run out of clean dishes, if I'm absorbed in something. I can get very absorbed in talking or listening. It is a joke in my family that, if there is anything they want to keep me from doing, all they have to do is get me involved in a conversation. When I'm talking to somebody I can't do something else at the same time. It took the family a while to figure out that it wasn't smart to start talking to me in the morning when I'm getting dressed, or getting everybody else on their way. I'd concentrate on talking and the breakfast wouldn't get on the table.

G: Does that fill in the contours the way you'd like to fill them in, in terms of your answer, or would you like to add some more?

V: No, we could go on forever with more examples.

Element c: the matter of the past.

Question based on element c:

Could you tell me what role the past tense has played in your life experience? That is, could you describe how you have related yourself to your own past during the course of your life experiences? Elucidate as fully as possible, if you could, what relatedness to your own past has entailed for you.

The interview based on element c's question:

Gordon: Could you tell me what role the past tense has played in your life experience? That is, could you describe how you have related yourself to your own past during the course of your life experience? Elucidate as fully as possible, if you could, what relatedness to your own past has entailed for you.

V: I feel very related to my past, in the sense that I see myself as one person walking through this life. I don't have a sense of being a "finished" person at any particular point. So it's all one journey even though I'm not the same person who started on the journey, anymore than I expect to be the same as I am now when I'm finished. Still, I feel very much in contact with my past. My memories go back a long time. I can remember the summer I turned two. I don't remember turning two, but I can remember some isolated experiences from my childhood that I have since been told could only be placed into the summer when I was turning two. I feel very continuous with that two-year old person, although obviously I don't feel the same. Furthermore, I don't feel "I am who I am now and I'm going to stay that way." I feel as though I'm going to continue to change. I think the past is important to me in the sense that I recognize the crucial role it played in having brought me to the point where I am today, but I don't have any feeling of having to give it any importance beyond that. I feel perfectly free to change my mind. I don't feel much pressure to have to believe something today just because I believed it yesterday. I don't have much compunction about being done with things when I'm done. The freedom I give myself to change doesn't take anything away from a point of view having been important when it was part of me.

I guess I also have some feeling of my past being continuous with other people who came before me. For example, I was very close to my father's mother when I was a child. She and I had many things in common. Some of the things I didn't have in common with my own parents I had in common with my grandmother. So, in that sense, I have the feeling that my past really didn't start when I was born. It goes back further than that. I feel there are many strengths I have received from my grandmother, but what I'm doing with them is completely different from anything she would have done. I felt fairly close to both of my grandmothers, but closer to my father's mother. Her husband was a Lutheran minister and they were very much caught up in Christianity. I feel as though I believe almost nothing this grandmother believed, as far as religion is concerned. Yet, I feel that much of my

religion, and of the strength I can gain from it, came from her just the same. I believe that's alright. I don't experience any compunction to have to be in agreement with her. I feel I'm on a continuum with her. Her past is part of my past, even though we may come to very different conclusions. I'm very comfortable with that.

G: That continuum with the past does not depend on agreement with some of the people who are in the past.

V: Yea, I have a lot of respect for both of my parents; but I don't feel any compunction to have to be in agreement with them about some things. I feel that way about my own past too. I don't feel like I have to believe everything...

G: That you once believed.

V: Yea, or keep doing something because I once thought it was important. For example, I once thought it was important to be doing nothing but biology. I don't think that anymore, but I don't experience that as being untrue to myself or my past. I feel like I've done that and I've incorporated it into myself. It's become a part of me. So I can use it to go do something else. I don't have to stick with it. I just make use of it. Does that answer what you were trying to ask in this question.

G: It answers it quite well from where I sit. Is that pretty much what you'd like to say?

V: Yes.

Element d: the matter of the present.

Question based on element d:

Could you tell me what role the present tense has played in your life experience? That is, could you describe how you have related yourself to your own present during the course of your life experience?

Elucidate as fully as possible, if you could, what relatedness to your

own present has entailed for you.

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: Could you tell me what role the present tense has played in your life experience? That is, could you describe how you have related yourself to your own present during the course of your life experience? Elucidate as fully as possible, if you could, what relatedness to your own present has entailed for you.

Victoria: I would say the present tense is where it's at and that isn't true just for me. That's where it's at for all of us. I can't recall a time when I became aware of that. My feeling is that we're all pretty good at knowing the importance of the present when we're kids. As we grow older, however, this awareness can sometimes slip away from us.

I've never felt so immersed in the present that I've wanted to go for experiences whether or not I could tie them into the stream of my life. I've sometimes been asked by other people to join in activities just for the sake of the isolated experience, and I refused to do that because I couldn't find any way that it would meaningfully tie into my life. So, in that sense, it isn't true that I live only in the present. I guess I feel that you can only experience life in the present, but I make my choices of which experiences I'm going to let in according to a sense of continuity in my life. This continuity is a sense that my life is all tied together. Therefore anything that I might have had a chance to do, that I can't hook into the continuous stream of my life, I tended to let go of. The meaning of my life comes from a more continuous thing than the present moment. This attitude influences the way I make my choices from present to present, but the experience itself is in the present.

G: The present can be both a positive and negative thing for you. Is that a way to put it?

V: I'm not sure what you mean by that?

G: At the beginning you mentioned the present as being "where it's at." I take it that by "where it's at" you

mean only if it's continuous with your past.

V: It's only in the present tense that we really experience life. So I don't find it meaningful to do things simply because of what they're going to do for me in the future. I think that my choices have to be meaningful in the present. On the other hand, it is the sense of the continuity of my life as being lived by one person who has a past and expectations for a future, that influences my choice in the present. It helps me to decide when I'm going to say, "No, thank you."

G: If the present experiences are discontinuous with other parts of your life, then you're not as likely to go for them. Could you mention a bit about some of those times when a present choice was particularly meaningful?

V: One way has been in communicating with other people. Say I'm involved with a group of people and different topics come up. I will be more likely to exert some effort to get into closer communication with those people who are involved in topics that I've gotten into or expect to get into. I won't exert this effort for people who are into things that leave me cold. I make my choices as to whom I'm going to put forth effort to try to communicate with by my emotional reaction to their interests. Sometimes I've been asked by people to participate in various kinds of activities. I find myself not likely to reach for a new experience just because it's new, especially if I don't have a sense that it's going to help me become who I want to be. I'm not likely to say, "Yes," just because it would be interesting. I'm talking about a huge variety of experiences. But, more specifically, this has happened to me in offers for sexual experiences. It's happened to me in offers for religious experiences and almost everything in between.

G: That covers a lot of ground.

V: Yea, I'm not likely to say, "Yes," unless I sense a way it's going to tie into my life and have some ongoing meaning. It has to be more than a momentary experience.

- G: I see. That part is very clear to me. I'm wondering how you get in touch with the present experience when you think it's going to be meaningful?
- V: I'm having trouble with your question about how I get in touch with the present experience. It doesn't seem to me that there is any way of getting out of touch with the present experience. It seems to me the present experience is what you're in, what you're in touch with. The present experience may consist of turning down the possibility of an experience, but that's still an experience that's happening in the present. In the present I'm either saying, "Yes, I'd like to do that," or, "No, I don't want to do that." Either one of those responses is a present experience. I don't know how not to be in touch with the present.
- G: I see. If you're already there, there's nothing to be in touch with.
- V: Uh, huh.
- G: That befuddles the question I just asked, but answers it in a very good way. It turns my question upside down and takes it from a different angle.
- V: I feel very strongly that anything I am experiencing is in the present. Even if you're dreaming about something that has already happened or something that hasn't happened yet, you're still experiencing the dream in the present at the time that you're dreaming it. The same thing is true with thoughts: you can be thinking about something that you've already experienced, but you're experiencing the thought in the present. To me that's where experience happens and that's why I don't know how to tell you how I put myself in touch with it. There is no other way to be in touch...
- G: When you experience all those different things they take place in the now?
- V: Yea.
- G: I see. (Long pause.) Does that cover the question?
- V: Yes.

Element e: the matter of the future.

Question based on element e:

Could you tell me what role the future tense has played in your life experience? That is, could you describe how you have related yourself to your own future during the course of your life experience? Elucidate as fully as possible, if you could, what relatedness to your own future has entailed for you.

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: For this question could you tell me what role the future tense has played in your life experience? That is, could you describe how you have related yourself to your own future during the course of your life experience? Elucidate as fully as possible, if you could, what relatedness to your own future has entailed for you.

Victoria: Well, I guess I tend to see my life very much as a connected process, and so in that sense, the future is an important part of it. I tend to live by making plans and carrying out those plans, but in a more basic philosophy underneath I feel pretty loose about the future. I always know there is a very real possibility that I may decide not to live out my plans. Something may come along to pull me in a different direction. I tend to feel pretty comfortable with that. It doesn't bother me if I don't carry out my plans. I live on the assumption that I make plans and I expect to carry them out, but I also realize that there's a fair chance that something will come along to make me change my mind. If I don't carry out my plans it's usually because, for some reason, I've chosen not to. I like to leave that fluidness in there. I enjoy making plans and feeling I know what I'm going to do next year or whatever, but on the other hand underneath that, it's important for me to be aware - and sometimes important to me for other people, who may be counting on me in various ways, to be aware that those things are subject to change as the future turns into the present.

G: Could you mention some concrete examples of where that kind of change took place or takes place?

V: Well, sometimes, it's a matter of my always knowing that the time will come to make a change and I just leave it loose, leave myself free to play it by ear as to when that time comes. For instance, during the time that I was working down at Crow Agency, I had planned to do that and I felt deeply involved in it while I was doing it, but I knew that wasn't something I was going to do for the rest of my life. I also enjoyed being free to just say, "Well, I'm not going to decide at the outset. I'm going to do it for a year, two years, five years or whatever, but I know the time will come to put this job down. When it feels like the time has come that's when I'll put it down." That would be one example. A lot of the time I relate to the things I'm doing in that way. Other changes may happen more unexpectedly. It is important to have some kind of plan, to be heading somewhere; but it's not important whether I actually get there or not. I'm perfectly comfortable substituting a different goal as long as that goal feels right at the time I'm pursuing it.

G: It's like that point in your future, whether it's a goal or something else, is not so important to you as something to be arrived at, as it is to be a part of the process of moving toward it.

V: Yea, I'm not going to change the direction on anything important unless something else feels more important. I think it's possible - and for me it has worked very well - to let the idea of future plans give direction to my life. Having that direction is important, actually arriving at the goals. Before I actually get there I may decide it's important to go somewhere else.

G: I see. That's quite clear. Also, as I've listened to you, I've heard two different thoughts. I've heard you say that you can change your own future in a sense, if you decide to go to a different place rather than another one. I've also heard you use the word unexpected, as if the changing were done by something other than yourself.

V: Yea, it happens both ways. Sometimes I'm doing it and sometimes it's done by other things that come along. And it's not a matter of the future always coming up with a better alternative necessarily. There have been plenty of times in my life when I was aiming for something that

suddenly got shut off. Usually I don't find that defeating or upsetting. My basic attitude is that there are many good things out there to experience. If it's not going to be one thing it's going to be something else. There are going to be some negative experiences too, but those things often make you grow and open you up to things that you didn't see before.

G: So whether it's positive or negative there can be some benefits both ways.

V: Yea, and I don't spend much time worrying about whether I'm going to be in the driver's seat determining that future, or whether something will come along and do it for me. Quite often when something else has come along and determined my course, I've enjoyed the process a lot.

G: Could you pinpoint that one? When something else comes along and does it for you? I'm not sure what you mean.

V: When that kind of thing happens I don't feel I'm doing the deciding, other than just making the choice to accept the challenge or the call. Other than that choice of acceptance those experiences are something else coming at me that I hadn't planned on. And it somehow sits better with me than what I had planned on. As I look back over my life, quite often those experiences that you really didn't welcome at the time, or found painful, distasteful, or that you didn't like when they happened, in the long run those experiences often brought me very positive results. I'm not trying to sound Polly Annish about this and say, "Therefore, I've learned to enjoy all my experiences." I often don't enjoy the experience when it happens, but when I look back, I have gained a sense that you can come out on top having learned things. There might not have been any other way to learn some things except by having an experience I didn't like. So, as I look at the future, I say to myself, "There are probably going to be some other experiences out there that I don't want to have." But I don't - at least in the abstract - feel very negative about them. I expect them to lead me to places that I'll be glad to be.

G: That's very clear to me now. Could you mention a time in which that happened?

V: Getting divorced after twenty-three years of marriage is an example. I didn't like it one bit, but even while it was going on I had a strong feeling that it probably was the right solution. Now I feel it was a very good thing for me. That's probably the most extreme example I can think of, but I have many everyday experiences when something I don't want to do makes me feel good after having done it.

G: That puts it concretely quite well. Does that sum the question up for you?

V: It does for me if it feels good enough for you. After all, I know pretty much where I sit.

Transcendence

Representation of the definition of transcendence:

This is the distinctively human capacity for self-awareness which "qualitatively increases the range of consciousness and therefore, greatly enlarges the range of possibilities of transcending the immediate situation" (May, 1958 b, p. 71). It is the human capacity, as May says, "to stand outside and look at one's self and the situation and to assess and guide one's self by an infinite variety of possibilities" (1958b, p. 74). The ability to symbolize, abstract, project thought into the future, recall the past, etc., are all examples of this capacity for transcendence - which is fundamental to human nature as such.

Element a: the matter of standing back from immediate occurrences.

Question based on element a:

Have you ever experienced a situation, whatever that situation might have been, in which you were able to stand back from the immediate occurrences it presented; and was thus able to get a broader perspective or picture in regard to what was happening to you? This

power to stand back from the situation could have been made possible through reflective thought on your part, the ability of you to symbolize in a particular way, or through any other means you may have utilized. In any case, have you ever had an experience or experiences in which you found yourself standing back from an immediate situation in some way such as this? If so, could you describe as fully as possible what this entailed for you?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced a situation, whatever that situation might have been, in which you were able to stand back from the immediate occurrences it presented; and was thus able to get a broader perspective or picture in regard to what was happening to you? This power to stand back from the situation could have been made possible through reflective thought on your part, the ability to symbolize in a particular way, or through any other means you may have utilized. In any case, have you ever had an experience or experiences in which you found yourself standing back from the immediate situation in some way such as this? If so, could you describe as fully as possible what this entailed for you?

Victoria: The situations that come readily to my mind, where somehow I stood back for a larger perspective, were triggered by somebody else. There are instances when I stand back to gain perspective just by myself, but those instances are not as dramatic for me. I'm not as likely to remember them as I am when that triggering comes from somebody else. When someone else has asked me a question that challenges values or inner convictions, it really makes me stand back and look at things in a larger perspective.

G: Could you describe for me what goes on inside you when you're standing back like that in order to get a larger perspective?

V: Sometimes it's a pretty quick sort of thing. Sometimes I was already partially turned toward a new conclusion and somebody else just triggered it. When

it's not that quick, then I do a lot of thinking about what the other person said. Sometimes somebody else's questions make me look at what I believe, or what I have always though I believed, in a different way. Sometimes this can happen by reading something too. An author can put something in a nut shell for me. It feels like I've always been standing over here looking at this thing which is part of me, and then all of a sudden someone who is standing over there says, "From where I'm standing it looks like this." If that person is tuned into me closely enough so that I realize what they're looking at is a very real part of me, then it enables me to suddenly step out of myself. Then I jump over where they're standing and I can see myself from a different direction.

G: You can see yourself from a different angle.

V: Yes, and it doesn't work unless the questioning comes from someone who is tuned in with my way, a person who is close to me or knows me pretty well. Otherwise I would ignore any comments that differ from how I see myself. Being close to me gives the other person's challenge validity.

G: Can you name an experience in which someone made an observation, raised a question, or something like that, that shook you loose and took you outside of yourself?

V: Yes. I can remember when someone from the American Friends Service Committee came through Bozeman. He and I had gotten into a discussion about occupations and I was arguing pretty hard for leaving people free to make their own decisions and finding their own thing to do. All of a sudden he said to me, "Do you really believe that anything is just as good to be doing as anything else?" I had been arguing that point, but I didn't really believe it. I didn't realize it though, until I got asked that question and it caused me to look at things from a very different perspective.

G: You stepped back and looked at yourself differently.

V: Yea, and I became aware that I don't think all things are equally good to be doing. Neither do I think that some people should therefore be pushed into doing some-

thing that some outside criteria proclaims as good.

G: A balance.

V: Yes. I can remember another experience where I had to go back and think something through and come to a different conclusion about what was the right thing to do. I don't remember what the specific argument was about. But I remember the comment that made me pull back and think it all over. The other person said, "I hope you don't make that decision." This was different from anything that had ever been said to me. I had always been used to people saying, "No you can't do that," to which my reaction was, "Oh, yes, I can." Then I'd go right ahead and do it. This was a very different experience, to be stopped from reaching a conclusion by somebody who wasn't assuming that he had the right or the power to stop me. It made me sit back and think about it myself. Like I said, I don't remember what it was we were arguing about at the time. I just remember that his comment really hit me. I've gotten away from your question, because you were looking for instances where I'm doing the triggering rather than where somebody else is doing it. There certainly are those instances in my life, but they're so much a part of my normal internal operating process. It's much harder for me to think of instances of standing back and gaining a different perspective by myself. It's rare for someone else to be involved in this process, and the rarity helps me to remember those instances.

