A Hermeneutic interpretation of stories about resilient adults images of past adolescent and childhood stressors
by John Earle Plummer

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Health and Human Development
Montana State University
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Abstract:
Stories of severe stress were told by well functioning adults who as children and youth were at-risk. These stories were organized using a grounded theory approach that examined numerous levels of social interaction. Participants selected pictures that represented scenes of childhood and/or youth and then told the story behind the picture. These projective self narratives unearthed the process called hypothesis formation that creates images. Each narrative was interpreted according to a set of hermeneutical rules. The findings indicated that the sample population exhibited scripted behaviors that enabled them to escape from severe stress either physically or emotionally. The power and presence of images in the formation and sustaining of reality was also affirmed. A therapeutic approach using images was introduced.
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ABOUT RESILIENT ADULTS' IMAGES OF PAST
ADOLESCENT AND CHILDHOOD STRESSORS

by

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APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

John Earle Plummer

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English language, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency. It is now ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Date

Chair, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

Date

Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Date

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ABSTRACT

Stories of severe stress were told by well functioning adults who as children and youth were at-risk. These stories were organized using a grounded theory approach that examined numerous levels of social interaction. Participants selected pictures that represented scenes of childhood and/or youth and then told the story behind the picture. These projective self narratives unearthed the process called hypothesis formation that creates images. Each narrative was interpreted according to a set of hermeneutical rules. The findings indicated that the sample population exhibited scripted behaviors that enabled them to escape from severe stress either physically or emotionally. The power and presence of images in the formation and sustaining of reality was also affirmed. A therapeutic approach using images was introduced.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The stress we face in life shapes us like the wind molds the trees and rocks of our natural landscape (McCubbin, Thompson, Thompson & Fromer, 1994). Often, like the wind, it is the cumulative effect of stress that shapes our form (Cottrell, 1992; Figley & McCubbin, 1983). No group is more susceptible to the forces of blowing stress than are children and youth (Brenner, 1984; Sorensen, 1993; Werner & Smith, 1992). Still tender, easily molded and influenced, (Erikson, 1950; Forman, 1993) these emerging entities are shaped, in part, by the power of the stresses around them.

Adult recollections of their childhood and youth indicate that the storytellers in this study are not as fortunate as the Monterey Pine, which over time slowly uses the force of wind to enhance its beauty. They are more like the blow-downs of the forested regions where profound winds treat full-grown trees as if they were match sticks (Figley, 1989; Werner & Smith, 1992). The questions of this study deal with the influence of disruptive, uprooting stress on the images held by these adults from their childhood and youth (Brenner, 1984; Sorensen, 1993). What images do these adults, exposed to noxious stress as children, possess (Jaspars, Fincham & Hewstone, 1983)? What processes are involved in the creation of an image or response to an image involving severe stress (Kantor & Lehr, 1985)?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to allow adults to reconstruct the images of their social interactions with others as children or youth when living with severe stress (Figley & McCubbin, 1983; Forman, 1993; Jaspars, Fincham & Hewstone, 1983;
Sorensen, 1993). In the end, a point of therapeutic intervention will be suggested that is based upon theory derived from the study findings (Pinsof, 1981).

This study examines the process by which adults view how they as children and/or youth create and store images in an environment of severe stress (Nichols, 1984). It also addresses outcome, that is, the creation of an image that evolves out of social interactions and directs the scripting of behaviors (Kantor & Lehr, 1985). Finally, a therapeutic intervention will be derived from our understanding of images that is capable of altering images that an individual possesses. The point of intervention would be theory-driven and based upon the therapist's understanding of the power of images (Hess & Handel, 1959).

**Theoretical Context**

Before starting a review of literature, I want to familiarize my readers with the theories that this study utilized for structural integrity. These are the ideas of others whose research I have built upon and that have impacted my stylistic presentation in terms of how I conceptually presented my findings.

Three kinds of theories are utilized in this study. First are the theories describing the process by which images are created (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983; Nichols, 1984; Pittman & D'Agostino, 1985). Then, once an understanding of theoretical process evolves, a whole new discussion about theoretical outcome, or the images themselves, needs to be explored (Burr & Klein, 1994; Kantor & Lehr, 1985) in order to clearly define an image. Finally, a third theoretical domain is needed in order to understand how a knowledge of images can provide a point of therapeutic intervention (Broderick & Pulliam-Krager, 1980; Burr & Klein, 1994).
Theories About Process - Images Created

I appreciate Kantor and Lehr's (1985) inclusive definition of an image. The definition reads like this:

Images are internalized representations of action made or observed. The most basic form of an image can exist in the form of a kinetic imprint, a kind of memory which is muscular and energetic. An image may also be a picture of an event, whether literal or symbolic. It can exist as a sentiment or feeling about an event. An image may exist as a belief or an idea about an event. (p. 241)

Kantor and Lehr's (1985) definition of an image appears to use any of the five senses plus our thought processes to internalize a representation of an action made or observed. The actions made or observed in this study deal with social interactions between an individual and person, places, or things in their social settings. These internalized representations can be recognized in the context of social interaction and the scripted behaviors these images direct.

Kantor and Lehr's (1985) inclusive understanding of the composition and origin of an image allows me to take other theorists and use their word to explain the process by which images are created. Nichols' (1984) theory of Object Stage Orientation can easily build upon Kantor and Lehr's (1985) idea that "images are internalized representations of action made or observed" (p. 183). Nichols (1984) suggests that the development of an individual depends upon the ego's relationship with objects, at first with the actual interactions with real objects and events and later as an unconscious residue of these first interactions.

The first ego-object relationship that an infant experiences is between itself and the mothering figure, or the object (Nichols, 1984). With an average environment and adequate mothering it is fair to anticipate that a child would move from object-oriented dependence to an object-oriented independence. In short, the infant would grow up to tie his/her own shoes. According to Nichols the
stages of object-oriented dependence to object-oriented independence are as follows:

**Figure 1. Object Stage Orientation**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>autistic (1-2 mo.)</td>
<td>objectless stage</td>
<td>physical care</td>
<td>reflex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>symbiotic (3-6 mo.)</td>
<td>mother figure object</td>
<td>psychic dependency</td>
<td>trust - mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separation</td>
<td>transitional object</td>
<td>reassurance in</td>
<td>delay gratification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individualization</td>
<td></td>
<td>mother's absence</td>
<td>tolerate frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7-36 mo.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>competent ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tolerate closeness &amp; separateness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This psychoanalytical, object relations theory helps explain the process by which individuals in infancy develop images concerning the interactive nature between themselves and objects. Feelings of pleasure or pain organize the internal object to self-relationships which are stored in what Hess and Handel (1959) refer to as an *imagistic memory bank*, much like the piggy bank into which we place one penny at a time. Positive and negative images are stored in an imagistic memory bank for future withdrawals. Having both positive and negative images in the bank balances each type of image against the other. This balance is there to provide an honest assessment of one's abilities along with a basis to assess others (Nichols, 1984).

Nichols' (1984) theory of Object Stage Orientation views the creation of images as occurring during the process of separating from the mothering figure. If the mothering figure remains openly warm and loving during the process of separation this instills in the child a sense of lovableness while achieving individuality and strength. It is believed that the health of the mothering figure
(Crittenden, 1985; Goodman, 1984; Lancaster & Adler, 1989) will strongly influence the fate of the separation and withdrawal. The child's sense of identity based upon the self to objects around him/her is later enriched and revised at the future developmental point of adolescent puberty (Steinberg, 1985).

Nichols (1984) theoretical interpretation of ego-object relations provides one construct for the creation of images that begins first in infancy with actual interactions with real objects and events, e.g., mothering objects. From these early interactions it is postulated that an unconscious residue stored in an imagistic memory bank is drawn upon for later interactions of the self to objects and events. Theorists like Kruglanski, Baldwin and Towson (1983), whose theories deal with lay-epistemic process, provide a construct for how the residue stored in the imagistic memory bank can be drawn upon in future interactions of the self to the world.

The term lay-epistemic process is not typical, everyday speech. The word epistemic means knowledge. The fact that it is labeled "lay-epistemic" means that the lay person or the common person would possess this knowledge. Lay-epistemic process means the way by which we arrive at common knowledge (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983).