G: It's appropriate that you pointed to situations where you've stepped back for larger perspective, whether you were the contributing force or someone else was. Does that touch on the question the way that you'd like to touch on it?

V: Well, I think so. It was a pretty good question and if you feel that there are aspects of it that we haven't yet dealt with, then it's alright with me to take another pass at it.

G: My feeling is if you think you've captured it the way that you'd like, then we've covered it.

V: OK.

Element b: the matter of a variety of possibilities.

Question based on element b:

Have you ever had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life of not being "boxed in," so to speak; of seeing before yourself a great variety of possibilities for action? If so, could you describe as completely as possible the full dimensions such an experience or experiences had for you or have for you?

The interview based on element b's question:

Gordon: Have you ever had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life of not being boxed in, so to speak; of seeing before yourself a great variety of possibilities for action. If so, can you describe as completely as possible the full dimensions such an experience or experiences had for you or have for you?

Victoria: In my life the experience of being boxed in is much more rare than the feeling of not being boxed in. Your question assumes there would be some separate special experiences that stick out where I'm not being boxed in. I just don't feel that boxed in most of the time. I can remember going for a walk with the husband of a friend of mine and we were talking about hiking, being in the mountains, or something like that. My friend evidently had made a point to her husband about how she felt this as a liberating experience. So he wanted to know if I found it that way too. His question was about whether I felt this sense of liberation that his wife had been talking about. My answer to him was: "You have to have felt imprisoned before you can feel liberated." I couldn't share the sense of liberation that she evidently had been talking about, because I just don't feel that boxed in by life. I can recall some experiences that included a joyful sense of freedom for me, but I don't see them in terms of a liberation from my box; as you question implies. For me the box isn't there very often.

G: The accent for you has always been on the availability of a panorama of options.

V: I almost always feel I have many options and many choices.

G: You don't contrast that with the feeling of being boxed in, imprisoned, or sealed off from possibilities. It's like you've always had a sense that there are possibilities.

V: I can think of a few experiences where I've felt boxed in, but that's not what your question is about.

G: My question is asking, "Have you had experiences of not feeling boxed in?" But if you'd like you might want to locate those experiences in which you have felt boxed in.

V: The experiences where I have felt boxed in have been in situations where I have made a great commitment, in terms of a lot of my feelings being involved in the situation. What happened in the situation, though, was also dependent upon somebody else. The choices or options couldn't just be mine. So I would feel boxed in when the other people or person involved didn't want to go in any of the directions that I wanted to go. I would feel boxed in by the fact that I couldn't go in the directions I wanted to choose, because the choices depended upon somebody else's involvement too. This has happened to me at work. Whoever was my boss in the situation didn't want to ok my taking those choices that I wanted. So I was boxed in by authority. Or else they've been very personal situations, where the direction that I wanted to go was dependent upon somebody else going with me. Then my choices were cut off if the other person didn't want to do it. But those boxes are rare.

G: You're saying that when you've been left to yourself you've always felt there were a lot of possibilities. Could you point to a situation where you were going to make a decision and you saw what all the possibilities looked like to you? As an example of what a wide open spectrum looks like.

V: It's hard to think of a good example. I can approach it from a slightly different angle though. For example, I sometimes think, "Of all the possibilities I wonder what I'll do." I don't think this in terms of, "My god, what am I going to do?" Rather, I'm just kind of curious sometimes what I will do. I feel that the choice I ultimately make is not just made by me, but by what comes

along and grabs me. I could put this into terms like, "I wonder which way I'll be led?" That term is sometimes used in a super religious sense, so I don't feel real comfortable with it; but I can't think of any other good way of saying it. My feeling is not that I'm just sitting here making up my mind between all these choices, but that there are other things in the interaction between me and the choices. Something will fall in, hook in, or pull me in one direction or another. Usually, though, my feeling is that several of the choices would be good ways to go. So I don't feel I have to choose between the wrong one and the right one.

G: Of many good choices one of them will reach out and grab you. It will lead you in a sense, although you're leary of the connotations the word lead has.

V: I think that deals with how I do my choosing. It doesn't deal with the way your question is posed. I guess your question doesn't fit with my life, because I'm not in the box that often.

G: On the whole you just don't have that boxed in feeling.

V: I've had that boxed in feeling in some separate, fairly rare experiences.

G: Which is just the reverse of what my question said. You spend the majority of your time looking at the panorama of possibilities, rather than feeling boxed in. Does that grasp the answer you'd like to give?

V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of increased conscious awareness.

Question based on element c:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which the depth and range of your self-awareness was "qualitatively increased," so to speak? This could have entailed a deepened self-awareness such

that you perceived things in yourself that you never knew were there before, a deepened awareness of "significant others" such that you perceived things about them you never realized were there before, or for you this self-awareness could have ranged itself across a variety of personal frontiers that you may want to mention. In any event, if you've experienced anything like such an increase in self-awareness, could you describe as completely as possible what this has entailed for you?

The interview based on element c's question?

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which the depth and range of your self-awareness was qualitatively increased, so to speak? This could have entailed a deepened self-awareness such that you perceived things in yourself that you never knew were there before, or could have entailed a deeper awareness of significant others such that you perceived things about them that you didn't realize were there before, or for you this self-awareness could have ranged itself across a variety of personal frontiers that you may want to mention. In any event, if you have experienced anything like such an increase in self-awareness, could you describe as completely as possible what this entailed for you?

Victoria: Now, by the term "self-awareness," you are including awareness of others.

G: In terms of how you would see them, how you would perceive them. The focus is on what goes on inside you. It could entail a perception of any one of a number of things, but the origination of that perception is inside of you.

V: So you're really talking about experience of increased awareness. I'm having trouble with the term self-awareness. The kind of experiences that you seem to be talking about here, I would call increases of awareness rather than of self-awareness.

G: So you would take it in a more broad sense.

V: Yes, since all awareness happens inside of me. I mean all of my awareness happens inside of me.

G: I think that your approach to that would certainly be viable.

V: There have been lots and lots of those experiences, and I'm trying to see if I can categorize some of them. I can think of three or four different kinds of experiences that have lead to feelings of increased awareness. There have been times when a situation suddenly made something I had learned previously come to life in a new way. I see it in a different, more real kind of way. For example, I can remember some things I had learned in geometry hitting me a new way, when I encountered geometric truths in the real world. An even more dramatic example would be photosynthesis. I can remember learning about that in the classroom and thinking about what an important process it was. Then at a later time, I remember being outdoors and suddenly becoming aware of this process going on and that it always had gone on. I used to think it was neat that processes like photosynthesis, upon which life as we know it is utterly dependent, didn't have to wait to be invented. It could just go on all the time; with us actually being a product of it. Through this way of creating energy life could progress to the point where a brain could evolve that could then become aware of the process. This was an awareness that I used to have a lot of fun with. It would sometimes hit me, not necessarily the day that I studied about photosynthesis in the classroom, but outside when I'd been in the mountains. It was an awareness that was based on new knowledge, but the awareness hit at a different time than the knowledge did.

Many kinds of awareness have come to me through interaction with another person. I think interaction that goes on at several different levels - intellectual, emotional, perhaps also physical - makes you more aware of the other person, of what they're really like. Getting to know people in any real sense is a building of awareness. This process has sometimes made me more aware of some aspect in myself. A few times I've had the experience of becoming aware of a sensitivity in myself by, almost physically feeling something that

I knew somebody else was feeling. An example I can think of is having sat out somebody's effort to quit smoking. I've never smoked, yet I could really feel that wanting of a cigarette on the part of the other person. I could feel it inside of myself. That's just one example. I think there are many many kinds of awarenesses, both of something within me and something within another person, that come through interaction with another human being.

Some awarenesses come through a more physical kind of experience. Like the experience of getting a second wind. I don't know if that's familiar to you or not, but that's like becoming aware of a strength and a resource in our own bodies. It's there through being used. For me, the fourth category of awareness would be those things that I have become aware of through mystical experiences. We've touched on that before and they aren't any easier for me to explain now. I guess those four categories of increased awareness are the ones I can think of right off. There may be others.

G: Could you trace those again in sequence?

V: OK. The first was one of becoming aware of something through some previously gained knowledge. One was becoming aware of something, either within myself or within another person, through a close interaction. One was a physical awareness, the second wind kind of experience.

G: An awareness of your body and its resources.

V: Yes. And then the last one was a mystical experience. As I say, those four are the ones I can think of right off the top of my head. There may be others.

G: That's quite a few to think of right off the top of your head.

V: All of those are broad categories. They probably come close to covering what I think of as experiences of awareness. I can't think of any that wouldn't fit in one of those categories.

G: Does that cover what you'd like to say?

V: Yes, I think so.

Element d: the matter of standing "outside" oneself.

Question based on element d:

Have you ever had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life of standing "outside" yourself and a situation, so to speak; such that you had a larger or broader view of what was going on? If so, could you describe as completely as possible the full dimensions such an experience or experiences had for you or have for you?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: For this question I'd like to ask you if you have had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life of standing outside yourself in a situation, so to speak; such that you had a larger or broader view of what was going on? If so, could you describe as completely as possible the full dimensions such an experience or experiences had for you or have for you?

Victoria: Well, you have two different aspects in that question. You ask about experiences of standing outside of myself or outside of a situation. I guess I'll take the situation first. It's more superficial, but easier to talk about. I would say that I quite often can do that, just putting myself outside of a situation in order to look at it objectively. Sometimes I do this by putting myself into the shoes of somebody else who is also involved in the situation. That's something which, to some degree, I've always been able to do. In fact, I enjoy doing it. Also, counseling training can really help us to do this. It's much easier after you've been in the counseling game for a while, to stand in other people's shoes. One of the things that I have learned to do when I am counseling with two people, is to help each of them to see where the other person is really at. From doing that I've learned to see better where another person who may be involved in a situation with me is at; also I've learned a lot about how to

state where I'm at. This is something I wasn't always very good at. It used to be a lot harder for me to do, but I've learned how to do it from doing it for other people. So I think that it's a fairly common experience for me to step outside of a situation to gain perspective myself, or in order to try to help someone else gain perspective.

As far as experiences of stepping outside of myself are concerned, I would say that I've done that only in mystical kinds of experiences. These are not very easy to describe. They have lead me to the conclusion that the boundaries of what is self and what is outside of self are not as firm as, or as certain as, we usually assume. It's that experience of being able to step outside of yourself that convinces me of that. I don't find those experiences very easy to describe.

G: Could you carry this line of thought further; in terms of the relationship between these two kinds of things that you found in the question: the situation and yourself, and how they might interact or interrelate?

V: Well, that's a new thought to me. I guess you're right. When you're stepping outside of a situation that you're really involved in, you are, in a sense, stepping outside of yourself to look at it. I've never thought of it that way. I've always thought of it as stepping just outside of the situation. I guess what I do when I step outside of what I call a situation, is to step outside of only those particular thoughts, feelings, and actions of mine that are involved in that situation.

G: Your example for that was some of your counseling experiences.

V: Yes, and I pick that as an example because that's where I learned a lot more about how to do it. I had done it before I ever was in a counseling curriculum, and I've done it since in all kinds of personal situations. There is some of that involved in the Quaker approach to a business meeting. This is, a meeting where decisions are to be made. One of the things I like about the Quaker approach is that we try to learn

to put our ideas out into the center of the group where everyone can look at them, and consider them only as ideas. And we take whatever ideas fit together out of the pile, so the group can finally come to a consensus that really is a conclusion of the whole group. In the process you learn not to hang on to your idea personally, but to be open to the wisdom in somebody else's idea. You try not to become attached to your own ideas because it's much easier for the group to pick the best wisdom for the whole group. That's the same kind of process of stepping outside of yourself applied to a group rather than just to a person to person situation. In a job related situation, for example, if I'm trying to work out something with another person I find that putting myself in both of our places, and defining the situation from both of our perspectives can be very helpful. That's what goes on in that kind of experience for me. It's kind of like a Quaker business meeting.

G: I'm wondering if you could speak a bit about the feeling quality of this standing outside the situation or standing outside yourself? What does that broader perspective feel like?

V: Well, I guess it feels like an attempt to sort out the issues from the feelings and separate them. I think that both the feeling and the more factual issues in the situation need to be considered, but the helpful part of the process is to decide which is which. That often happens in the process of trying to divorce yourself from your opinion. I don't know if that's very clear or not. You're not looking like it's very clear.

G: I guess I'm wondering if you can take that a bit further. It's a bit fuzzy to me.

V: Well, I guess what I say to myself in the process is, "I'm feeling this and this and this because I like it better, or it has some kind of emotional affinity for me." Then I say, "I think this and this and this because it's reasonable to expect such and such results." This gives me a chance to see whether my feelings are connected to the results that I foresee, or whether they're just something separate. When I'm really trying to step outside the situation and look at it, I'm

trying to do that, not only for myself, but for the other person involved too.

G: So that their perspective can become enlarged as well?

V: Well, partly for that reason; but it also enlarges my perspective to be able to see what the other person sees in that situation. I don't feel as though I'm just doing it for their sake. Quite often I find that if I can really crawl inside the other person's skin enough to understand why they feel the way they do about the issue, then we suddenly don't have any trouble coming to an agreement. This part of it gets to be relatively simple once we both understand each other. But I think that it's necessary to feel that I have been understood as well as having understood the other person. In this way we both feel more satisfied with the solution. You can't just reach agreement by understanding the other person. That's why it's been very helpful to me to learn more about how to try to assert where I'm at in a situation. If I really do feel understood, then it makes it much easier to go along with a conclusion different from mine.

G: So it's kind of like the enlargement of perspective goes both ways? I'm still confused.

V: Actually the feeling process that is going on there is that I want to feel that my position has been understood and accepted. I feel frustrated if I don't feel that happening. I feel all right if I do feel that happening, even though the conclusion may be different from the way I wanted it to come out.

G: OK. That comes home to me. That ties together, for me, the last couple of major things you were talking about. Does that round out this question for you, or would you like to say a couple of other things?

V: I guess the only other thing I would like to say is this: As I think of my own explanation here, I realize that it used to bother me a lot more that other people would not grant me the right to feel however I was feeling. It bothers me less since I have learned more how to grant that right to myself. Once I've

learned to figure out and to express how I'm feeling, I'm more able to assume that I have a right to feel that way. That makes it relatively less important, although it can still be important, for the other person to grant me the right to feel how I feel.

G: Kind of like it begins with you. Is that a way to state it?

V: Yes, in my head that relates to how we come by our self-concept, the image of ourselves. I think, early on, a lot of our self-concept comes from how we perceive other people to see us; and somewhere along the way there's more of the self seeing itself. So the self becomes a firmer thing.

G: Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes.

Element e: the matter of projecting into the future and recalling the past.

Question based on element e:

Have you ever had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life in which the capacity to project your thought into the future or recall memories from your past, enabled you to get a wider range of perspectives on a situation confronting you in the present? If so, could you describe as completely as possible the full dimensions such an experience or experiences had for you or have for you?

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: Have you ever had an experience or experience in moments or periods of your life in which the capacity to project your thought into the future or recall memories from your past, enabled you to get a wider range of perspectives on a situation confronting you in the present? If so, could you describe as completely as possible the full dimensions such an experience or experiences had for you or have for you?

Victoria: I don't know that I can think of any isolated experiences where that was more true than it is all the time. I think the fact that I can remember things that have happened before, and my projections about where I think I'm going with my future, are never completely out of the picture; but I can't remember any particular experiences where they were any more in the picture than they are all of the time. I'm not sure what you're trying to ask with that question.

G: Would you like me to repeat the question?

V: No, I think I heard the words. I know what the question says. I'm having difficulty only in trying to think of any particular experiences that were influenced by that awareness, because that awareness is a constant thing as far as I'm concerned. A lot of my approaches, the way that I try to go about things, are based on past experiences and things that I remember. But I guess I take the past in and it becomes a part of me. If you apply this to problem solving I think that my past experiences become part of what I know, part of what I believe will work. Then I solve problems by using what I believe will work and not by a direct connection to the past. My beliefs, ideas, and convictions are certainly related to the past. I have built them up out of past experiences, but I don't use the past experiences to directly decide what I should do in this instance. I don't think I do it that directly. It's a process of digesting the past and forming my convictions, beliefs, sense of confidence, or sense of uneasiness about things that won't work. I think those are all built out of past experiences and out of future projections too. I can't remember experiences where I directly said, "This is what you've got to do, or what you can do as a result of this or that experience."

G: Say that we had a hypothetical situation in the present and you are in that situation - you might want to fill in the hypothetical with the real - and you are going to make a decision about it based on the perspective you could bring to bear on it. How would projecting into the future or recalling from the past bear on that situation, even though you can't isolate a particular experience?

- V: I guess I'm trying to say in that kind of situation, I don't actively look into the past or project into the future. Both of those things are in there, but it's a second step removed kind of process. So what I'm actually doing is not looking at the past or looking into the future. The future projections that I'm most likely to make are in terms of other people, in terms of how will my doing or saying this or that, make this other person feel. I do that kind of projecting with the future, but it's a step removed from what you're trying to get me to do.
- G: It's like I hear you saying the past and the future are in the situation, but they're not in it in such a way that you are directly trying to fit them in by saying, "Here's what I did at such and such a time ten years ago and here is how it fits now, or here's what I plan to do five years from now and here's how it fits."
- V: Oh yes, they definitely are in the situation. But I feel like they're already digested. Whatever I've learned from them I've already made a part of me. So it doesn't feel like I'm going back to a past experience to make use of it directly. That past experience has taught me something. Whatever it has taught me has become part of my system of beliefs, and it's that system of beliefs I'm using to deal with the present. That system of beliefs probably wouldn't be there, in the sense that I wouldn't know all the things I know, if it hadn't been for those past experiences. But it's the things I know now, that are part of me now, that I use in dealing with the present.
- G: It's like they're so internalized that they're right there with you in a situation. So you don't have to go fetching backwards or forwards.
- V: I don't feel like I'm going back and digging up this experience or that experience; although if I think about how I ever got an idea, or why I thought that would work, I might be able to go back and figure out where I learned it.
- G: Could you help me by putting that in a concrete situation where such immediateness of the past and the future would be there with you?

V: Now what do you mean by "immediateness of the past?"

G: You've done a good job, in talking about how the past and future are internalized into your belief system. I'm wondering how that would enact itself in a real situation for you?

V: I can think of several recent experiences with clients, where I was able to be really helpful to them because I was able to put my finger on something going on for them that they were not that aware of. The reason I dug hard enough to figure out what their mind was doing and then let them know about it, definitely was because of other experiences I've had where I have done that with another person. If I try to look back at the first time I ever did it and why I believed it might work, then I might have to go all the way back to how my father, my grandmother, or a teacher worked with me. So, as I think about it, the reason I did something successful with a client yesterday, something I felt good about having done, was because something from the past gave me the insight to do it. I wasn't thinking of the past at the time. It just felt like I had to get in there and dig, and figure out what was going on in that other head; but I dug hard enough because I knew it would be helpful if I could do it. I knew it was because I had done it before, and I guess I tried it the first time because I had been helped by having it done for me. Conscious reflection about this process happens only when I sit and say, "Well, how does what you do relate to past experiences?" Then I secondarily figure out what happens and how the past ties in, but at the time that's not what's going on in my mind. I'm not saying to myself, "Well, this worked when I was dealing with a kindergarten child some time back, and therefore, I'm going to try it now with this client." That's not what is going on at all.

G: Say, afterwards, when you're talking about this client and someone asks you, "Where did you refer to get the kinds of tools and techniques to counsel like that?" You would answer by noting what you learned in the past.

V: I wouldn't even do it that directly. I would refer several clients back when I tried it. Obviously there

has to be a first time I tried it.

G: But when you're present with a client you're not thinking about past clients.

V: No. The very first time I tried it with a client I didn't say, "This is what my father used to do with me and I'm going to try to help this person in the same way." It just feels like I'm in there digging, trying to help in this situation, and then I just come up with something. I try it, it works and I do it again.

G: And then it's later on down the road that you can see the connection between something in the past and something with a client.

V: Yea, I'm connecting it with the past only because you're asking me. I might never have connected it otherwise.

G: That's much more clear to me. I can see a bit more about what's going on.

V: When I think about it, of course, experience is how you learn and so whatever I know today I learned from some experience. But I don't go through that process of reaching in there and picking it up as the direct experience to refer to, in order to apply it.

G: I take it you would take a similar approach in terms of projection into the future. You wouldn't try to pull a projection into the future into the present?

V: No, I don't. I think that in decision making, sure, the future must be considered. I often have to decide in the morning what I'm going to do at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, or maybe I have to decide the week before, and in that decision to make commitments there is a lot of projection into the future involved. But again I don't do it consciously. I guess, many times, I must decide to do things because I might not feel very good about myself if I didn't do them; but that's not what I'm thinking of when I say, "Yea, I'll do that." It feels more like I'm saying, "Yea, that's something I really could do. I'll take that on."

- G: But it's not a consciousness projecting into the future, a conscious bringing of it to bear on the present. It's not that kind of thing. I'm wondering if you could carry this line of thought further, go further with what this means to you? It's still a bit unclear to me.
- V: A different example occurs to me right now, one that might help you understand better what I'm trying to say. For me, there are lots of things that different parts of my body know how to do that I don't process through my head. That's what I mean by the kind of processing of past experience that's going on, when this experience is becoming a part of me. For instance, if I'm going to screw in a screw I know which way I have to turn it, from having screwed lots of screws before. It's not my head that knows. It's my fingers that know how to screw a screw in. If I'm thinking about screwing one in right now, I couldn't tell you out of my head which way I have to turn it. But I could tell you out of my fingers. That's not something that's processed through a conscious memory, in the sense that the consciousness is in my head. Rather, the consciousness is in my fingers.
- G: So this relates directly to the whole thing we have been talking about, in terms of past memories and projections into the future. This is not a conscious exercise.
- V: Yes. And there are other things I know that way. It's my feet and my legs that know how to ski. I don't know anything about how to ski in my head. Sure, if I'm going to ski down a hill I have to call on past experience but I don't call on past experience through my head and through saying to myself, "Well, the last time you had to come down a hill like this you did it like this." I have to feel my way with my feet. My feet know how to come down that hill and I don't worry about it. Spelling is another thing I do that way. When I want to know how to spell a word I write it down and see if it looks right. My fingers know how to spell words better than my head does.
- G: So you don't consciously figure it out beforehand, you don't consciously bring past recollections or future projections to bear on the situation?

V: Exactly. I don't do it consciously, even though I'm certainly aware of the fact that it comes from previous experience. It comes from some kind of filtering process which, once it has taken place, is there in a different way. So I just make use of it. I don't use it by consciously going back to the original experience.

G: Would you call the process that you go through, when you're in a situation and you want a greater perspective on it, an unconscious process, a subconscious process, or a beneath the surface process?

V: It's certainly a "beneath the surface" process. It isn't always unconscious. I may be consciously tuning in for whatever part of me has the experience to know how to deal with this; It's not a conscious way of going back to the original learning process. Somehow what I have learned has become a part of me, and in order to make use of it, I just turn loose whatever part of me it's in. That part of me may be my fingers or it may be my feet. So it's not a matter of conjuring up the memory again.

G: A word comes to mind out of some reading that I did sometime back, in which a person used the word "preconceptual" for a process that is preconscious in a sense. Does that word preconceptual ring any bells for you? Or would that not be a fitting concept at all?

V: Well, it's certainly a nonconceptual process that I'm using. I don't know whether it's preconceptual.

G: It's certainly nonconceptual. That's much more clear to me. Does that capture the question?

V: Yea. I'm glad I thought of that screw.

Freedom

Representation of the definition of freedom:

The existential view maintains that the human being utilizes "self-consciousness," the capacity to be aware of oneself as the one acting, in order to make choices from among assorted alternatives. This

expresses human freedom; and because the human being can utilize self-consciousness to become aware of the alternatives and thus freely choose in regard to them, the existentialist refuses to accept the person as one who is completely determined - whether by environment, heredity, etc. (May, 1967, pp. 171-175). An extreme example of human freedom is the power of choice between life and death. In any event, an important point is this: human beings do not live and grow by simple organic process as do other life forms (trees, flowers, etc.). Life must be chosen.

Element a: the matter of choosing between life and death.

Question based on element a:

Have you ever experienced within yourself, in whatever way such an experience may have formed itself for you, your own capacity or power to choose between life and death? If so, could you describe for me as much as you can what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced within yourself, in whatever way such an experience may have formed itself for you, your own capacity or power to choose between life and death? If so, could you describe for me as much as you can what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?

Victoria: First of all, death as a physical issue isn't very threatening to me. So the important kind of choosing I have done between life and death isn't between being physically alive or physically dead. There are many forms of death for living people, and these I object to much more than I object to physical dying. In this sense I make that choice more often and it's more of a struggle.

G: A choice between living in life and death in life.

V: Yes, the choice is whether I want to involve my energy in things that matter or whether I want to exist without making any living choices. If we're talking

about being alive or being dead, in a physical sense, then the only way I could have faced that choice is in doing something that involves enough potential danger so that it could lead to being killed. Sure, I've done such things many times; but not usually with the feeling that I was choosing between life and death. The only other way to face the issue of physical death would be if you were seriously considering the idea of suicide. I feel the more important point at which to face that choice, and where I face it more often, is when it's a choice between living and just existing. I don't know whether that gets at what you want to know or not.

G: Yes, that's right in the area of what I'm trying to explore with this question.

V: Well, in that sense I'm pretty clear within myself that I prefer living to just existing. I make that choice in deciding what kind of work I'm going to do for instance. I feel that way about the job that I have at the moment. It's a job that's well suited to me. It's also a demanding job. In a physical sense it may be killing me much faster than some other job might; but, on the other hand, it's a much more living choice. I'm spending much of my time at work doing what I feel I'm good at doing, as well as doing something I think is important. I've received a lot of job offers that would be more lucrative than the one I've got, but I would be spending more of my time and energy doing things that don't feel as suitable and important to me. So I've turned them down.

G: Your present job as director of Bozeman's crisis center - the Help Center - is one example of where you feel the power to choose, for yourself, between living and just existing.

V: Yea. I also exercise that power in choices I make about organizations I'm going to work with, things that I'm going to spend my time on, or even choices about recreational time. Also I'm sometimes involved with other people who are making this choice in their lives. In these situations it makes me feel good to be able to help somebody else to clarify choices, help them be more free to choose than they otherwise might have been.

G: Would you relate this helping to your role as a counselor?

V: Yea, I do that in my role as a counselor. I also do that in my role as a mother and sometimes as a friend. Counseling isn't the only place in my life where I find myself in that role. It's certainly one of them.

G: The principle of choosing between life and just existing is something that fits into many different roles.

V: Yes, but now I'd like to get back to the original question - the matter of having the power to choose between life and death. I feel strongly that as a human being I have that power. You can live - really live - as against just existing, only by choosing to do so. You have to choose to be alive and choose to do your living every day. Otherwise those grooves to slip into are always there, if you don't make that choice.

G: You say "grooves to slip into." Could you give me an example of what a groove to slip into would be?

V: Professionally I have seen, as a counselor and as a teacher - and in the medical profession - that many times promotions are grooves. For example, a promotion for a professional may mean a bigger salary and have a lot of the language of goal achievement attached to it. Actually it often means a change to doing less of what got the person interested in being in that particular profession, what made them really feel alive in doing their job. But the grooves aren't always grooves that lead upward. There are other ways of slipping into grooves or getting in a rut. However, I think the ones that are harder to resist are ones that lead upward; because they are more seductive. You have to be sure about what you really want to do, in order to avoid them. I don't mean that every promotion for everybody is necessarily bad. Some people may be suited to the promotion. It may make them feel more alive. But if it doesn't, it may lead them toward just existing.

G: The promise of a higher status can be a seduction for someone. It may get him or her into a groove that leads to just existing.

V: Yea, it can do that. There are many other grooves you can slip into - spending all your time and energy keeping a house clean, making your children go to Sunday School, or whatever. I think it's easy to slip away from spending much of your day doing those things that you feel life is all about. Anything that soaks up your time and removes you from being involved in what you feel life is all about, whatever that is, and it's different things for different people, I would consider a groove.

G: Especially if it became a repetitious thing.

V: Yea. I don't know whether the way I answered that question deals with the power to choose between life and death. It certainly deals with the power to make the choice between living and not living, but I don't know if that's the same as choosing between life and death.

G: I think the manner in which you interpreted the question certainly meets any standards that I might have. (Long pause.) Does that wrap up what you'd like to say?

V: Yes.

Element b: the matter of being one's own determiner.

Question based on element b:

During the course of your life experience have you experienced yourself, through the choices you make, as the principle determining influence in making you who you are? If so, could you respond as fully as you can in regard to what this has entailed and does entail for you?

The interview based on element b's question"

Gordon: During the course of your life experience have you experienced yourself, through the choices you make, as the principle determining influence in making you who you are? If so, could you respond as fully as you can in regard to what this has entailed and does entail for you?

Victoria: Certainly, as I'm living my life right now, there isn't much question in my mind that I feel myself to be the major determining influence in making me who I am or who I am becoming. All the same, I feel that very early in my life how other people interacted with me, saw me, or encouraged me, was probably the major influence. For all the years in between it's a lot harder to tell. In some ways I have been a major influence for a long time in influencing my process of becoming, but I don't believe I can say that I'm always the major influence. True, I can say the way I'm living right now feels like I'm the major force involved. However, I started out being influenced very much by my parents, more than by anyone else. Now I'm the major influence, because I'm not that closely involved with anybody else at the moment. Certainly, at times in my life, I have been very closely involved with another person. In such cases of close involvement all I can say is I feel I have been an important influence. There have been some other factors in these situations that have been very important too. I feel if I look at it from a different perspective, like looking at my children growing up, I see that even though I'm very much aware of the fact - and have sometimes had it driven home to me by my kids - of how important an influence I am on them, I still believe that part of the influencing process was always who that child was from the very beginning. As with my kids, I would assume that was probably true for me too. Very early in my life I was aware of the influences coming from other people. I suppose my own personality reacted to my parents from the very beginning.

Beyond these considerations, I would say I never feel I'm just influenced by outside forces or other people. I always feel I'm a very important factor in determining who I am becoming or who I am. But, on the other hand, I don't feel I'm, by any manner of means, the only important determining factor. Even people whom I have never met, whose ideas I have read, have been part of the process. It's very hard for me to make judgements about which influence is most important, because the ideas that influence me most are the ones that strike a cord within me. They fall in with where I'm heading from the inside. If the other person is very very different, and quite far removed from where I am, then I'm not as strongly influenced by them. But if I'm influenced more by

somebody who is already close to where I'm at, then it gets to be much more difficult to tell what's coming from me and what's coming from the other person. I don't feel that I'm becoming who I am in isolation. On the other hand, I don't feel as though I'm a piece of putty that's going to become whatever other influences make of me. There are some things that are precluded.

G: Could you highlight an instance, or instances, or however it might be, in which you said, "This is my course, I'm going to do this and it's going to make me be the way I want."?

V: Let's work with two examples - one very early in my life and one relatively late. Very early in my life one thing that did come from me more than from my parents, was my great affinity for animals, biology, and natural science. I don't know why that was in me. It wasn't in me because of my parents. Their fields or major interests were not oriented in that way. When I was young I expressed my inclinations by putting pressure on my parents to move to a farm, because that was what I conceived as the best way of interacting with animals. They didn't and really couldn't, move to a farm. So I found other ways of expressing that interest - by studying biology, working with animals in the laboratory, and by finally being on a farm to live for a while. This ended up some fifteen or twenty years later with my having a degree in biology and most of a masters in it. Certainly all the knowledge that I absorbed in the process of that has very much influenced what kinds of things I have been aware of, what choices I have made, and what kind of person I am. I feel that process somehow started with something that was in me to begin with, because I don't see it coming from somebody else I was close to. This interest in biology led to a lot of training in scientific methods and critical thinking from a scientific point of view. I'm sure that has made a difference in how I've looked at some other choices. You know how those things snowball. Does that explain what I mean or do you want me to elaborate more?

G: No, that's clear to me.

V: OK, then the other example that I would pick, was my decision to go into counseling. I made that decision when I was a lot older. So there was a lot more of this

process that I was getting at earlier already going on, the process of letting myself be influenced by things that are already oriented in my direction. For instance, before I made the decision to go back for my masters in counseling, I worked for two years in a social agency in Baltimore. While I was there I did a lot of fighting with my supervisor about how I was going to approach my clients. I had never taken any courses in counseling methods, but I was using a very "nondirective" approach. I was working in protective services; which, as my supervisor saw it, needed to be done in a very "directive" way. Consequently we had a lot of arguments about the difference in our approaches. So one of the things that drew me into counseling, as I got back into graduate school, was the realization that there was such a thing as a nondirective method; and that there were people who believed in approaching clients in the way that I had been wanting to approach them. The fact that I made the decision to go through counseling training certainly, in turn, influenced me in strengthening those nondirective tendencies. I was already a pretty nonaggressive person, but I think counseling training probably made me even more so. So I was choosing it because it already fit, but then it made me firmer in my position for having chosen it. I think that's typical of the interaction between what's basically me to start with and what I become because of what I've chosen.

G: This is a dialogue between the kinds of choices that you feel most equipped to make and the forces that come from outside you.

V: Yea, and I do a lot of selecting as to what influences I'm going to expose myself to. I think I do a lot of choosing there. Once I've made the choice, the feeling of getting into something and letting it get into me is important to me. So I realize I want to be influenced by what I'm getting into, but I'm also very particular about what I'm going to get into. I'm not going to expose myself to something that I don't want to be influenced by, because I want to expose myself to things that can have meaning for me.