Kruglanski, Baldwin and Towson (1983) conclude that people arrive at common knowledge by the process of generating hypotheses. An ego-object interaction takes place and an hypothesis is generated to explain its occurrence. Although the number of hypotheses for any given interaction is infinite, there comes a point when a person stops generating hypotheses and reaches closure on a given belief. That point of closure is dependent upon two factors: a) the individual's capacity, and b) their motivation to generate more hypotheses.
The capacity to generate an hypothesis is dependent upon one's past knowledge (e.g., the residue of images stored in the imagistic memory bank) and the present availability of various ideas (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983). There are also certain internal motivators within an individual for creating hypotheses: a person's need for structure, validity, and possessing conclusions as to why interactions occur.

A person's capacity (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983) to create alternative hypotheses depends upon his/her store of knowledge about a particular subject. For example, a small child who sees two Santas at the same time has to come up with an explanation as to what their eyes just saw. If the small child knows about twins, then this store of knowledge can help create an explanation or new hypothesis; i.e., Santa has a twin. But what if this child was Little Albert (Davison & Neale, 1978), who had stored in his imagistic memory bank a conditioned fear about white objects like Santa's beard? That stored knowledge about white objects would greatly affect his hypothesis about Santa. Instead of entertaining the idea of twins Little Albert's knowledge base would only be able to see twice the white.

Capacity is also dependent upon the availability of information; i.e., asking an older sibling what s/he thinks about seeing two Santas. Both the store of knowledge and availability of new knowledge affects the number of hypotheses an individual can create. The fewer the number of hypotheses generated, then the sooner closure on a given belief will be reached.

Some individuals are more motivated to create alternative hypotheses on a given interaction than others. This intrinsic motivation to generate alternative hypotheses is dependent upon a person's belief system and how that belief system is affected by the properties of knowledge referred to as structure, conclusions
and validity. For example, if a small child has a firm belief in Santa, then that belief will interpret his/her interaction with two Santas at one time. These three properties of knowledge will determine when closure on a given belief will be reached.

Structure (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983) is the opposite of confusion and ambiguity. Structure is a guiding knowledge that gives one confidence. For example, when the small child sees two Santas at the same time confusion can result. An explanation that Santa has an identical twin may provide enough knowledge for a small child to accept this hypothesis with a certain degree of confidence. When a child gains more knowledge or possesses more structure, then an inconsistent hypothesis will create discomfort. For example, why is one taller than the other if the Santas are identical twins?

Time also limits the amount of knowledge one utilizes in generating hypotheses. If one has to make up one's mind right now, there may not be enough time to think of all the possible alternatives. Drawing upon knowledge from the imagistic memory bank may be all there is time to do. One simply acts within that time constraint with the information available at that moment. The twin hypothesis might even satisfy some adults who don't take time to process the conclusion's consistency.

Consistent conclusions (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983) tap into the fulfillment of one's wishes or beliefs. If a child has a real need to believe in Santa then the conclusion can accommodate a second Santa. Usually if new information creates logical inconsistency in one's belief system (e.g., one's belief in Santa) then one must do some mental or behavioral gymnastics to reduce the discomfort of inconsistency (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983). One way a person deals with the discomfort of an inconsistent conclusion is to protect cherished beliefs
from new information and possible hypothesis generation. For example, Santa is real and that's more important than the fact that two Santas are now known to exist. Beliefs that aren't as important are vulnerable to change because they are now open to the scrutiny of alternative hypotheses.

For Little Albert (Davison & Neale, 1978) the discomfort generated by the presence of an additional Santa would not be based upon inconsistent conclusions. The preconditioned knowledge within his imagistic memory bank would have already created a belief system about white hairdo images. His belief system may be so entrenched that new information would not be accepted and a new hypothesis would not be generated.

Validity asks if a conclusion is believable. For example, could Santa have an identical twin? Persons with a strong need for structural knowledge find inconsistency terribly disturbing (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983). However, if the need for structure is stronger than the need for validity then inconsistency will be ignored. One might think, "So what if one Santa is a foot taller than the other Santa." or "I'm Little Albert (Davison & Neale, 1978) and I have my own beliefs." If the need for validity is greater than the need for structure, then the discomfort of inconsistency will be felt. "I just can't accept that Santa has a twin especially when one is a foot taller than the other." An inner desire for validity will lead a person to seek out alternative conclusions or hypotheses that lie within the realm of the believable (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983).

An hypothesis is an explanation given for an ego-object interaction. Once an hypothesis is reached, then a given belief is held. This simple process of generating an hypothesis and coming to a conclusion or belief uses simple deduction. Lalljee and Abelson's (1983) process model suggests three elements
that are deduced: 1) the goals of the characters in the scene 2) the plan that the characters will use to reach their goals, and 3) the interaction that implements the plan (Lalljee & Abelson 1983). For example, a small child sees Santa and believes that the goal of Santa is to bring presents. The plan is to sit on Santa's lap to tell Santa what is wanted. All the child has to do is act by going up and talking to Santa.

If Little Albert (Davison & Neale, 1978) were asked the goals of the white-bearded figure and his own goals, one might discover a deductive process that is frozen (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983) by the knowledge stored in his imagistic memory bank. The interaction is already a well-known script (Lalljee & Abelson 1983) that governs his social interactions with white-bearded figures.

Individuals create hypotheses to explain an interaction between the self and an object or event. Based upon knowledge and motivation, an individual generates one or more hypotheses (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983). An hypothesis, or explanation for any given ego-object interaction, can be reached through an understanding of: a) the goals of the main characters b) their plans for reaching their goals, and c) the patterns of interaction between the ego and the object (Lalljee & Abelson 1983). There comes a point when closure is reached. Individuals settle on a given hypothesis which becomes a belief about themselves, the objects they interact with, and the interactions that they can expect to encounter. Lalljee and Abelson (1983) view this as the main means by which we "organize our understanding of social life". (p. 79)

Theories About Outcome - Images

The outcome of the deductive process by which hypotheses are generated, tested, and finally adopted results in a belief, or what I call in this study, an image
(Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983; Lalljee and Abelson, 1983). The outcome of possessing an image is that it is stored in an imagistic memory bank and drawn upon like one does a data bank when future hypotheses need to be generated (Hess & Handel, 1959; Nichols, 1984).

Kantor and Lehr's (1985) definition of an image provides a staging point from which to explore the power of an imagistic memory bank in creating reality.

Images are internalized representations of action made or observed. The most basic form of an image can exist in the form of a kinetic imprint, a kind of memory which is muscular and energetic. An image may also be a picture of an event, whether literal or symbolic. It can exist as a sentiment or feeling about an event. An image may exist as a belief or an idea about an event. (p. 241)

Burr and Klein (1994) created a construct of reality that explains the role of images in creating that reality. These two individuals refer to this construct as Interpretive Science. To aid us in understanding Interpretive Science, Burr and Klein provide twelve questions that enhance and explain the place of images in creating reality. (p. 12-17)

1. What is the ultimate objective in scientific inquiry?
   Answer: That the subjective perceptions of meaning and interpretation can be understood.

2. What assumptions are held about causal laws?
   Answer: That people may believe in causal laws, but it is the beliefs that are important, not the laws.

3. What are the key beliefs about the nature of reality?
   Answer: That reality is subjective and fluid and that as many realities exist as there are people.

4. What aspects of reality are important?
   Answer: The focus is on parts that have mental or cognitive interpretations, meanings, or definitions.
5. How is reality known?
Answer: Subjective ideas are shared about a meaning of experience and the interpretations that an individual gives to their experience.

6. What kinds of evidence are sought?
Answer: Subjective perceptions and definitions provide all necessary evidence.

7. How is objectivity viewed?
Answer: Objectivity is viewed as either unimportant or impossible.

8. How is certainty viewed?
Answer: Many realities exist and certainty is always subjectively based upon a degree of probability.

9. Where do values fit?
Answer: Values are an integral part of the human experience and a main part of what is studied. Because values are subjective constructions, they do not have any absolute value. No group's values are wrong, only different.

10. How important is action? If it is important, what is its role?
Answer: Action is not central. The goals are to gain insights and understand interpretations.

11. What role does common sense play?
Answer: Powerful, everyday theories are used by ordinary people. Common sense is as valid and as useful as scientific methods.

12. What is the nature of the human condition? How can scholarly inquiry improve it?
Answer: Humans live in spontaneously evolving interactions with their social and physical environments. As they share meanings and interpretations, life is moral, humane, rich, and meaningful.