G: This is a process of selection.

V: Yea, I like being selective.

G: Could you touch a bit on what the feeling quality of those choices is? How does it feel to say, "I'm going to expose myself to that influence or I'm going to choose to go in that direction,"?

V: It feels like coming home, in the sense that I usually know enough about what the choice is, so that I pick it because it falls in well with what I feel I'm like. So the choice feels very comfortable and reinforcing. At the same time, it may be very challenging, in the sense that there may be a lot to discover.

G: Does the experience of this "coming home" feeling make it easier for you to make the choice?

V: Yea, in fact, now that I have had that experience often enough I look for that kind of a fit before I will make a committed decision toward anything. It has to be something that has that aspect of falling in well with what's inside of me. If it doesn't have that, then I don't feel like it's something I'm going to commit a lot of time and energy to; because I've learned by experience that it's not going to be as fruitful as putting my time and energy into something that does have that feeling of fitting.

G: I see. This feeling of "coming home" or having something "fit," has become a criteria for you.

V: Yes. So does that explain anything to you?

G: Yes, it's quite clear to me. Does that sum up what you'd like to say about this question?

V: I guess I would say in summing up, I don't feel either myself or outside ideas, forces, factors, or people, as the major influence on who I am becoming; rather the direction I am most likely to go in is always going to be that direction where the two - myself and outside forces - fit together so well that I can't tell which is which.

G: I see. It's like the two have to fit together in your choices.

V: Yes.

G: Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of human growth.

Question based on element c:

Many forms of life (whether trees, flowers, plants, animals of all sorts) have a very natural organic growing process which, according to laws of nature, they seek to carry out. How have you, as a human being, experienced your own process of growth in comparison and contrast to these other forms of life? Based on your life experience and experiences could you elucidate as clearly and completely as possible what such a comparison and contrast entails for you?

The interview based on element c's question:

Gordon: Many forms of life (whether trees, flowers, plants, animals of all sorts) have a very natural organic growing process which, according to laws of nature, they seek to carry out. How have you, as a human being, experienced your own process of growth in comparison and contrast to these other forms of life? Based on your life experience and experiences could you elucidate as clearly and completely as possible what such a comparison and contrast entails for you?

Victoria: I probably could, but it's not something I've ever done for myself before. Some of the other questions you have asked have dealt with things I have thought about before, so you got some answers that were already inside. But I don't remember ever having thought about things from this particular focus before.

G: It comes from a new angle.

V: My first reaction was that your presupposition, in your question, seemed to say that only some forms of life grow organically. I say all do. It's one of the characteristics of living organisms. I have derived a good deal

of pleasure and a good deal of meaning out of observing this going on. But I've never particularly thought about trying to relate myself to it in any other way.

G: Just sort of always related yourself to other forms of life in terms of the organic growing process. Is that what you're saying?

V: No, I've related myself to other forms of life in terms of thinking of myself as part of them and them as part of me, and of all being involved together; but I've never separated out how I'm following a pattern as compared to other organisms. I've always assumed that my pattern is like theirs. I haven't done a lot of thinking about it, except that I can remember thinking those kinds of thoughts about my children. It's a pretty amazing thing to be faced with a newborn body 20 inches long, and figure that all of the organs and functions are in there. I remember thinking that way about my kids while they were growing up and learning control of their bodies and coming into the promises that were there when they were born. But I don't remember having thought about that in terms of my own body. The way in which I have used my body in my life has been very satisfying. I've been very physically oriented, in that I've been active and had a very well functioning body. But I've never been physically oriented in terms of paying much attention to it and what was going on with it. I think that in the last ten or fifteen years of my life I've paid more attention to my body; partly because my arthritis has forced me to. I've also run into some counseling techniques and some group work that emphasize paying attention to what's going on inside the body right now. Before I always just took it for granted that my body was doing what it was supposed to be doing, and it usually did. Of course your question could be interpreted in a way other than a physical one; except that if you're asking me to relate the cycle of my own development to other forms of life, then it's difficult to do that in a nonphysical way. There may be all sorts of things other than physical going on for other forms of life, but it's hard for us to be in touch with that except in a spiritual or metaphysical sense.

G: And so you're having difficulty with the comparison/contrast part of the question, difficulty in relating your own experience to the growing process of other forms of life?

- V: I would have difficulty in taking the question in a nonphysical sense. But, in a physical sense, the best answer that I can give is that it's always been my assumption that I'm following the natural patterns.
- G: And you mean by a "physical sense" that you've always been aware that your growing process is much the same as the growing process for other forms of life. Is that what you mean by physical sense.
- V: In my thoughts I've always applied to myself the same kinds of things that I apply to any other forms of life. The things I have discovered about other forms of life I assumed applied to myself. All life is a process and part of a cycle. It's a matter of growing and changing and a constant turn-over of cells. I think of myself as being me, and being the same person in the same body through my process of life. But in some sense that isn't true. In some senses it's like a river. The river is always there, but the water you see in it is never the same water. That's true of our bodies too. We are made up of cells and pretty much the same organization of cells, but the actual cells die off and you get new ones. I can remember having some experiences where this suddenly became very clear about life, that the whole thing is like a river: we think because the river is there it is a constant thing. Actually it isn't. It's actually a whole bunch of particles relating to each other in a very complex way. So, in some sense, the idea of a continuous individual, even for the span of one life, is an illusion.
- G: It's like the water you just saw is now ten miles downstream. There's a brand new set of water there.
- V: Yea, and I feel that's true of my body too. I feel it's the same body, that it has gone through a process of growth, change, deterioration, or whatever, since I was little. Yet I think of it as the same body. But when I really think about it, I know it isn't the same set of cells.
- G: And there have been experiences when that insight comes through pretty clear.
- V: Yea, although, this time your question seems to fo-

cus on that in a physical sense. And I've never particularly thought about it in a physical sense before. I guess that just hasn't been where I've put my thinking emphasis.

G: Would you like to talk about where you have put your thinking emphasis?

V: Well, I haven't exactly separated it from a physical sense either. When I think of the term "me," I don't usually primarily mean my body. And I'm not usually thinking of the cells in my body as I was just now. Yet I don't mean to exclude my body either. As long as I'm alive in this particular body I'm pretty convinced that I want to take it along in my experiences, but I'm not very often focusing on it as me.

G: Could you help me with what you do focus on when you think of you?

V: Well, I don't know whether I can or not. I guess when I think about "myself," it's more my feelings, my thoughts and my wordless connections with things that are important. This doesn't exclude the fact that there is also a body that goes along with all that, but it doesn't particularly focus on it. So if I'm going to relate that to your question, then I guess I would have to say that those things are also in the pattern for a human organism.

G: Could you help me with what "those things" are?

V: The development of and the constant change of feelings, thoughts, ideas, and all the nonphysical aspects that go into my identity along with my body. I think they are also a part of the process of the human organism, and maybe for some other organisms too.

G: But, for you, it's an open question as to whether they are or not?

V: Yea, it is and it isn't. I can remember having hot and heavy arguments with a Presbyterian minister who was the leader of a youth group when I was in college. We used to argue about whether animals had souls or not. He didn't believe they did and I disagreed. I felt they did.

He thought the definition of the soul excluded them. It could only be something human to him. That wasn't true for me.

G: How would you define the soul?

V: I knew you were going to ask me that. I wouldn't define it. Partly because I can't, and partly because to define it would be to confine it. I guess all I can say is that a human being and an animal each are more than a sum of parts. A human being is more than the sum of its parts and that difference is the soul. That's a pretty big definition. That doesn't tell you a whole lot about what the soul is.

G: But it does tell me, from your point of view, that the soul is more than the sum of the organism's, person's, or an animal's parts.

V: Yes.

G: As I reflect on what you are saying I can see where my question could sound like the primary focus, in the comparison/contrast with other forms of life, could be on the bodily aspect of things, the physical aspect to use your phrase. In defense of the question, you could also look at it from other angles. You could go beyond the bodily angle. Did you have any trouble with where the question was pointed?

V: No, I can see that it could be interpreted in other ways. The difficulty with the question is that, in asking me to relate myself to other forms of life, the further away you get from human life down the animal scale the less possible is it for us to really know anything about those things, exclusive of the physical processes. Even in the physical processes, it has always been one of the complete mysteries as to what exactly is the difference between a living organism and a dead organism. That almost gets more amazing the further down the scale you get, because the physical forms of life become so much simpler. It seems there is so much more to know about it compared to what we do know. There is an important difference between a dead amoeba and a living amoeba. How do you know what that difference is? You can know a lot about living organisms and still not know that.

G: So that's still a mystery?

V: Yes. Some of my own feelings and conclusions about myself and life came after having questions stimulated by watching amoeba under a microscope. I remember, in high school, coming across some very basic questions about life that way. One amoeba may be pinching off a piece of another amoeba and ingesting it and making it a part of itself. It was a big question to me how that amoeba could know when it quit digesting the piece of another amoeba. Why didn't it start digesting itself? How did it know when to quit? How did it know when it had finished digesting the amoeba it engulfed? And all this was going on within one cell. I can remember, twenty or thirty years later, sitting in Meeting and having some mystical experiences that made it clear in a way that is very difficult to explain to anyone else, that there isn't as much difference as we think between inside ourselves and outside of ourselves. There are regions we deal in where that difference isn't apparent. There are experiences when that difference is less clear than other times. All I can say is that, in some ways, all of the forms of life you tried to touch on in your question are connected with myself. We are somehow going through this process together. I guess it's so difficult to compare between us because, on some level, the distinctions between us aren't real. On other levels it's pretty easy, but then you get into a strictly physical plane. It's not that I don't feel your question could apply to other than physical things, but it could be very hard to deal with.

G: It strikes me that it would be a fair statement to say that you would be very reluctant to draw a strict dichotomy between yourself and other forms of life. That's the theme that comes through to me as I listen to you.

V: I would certainly agree with that.

G: Is that pretty much the way you would like to deal with this question? Or do you feel that there are some things you would still like to touch on?

V: That seems satisfying to me. I realize that, in a lot of ways, we haven't dealt with the question.

Element d: an extension of the matter of being one's own determiner.

Question based on element d:

Could you tell me to what extent, during the course of your life experience, you have experienced yourself as in control of yourself through the choices you make, so to speak? Could you respond as fully as you can in regard to what this has entailed and does entail for you?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: Could you tell me to what extent, during the course of your life experience, you have experienced yourself as in control of yourself through the choices you make, so to speak? Could you respond as fully as you can in regard to what this has entailed and does entail for you?

Victoria: I'm usually very much in control of myself and pretty much always have been. But I can remember experiences when I was young, and I still experience situations now, that I can't control. I feel differently about them now than I use to. I use to get really mad at myself when I was a kid. I can remember situations which I thought I should be able to control, even though I couldn't. Sometime I had fights with my brother who was 13 months older than I was and a little stronger, but we were fairly evenly matched. During a fight he would get after me. I would run upstairs, lie down on the bed, and kick my feet so he couldn't get at me. I would tell myself that was the perfect way to keep from being able to attack me, because I could kick my feet like mad and he wouldn't be able to get at me. But my brother would walk right up to me, and I would quit kicking. There was no way I could control that and it made me very mad, because I thought I had a perfect strategy all worked out. But I would stop every time if he just walked into those kicks. That's an early instance where I would tell myself I could control the situation, but I would actually lose control over carrying out my own instructions. As I've grown older I've come to know myself better and accept myself better. I really don't want to be the kind of person that could kick anyone in the face. So I have

learned to exercise control over such situations by not getting myself into the fixes I did when younger.

G: Can you carry that a bit further?

V: When I was working with groups of children on the Crow reservation I got myself into problems with the principal of the school. The difficulties arose over the ways in which I didn't control the kids. I wasn't neglecting to control those kids because I didn't know how to do it, but because I didn't believe in it. So I settled it by arguing with the principal and saying, "This is the kind of teacher I am and these are the things I think the kids need to learn, the things I want them to learn." Then he could say, "Ok, these are the limits in which you can do this." So we worked it out in that way.

I'm trying to think if there are situations I get into now in which I lose control of myself. I've no doubt had my share of situations where I disagreed with someone else, but I've usually been able to work it out in a fairly controlled way; especially if it's job related or in the area of personal conflicts. I can remember times when I got so angry or frustrated that it would reduce me to tears. At other times I just get mad and walk away from the situation, go take a walk, go for a drive, slam a door, or somehow separate myself from a situation where I feel I'm losing control of myself. Then I get back at the issue another time.

G: Get some perspective on it...

V: Yea. That's how I handle it. The last time I can remember either being reduced to tears or just walking away from the situation until I felt I could deal with it, was during the time my marriage was breaking up; which was nine years ago. One shouldn't think that in the last nine years I've suddenly learned to live under perfect control. Rather, the kind of conflict situations I've been in since then have not been that personal. They've been professional conflicts or conflicts that haven't involved close personal living.

G: Not the sort of situation you had when your marriage was breaking up...

V: Yea... I have no reason to believe a situation couldn't arise tomorrow where I might decide to slam a door or walk away from something. I think the reason I haven't done that lately is because I haven't been in an intense personal relationship with anybody. I think that job related conflicts, or those outside of the home are much easier to handle in a more objective way. I still get my dander up, but I don't remember having felt out of control for the last several years.

G: I'm wondering if the choices, where you exercise control of yourself, are most difficult when it's a more person situation?

V: Yea. There are other things going on that I feel I have no control over. But they're not emotional, they aren't so hard to handle. For instance, my arthritis is a case in point. I'd love to be able to control it and I keep looking for ways to do so. But that's not an emotional lack of control. It's not the sticky kind of interpersonal issue that you're asking about.

G: A physical thing is not a problematic issue.

V: Well, sure it's a problem. But I have no control over what my body is going to do or not do in this instance. It bothers me, but it doesn't involve my sense of self that much. It's not what I conjured up in my mind when you ask a question about being in control of myself.

I guess your question contains the other side of the coin as well, in terms of asking how you control yourself. My answer would be that I was given a lot of responsibility for myself from a very early age, from a source I respected and which respected me. When I was young, my mother and father both worked most of the time, and so we often had other people in charge of us. We would get into hassles with them quite often. I always worked the conflicts out by figuring it didn't matter. I could save them until my mother and father came home and then work it out with them. They always gave us a lot of responsibility for ourselves, and offered help when we felt we needed it. I didn't grow up with many examples of losing control. My parents were both very controlled people. I think children learn a lot just from the models they see. So I can't really point to

specific instances and say "this is how I learned control." I just kind of picked it up in the same way that I think a lot of kids learn to lose control from seeing that happen, or from not learning how to be in control.

G: Learning control over yourself involved a long process of modeling in relation to your parents. Whereas you didn't gain it as a result of a specific incident or experience.

V: Yea. Some of it is also my personality I suppose, because I don't remember ever having difficulty with it. I had a younger brother who had a lot of trouble controlling himself emotionally. He used to fly into fits of rage. I believe that some of this is a basic personality factor and some of it is probably learned. It depends upon what kind of experiences come at you.

G: It's unclear to me what you mean by "basic personality factor."

V: It's unclear to me too. I just feel, from looking at my family, and looking at my own children, that there is a lot that seems to be inborn in how different human beings respond to life. There's an unbelievable amount of difference in personality among newborn babies. I think that some of the basic differences in temperament between me and my siblings were due to inborn personality factors. I can't think of any other good way to account for them. I've especially come to that conclusion since I've had my own children and discovered how different their personalities were even from the time they were very small babies.

G: It's something basic.

V: Yea, I guess so. To call it an inborn personality trait is just a way of getting away from having to explain it. Maybe it would be just as useful to say I can't explain it.

G: I see. (Long pause.) Does that wrap the question up?

V: Yes.

Element e: a further extension of the matter of being one's own determiner.

Question based on element e:

As you look at the course of your life experience can you tell me the extent to which you have experienced your life as something you have created through your own power to choose what you wanted it to be, and what you want it to be? Comment, if you could, as completely as possible in regard to what this creative choosing may have entailed for you and what it may presently entail for you.

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: Can you tell me the extent to which you have experienced your life as something you have created through your own power to choose what you wanted it to be, and what you want it to be? Comment, if you could, as completely as possible in regard to what this creative choosing may have entailed for you and what it may presently entail for you?

Victoria: In a superficial sense I do have that feeling. I certainly have felt, and do feel, that I have the power, and probably even the obligation, to make choices to control the direction of my life. I think I've always felt a lot of that. I've never felt helpless, as if being buffeted about without my control. Expecially since what's going on inside for me is the more important part of what's going on. And I feel as though I have a lot of control ever that. In a deeper sense, however, I'm not sure how true that really is. The very control that I exercise is, in a sense, something that is given to me. Something that I couldn't create all by myself. I guess it comes down to this: choices that I have today come from choices that I made yesterday, last year, and ten years ago. So, somewhere along the line, it brings me up short against the fact that there was an awful lot that was given to me. Given to me in the sense that previous choices gave me the where-with-all to make present choices. That's why I was saying that, in a relatively more superficial sense, I feel I definitely am creating my life and myself as I go along; but in a deeper sense, I don't really know how true that is. I have some sense of humility about how much credit I should take for the whole thing. I

feel very much involved in making choices. I feel that my life is going generally the way I want it to go. But I also feel that some humility is called for. I have been given a lot to start with. So, even though I feel really good about my life and proud of myself, I also feel that much has been a gift. I have been allowed to have more conscious choice and conscious control over my life than some people have. In that sense I'm humble. I am happy to see that you're that you're getting something very different from what I'm getting, if you want something different. That's great! I like that diversity in the world. But when I run into other people who don't seem to have the amount of choice over their lives that I have, I don't feel comfortable with a conclusion that they're somehow not creating their lives as well. There's a lot of good fortune in what I have been given.

G: Very early you said, at a deeper level the power to create yourself has been given to you. Given to you by what? What do you mean by that? It's still unclear to me.

V: It's unclear to me also. I don't know necessarily. Some of it was given to me through my genes, my biological inheritance. Some of it was given to me through the environment created for me, very early, by my parents. Some of it goes way beyond that. The relatively simple answer, complex as it is, would be that it was given to me by God. But I don't think that explains very much either. So I would much rather say that I don't know.

G: I see. You said earlier that, at this deeper level, in which the power to choose yourself has been given to you, you have a sense of humility. Could you carry that a bit further? It's still a bit fuzzy to me.

V: I don't mean this in external and materialistic terms, although it might be true in those terms too. I mean it in a much more internal sense: I'm a lot better off than a lot of people I know. But there isn't anything I have done to deserve that. It's just there.

G: It's like this deeper sense of the power to create yourself, forms the background for some of the more superficial kinds of ways of creating yourself. What would be an example of a superficial way in which you have gone

about creating yourself? Given this background we have already established.

- V: One relatively recent choice that has had significant influence on who I am in the process of becoming, was the choice I made to take the job at the Help Center. There were lots of other things I could have done. I feel that I made this choice because of who I was at the time and what direction I wanted to take from there - what abilities I was interested in exercising. Another very current example is the choice of where and how I live in this valley. That choice is both a result of who I am and a factor in who I will be tomorrow. There are other examples.
- G: Those are the two you choose to highlight in the case.
- V: Well, those are two very different kinds of examples of how I am creating who I am.
- G: The choice of where you work and the choice of where you live?
- V: In both of those there's much more than a choice of just where. There's a lot of how involved.
- G: A lot of how? I'm not sure I follow.
- V: The important thing is choosing a particular situation. I'm not only choosing where I am going to work but how I am going to operate, how I'm going to deal with people. Living here, you know, I'm not only choosing where. I'm really determining how I'm going to live my life by making the choice to live here. And it's the how, both in my job and in this lifestyle, that really have more influence on who I'm going to be in the future.
- G: I see. That's quite clear. Does that sum up the question?
- V: Yea, I think so.

Responsibility

Representation of the definition of responsibility:

In the existential literature it has been observed that the human being is partially determined: whether by environmental factors, hereditary influences, or from other forces beyond the control of the individual. It is stated that the individual must use her freedom to relate constructively to the determining influences in her world (family environment, culture, etc.). This constructive use of freedom recognizes human limits, and therefore, is not to be likened to liscence (doing what we want irregardless of limits). This constructive use of freedom is responsibility (May, 1967, pp. 175-178). Concomitant with this understanding of responsibility is the willingness to face the consequences of our free actions. These consequences must be "owned" as our's, so to speak.

Element a: the matter of relating to determining influences.

Question based on element a:

How have you reacted to forces or influences that could be said to have played an instrumental role in shaping who you are - hereditary inheritance, the impact of your mother and father on you, the influence of your early school environment, or any other force or influence from either your early experience or later experience in life? Could you describe as completely as possible your reaction to such influences?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: How have you reacted to forces or influences that could be said to have played an instrumental role in shaping who you are - such things as hereditary inheritance, the impact of your mother and father on you, the influence of your early school environment, or any other force or influence from either your early experience or later experience in life? Could you describe as completely as possible your reaction to such influences?

Victoria: Wow! That's a big question. I certainly can't come

up with a blanket response to all influences. I can't put my finger on what I would call my way of responding, that would apply to all the different kinds of influences in your statement. I could pick some of the major ones, and try to figure out how I responded to those. Right off the bat I can think of some very different ways I have of responding to different kinds of influence. As far as heredity is concerned, I feel like I've been stuck with that since before I was conscious of what my responses were. I have some ideas on what aspects of myself heredity has a large share of influence in. But I would say that the hereditary influences always have to work together with the environment. So it's pretty hard for me to separate these two. I think some hereditary factors gave me a pretty good ground to work with. I don't know how much of a factor to ascribe to heredity in the business of intelligence. I think that a lot of that is learned. Most of the ways that we have of measuring intelligence get more at the learned aspects of it, than at the hereditary ones. My own feeling is that I started out with good intelligence in my set of genes. But I also feel that I learned a lot about how to respond as a thinking being. That was certainly very much a part of my parent's purpose in how I was raised. I'll get to that in a minute. Until I started developing arthritis, heredity gave me a very able body. There again, part of that is heredity. But part of that is certainly nutrition. Part of it is the use that you make of your body. Again I can't separate heredity from learned experience. As far as the development of intelligence is concerned, I think I was very much influenced by both of my parents. Both of my parents had a high degree of education and believed in this for me. My father made deliberate, conscious efforts to develop my intelligence. But it would be hard for either myself, or my father, to sit down and say, "OK, this much of this activity was a plan, to develop intelligence. And this much of it just happened because we enjoyed interacting with each other intellectually." From the time that I was very young, I was definitely encouraged to think. I used to play a lot of games with my father, that involved math problems. When I was a little older I developed an interest in the study of biology. From then on I didn't think it was important to pay attention to anything that didn't have something to do with biology. Even though my father was an economist, and taught statistics, he had a broad enough liberal education to know something about

the principles involved in biology. So he used to exercise my mind by arguing with me. He would take the other side. He would pretend he didn't believe in evolution, or whatever it was I was excited about. We would argue until my father thought it was bedtime. Then he would throw me a whammy. He would just throw me one that I couldn't do anything with. I began to find out, after a while, that he could do this anytime, on any subject. He would do this with math problems too. When he was tired of giving us math problems, he would give us an insoluble problem. Then he would simply not accept any guesses or possible solutions until the next day. The rule was that you couldn't have a new problem until you had solved the one he had given you. He did the same thing in our arguments about biology. The effect was that I would go to school the next day and get into a discussion with my teacher, plow through every book in the library, and come home with all the ammunition I could find. Then he would string along the argument until it was bedtime again. It was a lot of fun. I used to enjoy it a lot, and I learned a lot about how to think. My father was very good at finding loopholes, so I learned to discover loopholes and figure out what to do with them. My mother had a very different way of developing my quest for knowledge. She had a very different personality, but she also didn't know about biology. I sometimes have a sneaking suspicion that one reason biology was so important to me may have been because it was outside of the field of either of my parents. I pretty much reacted to my parents fields withdrawing from them. There must be some kind of a connection there.

This gets to another way in which I react to influences. I react to them, either by picking up the challenge and running with it, or by pulling back and withdrawing. When I withdraw, I'm deciding that's an area that isn't important to me. That's what I did with my parents' political involvement. My parents were very active, politically, on the opposite side of the Nazi movement, for as long as this was possible. I developed a way of rejecting politics. I'm still not very interested in it.

But to get back to how my mother used to influence my developing ideas. She did it by giving the impression that she was dumb in a field that interested me. By doing

this she would get me to clarify my thinking by explaining the whole thing to her. It wasn't until I was a little older, that I realized she couldn't possibly be as dumb as she made out to be. She did that with a lot of my biological inclinations. I remember, very extensively explaining the sex life of cows and bulls to my mother. She played dumb about a lot of my other interests as well - like sewing and cooking.

I think that a lot of the ways in which I have developed, both in my thinking skills and my physical skills, were definitely at the stimulation of my parents. Getting back to the matter of inheritance, an important thing to note there, is my body. I've always been very active. I was very much a tomboy when I was a kid. And I've always been very much involved with nature. I've spent a lot of time outside, and my parents used to do a good deal of hiking. So I can remember developing my body on hikes and bicycle trips with my parents. But my parents were relatively older than some parents. Particularly my father, who was ten years older than my mother. He must have been 35 when they were married. He was approaching 40 when I was born. One thing that my parents did with my urges to do a lot of hiking and camping, was to put me in touch with a group of friends they had. Some of them were my father's graduate students. Some of them were younger people they had run into in their political activities. They were a group of people about half way between my parents and me in age. They were into a lot of camping and hiking. My parents got these people to take me along on camping trips. That deals with the early influences in my life. The heredity that I arrived with and a lot of other influences.

In regard to religion, my parents' philosophy was that, the best thing for me, was to keep me away from strong influences. They wanted me to develop my religion later. So I was simply excused from religion. My parents tried very hard not to fill the gap. I grew to appreciate that policy as I got older. I always appreciated my parents' sense of leaving me to draw my own conclusions. I don't know how far you want to go on with this question.

G: I mentioned in the question that there might be other influences, other than just parents and early school experiences, or heredity, that you might want to include. I don't know whether you want to do that or not, but if you would like to...

V: Yes, there certainly were other influences. I've never looked at this question in the particular way in which you put it. But my feeling is that, pretty early in life, I put together an approach to things, a solid inner core of who I was. Other influences that I ran into later always felt more like running into choices you can either accept or reject. Most of my life I have kept that core. Then I just feel out how it adopts itself as it bumps into other things. This core is my basis for seeing what fits in with me and my way of doing things. There has been a lot of selection on my part, in regard to what fits with me. We can go through what this process of selection has been like.

G: If you'd like to do that, right now would be fine.

V: Well, biology, in a very broad sense of that term, certainly is one of the first things to consider. During the time that I was in grade school and high school, I did a lot of reading in biology. I used what I was able to dig out for myself, as a basis for my approach to the world. I formed my earliest beliefs and theories, or whatever you want to call them, about religion, as a result of what I learned in biology. I was half way through college before I tried to form any kind of interaction between what I'd come to believe, and what other people believed. The group that I worked with most during my last couple of years in college, was a Presbyterian youth group. But I was quite aware at the time that my beliefs were never what I would call Presbyterian. I did belong to the Presbyterian Church for a while. I joined it when Mark and I decided to get married. He was raised in a Presbyterian Church, and it was important to him to stay in it. So I stuck with it for a while. I did a lot of teaching in Sunday School. In the process I ran into some Unitarian material which fit in with the way in which I had been raised. Now I'm a Quaker. I became a Quaker mostly through interactions between a small meeting, here in Bozeman, and the Cheyenne people. We had some work camps on the Cheyenne Reservation and did some visiting down there. The Quaker and Cheyenne approaches fit in with the philosophy that I had arrived at, in regard to how people are interrelated, and how they should treat each other. There were also several years when I did a lot of reading in the world religions. I found, in some cases, I could more easily assimilate

portions of the non-Christian religions; even though what they were saying was also in Christianity. When I was a child I assumed that a lot of the things stated in Christianity and in the Bible were the way that people believed them. When I ran into other religions, it was obvious to me that you didn't have to believe things literally as they were stated. You could dig for the truth underneath the words or underneath the surface. Now I have learned that the words of religious statements of faith are not the important part of it for me. So I have a feeling of very close kinship with the mystical element in all the religions.

One other major stream of my life has been my association with mountains and winter and summer climbing. This ties back to my earlier interest in biology and the natural environment.

G: I guess, if I were to try to summarize what you just told me, I would say that very early you developed a core approach to things; and when you come up against an influence from someone or something outside of you, a comparison goes on inside of you: between that core approach and the influence that comes from outside. Is that a fair statement?

V: Well, yea. But I wouldn't use the word "comparison," myself. But some kind of sorting process goes on there yes.

G: A kind of check and balance?

V: Yea, a checking out to see whether what I'm running into seems to fit well enough. Then I know if I dig into it a little more, I might get some meaning out of it. If it feels like it would fit, then I'm inclined to do quite a bit of digging. If not, then it's one of those many things that I feel I can live a full and happy life without.

My interest in counseling reflects this process of digging, or sorting, to see what fits. When I got into my graduate training I found that the counseling methods best suited to me are very similar to the values regarding interactions between people that I ran into with the Quakers. So counseling ties in with the religious aspects of my life as well.

G: Does that kind of capture what you'd like to say about this question?

V: Yea, I feel like we've only briefly touched on what some of the major influences are. We'd be here for a week on each of them if we really tried to go into the issue of influences.

Element b: the matter of human limits.

Question based on element b:

Could you tell me if there have been any times in your life in which you've had a particularly clear sense of your human limits, so to speak? You might want to think of these limits as powers or pressures affecting you from beyond your control. In any case, if you've had an experience or experiences in some way such as this, could you describe as completely as possible your reaction to your human limits?

The interview based on element b's question:

Gordon: For this question I'd like you to tell me if there have been any times in your life in which you've had a particularly clear sense of your human limits, so to speak? You might want to think of these limits as powers or pressures affecting you from beyond your control. In any case, if you've had an experiences or experiences in someway such as this, can you describe as completely as possible your reaction to your human limits?

Vicotira: I'm very much aware that I prefer to accept those limitations that are there because I'm human, and I can only do what I can do. I can note one thing that I've often enjoyed about a difficult job: I like it when there are no limits set upon me about what I can do, other than my own limits. I tend to object to limitations that are put upon me by the job, which say, "You may not try to do this or this." I chafe under those pretty fast. Whereas if the limitations are just my own - the limits of my own humanity - then I don't mind. But, sure, my human limitations are always there. You can't get away from them.

But what you would like are some instances in my life that have particularly made me aware of the. I guess, I've never fought with them very hard. I've talked to many people who fight with their limits a lot harder than I do. I've talked to people who go back over incidents and worry about whether they did everything that could be done. I don't find myself doing that very much. Even though I sometimes have the experience of thinking later about what I wish I had done, or wish I had said in a situation, I pretty much operate on the assumption that whatever I did do at the time was the best that I could do. I know the limits are there. I have developed a standard answer when I'm involved with someone else who is trying to push the limits beyond what I think is fruitful. I say, "I didn't make this world. I'm only trying to live in it." That's pretty much the feeling that I have.

One place where I sense the limits right now in my life, and resent them a great deal, is in the physical limits my arthritis puts on me. One reason why I resent those limits is because, before I developed arthritis, I had better control over my body than many people gain. In this sense, I was spoiled. The arthritis has brought me up short. I still run into things where the old concept I have of myself says, "You should be able to do this." In fact, it may be easy to do. Yet I can't do it, and I resent that. Other limits I feel are natural. I resent the limits the arthritis puts upon me because I feel them as a limit due to something being wrong. The other limitations I work with don't feel that way, so I have a more comfortable time accepting them.

I guess the other limits that I mind the most, besides the arthritis, are limits that are imposed through the limitations of communication. I've sometimes had the feeling that somebody else and I could better work out a point of disagreement if it were easier to communicate. The limits are set by the barriers that sometimes prevent two people from understanding each other. This kind of limit is also hard for me to accept. With some people it's possible to communicate about things that you can't get into communication about with someone else. So then I feel like it should be possible. If it's possible for one person to understand me on a certain point, then obviously it isn't something that's impossible to be understood or communicated. Still it

isn't always as possible for another person to understand it. That bothers me because I feel it doesn't have to be that way.

G: You mentioned a couple limitations in particular that come from outside and impose some controls on you. One is the arthritis. Maybe we can even say it comes from inside; but, then, it's like a force saying, "There are some things you can't do anymore." You also mentioned the limitations in human communication. Can you carry that line of thought further, in terms of how you deal with the limitations? You said you resent the arthritis and limitations like it. And I thought I heard you say you're frustrated with limitations in human communication, in the sense that you'd like it to be better, but it isn't. Can you carry the line of thought further in regard to what you do with these limitations?

V: Well, with the limitation of the arthritis - I don't know exactly what you mean - I resent it, but I accept it. There isn't much else I can do.

G: I guess I was going to ask you what you do with the resentment, what you do with the frustration, and what you do with other feelings like that, that emerge and clash with your limitations?

V: I push at the limitations in the sense that even while I resent them, I also try to figure them out. I try to see whether there's anything I can do that makes a difference. I try to see whether there's any way in which understanding exactly what the limitation is can make a difference. And it can. There are many things I've learned to do with my elbows, because I can't do them with my hands any more. I've also learned a lot about exactly what things certain parts of my body can do or can't do. In other words, I try to understand exactly what the limitation is. That's not what I do with the resentment. It's what I do with the limitations. Yet at the same time, it helps with the resentment. I found that true in instances of pain as well. It helps me in dealing with pain to know more about just what's going on. For instance, labor pains were much easier for me to deal with once I learned enough about the process of labor, to understand that stretching was going

on, because then I could try to work with the process, instead of against it. I do that with the arthritis, although to a limited degree. I guess what I do with the resentment, then, is to reduce it as much as I can by getting at it in all these other ways. I'm not aware of doing anything with what remaining resentment there might be.