The role of perceptions in the Interpretive Science (Burr & Klein, 1994) paradigm is evident. This view of creating reality is based upon subjective insight, interpretations and beliefs about life events and the validity of common sense. Images are used to create a reality based upon a degree of probability. The question of degree of probability simply asks, to what degree are subjective
understandings of life an accurate view of life? This common sense approach to life may be flawed by limited information or motivation (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983), but it explains the importance of images in shaping a person's view of reality (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983).

**Therapeutic Intervention**

An hermeneutical explanation (Hultgren, 1989) of Interpretive Science analyzes each ego-object interaction at the conversation and narrative level to discover specific conclusions, hypotheses, or images held by the individual. Hultgren (1989) views conversation as a means by which one seeks understanding through the dialogue of question and answer. There is a certain energy that lies beneath the act of conversation, as if the narration reveals the images it contains. He quotes Gadamer's (1975) conceptualization of narration or conversation:

... it is generally more correct to say that we fall into conversation, or even that we become involved in it. The way in which one word follows another, with the conversation taking its own turnings and reaching its own conclusions, may well be conducted in some way, but the people conversing are far less the leads of it than the led. No one knows what will 'come out' in a conversation. Understanding or its failure is like a process which happens to us ... a conversation has a spirit of its own ... the language used in it bears its own truth within it ... it reveals something which henceforth exists. (Gadamer, 1975 as cited in Hultgren, 1989, p. 345)

As a story is told, the images of reality lead the conversation. Hermeneutics takes conversation and from that conversation discovers the hidden images of one's reality (Hultgren 1989).

The psychoanalytical use of projective techniques also reveals one's inner images through the practice of narration that is fueled by an individual's understanding of reality. Freud (cited in Bellák, 1986) states that all contemporary meaningful perception is based upon, and organized around, the memories of all previous perceptions. Bellak refers to this phenomenon as
"apperceptive distortion". Freud's (as cited in Bellak, 1986) full quote is as follows:

Projection is not specifically created for the purpose of defense, it also comes into being where there are no conflicts. The projection of the inner perceptions to the outside is a primitive mechanism which, for instance, also influences our sense-perceptions, so that it normally has the greatest share, in shaping our outer world. Under conditions that have not yet been sufficiently determined even inner perceptions of ideational and emotional processes are projected outwardly, like sense perceptions, and are used to shape our outer world, whereas they ought to remain in the inner world. (p. 16)

What Freud is saying is that inner perceptions, or images, can be projected outwardly (Bellak, 1986). The implication of this, for my study, is that a projective technique can be used to draw out a person's inner perceptions, or images.

Burr and Klein's (1994) work with stressed families provides a therapeutic approach which can be integrated with the knowledge obtained from projective techniques about images of reality. Burr and Klein visualize families moving in a progressive manner through three levels of coping. If Level I changes bring about a reduction of stress, the family stops there. However, if it does not, then they move to Level II and if need be to Level III (Burr & Klein, 1994).

Level I draws upon coping strategies that attempt to change the interactions of the family that are regulated by roles and rules. For example, Mary is the mother of four children. Her husband works full-time. Unexpectedly Mary finds herself in the hospital for a week due to an accident. Her presence in the family is missed. She transports the two youngest children to school, helps her husband with a scout troop in their home, and does all the co-attending that a spouse does to everyday details. In short, she is missed and someone else has to take up the slack. A new rule is created. The oldest child now drops the two youngest off at school. Dad now cooks as well as does the dishes. The stress of her absence is alleviated by shifting rules and roles.
Level II utilizes the coping skills that go beyond adjusting to new rules or roles. At Level II the shift is in leadership and who makes the rules. For example, up until mom's hospitalization she had arranged transportation for the two youngest children. She had always arranged her work so she could pick them up after school. The oldest, who took over the role of transportation person, can't get out of classes early enough to pick up the two little ones. Right or wrong the oldest child decides that the two youngest will have to play on the playground until transportation arrives. At Level II not only do the rules/roles change, but there is also a shift in who makes the rules.

Level III pushes beyond the coping skills of new rules or roles and even past a new maker of rules. At this level the focus is upon the beliefs, or images, that create the world. In other words, who says the two youngest children have to be picked up from school? They only live three blocks from school. Why can't mother let them walk home? This was the question that the oldest child asked after three days of reorienting their afternoon schedules. Within the eldest child's mind, there was no reason why these two could not walk home. He had to do so when he was their ages. He believes they are capable of walking home. Mother believes they are not. Their own histories of perceptions and present needs created two different worlds.

At Level I rules and roles require little shift in the family's images of reality. Reality remains intact and it's simply new persons who now revolve around the same world image. At Level II, the introduction of a new world ruler produces a reorientation of life around this new rule maker's understanding of life based upon that person's past and present images. At Level III, it's not the world ruler who changes, it is a new world that is created based upon a new belief about life. No wonder people feel strange and alien when they change their beliefs.
Therapeutic intervention that values the use of imagery needs to be theory based (Pinsof, 1981). A point of intervention could begin with Burr and Klein's (1994) three levels of coping where the core assumption is that rules, roles, and authority are actually based upon beliefs or images. This study will use a projective technique (Bellak, 1986) that utilizes the power of conversation (Hultgren, 1989) to reveal past and present beliefs, or images, upon which authority, rule, and roles are based.

**Summary**

We interpret our world through images: capsules of knowledge imprinted by a history of interactions between ourselves, others, objects, and events (Kantor & Lehr, 1985). These capsules of knowledge have been seemingly purified at first by kinetic imprints, a kind of memory which is muscular and energetic, and then later tested by deductions that analyze the goals, plans and interaction of each interaction we encounter. At some point, due to time, availability of knowledge, or motivation, we accept our knowledge as true and capulate it as a belief about ourselves, others, and the world. These capsules of knowledge, or beliefs, are stored and drawn upon to explain our future interactions with life (Hess & Handel, 1959; Nichols, 1984).

Although the beliefs we possess about ourselves, others, and the world are subjective in nature, they form our own understanding of reality (Burr & Klein, 1994). This reality may remain fluid and incorporate new knowledge that restructures our beliefs, our bases of authority, and even our rules and roles (Burr & Klein, 1994). Conversely, our beliefs may become frozen and our interactions with the world scripted because we have subjugated ourselves to rules, roles, or an
authority that resists or limits our freedom of critical thought (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983).

Stressed children and youth create images of reality based upon their interaction with the world filled with noxious stresses. With the imprinted images of infancy and early childhood they begin their interactions. Core beliefs, forged in this early stage and later sustained or modified by their innate powers of deduction, provide the rules and roles they will use for scripting behavior. This suggests that therapeutic intervention for persons who were stressed as children, needs to expose the images of reality around which their world revolves and then call into question the validity, consistency of conclusions, and the confidence they hold in their core beliefs. This need exists because the stressed child's images of reality may not be valid, their conclusions may not be consistent, and their core beliefs may be faulty.

One end product of this paper is to delineate a therapeutic approach that would provide a reality check for adults who were once stressed children. This approach would utilize a projective tool of narration (Bellak, 1986; Hultgren, 1989) that would expose their patterns of interaction within their childhood world and from examining those interactions expose the images, or beliefs, they held or still hold. Utilizing the powers of deduction and the therapist as a resource of knowledge and motivation, therapeutic process would examine the validity, consistency of conclusions, and confidence in the knowledge they possess. The therapeutic process would help adults who were once stressed children or youth rethink their belief systems.
Preview of the Study and Definition of Terms

Provided is an overview of the main components that are critical to this study. An expanded dialogue of the following points will follow in the main body of the paper. This brief synopsis is simply to aid the reader's understanding of the logic behind this study.

**Perception.** Perception is another word for image. An image is a perception about what an individual thinks is real. This reality is totally subjective. That is, reality is solely dependent upon what the individual can visualize in his/her mind as true.

**Images.** Images are internalized representations of action made or observed. The most basic form of an image can exist in the form of a kinetic imprint, a kind of memory which is muscular and energetic. An image may also be a picture of an event, whether literal or symbolic. It can exist as a sentiment or feeling about an event. An image may exist as a belief or an idea about an event. (Kantor & Lehr, 1985, p. 241)

**Design.** This study is qualitative in nature (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1988; Morgaine, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It deals with the non-quantitative entity of images (Kruglanski, Baldwin, & Towson, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). Another person's perceptions are discovered, not measured (Bellak, 1986).