As far as the frustration in communication is concerned, it depends on the particular situation. Sometimes I deal with it by just saying, "It would take so much to get through that communication barrier, that whatever is likely to be achieved by it isn't worth it." It's easier just to turn away from that situation - and more fruitful. There are always a lot of fronts on which to be doing something. If one issue gets to be really frustrating, sometimes I resolve it by just turning away from it. At other times I resolve it by working at it. Which of those two choices I make depends partly on how important the issue is, and partly on how escapable the issue is. In other words, if I feel that I'm limited by lack of communication between me and someone I have to work with, and if it would take a major change in my life in order to not have to work with that person, I'll work at communicating better. Whereas if it's a situation that doesn't involve someone that I have to work with, then I decide how important the issue is to me, or how possible it is to work on the issue and work around that person. If it's a personal thing, then it depends on how important the relationship is to me. So in some cases I might make the choice to work at the relationship. In others I might make the choice not to work at it. If I make the choice to work at it, then that still leaves a lot of different ways I might go. I sometimes do it by trying to work at it right then, and I sometimes do it by letting it go until I've had a chance to think about it. Sometimes I don't detect a communication problem until afterwards. Such a problem is not always obvious. But even if it is obvious, quite often I'll wait and then come back at it, write a note about it, or think about it, so that I can try to find a different way to get at it the next time it comes up. I don't know whether that answers your question or not.

G: Yes, that's clear to me. I'm wondering if, in addition to that, you can point to an instance where you worked

on a communication problem that seemed to be a big limitation to you? What kind of process did you go through in an instance of dealing with that kind of limitation?

V: Well, if I feel the major difficulty in the limitation stems from a lack of communication, then I often have to make a decision about how much to risk in order to try to communicate with the other person. It's not always a matter of my not being able to tell them how it looks to me. But in the process of trying to explain, I have to reveal various amounts of my own feelings. How much I'm willing to do that depends a lot on what kind of feeling of trust I can have toward the other person. It depends on what they will do with that information, because opening up my feelings to another human being makes me vulnerable to them. How far I'm willing to go in that will also depend on what the issue is. Usually if it's an interpersonal issue, then I'm fairly close to that person anyway, because otherwise communication wouldn't be an issue. But if I'm talking about a job related thing, then I may not feel real close to that other person as a person; I have to decide how far to let them in. There are some limits to communication that are set by the ability to express something, to let somebody know just how you feel. Yet, many times, it's not a matter of whether it's possible. Instead, it depends on whether or not you want to take the chance on opening the door far enough to let them know what you feel. How I weigh that depends very much on what I think the person is going to do with that information. So I'll probably risk a little and see what they're going to do with that first. Does that get at what you wanted to know?

G: That's clear to me and it's well stated. I'm wondering if there might be particular instances that you may want to refer to, where you actually went through the process you just described? If not, that will be fine too.

V: I can't think of a particular instance. I guess I might say that it makes a great deal of difference if you can let another person know why a certain course of action seems important to follow, or seems risky and you don't want to follow it. This is so, because in the process of trying to do that, you come to understand yourself better. Thus you may begin to realize that

your preference for a course of action comes from a different experience, one that isn't related or not pertinent. So you may change your own feeling in the process. In any event, usually if you can let the other person understand why you feel the way you do, they're more likely to be willing to accomodate your judgement, just because they understand you. Often we tend to assume that other people do things they do for the same reasons or motivations that we have. Sometimes that isn't true at all and if it can be cleared up, then you understand each other better.

G: Get the motivation of both parties out in the open.

V: Yea, the easiest way to illustrate that point is in cross-cultural difficulties. For instance, in working with indian people and non-indian people who are trying to work with indian people, I get into a lot of communication issues. I have learned that my understanding of the situation and my ability to get into communication very often has depended upon someone from another culture - like an indian person in this instance - being willing to let me in far enough to explain themselves to me. For example, the white culture judges indian people as being shifty, dishonest, or as trying to hide something, because indians won't look you in the eye when they're talking to you. It really opened an insight for me, when a Cheyenne person explained to me that from an indian point of view, what they feel they're doing when they're not looking you in the eye, is a completely different thing. They have been taught that when you're talking to someone about anything really important you shouldn't look at them. If you're looking at them you're influencing them with your eyes, and therefore, you're not leaving the other person free to make up his own mind about whatever it is that you're talking about. As soon as I knew that, it felt entirely different. I no longer have a negative feeling when my indian friends don't look at me. It's also changed my feeling about looking at other people, because now I know about the possibility of an entirely different point of view.

Sometimes it takes a lot of courage for me to be willing to trust the other person enough to let them in on those inner things. If I feel there is a potential that enough can be accomplished by letting them in, then I'm likely to do it, even though it feels uncomfortable

for me. Otherwise I don't let them in. I think I'm fairly private with other people. I don't tend to expose a lot of what's going on for me. If I get frustrated enough at the lack of communication, I will do it - even if it goes against the grain a little bit.

G: That captures what I had in mind.

V: You got me to come up with an example for you, even though I was resisting. Well, that's a good illustration of the point I was trying to make.

G: Indeed it is. Does that sum the question up?

V: Yes.

Element c: the matter of "owning" consequences.

Question based on element c:

Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you were, so to speak, confronted with the choice of either "owning" or "disowning" the consequences of a decision or decisions you made? If so, could you describe as fully as possible how you reacted to such an experience or experiences?

The interview based on element c's question:

Gordon: Have you ever experienced moments or periods in your life in which you were, so to speak, confronted with the choice of either owning or disowning the consequences of a decision or decisions that you made? If so, could you describe as fully as possible how you reacted to such experience or experiences?

Victoria: Basically I would say, "No." That's not really a choice we have.

G: Can you carry that a bit further?

V: Well, I just don't think there is any way of disowning the consequences of your choices. You're hardly ever going to be in a situation where everything that happens is the consequence of the choice that you made,

but whatever is the consequence of this choice can be escaped only by being unaware of it. And if you're not aware of it, then you can't make a decision as to whether you're going to own it or not own it. As soon as you're aware of something as the consequence of a choice you have already made, then it seems to me that you no longer have the choice about owning it or not owning it. You can try to run away from it, but that isn't going to keep you from owning it inside.

I can't imagine a situation that would fit your question. There might be situations where you may not have made your decision or choice public, or where you may not want to share it with other people; and therefore, you may have a choice about whether you're going to openly own the consequences of it. But that pertains only to sharing it with other people. For myself alone, if I have made a choice and then I clearly see something as the consequences of that choice, then the very act of seeing them dumps those consequences on me. I'm just playing a game if I'm trying to decide whether to own them or not.

G: I can see pretty well what you're saying. I'm wondering if you can pinpoint any experience where you recognized the consequences of a choice you made and decided to go ahead and own them. Could you take the idea that you've just presented and show where it originated in your experience?

V: I guess my argument with your question was philosophical. It wasn't based on experience. It seems to me that you have put a choice where it couldn't possibly exist. But, in terms of how I own the consequences of my choices, as far as possible I have already dealt with them in making the choice. When I'm making a choice I try to foresee what I think the consequences are going to be. If there are going to be consequences that I feel I couldn't live with, then I take that into consideration at the point of making the choice. If there are consequences I didn't foresee and therefore didn't take into consideration, then it may make me sorry that I made the choice and it may prompt me to see what I can do about reversing it or something like that. More often, though, I've felt pretty ready for most of the consequences. Usually they're not that unforeseeable.

G: Could you point to a time in which you actually carried out that view in a concrete decision?

V: One of the consequences of a choice that I didn't deal with adequately, in the process of making the decision, was the extent of difficulty it was going to raise for our kids to accept the choice Mark and I had made to get divorced. I didn't expect it to be easy for them, but I didn't expect it to be as hard as it was for them, either. Maybe that's not a good example, because it wasn't entirely my decision. Anyway, once Mark and I had talked it over and we had made the decision, I did feel as though it was my decision or at least one that I concurred in. Once things had gone that far, I felt strongly that we should go through with it. I felt badly that it was as difficult for the kids to cope with as it was. On the other hand, I didn't feel it would do them or us any good for Mark and me to try to reverse the decision. So I tried to help them cope with it as best as I could. We both tried to accommodate the kids' wishes as much as we could. One of the things they requested right away was that we not make our decision public until they had had time to get used to it. We agreed to this. I would follow a similar course of action in any other circumstance where the consequence of a decision of mine raised difficulties for somebody else. Sometimes you can reconsider a decision. Otherwise you can only try to do what you can to help somebody through the difficulties your decision has made for them.

G: It's a fruitless thing to think that you can disown the need to help someone in that way.

V: Yea, that wouldn't have done any good. If we had disowned the difficulties they would still have been there. Basically you can't. I don't only mean that it wouldn't do any good to disown them. I don't see how you can even if you want to. It would have been easy for me to say, "The difficulties you kids are having with this decision really aren't my fault, because it was Mark who wanted the divorce and not me." I could've said that to the kids, but that wouldn't have helped them. Their difficulties would have been just as great. Also it wouldn't have helped me, because it would've made me feel very dishonest. It was true that it was originally Mark's decision that he wanted a divorce. However, by the time

we got around to telling the kids about it, I had also made the decision that I thought a divorce was the right thing. So there wouldn't have been any way of disowning the responsibility within myself. I don't think you have to drown in that responsibility. After all, I knew it wasn't going to be an easy thing for the kids when we made the decision, and it wasn't an easy thing for me and Mark either. To hold the marriage together because it's hard for everybody to go through a divorce - that wouldn't have been good either. We get into a whole means and ends philosophical issue there. My feeling is that you can't separate them. The means become part of the end and the end becomes part of the means, and so you can't say which justifies which. I guess I feel that way about decisions and consequences. I think the only way you could escape owning consequences, at least to yourself, would be by refusing to see them.

G: The closest you can get to disowning consequences would be to try to stay unaware of them.

V: Yea, and in the long run I think that would raise more difficulties than the other way around. It's certainly not something that I would recommend.

G: Although being aware of the consequences might have some repercussions, staying unaware of them is going to have more.

V: Yea, because you can deal with the repercussions that you're aware of. Those that you aren't aware of do their dirty work without your vote. I'm back again to a philosophical argument with your question, but I guess your real question was, "How do I deal with having to take the consequences of my decisions?" And that's a perfectly answerable question.

G: I see. When phrased that way it's much easier for you to deal with.

V: Yea, and I'm willing to be convinced if you can give me an example of how somebody can be faced with the choice of whether or not they're going to own the consequences of a decision they've already made.

G: I think you've done a very appropriate job of answering the question in terms of the way you hear it. That satisfies anything that I might have expected of

your response. Does that wrap up what you would like to say?

V: Yes.

Element d: an extension of the matter of relating to determining influences.

Question based on element d:

At birth we are given a certain world within which to live - a certain family, certain society, etc. It is as if we are "thrown" into a particular world, so to speak. Could you describe as completely as possible how you have reacted, in your life experience, to this condition of being thrown into a particular world?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: At birth we are given a certain world within which to live - a certain family, a certain society, etc. It is as if we are thrown into a particular world, so to speak. Could you describe as completely as possible how you have reacted, in your life experience, to this condition of being thrown into a particular world?

Victoria: I think, generally, I have reacted to it pretty positively. I have been accused many times of considering this the best of all possible worlds by less optimistic friends, and I think that's pretty close to the way that I feel. I've always been pretty comfortable with my world. I don't know that I think of it in terms of "a particular world." It's certainly a changing and expanding experience that we're thrown into. So I'm not used to thinking about it in terms that are quite as confining as those that you're expressing in it. Basically, I would say that my reaction to it is pretty positive. I make a pretty positive identification of it. I remember an experience when I was about 8 or 9. I don't know what I had just found out, but it must have been something about the poverty that some people live in. I remember coming home and telling my mother that I was glad that we were rich. And she gently reminded me that we really

weren't rich. As far as I could see we were, because we had everything we needed, and life was good, and so I looked at life that way. I tend still to look at it that way. Also I remember my mother showing me some letters that I had written her at various times in my life. There were some letters from the time when I was in college. About this time I was writing home and telling my parents that I just was beginning to appreciate what a good set of parents they had been. That's pretty well how I felt about my world. I guess I arrived in this world with a cheerful outlook on things. Some of it may also be that I've been more fortunate than a lot of people. Generally, I don't have too many complaints about the world I live in.

G: So, on the whole, for most of your life, it's been a positive experience. There's been no reason to not like your world.

V: Yea, I sensed an attitude in your question of, "How do you feel about being thrown into this world? Don't you want to rebel against it?" I've never felt that way. I've always been glad to explore more aspects of this world, but I've never really felt rebellious about being here. I think there are times when life seems to be a joke on all of us, but I don't find it a desperate situation.

G: Could you carry that a bit further? It seems to me that I heard you draw a distinction between two different ways in which one could react to one's world. One positive and one negative. The word you used was rebellion. That distinction is unclear to me.

V: Well, I think that's true. There are people who have to fight with it. They have an attitude about life in general that tends to relate them to it in a rebellious kind of way, kind of fighting their way. I just don't feel that I'm one of those people. I don't think I ever have been. There's just a difference between going through some struggles like all of us do, and kind of fighting with the world all along the way. I felt that the way you had phrased your question about this world that we're "thrown into," had a little bit of that kind of implication in it. I more likely would think of myself as emerging into this world rather than being thrown into it.

G: Could you carry that a bit further?

V: Well, uh, I don't know that it's a deep philosophical difference or anything like that, but just a choice of words that does have some connotation about how you feel about being where you are.

G: Would it be a fair statement to say that the word "thrown" means kind of a backward looking thing. I've been propelled into this world. Whereas the word "emerging" is an unfolding - a moving into it, a forward looking thing.

V: Well, I guess there would be that connotation. That wasn't the connotation I had in mind. The word "thrown," to me, implies a somewhat uncomfortable landing; and it also implies a force outside of yourself doing the action almost against the will of the person being thrown. I like the word "emerge" because it has a gentler connotation, and it also has more of a connotation of the person being involved in the process rather than it just coming at them from the outside.

G: I see. That's much more clear to me. There's one other thing that I would be interested in. I would like you to look at some more particular worlds where you have this positive experience. Some examples I used were family, society, that sort of thing. I'm wondering in what particular worlds you've had this positive experience?

V: OK. I think that, as I matured my way through life, I have been aware of doing more of the choosing of the worlds that I live in. In the beginning we certainly don't have any choice about which family we're going to become a member of; although I think from fairly early on, we do have some choice of how we are going to relate to our family. This, then, has it's effect on what kind of family that's going to be. You know, we're a part of it. It's not just a family that we're plunked into. It's also a family that we're a part of and that we help to create. But I think, as you get older, you have a lot more freedom. At least I've had a lot more freedom in my life. I've had a lot more freedom than a lot of people do; partly because that's been one of the things that's been important about living to me. I do some

choosing about what worlds I was going to live in, so the worlds that I am a part of now are pretty much worlds of my own choosing. Everything about them may not always be just the way I want it. For instance, we went through a process of picking Bozeman, Montana, as the town in which we wanted to live and raise our kids. So we moved here. I also chose counseling as a profession, because it seemed to really fit for me. Along with that, I certainly chose to some degree a group of people who were going to become my world. I've always done a lot of choosing about what my world was going to be and who was going to be in it, as well as what worlds I was not going to step into.

- G: It's become more evident as you've grown older.
- V: Yea, you have more choices as you grow older.
- G: Does that wrap up this question for you or would you like to explore it more?
- V: No, I think that wraps it up pretty well.

Element e: a further extension of the matter of relating to determining influences.

Question based on element e:

As you look at the course of your life experience can you tell me the extent to which you have experienced in you life some things over which you've had no control; that is, the extent to which you've simply had to accept certain things as given? Comment, if you could, as completely as possible in regard to how you've reacted to such experience or experiences.

The interview based on element e's question:

- Gordon: As you look at the course of your life experience can you tell me the extent to which you have experienced in your life some things over which you've had no control; that is, the extent to which you simply had to accept certain things as given? Comment, if you could, as completely

as possible in regard to how you reacted to such experience or experiences.

Vicotira: I might preface my answer by saying that I don't mean for the way I'm going to answer this question to imply that there haven't been particular experiences in which I've felt rebellious about not having more control. But, in the larger view, I would say that I would be much more uncomfortable with the thought that my life might be completely under my control, than I am with the feeling that it's not. So I can't, in a larger sense, isolate experiences and say, "OK. In this experience or in that experience I have felt that suddenly, in an isolated sense, things were out of my control." My response would be much more like, "Thank goodness I don't have sole control over my life, because that's the last thing I want." I don't mean that I have any urge to give up participating in that control and having that control.

G: There's a difference between participating in it and having complete control.

V: Yes. At times when there are things that I can't control, I'm rebellious about it. I refuse to accept it, and tell myself, "There must be a way I can control this. I just haven't figured out what it is." But, in the larger or deeper sense, I don't feel I'm controlling my life all by myself.

G: Could you carry that a bit further?

V: I guess I'm saying that I value the sense of interaction with the rest of the human world and the "beyond the human" world. I value the interaction more than I would value any sense of being in control of things all by myself. My own efforts at control don't have the feeling of, "You've got to drive this thing and tell it where to go." They have much more the feeling of, "You have to listen, feel your way, and find out where you fit into things."

G: Control what you can, but not the whole scope of the thing?

V: I guess the word "control" just isn't a very good word for the basic way in which I'm trying to walk my way through this experience of living. I feel that I

definitely have a lot to say in the matter of living, but I also have a lot to listen for and feel for from somewhere else, whether from other people or from a larger source. That way of operating isn't what the word "control" conjures up in my mind. In other words, to gain absolute control over my life just isn't one of my goals. It isn't what I'm trying to do.

G: Can you locate an experience in which you didn't have control over a situation or event, and how you reacted to that? Especially in light of the fact that you said having "absolute control" is not a goal for you.

V: For example, if I have the feeling there is someone else that is trying to control any of the circumstances of my life without working with me on it, in the same way that I am trying to work with life in controlling my life, then it really gets my dander up. I would rebel against this. In other words, by rejecting the idea that I want to be holding the reins and drive this thing, I'm not saying that I want somebody else to do it. If somebody else tries to do it, then I resent it and rebel. But, just the same, I don't really want to do it. I just want to be left free to feel my way and let the control be a cooperative effort, but I don't want to hand it over to anybody else. So whenever anybody tries to get very bossy with me I rebel pretty fast. The most dramatic example I come up against every day is my arthritis. I'm much more out of control in what my joints are doing than I would like to be. I would be very willing to grab a little more of the control in that particular cooperative effort. That would be one example. The way I react to that is by trying to ignore it as much as I can, by resenting it, and by trying to chip away at figuring out what I can do about it. I still feel that there is something to be done about it. I just haven't figured out what it is yet. So that's control in a smaller sense. I don't like the word control when it's used in a larger sense.

G: Control in a smaller and larger sense? I'm still vague on what those two things mean.

V: OK. The control that the arthritis takes away from me doesn't touch the basics in some way. It doesn't try to keep me from being who I am or from following my leads

as I see fit. In a physical sense it sometimes makes it a lot more difficult, but all the arthritis is saying is, "It's going to take you two hours instead of 20 minutes or something like that." That's what I mean by being controlled in a more limited sense. I guess, partly, what I'm saying here is that my inner life is more important to me than my outer life.

G: So the larger sense of control would be something that tries to control your inner life. Would that be correct?

V: Yea, although I don't feel there is anything controlling my inner life. Control is just not a term that applies there. But I want to be explicit as to how I feel about one thing: I can't isolate examples in which I was not in control of my life, because being in control of my life is not what I'm trying to do.

G: I see.

V: I guess what I'm trying to do is to figure out a way of letting it flow with all the other things that are around me.

G: So that it doesn't have to be controlled always? Maybe you've answered the question. I'm not sure. I'm still having some trouble with this larger and smaller control. I have a good sense of what you mean by the narrower sense, with the arthritis. But that larger sense still escapes me.

V: In the larger sense, I'm talking about what I am going to do with my life. Who am I going to be, and how I am going to be. Those are probably the biggest questions. Then on the next order are: where am I going to be? Or even smaller than that: When am I going to be? And it's not as though there's a separate sense of the large and the small. The small kind of moves downward from the large.

G: It follows a scale.

V: Yes. Down to what am I going to do this morning.

G: I see. It's the larger sense where you don't feel

as controlled by other things as on the smaller scale,
as with the arthritis.

V: By "other things" you mean what?

G: Outside forces.

V: No. On that larger scale it's more important to me not to be either given the control myself, or be controlled by outside forces. The larger you get in this question the more important it is to have some other approach to it than control from anywhere.

G: I see. I think the word you used a while back was "listen." On those larger things you said you like to listen.

V: Yea, in fact a word I would much prefer to apply to my life other than control either from me or from somewhere else, is "response."

G: I see. Could you carry that a bit further?

V: What I want to do is to respond. That's when I feel really fulfilled. That's when I have a sense of being most alive, when I most strongly have a sense of responding. It doesn't always have to be to another person, it can be a sense of responding to life. So I guess the control coming from anywhere else that I would resent or fight against, would be any control that inhibits my freedom to respond.

G: I see. That's very clear.

V: I finally found the right word.

G: Does that capture your answer?

V: Yes, I can let it rest there.

Meaning

Representation of the definition of meaning:

"Man's search for meaning is a primary force in his life..."

(Frankl, 1962, p. 97). Frankl, in these words, indicates the essence of the existential understanding of meaning: each person is pulled from in front by her logos (meaning). This meaning is the specific question posed by life in each concrete situation of the individual's particular life, a question to which the individual must answer "by answering for his own life" (Frankl, 1962, p. 109). This could entail the fulfilling of a "specific vocation," carrying out an important task, special purpose, etc.

Element a: the matter of "answering" for oneself.

Question based on element a:

During the course of your life experience, when you've made an important decision, how have you "answered for yourself," so to speak? How have you decided which course of action best represents what you'd like to do with your life? Could you respond as fully as possible in regard to what such a decision or decisions has entailed for you?

The interview based on element a's question:

Gordon: During the course of your life experience, when you have made an important decision, how have you answered for yourself, so to speak? How have you decided which course of action best represents what you'd like to do with your life? Could you respond as fully as possible in regard to what such a decision or decisions has entailed for you?

Victoria: Well, when I make such a decision, I'm pretty methodical in considering the pros and cons in regard to what the likely outcomes will be. I look at all those things that are in the pot and weigh them in a pretty reasonable manner. But with the more major decisions in my life, I don't find that it's always a matter of following that process. More often it's sometimes a matter of looking inside and finding which decision I've already made, before I was consciously making it. It's like discovering the decision that I've already made. Usually that's not an uncomfortable process for me. I'm pretty comfortable with the decisions I find I've already made; even though they might be pretty major

decisions. We've talked about the plan that I originally had to go to medical school, and the decision that I made not to go. That was one of these decisions. I never really sat down and said, "Now what are all the pros and cons? What are you going to do? Did you really want to go to medical school? Do you want to do something else? Rather, I began to discover that I had already made the decision that I wasn't going to go. So, at this more subconscious level of making decisions, it's much more difficult for me to tell you just what goes into them. I don't discover them on a conscious level until I've already made them.

G: It's like something at a deeper level has already made up it's mind, or it's heart, or whatever.

V: Yea, and I don't think that I'm uninvolved in that process. I'm not trying to say that there is something else making the decision for me. I'm still making the decision. Sometimes I think about a decision for a long time, but I'm not right at the point where I'm really deciding yet. Then I wake up one morning and know what I'm going to do when that decision comes up. So, somehow I've already decided. I don't know exactly what the process is, but it obviously isn't just a reasonable process of weighing all the pros and cons. It's a much more "soft" emotional process of deciding what I really want to do.

G: How that goes about happening inside of you is not so clear.

V: No.

G: Could you help me with the process that you go through when you try to get in touch with, or get in tune with, that deeper level? Could you tell me what goes into that?

V: Well, yea, when I get in touch with that deeper level, it isn't for the purpose of finding out whether I've made a decision. I'm more in the habit of trying to get in touch with myself at a deeper level, and I find that this works much better when it's not for a specific purpose. You can't sit down and say, "Now I'm going to have an important inner experience." The process of discovering what decisions I may have already made is very much the

same kind of process as discovering other important things about life. It's just a contemplative kind of thing. It's not a process of trying to find out anything specific.

G: Would it be fair to say that it is more a passive listening, than an active grasping? Would that be a way to put it, or would you phrase it differently?

V: Yea, it's much more a passive listening to myself. But I may find out that I've already gone in one direction or another pretty actively.

G: You noted that you can't sit down and say, "Well, now I'm going to find out what my deeper levels are telling me."

V: It's not a process that can happen best by trying to control it consciously. To me that doesn't mean that I'm just letting it happen outside of my control. It's just that some decisions can make themselves better when I'm not in there muddling them up with my head.

G: Would there be another example to go along with the one that you cited in relation to medical school? An example where you found yourself going through this kind of process?

V: Well, for one thing, that decision about medical school also involved a decision to get married. The reason I decided not to go to medical school was because Mark and I were going to get married. The way I wanted to live out a marriage wasn't really compatible with having two doctors in the family. I figured one would be all the kids could stand. It was more than a decision about what I was going to do about school. The most recent decision that I made like that was the decision to give up the job down at Crow agency and come back to Bozeman. That was also the kind of a decision. By the time I finally got around to deciding I had already made the decision.

G: If someone were to walk up to you and say, "I think I understand the process that you go through in making these big decisions. Indeed, some of these are very big: getting married, deciding not to go to medical

school, leaving a job. These are the big choices that we make in life. But how do you justify one route over against another route?" What would you say to the person who asked you this; given the process that you just described?

V: I guess it would depend who that person was, and how well we communicated. After all, "justify" is the wrong word for me. Justifying isn't something I have to do with my decisions. I feel like I have the perfect right to live my life the way it feels right. Once I've decided to go this way rather than that way, it's not something that has to be justified. It's just what I did. I have to live with it, but I don't feel that I have to justify it.

G: So, if you were to answer that person, one of your first tendencies would be to say, "Wait a minute, I don't really have to justify." Is that it?

V: Yes, but the reason that I said it would depend on who was asking me, is because it would depend on how much I really wanted to get into it. If someone I didn't know that well were to ask me that question, I might answer the question in another way. The results of a decision to justify it, if you want to look at it in terms of justification. So I could justify a decision by taking a look at what happened as a result of the decision. Basically, however, that would be a way of answering that person, but not really meaningful to me.

G: So you point to the consequences of the decision.

V: I would if I didn't want to get into a discussion about whether you should justify decisions or not. I guess it would depend on whether I thought the question was being used by someone to get into communication with me, or whether they were asking the question only to find out about the results of a decision. In any case, it explains what I do to point out that I don't feel it's necessary to justify the decision. Still, this doesn't answer the question for the person who is trying to get a fix on whether they think a decision was wise or not. So it would depend upon what I thought they were trying to find out.

G: Kind of what their motives would be for asking the question.

V: Yes.

G: Has there been an experience in which you felt uncomfortable or dissatisfied with the consequences? Have you ever felt that the consequences of a decision have disappointed, for you, your way of making those kinds of decisions?

V: Not on one of those big decisions we were talking about. Those, I find, I've already made on another level before I make them consciously. Sure, there are lots of decisions I've made, where I've decided later that I was wrong. But those were decisions where I weighed the pros and cons. In those cases I can be wrong. I can't think of one big decision where I would say, "I wish I hadn't done it that way."

G: So it's not like you would say, "I wish I hadn't gotten married" or something like this?

V: No, I never have regretted getting married. Even when we were in the process of getting a divorce, I didn't regret getting married. I also don't wish that we hadn't got divorced. Although when I got married I probably would have said, "I hope we don't get divorced." I think of the major decisions as coming to a "Y" in your path. You can go this way or that way. You can't go both ways at once, but that doesn't mean both ways couldn't be good choices. It's not that after making the decision I've had any feeling of "boy, I'm really glad I did this because it would have been terrible to do the other." Probably the other way would have been alright too. I can't think of any big decisions where I wished that I hadn't gone the way I did. If I had gone on to medical school I probably would have lead a very satisfying life being a doctor. I got married, and I couldn't do both; or didn't want to try to do both.

G: So it's a matter of choosing what you think, or feel, at some deeper level. And it's not necessarily choosing between a good and a bad alternative.

V: It's not even a matter of deciding which of two things is better. What counts is knowing what fits with all the things going on with me right then. And in major decisions

I just don't feel that there's a firm right or wrong.

G: Does that capture the answer that you'd like to give to this question?

V:

Element b: the matter of life posing a specific question.

Question based on element b:

In the concrete situations of your life have you ever experienced life as posing before you a particular question about yourself, so to speak? As if life were saying, "Victoria, what are you going to do in this situation?" Or, "Victoria, where do you stand on the matter posed by this situation?" Or, "Victoria, how do you feel about the occurrences in this situation?" If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

The interview based on element b's question.

Gordon: In the concrete situations of your life have you ever experienced life as posing before you a particular question about yourself, so to speak? As if life were saying, "Victoria, what are you going to do in this situation?" Or, "Victoria, where do you stand on the matter posed by this situation?" Or, "Victoria, how do you feel about the occurrences in this situation?" If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

Victoria: I would like to ask you to repeat the first part of the question. The second part of the question, when you got into talking to me in terms of Victoria this and Victoria that, threw me off, because that's not how I hear life.

G: The first part of the question goes like this: in the concrete situations of your life have you ever experienced life as posing before you a particular question about yourself, so to speak?

V: Life is basically a question. So it poses a question to me just by my being here.

G: Could you talk about what that question is? What kind of form does it take for you in your experience?

V: The basic question, which therefore gets echoed in more specific questions, is: "What does it mean?" That's the question that life is asking. Therefore, it is also the question I ask of important experiences.

G: Could you talk about how you try to answer the question of what life means to you?

V: Well, it's not as important to answer it as it is to ask it. So maybe I answer the question by asking it. Maybe I answer the bigger underlying question by asking it in more specific instances. I feel that, basically, the function of the question isn't to have an answer.

G: Could you point to experiences or instances in which you particularly felt that question being raised for you: "What does life mean?"

V: I approach the basic question of life's meaning, or even the meaning my life, only in intangible ways and moments. The way I get at it is by echoing it back in little pieces. I do this by asking "What does it mean that a plant will grow?" That's one.

G: In the experience of watching a plant grow the big question arises for you at some level of yourself.

V: Or in the experience of learning to categorize the animal kingdom from microbes on up, or from the experience of having a baby, or waking up in the morning. I notice it in almost any experience. It's present in every close and meaningful encounter with another human being. I think that bigger question is always there. There's no point in answering it in terms of specific experiences, because it's too total a question.

G: It covers the whole panorama of your experience.

V: One difference between how the question comes at me and how it comes to some other people is that many people

get to where they have to ask, "Does it mean anything?"
And that's a very different question from "What does it mean?"

G: Could you clarify the distinction you have there?

V: I think when I'm asking what it means I'm making an underlying assumption. To me it's self-evident that life means something. So, "Does it mean anything?", is not a question that I feel I ever have to ask. I know it means something. I feel the question, "Does it mean anything?", can be a very frustrating question, a very desperate kind of question, those who ask it are not sure there is any meaning. My question is much more comfortable.

G: When you ask, "What does it mean?", you're presupposing it means something.

V: Yea, I already know it has meaning or I wouldn't be asking that. This doesn't mean I have the answer anymore than the guy who's asking, "Does it mean anything?", but it does mean I'm in a more comfortable spot. Now you can ask me why does life ask me, "What does it mean?", and somebody else gets asked, "Does it mean anything?"; and I don't know.

G: You anticipated my next question pretty well.

V: I think part of the reason is that I grew up enjoying many games of a question and answer variety. So I grew up with the assumption that questions have answers and things do mean something. Though I've come to the conclusion that the answers aren't the important part of it.

G: From very early you began to develop this sense of presupposing that life does have meaning, and that your life in particular has meaning.

V: Yea, well, my life has a meaning only because life has meaning. I don't think my life means anything different from everybody else's life. So for the guy who has to ask, "Does it mean anything?", there's just as much meaning there for him as there is for me; but that doesn't do him a heck of a lot of good right at that point. Since he may not know it. I don't know it either, but I know it.

G: Could you help me with your last statement?

- V: Well, I don't know it, in terms of having the answer, anymore than he's got the answer; but I know it, in terms of knowing that the reality of an answer isn't dependent upon my knowing. In other words, there can be an answer even if I never know what it is.
- G: The meaning of life doesn't depend upon your figuring it out.
- V: Thank goodness!
- G: That would be an awful burden.
- V: Yea, but for some people I think it does depend on them figuring it out. Sure, life comes along and asks me questions all the time; but underneath all the other questions is this big one: "What does it mean?"
- G: Does that answer the question for you?
- V: Yea, it does for me. I don't know about you!

Element c: the matter of being pulled forward.

Question based on element c:

During the course of your life experience have there been moments or periods in which you've experienced yourself as pulled forward by a need to fulfill a "special purpose," so to speak? If so, could you elaborate as completely as you possibly can on what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

The interview based on element c's question:

- Gordon: During the course of your life experience have there been moments or periods in which you've experienced yourself as pulled forward by a need to fulfill special purposes, so to speak? If so, could you elaborate as completely as you possibly can on what such an experience or experiences entailed for you?
- Victoria: There've been many times in my life when I felt pulled

forward and quite a few of those have been when I've been pulled forward by a purpose. I don't know that I would usually call it a need to fulfill a specific purpose, but that's relatively unimportant in your question. At least that's not the part of your question that pulls at me very hard. I may feel strongly pulled by a purpose, but I don't experience it as a need to fulfill that purpose. I've been pulled forward by all kinds of purposes in my life and have often been pulled not only forward, but also pulled through something else in my life that was difficult to get through. For instance, I had difficulty in accepting supervision from, and in getting along with the person who was in charge of me when I was living on a farm as a child. My brother kept saying to me during that time, "You know, why do you put up with this?" My response to him was that although it was very difficult for me to live with this person, the experience of living on the farm was fulfilling a purpose that I'd had for a long time. So there was no question in mind that it was worth it to put up with this person, because I liked being on the farm.