**Validity.** Images created are an individual's view of reality (Burr & Klein, 1994). This study does not ask if that reality agrees with anyone else's view of reality. The images shared from the individual can only be taken as valid for that individual (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
Reliability of the Process. The concept of reliability is directed towards the process by which information is collected. Specifically, if someone else repeated this process it would be expected that s/he would obtain the same type of information as this study did and that conclusions would be similar (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Reliability of the Instruments. There are three instruments used in this study. Two deal with the selection process of the sample population. The reliability and validity of these two selection instruments reside in the originator's work. One selection instrument emerges from Werner and Smith's (1992) 30+ year longitudinal study on factors that place a child at-risk. The second selection instrument comes from Beavers and Hampson's (1990) Self-Report Family Inventory (SFI). I chose to use Werner and Smith's criteria as to what constitutes a risk factor and Beavers and Hampson's criteria as to what constitutes Health and Competence because both of these works contain their own high degree of validity and reliability.

The third instrument is myself, the interviewer (Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1988). My training as a marriage and family therapist, my analytical skills, and my use of intuition and general knowledge of the topics addressed by the study allow me to interpret the information gathered in this study. It is reasonable to believe that another person with similar abilities and traits could likewise interpret the information gathered arriving at similar conclusions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Optimally Functioning Adult. This term I borrowed from Beavers and Hampson's (1990) Self-Report Family Inventory to describe an individual's health and competence. Their Self-Report Family Inventory was adapted by changing the word "we" to "I". This adapted version measures an individual's health and
competence in relation to others. The qualities that an optimally functioning adult would exhibit would be the capacity to negotiate, the ability to make individual choices and to have any ambivalence respected, warmth, intimacy, and humor.

**Adequately Functioning Adult.** This term is also used in Beavers and Hampson's (1990) Self-Report Family Inventory to describe a family's health and competence. Again, the Self-Report Family Inventory was adapted by changing the word "we" to "I". This adapted version measures an individual's health and competence. The qualities that an adequately functioning adult would exhibit would be: negotiation although with some pain, relatively clear boundaries although ambivalence is reluctantly recognized, periods of warmth and sharing interspersed with control struggles.

**Sample Population.** The sample population needed two specific characteristics: a) as children they were confronted by stresses that placed them at-risk as defined by Werner and Smith (1992), and b) as adults they are, as defined by Beavers and Hampson's (1990) SFI, considered either "optimally" or "adequately" functioning adults. The primary criteria for selection was based on these two criteria alone. The variables of gender and geographic diversity were part of the population's characteristics. The variable of non-Caucasians, although sought after, was not available.

**Selection Method.** The selection method utilized is referred to as a "snowball" method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Wanted posters were distributed and people meeting the descriptions mentioned above started turning themselves in as volunteers. As the snowball rolled down the hill it got bigger and bigger.

**Saturation Point.** A point of saturation, where new knowledge only repeats the information already collected, was reached after 10 individuals told their
stories. The information needed to create a feasible grounded theory required the input of only these 10 individuals (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

**Intent of the Study.** There are two reasons for this study. The first reason is simply to learn how to do research. This is my first solo flight. In many ways I am more interested in creating a design for research than actually arriving at a particular destination. The second reason is to examine the role of images and to turn that knowledge into a theory that could become a point of therapeutic intervention for adults who were once stressed children.

**Theory Building.** The outcome of this study is a theory about the images of stressed children. This theory building will utilize and reference the works of other authors and researchers. The citations of other researchers were selected based upon a high degree of probability that their contributions were both reliable, valid, and relevant to this study.
This chapter deals with myths spun about resiliency in stressed children. It will touch on how resiliency is actually stress management. Finally this chapter will examine the use of the lay-epistemologist deductive logic to manage stress which is directly related to a child's ability to create perceptions, otherwise known as images.

Perceptions emerge from the head like habits flow from our hands (Kantor & Lehr, 1985). Perceptions are of a secondhand nature yet they determine much of our movement and life decisions (Hess & Handel, 1959; Nichols, 1984). Individuals who were once stressed children formed perceptions that helped them evolve into well functioning adults (Bellak, 1986).

In this study adults, who were once part of the population of stressed children, are invited to tell their stories about the goals, conflicts, scripts, and preconditions present in their families of origin (Crittenden, 1985; Lalljee & Abelson 1983; Lancaster & Adler, 1989; Olson, 1986). The perceptual powers that helped them create resiliency resided in their capacity to create new hypotheses, to freeze or unfreeze specific conclusions, to store ideas, and to link ideas via language and imagery (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983). Perhaps this ability to reframe and create perceptions that lead to health and competence in social interactions may be more potent than the actual perceptions to which they subscribe. This study intends to listen to the stories about social interactions that created stress and to follow adult's recollections of the deductive processes that resulted in his/her childhood perceptions about themselves, others, and their world (Lalljee & Abelson 1983).
The use of storytelling is perhaps the best design available for exposing the inner perceptions, or images, of an individual (Hultgren, 1989). By using a picture to stimulate the scenes of the past, persons are invited to retell their stories in a non-threatening manner. This projective approach unearths perceptions by asking adults what they see to be true about their past. Their perceptions are theirs alone and they share insights which only they can see about their past (Bellak, 1986).

**Myths About Resiliency**

Recently, sociologists, psychologists, and developmentalists have referred to a strain of the stressed child as the "superkid" (Pines, 1979) or the "superphrenic" (Feldman, Stiffman, & Jung, 1987) who resembles the western pioneer with a spirit of nerve and steel (Garmezy, 1976). This ascribed, mystical resiliency enables the child to emerge unscathed from a life of potential ruin and rubble and to develop into a well-functioning adult.

This idealized construct of the "superkid" (Pines, 1979) or the "superphrenic" (Feldman, Stiffman, & Jung, 1987) crumbled under the scrutiny of researchers such as Feldman, Stiffman, & Jung (1987) who recognized that resiliency consists of multi-variable factors. Their Social Interaction Model (SIM) plotted a child's coping skills against protectors and stresses found in their family and community. The SIM presents nine positions for an at-risk or stressed child (Feldman, Stiffman, & Jung, 1987).

In this model, a child may move from the spectrum of resiliency (invincible) to non-resilient (victim) if a shift occurs either in the child's coping skills and/or in the net effect of environmental stressors against protectors. This model is actually a bell curve. The far right hand portion of the bell curve represents a
population of stressed children who because of protective environmental factors and strong coping skills are able to exhibit the total absence of mental illness (Goodman, 1984). The statistical percentages of this resilient population is estimated by Feldman, Stiffman, and Jung (1987) to be about 10% of the population.

Werner and Smith's (1992) longitudinal study of high risk children from birth to adulthood confirms that numerous factors either contribute to or negate the possibility of a child feeling the impact of noxious stressors. They speak of "protective factors" that buffer the stressed child: easy temperament, the ability to plan, achievement up to grade level, responsible chores in childhood and adolescence, and successful graduation from high school. These protective factors apply to both boys and girls. According to Werner and Smith, resiliency depends upon the complex interaction between constitutional factors and life circumstances; the dance between protective factors both within the child and his/her socializing community.

Feldman, Stiffman, and Jung (1987) along with Werner and Smith (1992) demystify the "superkid" scenario of the resilient stressed child. In reality a resilient, stressed child falls well within the definition of a normal child as defined by Lillian Schwartz and Carol Eagle (1986).

... by normal we mean children who have the capacity to relate to others, feel good about themselves, achieve normal landmarks at each level of development, and are free from undue pain and stress. Another aspect of normalcy is resiliency, whereby children faced by unfortunate circumstances creating stress and possible temporary regression can quickly return to age-appropriate functioning. (p. 8)
Resiliency as Stress Management

Asserting that resiliency overcomes stress places resiliency under the auspices of stress management. The usage of McCubbin and Patterson's (as cited in Figley & McCubbin, 1983) Double ABC-X model on stress management is a standard construct of viewing how individuals cope with stress. One component of McCubbin's double ABC-X model is that of perception, the C component (Figley & McCubbin, 1983).

McCubbin and Patterson's perceptual component focuses upon an individual's understanding of the stress in his/her life and the realization of the resources available to meet that stressor (Figley & McCubbin, 1983). This study expands McCubbin and Patterson's view of perceptions by ascribing perceptions as an actual resource and not just the realization of a resource (Kantor & Lehr, 1985). Perceptions, or images of reality, become a resource in dealing with stressors (Burr & Klein, 1994). This way of thinking lies in direct contrast to the commonly held idea that reality creates our perceptions. Rather, our images can create reality (Burr & Klein, 1994; Hultgren, 1989).