The same thing was true when I enrolled in graduate school in counseling, which I did as soon as Mark and I reached the conclusion that we were going to get divorced. Even before we told the kids, I enrolled in graduate school; primarily because I felt I'd need to go about supporting myself, and there wasn't anything I felt qualified and ready to do that I wanted to do. That's why I decided to enroll in school, but once I got there I really enjoyed the challenge of being in the program and working on the degree. It turned out to be not only a purpose, but a very good counterbalance to the negative things going on in terms of the divorce.

G: At one point you said, "Although there may be purposes that you felt it important to fulfill, it's not like there was a need for fulfilling the purpose."

V: Yea, that's not how I feel.

G: Could you carry that a bit further?

V: I have a need to fulfill some purposes just as a need to have something purposeful in my existence, but I don't feel the need in relation to specific purposes. In other words, the need is to be doing something purposeful; but

that need leaves a lot of choice. Then the choice I make about what specific purpose to pursue is made more by a sense of what grabs me. To fulfill that particular purpose doesn't feel like a need to me. I think there is a need behind it, in the sense that I have a need to feel that I'm doing something worth doing. But there are a hundred things worth doing and doing any one of them would fulfill that need to be doing something useful. I choose one of those things out of other preferences, so it doesn't feel like there's a need to fulfill this particular purpose.

G: In the background there is an essential purposefulness for you, which you do feel a need for; but in the foreground any particular purposes don't have the word need attached to them.

V: Yea, they don't have that feeling of need attached to them. It feels like I'm doing it because I want to do it, not because I need to do it. But in the process of getting hooked on to a purpose, as was pretty clear in both of the examples I gave, it should have an attraction strong enough to pull me through some other negative things. One way I deal with negative things in my life is to start myself on a different purpose.

G: In a roundabout way this satisfies that background kind of purposefulness that we talked about. Is that a fair way to say it?

V: Well, yea, we're talking about a double need in these particular examples. It was both a need to have something else to do besides focusing on a negative aspect of my life, also a need to be doing something positive in itself. So we're really talking about two needs, but neither of them are necessarily tied to the specific purpose that I may be pursuing. In other words, any other purpose that I could get hooked into would do as well. There are some needs in there, but neither of them feel like a need that's tied to a specific purpose.

G: On occasion there's been a purposeful counterbalance to those negative things going on in your life.

V: Yea, though not necessarily negative things. Maybe just frustrating things. I think one reason I used to write a lot of poetry when the kids were smaller was because I had a need to be doing something that called me

to focus inside myself more than young children allowed me to do. I felt like I had to have something that pulled me strongly enough to do something just with myself, and writing a poem was something that I could get into. I used to do it standing up at the kitchen counter, because I noticed if I sat down my children immediately assumed that I wasn't doing anything and that they could all come for their bits of attention. Whereas if I was standing at the kitchen counter they assumed I was busy.

G: I see. That comes through quite clear. Does that capture the question for you?

V: Yes.

Element d: an extension of the matter of being pulled forward.

Question based on element d:

In the concrete situations of your life have you ever experienced life as calling you to the accomplishment of an important task, so to speak? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

The interview based on element d's question:

Gordon: In the concrete situations of your life have you ever experienced life as calling you, so to speak, to the accomplishment of an important task? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences has entailed for you?

Victoria: This is one of those instances where life doesn't use quite the same words talking to me as to you. I'm quite familiar with the sense of life calling me, but life doesn't tell me to accomplish specific important tasks. The sense of calling, and being somehow directed in my search, is familiar. But this applies more to directions I'm going to go in, to my efforts in finding myself, or my sense of following what I might call my own inner leadings. It may be a matter of life calling me if you want to put it that way. This would apply very well to the things I just listed. But life doesn't

say, "Here's this task and you're the person to accomplish it." I tend to work in terms of whether the process feels right, and not what the goal or the end is going to be. In important experiences when I really feel life calling me, it's more in terms of the flavor of things and the engagement. It's not in terms of the end. I'm not trying to say that the end product is never important to me. When I'm writing a poem, building a chimney, doing carpentry, or something like that, I'm very particular about the end product as well as the process. But these latter things aren't what life calls me to do. Life leaves them to my own choices. Life only bothers to speak to me on important issues, issues of whether I'm going to follow my leadings.

G: I see. Could you describe what following your "leadings" entails for you?

V: Well, it's a matter of doing what fits or going where I fit. It's a flowing with things that have a right feeling about them. It feels good and comfortable in some deep sense. It's not the sense that life has called me to complete this task or that task and I didn't do it, so I'm supposed to feel guilty about not having done what I was called to do. It's not that kind of feeling. It's just a feeling like this is where I belong, this is the right way for me to do something.

G: Would it be a fair statement to say that life calling you, when you "Hear life calling you," is like hearing a deep part of yourself calling you?

V: No, only in the sense in which I am also a part of life outside of myself. But it's not myself. It's not inside of me. It's outside of me. And so it's myself only in the sense in which I'm also a part of that which is not me.

G: I see. Could you put that concretely for me?

V: No! I don't think I can!

G: Could you tell me what you do when you hear that kind of a call? Maybe it's not a call to a particular task, but what kind of behavior does that generate?

V: I follow it! I mean I don't wait until it's calling loudly. It's more a matter of that's what I'm looking

for, and the directions I'm going to try are going to be the ones that may even only whisper for me.

G: And so it's like the behavior consists of whatever it takes to follow the lead.

V: Uh, huh.

G: How does it feel to follow a lead like that?

V: It feels good. It feels comfortable and it also feels like it wouldn't be right to be going where that calling isn't taking place - not wrong in the sense of morally wrong or that that would be a wrong thing to do, but more like that isn't the right place for me to be engaged. It's a personal thing. A given direction may be perfectly all right for somebody else to follow and it may be a good thing to do, something that someone needs to do. But if that sense of calling isn't in there, then it feels like it's the wrong thing for me to be doing; just because that sense of engagement that's important for me isn't there.

G: I see. So the question is whether it's where you should be, not just where anybody else should be.

V: Yea.

G: I see. As I think back to what you were saying a-while ago, in regard to the distinction between the calling from inside yourself and outside yourself, that's still a bit unclear.

V: Yea, because I've made a point several times about the fact that the boundaries between inside myself and outside of myself are not that clear; although in most everyday ordinary experiences they feel pretty clear. The sense of being called doesn't come from what I, in ordinary everyday experience, would define as me. It comes from Life, from situations, definitely from outside of me; but in the deeper sense of speaking. I feel the boundaries between me and not me really aren't that sharp. I am also, in a larger sense, a part of what life does outside of me. All of me isn't confined in me and so that part of me that isn't confined in me is maybe what's doing the calling, but it doesn't feel like it's coming from inside.

G: Can you point to an experience where that became particularly clear?

V: Well, I never used to fuss with those fine shades of distinction. The experience that brought home the fact that the distinction between me and not me isn't as sharp as I had always assumed it was, a mystical experience that I can't really define. I not only can't describe it, but I can't even remember the particular image that the experience happened in. I can just very firmly remembering a conclusion I reached from it. It's not like a theory or a supposition. It's something I know because I've experienced it. I remember very definitely that I did have that experience, because I had been in a discussion about mystical experiences with some friends of mine at the Unitarian group. I remember one person asking me whether I felt that mystical experiences came from inside of myself or outside myself - and this was before I had that experience that I'm talking about. I said it felt as though they came from outside myself. Then, sometime later, I had an experience that suddenly made me realize that inside of myself and outside of myself was not as distinct as I had always assumed. So I wrote the fellow that had asked that original question a note, and told him that I wasn't as clear about that answer as I used to be; because I wasn't as sure that there was as firm a distinction between inside of myself and outside of myself as I used to feel. That's why I remember there was a very specific experience that led me to that conclusion, but mystical experiences are elusive. They usually do wear some kind of clothes, but what clothes this particular experience wore at the time, I really can't remember. I can only remember what I learned from it.

G: That does a good job, from where I sit, of providing some context for what you were saying earlier.

V: You got me a little ways away from the original question, but I think we've kind of dealt with it.

G: OK. Would you like to put the wraps on it?

V: It sits easy with me if it does with you.

Element e: the matter of the "search for meaning."

Question based on element e:

Have you ever had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life in which you found yourself searching for a direction for your life to follow, so to speak? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences has entailed and does entail for you?

The interview based on element e's question:

Gordon: For this question I would like to ask you if you have ever had an experience or experiences in moments or periods of your life in which you've found yourself searching for a direction for your life to follow, so to speak? If so, could you elucidate for me as much as possible what such an experience or experiences has entailed and does entail for you?

Victoria: This is one of those things that is an ongoing part of my life, rather than being concentrated in specific experiences. I think that life, in many ways, is a search. My life has been such for me. There have been some periods when I have stood more at a crossroads than at other times. In these cases I had to make some choices about directions. Given these cases, I can isolate a few experiences where choosing a direction was going on. But, in isolating them, I want it to be clear that we're isolating them in order to pinpoint certain kinds of processes; but not isolating them in the sense that those were the only times such searching was going on. I think that choosing direction is always an aspect of life. When I'm searching for direction it's not with a lost kind of feeling. Anyway, the first experience where I came up against a real change of direction, was almost an automatic choice. It was when a decision needed to be made as to whether I was going to go to a different school in order to start my high school career. As I look back on it, and even at the time, I feel it was a pretty automatic decision. Given the circumstances, this decision to go to a different school was practically a foregone conclusion; both for myself and my parents. When I was ten I made a choice, that carried with it, a lot of this notion of searching. I had been making a lot of remarks to my parents that I wanted them to move to a farm, because

that's where I wanted to live. So, when my mother was going to join my father (who was living in South America at the time) she faced me with the possibility of finding a farm for me to live on while she was gone. She also said I could stay home with whoever was going to take care of my little sister and brother. I had always been searching for a chance to be related to animals and the natural world. That day I actually had a chance to make a choice as to whether I wanted to put the urge into practice. I left home and went to live on a farm, and I was very glad I did. Since then many choices have come up for me about what direction I really want to take in my life. There were a couple of times when I was making choices about church affiliations. This has been an ongoing process involving many changes; until I made the decision to become a Quaker. That involved a more internal change of direction. Therefore it was more important to me than the other changes we were talking about which were more external. Another change of direction that I was really hit with, kind of from the outside, was my divorce. Seeing it coming prompted me to go back to school and get into the MSU counseling curriculum. So it lead into a change that provided a meaningful new direction for me. In all the other choices it was a matter of having arrived at a Y shaped fork in the road and I could go either way. Whereas when the divorce came up, there was a crack in the earth to jump across.

G: When you come to one of those Y forks in the road, what kind of feeling do you have prior to making the choice to go this way or that way?

V: The feeling I have is one that probably starts quite a ways before I get to that Y. It's a feeling of being drawn. I operate on a system of following my leanings and letting myself be drawn.

G: That Y is not just an isolated moment. There has been a long process drawing you in one direction or the other.

V: Yea, and that's why I say it's a bit artificial to isolate the particular experiences of looking for direction. It's an ongoing thing. I'm doing it all the time.

G: This feeling of being drawn?

- V: Yea. I pretty much live my life by going where I'm drawn. There are some points in my life when I can see those Y's in the road, but most of the time I have already passed the Y before I think of it as a choice. So then it's just a matter of acknowledging that I let myself be drawn.
- G: What is it that draws you?
- V: I'm drawn by some kind of positive interaction, chemistry, or whatever you want to call it. The interaction takes place between me and my feeling of what's important on one side, and that opening of the way, that possible direction, on the other side. Something just fits and clicks.
- G: Like something inside of you clicks with the direction drawing you.
- V: Yea, so it becomes a fruitful interaction that I'm drawn into. It often feels very smooth.
- G: Does that say pretty much what you would like to say about this question?
- V: Yes.

C. Summary

A format for Victoria's expression of her experience in the interviews was presented. Victoria's historical self-report and her response to the fifty interview questions were offered.

Chapter IV

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

A. Summary

We have traversed a long, very difficult, road together. At the beginning of our journey I spoke of five themes that would be developed in the study: the need for a philosophical base in counseling and psychotherapy, the impact of wider cultural influence on the counseling context, the importance of concerning ourselves with unique individuality, the primacy of existentialism's thrust in the direction of simplicity, and the need to examine and search for alternative methodological premises.

As the journey progressed the study's dependence on existential philosophy became evident - in the use of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, etc. As such the import of philosophy for the understanding of human beings, and thus for counseling, was implicitly recognized throughout.

On the matter of cultural influence, the danger of the "mass" was discussed. In response to this prevalent tendency of our time toward the usurpation of the unique individual in the throes of collectivism, I presented Kierkegaard's understanding of the "single individual" as the central category opposed to the "crowd." This category directed our attention away from abstractions toward concrete unique individuality. Following this direction I developed the simplicity of the study: the provision of the opportunity for a unique individual - Victoria - to speak to us about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life - as these issues are occasioned by ten central concepts from existential psychology. This simplicity is the core of the study.

In order to carry out the simplicity of the study I had to examine and reject quantitative, empirical, scientific methodological premises, in favor of a "hands off" policy in regard to Victoria's comments about her experience in Chapter 3. Thus I issued a categorical refusal to

analyze any portion of what she said - in favor of just letting her speak, letting her be. In spite of the inherent analytic value in phenomenological methodology, this position could not be compromised in any way.

Our journey found its concrete fruition in Chapter 3. There Victoria spoke to us. Simply that. Her concrete expression of her experience is the essential reason for having even done the study - without the simplicity of her self-expressed experiential uniqueness, there would have been no point to this undertaking.

So at the end of our journey I would hope that two primary things have been accomplished: one, that Victoria has had the opportunity to talk about how she has dealt with some of the basic issues of human life; and two, that the encounter with the uniqueness of Victoria's experience may lure you, the reader, into making the decision to begin or renew asking yourself, "What about my uniqueness?"

B. Conclusions

The conclusions of the study can be listed as follows:

1. The first conclusion, of course, is that there really are no conclusions. Both Victoria's experience of herself, and the existential thought used to elicit that experience, are open to the future. Thus we may expect both to develop far beyond what has been said in this study; which makes this project of thought a point of departure, not a fixed place of arrival.

2. As to whether there is any decisive accomplishment, or insight into truth, that could be attributed to the effort of the preceding pages, I will leave up to the reader to decide. Such a decision may help the reader discover her own truth.

3. However, I do believe that, on the basis of the study's effort, we can conclude that work in the area of unique individuality

is entirely valid and appropriate - even of paramount importance!

4. Philosophy in general, and existential philosophy in particular, has much of benefit to contribute to counselors who genuinely want to understand human beings.

5. Understanding wider cultural maladies can be of help to the counselor in her understanding of individual malady.

6. Methodological premises, other than those of strict empiricism, can be creatively utilized to further our understanding of human beings.

7. Finally, in regard to this study, let me emphatically conclude that it is just a modest attempt at a unique project of thought - it should be seriously questioned and critiqued.

C. Recommendations for Future Exploration

Recommendations for future exploration can be listed as follows:

1. A very important task for the future is a more extensive treatment of the meaning of individuality in several of the leading existentialists, whom this study could not deal with in depth: Marcel, Berdyaer, Jaspers, Tillich, etc. Completion of such a task could deepen our understanding of the unique person, as well as sharpen our awareness of the differing approach each existentialist takes to a common subject matter.

2. Procedural refinements should be considered by others who may be interested in eliciting the experience of unique individuals. My feeling is that my use of interviewing methods for this purpose was rather crude and tentative. Such refinements could probably be conducted in a variety of ways, none of which, should mean having to resort to the objectification of empirical methods. These should, of course, be avoided at all costs.

3. The themes of simplicity, cultural malady, a philosophical

base for counseling, and the hunt for alternative methodological premises, should all be explored further - drawing out the implications of each for our understanding of human beings.

4. Students in the counseling department here at MSU should take this study as an invitation to alter the structural contours of their professional projects, in order that the projects might become more suitable to their personal aspirations.

5. It would be interesting to have someone use the same concepts from existential psychology as used here, and the same questions based on those concepts; and then select a different respondent(s) in order to see how Victoria's experience would look along side that of another unique individual(s).

6. Another person could use the same basic format provided in this study, except for taking a different philosophical posture upon which to base the interview questions. We might then be able to see how our philosophical position influences our understanding of what the basic issues of human life are, and consequently, how the questions we ask of people influence the answers we get.

7. Another exciting twist would be to have another person use the same concepts from existential psychology as the basis for a similar series of interviews, except that she would write her own definitions and questions. This might allow us to see how another investigator would invest these concepts with different meaning, thus obtaining the likely consequence of receiving a different set of experiences from the respondent(s).

8. I would recommend any number of variations of the above mentioned sort.

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