Lay-epistemic theorists deal with the formation of common knowledge. In particular they concern themselves with the basic processes that are involved in perceiving the self, other persons, and the setting in which people function. Two lay-epistemic theorists acknowledge that a stressed child operates out of a stance of "control deprivation" (Pittman & D'Agostino, 1985). Typically when a person is deprived of control, this state of discomfort motivates one to engage in a deductive thought process that results in hypotheses formation about the present interaction. The result is that one forms hypotheses which, if accepted, become
images, or beliefs, about oneself, others, and the world (Kruglanski, Baldwin, & Towson, 1983).

This deductive process that attributes specific goals to social interactions is "intentional and results in an increased attentiveness and interest in obtaining essential diagnostic information" (Pittman & D'Agostino, 1985, p. 138). This information is processed in a "careful, deliberate fashion that can be characterized as data-driven, bottom-up, or systemic processing" (Pittman & D'Agostino, 1985, p. 138). The result of this deductive processing is that a person's response becomes precise, fine-tuned, and accurate for understanding goals in the social transactions s/he encounters. For example, a child wants a cookie and mother says, "No." What could a child do to help a mom want to give him/her a cookie? Clean his/her room, or throw a tizzy fit, or ...?

The Child's Ability to Create Images

The question of what a child can understand regarding social interaction is important when we begin talking about images creating a child's perceptions of reality. Brooks-Gunn and Lewis (1978) claim that by the age of two months a child is able to start telling the difference between social and non-social objects. Piaget (1929) explains a child's capacity to understand reality by telling us that young children first believe that anything that moves is real, e.g., the clouds and wind. Later the child thinks only those things that move on their own are real, e.g., the Little Red Engine. Finally they restrict a sense of realness only to animals (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983).

Social knowledge is a key factor in seeing the difference between inanimate and animate objects in social interactions. For example, dogs are often treated like humans and it will take longer for a child to recognize the non-social nature of
interacting with a dog compared to a human (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983). As the child’s social knowledge develops, s/he learns that inanimate objects do not act on their own accord and thus do not have specific goals (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983).

Hood and Bloom find that a two-year-old can tell why things happen and that by age three a child can even predict what will occur before an event takes place (1979). As a child asks the question, "why", explanations, or hypotheses, from others may include a goal-oriented answer. For example, "The rain comes down to water the flowers."

In unfamiliar events, a child must draw upon the knowledge s/he possesses which may lead to magical explanations (Berzonsky, 1971). For example, a small child may believe that the rain intentionally chooses to fall in order to water the flowers.

A knowledge source, or an imagistic memory bank, is needed for a child to draw upon to develop hypotheses (Lalljee, 1981). Nichols' theory of Object Stage Orientation (1984) provides one explanation as to how this knowledge source is created from birth to age thirty-six months. At birth there are no social interactions. The new born's reactions to the world are primarily reflexive in nature.

Nichols (1984) views the first creation of images based upon social interactions as occurring during the process of interacting with the mothering figure. At approximately age two months the child is motivated by psychic dependency to interact with the mothering figure which results in a child's image of either trust or mistrust (Nichols, 1984).

The next phase of social interaction comes during the time of separation, age seven months to thirty-six months. If the mothering figure remains openly warm
and loving during this process of separation the child acquires the belief in a sense of lovableness while achieving individuality and strength (Nichols, 1984). The child's images of him/herself and the world revolve around the social interactions where gratification is delayed, frustrations are tolerated, the self becomes competent, and the extremes of separateness and closeness are experienced.

Jaspars, Fincham, and Hewstone (1983) point out that the family acts as a primary source of information for a child in creating hypotheses. The history of one interaction after another, in the context of the family, provides a sense of consistency and distinctiveness which could lead to closure of hypotheses into beliefs and to a sense of scriptedness (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). For a child, the family may be the only source of information available to interpret the world.

The child's sense of identity based upon the self to objects around him/her is later enriched and revised at the future developmental point of adolescent puberty (Kelly, 1973; Steinberg, 1985). The social life of a child at school and other groups in society, as well as books and television, are important sources of information for new hypotheses (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983).

**Summary**

A child forms an hypothesis by the use of his/her deductive abilities (Lalljee, 1981 as cited in Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983). Out of a store of knowledge the child both constructs and contrasts the goals of main actors, assesses resident conflict between those goals, becomes aware of known scripts, plus can predict covariant or existing pre-conditions (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). The child's deductive ability is dependent upon his/her capacity and motivation to create a new hypothesis, to freeze or unfreeze specific conclusions, to store
ideas, and to link ideas to one another via language and other forms of imagery (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983).

To date little study has been done on adult's reconstructed images of being stressed as children or youth. To determine the role of perception in helping them evolve into their present adulthood, an adult who was a severely stressed child will tell about their childhood process of deductive thinking. Understanding the images created from the process of deduction will reveal a reality base about themselves, others, and the world.
CHAPTER 3

STUDY DESIGN

Feldman, Stiffman, and Jung (1987) conclude that out of the total pool of stressed children ten percent will be normal and grow into well-functioning adults. These ten percent possess protective factors or buffering agents that help them to evolve into well-functioning adults (Werner & Smith, 1992). This study focuses upon but one protective factor, that of the images of reality about self, others, and each individual's world (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983; Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983).

Well-functioning adults, who were once children at risk, were asked to reconstruct a memory of the deductive processes they went through as stressed children and share these reconstructed images they believed they had as children. The study embodied the following points.

1) It was the intent of this study to allow adults to reconstruct images of their childhood in which they encountered severe stress. These images were revealed and analyzed by using a hermeneutical tool that interpreted the narrative of each story.

2) It was not my intent to contrast the health and competence of one storyteller against the other. I felt this would be unethical since I asked each storyteller for permission to share their insights and not to compare their health and competence against another's.

3) Each person was treated in the sample population as an equal. All of the storytellers had encountered severe stress as a child or youth. All fell within the range of being optimally to adequately functioning adult. I did not make distinctions in gender or age. The rationale for
this decision was based upon my desire to make comprehensive statements about adults' reconstructed memories of being a child under stress, not adult males' or forty-year-old adults' reconstructed memories. It can be noted here that the sample population is all Caucasian. More specifically, these were optimally and adequately functioning Caucasian adults' reconstructed memories about their stressed childhood.

4) It was my intent to provide a hermeneutic tool which could be used to interpret narratives. This interpretive tool would allow for a full analysis and reveal the major parts of the narrative including the perceptions contained in the narrative.

5) It was not the intent of this study to provide therapy for the adults who participated, although therapeutic benefits may have occurred.

6) It was the intent of this study to glean wisdom from the storytellers. This wisdom is viewed as an experiential knowledge that is true for the individual and which may be true for others. This experiential knowledge contrasts these adults' recollections of images of severe stress with a dream of what could have been.

7) It was the intent of this study to rely upon a grounded theory approach of analysis that utilized differing levels of social interaction. The influence of each level of social interaction upon the images of the storyteller provided the primary framework for the methods section.

The Sample Population

The sample population refers to the persons who agreed to be interviewed for this study. These persons first became aware of the study through an
Informational Flier (Appendix II) that was distributed to elementary schools, university classes, churches, and from friend to friend through direct contact. In all, ten persons consented to be interviewed.

Persons who met the criteria on the "Informational Flier" of being both a "well-functioning adult" (optimal or adequate level of functioning as an adult) and a stressed child (possessing a "child-at-risk" history) could express their interest in participating by contacting me by phone. Over the phone, I confirmed that four of the at-risk criteria, or stressors, were present in each individual's childhood. I also told each one that I would be sending him/her a "Present Profile Assessment" form (Appendix III) along with a "Release of Information" (Appendix IV) form. I would give each person a few days to receive the information and then call to make an appointment. During this conversation I asked each individual if s/he understood what s/he was being asked to do. After clarifying any questions, I asked each one if s/he still desired to participate. If so, I would set up an hour-and-a half appointment to have the individual tell his/her story.

The number of individuals interviewed, a total of ten, was chosen due to time constraints, the lack of immediate volunteers, and the amount of information ten interviews generated. A total of over one hundred and twenty pages of single-spaced narrative was typed for the ten persons interviewed.

The number of persons interviewed limits the findings in one way, but does not limit them in another way. Ten participants did not limit the findings in that the analysis revealed a common theme running throughout the narratives (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For example, in this study one common theme was that stressful social interactions led to a need for escape. On the other hand, these findings may be limited in that all the possible sub-themes within a common theme were not fully disclosed. For example, two sub-themes were discovered in this study in
regard to escape. One sub-theme was a physical escape, such as removing one's self from the immediate geographical area. The second was a mental escape, such as disassociation or depression. The possibility of increasing the number of sub-themes for a given theme grows with an expansion in the size of the population.

The ten persons interviewed ranged in age from 26 to 65 years. Three were 26, 33, and 65 years of age, five were in their 40's, and the remaining two in their 50's. There were four males and six females. Their occupations included that of electrician, plumber, State representative, tire salesperson, housewife, school administrator, secretary, counselor, college student, and minister. They were raised in small towns, cities, suburban areas, farms, and ranches from the midwestern states to California. All were of Caucasian origin.

Originally it was intended that the sample population consist of a highly selected, purified sample of "optimally" functioning adults (Beavers & Hampson, 1990) who had a history of being stressed children (Wemer & Smith, 1992). The second criteria, that of having a childhood history containing stress, was strictly kept. However, the first criteria, that of being an "optimally" functioning adult, was modified because a pure sample of "optimal" adults willing to be interviewed was not available. The fact that there were not enough willing, "optimal" adults to be interviewed is not a surprise since Beavers and Hampson indicate they also had a hard time finding optimally functioning families. Instead, both "optimally" and "adequately" functioning adults were interviewed for this study (Beavers & Hampson, 1990).

The Health Competence score is a numerical value which describes the way an individual usually acts in social interactions. This score was used as a way to confirm that the individuals in the sample population were optimally or adequately functioning adults.
To determine whether or not a candidate fell within Beavers and Hampson's (1990) Health/Competence continuum for optimally or adequately functioning adults, I asked each individual two sets of questions. The first set of questions listed eight criteria that are characteristic of an optimally functioning adult (Document II). These eight criteria were those given by Beavers and Hampson in their book Successful Families (1990). Their model for family assessment views healthy, competent people as individuals who possess certain relational skills. The first set of eight criteria was simply a listing of eight general relational skills. Each person who agreed to be interviewed marked six or more of the criteria and viewed themselves as a well-functioning adult.

The second set of questions numbered thirty-six and were modified from Beavers and Hampson's Self-Reporting Family Inventory (1990) (Appendix III). This second set expanded the initial eight criteria by asking specific questions about one's relational skills. For example, "I pay attention to other people's feelings", "I compete and fight with others", and "I am proud of being close to my present family/friends" were three of the thirty-six relational statements. The result placed the candidates along a number line. This number line is referred to by Beavers and Hampson (1990) as a Health/Competence continuum. Along this Health/Competence continuum there are five sections. Each section has its own set of relational abilities. These relational characteristics, as listed in Figure 2 below, vary from section to section.

The actual scores for individuals interviewed ranged from 2.4 to 4.9 along the Health/Competence continuum with 1.9 being the lowest possible score and 10 the highest. The intent in knowing the Health/Competence numerical value of the persons interviewed was to confirm that participants fell within the optimal to adequate health competence range. Care needs to be taken here since Beavers
and Hampson (1990) themselves indicate that scores that lie towards the optimal end of the scale lose their accuracy of prediction.

Figure 2. Health/Competence Assessment Adapted from Beavers and Hampson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH COMPETENCE RANGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capable of negotiation; individual choice and ambivalence respected; warmth, intimacy, and/or humor present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively clear boundaries; negotiating, but with pain; ambivalence reluctantly recognized; some periods of warmth and sharing interspersed with control struggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatively clear communication; constant effort at control; &quot;loving&quot; means controlling; distancing, anger, anxiety, and/or depression present; ambivalence handled by repression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifting from chaotic to tyrannical control efforts; boundaries fluctuate from poor to rigid; distancing, depression, and/or outbursts of rage present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor boundaries; confused communication; lack of shared attentional focus; stereotyped family process; despair, cynicism, and/or denial of ambivalence present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be said that a range does exist between 2.4 and 4.9: a range of some twenty-five points on an initial test that had the potential of a minimum score of nineteen and a maximum score of ninety-five. I view this difference of twenty-five points as greater than what could be attributed to a potential margin of error (May, Masson & Hunter, 1990). It can be said that a difference does exist amongst the sample population on the Health/Competence continuum. The question becomes, what does that difference actually mean?

A higher score of 4+ on the Health/Competence number line indicates the likelihood that these individuals' social interactions operate, at the present time, on a different qualitative level than those with a 2+ numerical value. For example, those in the optimal group are capable of negotiation, but so are those in the
adequate group. It's just that those in the adequate group experience more pain when they negotiate, it's harder for them, but they still can negotiate. Both levels of social interaction were deemed acceptable for the sample population in this study.

The criteria for factors that determined if a child was at-risk were adapted from Werner and Smith's (1992) 30-year plus longitudinal study on the Hawaiian Islands. Werner and Smith (1992) clearly indicated in their book *Overcoming the Odds* (1992), that the presence of only one risk factor would be sufficient to place any child at risk. To assure that a candidate in this study was truly at-risk as a child, it was required that four risk factors be present in his/her childhood history. All persons interviewed did indicate that they had four or more risk factors in their childhood history.

Individual risk factors are considered stressors. These stressors can be assigned a numerical strength. That is to say, some stress factors have a greater or lesser potential for placing a child at-risk. Werner and Smith's (1992) longitudinal study found different $r$ values for each stress or risk factor. The risk factors taken from Werner and Smith's longitudinal study that were present in our sample population had $r = .6$ to $r = 1$.

An example of the impact of the $r$, or correlation, value of a stress factor to potential risk can be seen in the example of driving a car (May, Masson, & Hunter, 1990). If an $r$ value is thought of as the speed of an automobile, then we could consider the $r$ value of .6 to mean that one is traveling at sixty miles-an-hour. If the $r$ value of 1 equals one hundred miles-an-hour then it's easy to understand that a car going that speed has a greater potential for hurting the occupants than the one going sixty miles-an-hour. However, we all know that even at sixty miles-an-hour driving can be dangerous. So it is with the risk factors in this study. The
speed range of these risk factors were between $r = .6$ and $r = 1$ and at least four or more of these high-speed risk factors had to be present in each one's childhood between birth and age 18. All four risk factors were between $r = .6$ and $r = 1$.

It is true that the risk factors each person faced were different. One person lost his/her parents to death. Another person was born premature which led to below normal physical development and numerous illnesses. Others encountered profound conflict with parents, had records of delinquency, failed school, or had mental problems. Regardless of the nature of the stressors, each was capable of placing a child at risk. With the awareness that not one, but four or more such factors were reported in each person's life, the likelihood that these individuals were truly at risk as children dramatically increases.

To help the reader understand the stress these persons faced I've grouped them according to their particular risk factors. Figure 3 represents the sample population and the stressors they encountered as children and youth.

**Figure 3. Stressors Present in the Sample Population**

**Individual #1**

Before age 2  
My mother was pregnant with a sibling before I was age 2.

Age 2 to 10  
I experienced continual conflict between my parents.

Ages 11 to 18  
I got married.

Ages 17/18  
I had conflict with my father.

**Individual #2**

Before age 2  
I lived in poverty.

Age 2 to 10  
I had a number of illnesses.

Ages 11 to 18  
I needed to see a mental health counselor.

I had conflict with my mother.

I had conflict with my father.

I became pregnant (ages 11 & 14).
Individual #3

Age 2 to 10  I experienced continual conflict between parents.
Ages 11 to 18 I lived in poverty.
I had conflict with my father.
I had conflict with my mother.
My father was permanently absent (divorced).

Individual #4

Before age 2 I was below normal in social development.
Age 2 to 10 I had a sibling leave home.
I had a sibling who was handicapped.
My mother was mentally ill.
I needed to see a mental health counselor.
Ages 17/18 I had mental health problems.

Individual #5

Before age 2 I lived in poverty.
Age 2 to 10 I lived in poverty.
My mother was permanently absent (death).
My father was permanently absent (death).
Ages 11 to 18 I lived in poverty.
Ages 17/18 I was placed in foster care.

Individual #6

Before age 2 My mother was pregnant with a sibling before I was age 2.
Age 2 to 10 I had a sibling leave home.
My mother was mentally ill.
I experienced continual conflict between my parents.
Ages 11 to 18 I had conflict with my mother.

Individual #7

Age 2 to 10 I had a sibling leave home.
I had a number of illnesses.
I experienced continual conflict between my parents.
Ages 11 to 18 I had conflict with my mother.

Individual #8

Before age 2 My mother was pregnant with a sibling before I was age 2.
I had a number of personal illnesses.
Age 2 to 10
I lived in poverty.
My father was permanently absent (divorce).
My mother remarried and/or I had conflict with my step-father.
I had a sibling leave home.
My mother was mentally ill.

Ages 11 to 18
I lived in poverty.

Individual #9

Age 2 to 10
I had a number of illnesses.
I experienced continual conflict between my parents.
I needed to see a mental health counselor.

Ages 11 to 18
I had conflict with my father.

Ages 17/18.
I had mental health problems.
I failed school.

Individual #10

Before age 2
I experienced prolonged disruption in my family life at age 1.
I had a number of personal illnesses.
I was below normal in physical development.

Age 2 to 10
I had a number of illnesses.
I needed special education, Chapter 1, etc.

Ages 11 to 18
I was placed in foster care.
I had conflict with my mother.

Ages 17/18.
I had a record of delinquency.
I had mental health problems.
I failed school.

Storytelling as Methodology

I chose the method of storytelling to obtain the information I sought in this study (Guba, 1978; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1988; Morgaine, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method of storytelling lends itself to the personalized nature of images which are best discovered through an interactive dialogue (Hultgren, 1989) with one trained to focus on the hermeneutic analysis of relational interactions (Broderick & Pulliam-Krager, 1980).
The personalized nature of images means that only the adults who were stressed can reconstruct the images (Jaspars, Fincham & Hewstone, 1983; Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). The validity of this study is not dependent upon the adults accurately reconstructing pure, untainted images they once possessed in their childhood or youth. Those images have since changed by the increased abilities of these adults to articulate their past experiences. These adults reinterpreted these past images by redefining them with new knowledge and some of the adults found emotional closure through therapy.

The validity of this study is based upon the adults accurately communicating their present reconstructed images of their past childhood and youth. Since these adults are the original source for these reconstructed images, the only breakdown in validity would lie with the interpreter. Since I am the interpreter, it must be recognized that I am an interpretive tool in this study.

The Place of the Interviewer

I became an assessment tool for each story (Burr & Klein, 1994; Hultgren, 1989; Morgaine, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My therapeutic background in marriage and family therapy contributed to the reliability in accurately retelling the stories of the adult population (Guba, 1978). This background also provided ethical safeguards to the interviewing process. It did this by providing a sensitivity to comfort limits in self-disclosure and/or the need for mitigating the impact of awakening sleeping ghosts through active listening, reframing, or referral if need existed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In all interviews, the primary purpose rested solely in gathering information and not therapeutic intervention (Guba, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
As stated earlier, validity itself resides in the story (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Reliability, on the other hand, is viewed in two ways. First, reliability is defined in the accuracy of the storyteller's perceptions. I found no evidence to indicate that a storyteller's narrative was not valid (Burr & Klein, 1994). The pictures, like water used to prime a pump, helped to reconstruct past memories of childhood and youth. What was told by the storyteller was accurate and true according to their own perceptions (Bellak, 1986; Schwartz & Eagle, 1986; Semeonoff, 1976).

A second way to view reliability is associated with the capacity to repeat a particular method (Kirk & Miller, 1986). If one takes a Dutch chocolate brownie recipe from a great-grandmother's cookbook and follows the instructions as written, then one will be able to make similar brownies. The realization that the consistency of flour or cocoa from the 1930's might have changed over the years does not stop anyone from approximating the recipe. In theory, if one had a similar population of storytellers, followed the same set of questions based upon hypothesis formation, and had a similar background as I in marriage and family therapy, then the results would be similar. Results would never be exactly the same, however, since storytellers and interpreter could not be cloned.

My own influence upon the storyteller's ability to share accurately and reliably cannot be measured. I found no indication that my physical presence or attitude influenced the participants to the point where they could not share their images accurately. It is true that one male participant only chose one picture to represent his childhood. All other participants chose five to fifteen pictures from which to tell their stories. I attribute the use of only one picture to the age of the participant and not my presence. The pictures used were scenes typical of the 1940's to 1960's. This youngest participant was born in 1969 which might
indicate that he was unable to correlate his memories with many of the dated images in the pictures.

The projective nature of the questions I asked invited the storyteller to reconstruct their inner images. Some of these images appeared to carry the same muscular or kinetic response as they did in the storyteller's childhood. Over the years, however, these images have become defined by the usage of language (Kantor & Lehr, 1985; Nichols, 1984). Take for example these two storytellers who talk about the inarticulated shame they felt as a child. Only after some time were they able to articulate with words the images they felt.

**Storyteller One.** This is sort of a, not a total connection with the image of sexuality and fertility and so on. Wasn't something I was really aware of growing up. In a lot of ways I was extremely naive. I had a deep sense of shame and I didn't know what it was. There was a point where I became aware that a neighbor's child was my father's child. These two people had been involved. When the divorce papers came I sneaked and read them, because nobody showed them to me. There was something about an illegitimate child. So, this sense of not looking at it directly. That it is there in the background. I vaguely knew before I read the divorce papers.

**Storyteller two.** When you used the word shame. That feeling of shame or possibly of her feeling ashamed of you. When would you have been aware of that ... how old would you have been? Well, it's not a thing that I could identify then. I mean like this is shame that I am feeling. But I don't know, maybe somewhere around third or fourth grade. It may have gone back farther than that.

The reconstructed images of childhood, told by an adult, with adult language and the adult's ability for abstract thought may still capture the full meaning of the image in its natural, kinetic state. Take for example the experience of intimacy shared by an infant. It is believed that an infant's experience of intimacy embedded an image of "trust" into that infant or for a young child a sense of "industry" can be embedded as an image as well (Erikson, 1955). The images of childhood and youth may still remain intact, only expanded in understanding by the use of language and imagery (Freud, cited in Bellak, 1986).
There is also the possibility that new images have biased the interpretation of older images. The only way to determine the accuracy of reconstructed images in an adult population who were severely stressed as children would be to do a longitudinal study starting with children who are stressed.

As a listener there were times when I needed to enter into an interactive dialogue with the storyteller (Guba, 1978; Hultgren, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I had to separate my own story from their stories and gather data utilizing feedback techniques to clarify confusion or apparent incongruities (Griffith & Coleman, 1988). The ability to view process, aside from content, meant that I was able to describe the patterns of interactions within the story and assess each storyteller's ability to think and act for him/herself (Nichols, 1984). This is important in understanding whether the childhood images were self-generated or scripted from others in their socializing community (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983).

**Storytelling**

Each individual from the sample population was asked to select from a set of pictures scenes that "elicited" a response from childhood. One person chose only a single picture whereas the rest chose between five and fifteen pictures. These pictures were from the Thematic Appreciation Test and were utilized because of their projective qualities. A projective picture presents a well-defined person in a not-so-well-defined situation in order to spark the imagination as to the action that is taking place (Bellak, 1986).

Each individual from the sample population was to take the pictures s/he selected and tell the stories that reminded him/her of his/her childhood (Hultgren, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Some stories were of good and pleasant
memories. Other stories contained conflict and stress. Each individual took one scene at a time and reconstructed a story about his/her childhood.

I would ask the storyteller a question that would start the story rolling; "Who are the main characters and what are they doing?" After the story was told, I would ask, if it was not yet evident, a second question; "What conflict is present?" After this I wanted to know, "To what conclusions did you come after this encounter?"

After all the stories were told, I summarized the conflicts that the individual had encountered and then asked each one to paint me a picture of a scene that would be in direct contrast. Contrast is used in the attribution process of hypothesis formation to motivate a person to develop further hypotheses about reality (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983).

I then asked an imagery question that I picked up from Sharon Parks (1986), author of Faith Development and Fowler. She told me at a seminar in Wisconsin about work that she had done with stressed children. She said the most important question her research group asked their sample population was, "What was your source of light in the midst of darkness?" The answer to this question provides some insight into a person's awareness of contrasts that could provide knowledge for new hypotheses (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). This question also allowed the storytellers an opportunity to share their wisdom in terms of what they had learned.

An element in the stories, for which I had not prepared myself, was the existence of what Forman calls coping skills (1993). In hindsight, I would have added a question to help draw out each individual's adopted coping skills. In most of the narratives, however, the adopted coping skills became apparent.
The stories that emerged flowed out of the reconstructed memories and the dialogical prompting of the pictures. Each story followed the script of the teller. For example,

"She went to the welfare office and there was this welfare woman that would come out from Rapid City. Mom said, 'I think I'm going to have to go and see about welfare.' That was extremely humiliating to her because at that time they published your name in the paper if you took welfare. The one time she went to get welfare the woman said that her house was too nice. Sometime before the divorce was final dad had bought this house. He was going to add on to it. As it turned out it was basically a one-bedroom, tar paper shack. But at least mom was making monthly payments and she was going to own it in 30 year's time. The welfare woman told her that, that was too much to be paying--that she needed to be paying only $50 a month and that she was going to make us move if we took welfare. Finally she gave mom $50. Then mom came home again crying how awful that was and that she wasn't going to be able to get anymore unless she moved us. So no matter what, we made do. There were times when there was nothing in the frig! Nothing!"

By allowing the story to unfold I discovered a unique power inherent in the storytelling process (Hultgren, 1989). "So no matter what, we made do. There were times when there was nothing in the frig! Nothing!"

How the Questions are Linked to Theory

A set of questions (Appendix I) about each picture was asked of each storyteller. These questions evolved out of my understanding of the basic elements of lay-epistemology and the attribution theory for image formation (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983; Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). Specifically, these questions focused upon the goals of main actors, assessing resident conflicts between those goals, becoming aware of known scripts, plus any predicted covariant or existing pre-conditions (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). These questions were also related to the storyteller's capacity and motivation to create a new hypothesis, to freeze or unfreeze specific conclusions,
to store ideas, and to link ideas to one another via language and other forms of imagery (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towson, 1983).

At first, I thought that the focus of this thesis would answer the question, "Why did these stressors happen to me?" This question of cause is the attributionalist's main question in exploring common knowledge (Hewstone, 1983). After listening to the stories of the adults interviewed, I realized that images behind the question and not the answer to the question of "why" held more importance.

I also thought that I would have some control over the storytelling process that would come out of a mindset containing questions that needed to be answered. The first interview made it clear to me that stories have a power all their own (Hultgren, 1989). Questions cannot contain stories. At best they can only guide them. For that reason, I modified my approach. In my mind, I gave up trying to control the process. Instead, I allowed the stories to follow their own course while at the same time remaining aware that I wanted to understand four reconstructed areas in hypothesis formation: a) the goals of the main characters, b) any conflicts between the main characters' goals, c) the patterns of interaction between the main characters, and d) events that would precede the scene (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). The storyteller's reconstructed goals, conflict, interaction patterns and preceding events became the ingredients inherent in hypothesis formation that resulted in reconstructed conclusions and the ability to contrast reality.

In a given scene one or more principle characters exist. Each character has a goal that s/he wants to reach (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). If the goals of the main characters are different, or circumstances like poverty are in contrast to one's goals, then the potential for conflict is present. When two or more main
characters are present in a story, these main characters may choose to recognize their differing goals and, for the sake of their relationship, negotiate a mutually satisfactory settlement. If, however, a person(s) or a particular circumstance hold(s) more power and that person(s) want(s) his/her/their own goals met, then a real potential for conflict exists (Jaspars, Fincham, & Hewstone, 1983).

Imagine at age three encountering a father figure whose only intent at that moment, whose only goal, is to listen to the radio. It's a small house. Mother is in the kitchen fixing dinner. Your baby sister is beside you on the floor. You're making noise as kids do and father is sitting close to you trying to listen to the evening news. (It's pre-TV days.) Angered by the chatter of the children the father yells out, "Damn it, be quiet I am listening to the news." The interaction between this individual's story and my questions about his/her deductive processes went like this:

I remember that he was, he was, always a terrifying figure to me. I felt that our lives were threatened. That's my main memory of him. When I was three or so, the earliest memories I have of him are him saying, 'Damn it, be quiet I am listening to the news.'

What was his goal when he said that? Umm, I think he wanted us to disappear.

What was your goal when he said that? Not to. I certainly didn't want to get spanked and so I certainly learned to be quiet. On the other hand I think the bottom line is I am going to exist.

Did you want his attention? I don't remember wanting anything from him except not wanting to be afraid of him. And I was always afraid of him. I didn't want him to spank me or my sister. During a lot of that time I often knew that he was angry at my sister and not at me so I felt like I had to keep her out of trouble. She was more defiant than I was, way more. He could beat her and she wouldn't cry. I would bawl at a drop of the hat, 'Please don't spank me. I'll be good. I'll be good.'

What conclusion did you come to? Oh, that I had to be quiet. I am well aware of where that muteness comes from that my friend talked about.

Inherent in this narration is a reconstructed awareness of goals, conflict, patterns of interaction that were scripted by predictability, and existing pre-
conditions which, when combined together, resulted in a reconstructed hypothesis, conclusions, or images about him/herself, others, and his/her world.

The four questions concerning reconstructed hypothesis formation provided a mental coat rack on which to hang ideas. These four questions also gave enough information to see the reconstructed images, or beliefs, about individuals, others in their lives, or their world that evolved out of the interactive narrative of their stories. In the short narrative above, three reconstructed pictures, or images, about this interaction emerged: a) "I remember that he was, he was, always a terrifying figure to me. I felt that our lives were threatened." b) "She was more defiant than I was, way more.", and c) "I am going to exist." Images are spawned in the fires of interaction, be they reconstructed interactions or interactions of the present day.

Summary

The sample population consisted of ten adults whose present social interactions operate at an optimally or adequately functioning level (Beavers & Hampson, 1990). The method of storytelling was chosen to disclose the reconstructed images of reality that these adults hold about their childhood when they were severely stressed (Guba, 1978; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Locke, Spirduso & Silverman, 1988; Morgaine, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

It is the use of deductive logic that allows an individual to understand the goals, conflicts, interactions, and pre-conditions that are present in his/her social interactions. The use of deductive logic as a tool to understanding is totally contingent upon the person's capacity to create new hypotheses, to freeze or unfreeze specific conclusions, to store ideas, and to link ideas via language and imagery (Kruglanski, Baldwin & Towsom, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). As a
listener, I became one of the assessment tools for each story as each person
reconstructed his/her use of deductive logic (Burr & Klein, 1994; Hultgren, 1989;
Morgaine, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Reliability resides in the ability to
repeat this process and obtain similar results while validity resides in the teller's
story (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Method of Data Analysis

This section deals with two methods by which data was collected. The first
method of analysis was derived from the practices of grounded theory. The
second method of data analysis is actually part of my findings. I will begin first
with the method of data analysis that was derived from the practice of grounded
theory.

The Grounded Theory Method of Data Analysis

All ten interviews, including my questions and each person's stories, were
recorded onto a cassette tape. Each tape was then typed verbatim into a word
processing program that had the capability of highlighting, copying, pasting, and
sorting. In total, one hundred and twenty pages of single-spaced narratives were
typed.

When people speak they do not use capital letters and periods as in written
language. Often they speak in fragmented sentences, mixing one thought with
another. This means that the recordings that are transcribed into written form
suffer poor grammatical syntax. To facilitate understanding, three dots (...) were
used to indicate an incomplete thought. Obviously the storyteller wanted to say
more about a particular item, but s/he just rephrased what s/he was thinking or
shifted, as if in midair, to another line of thought. An example follows:
I used to say you're never alone cause you have yourself. There's always this inner world. That I...where I always felt rich to me. That there...that no one can get there. There is something safe and valuable inside. That you don't have to share with anyone if you don't want to. It felt like a whole other planet. That I could visit. I could be thinking...I was big into Thoreau.

Before I typed out each interview, I assigned each storyteller a number. The numbers assigned simply indicated whether the storyteller was the first, second, or third, etc. person interviewed. These numbers go up to ten since ten persons were interviewed.

After typing out the entire interview, I began to categorize each story according to levels of social distancing from each storyteller. Organizing the data according to levels of social distancing becomes the basis of analysis for a grounded theorist (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It helps to visualize our solar system. In the center is the sun. Then out from the sun are rings of differing diameters. The furthest level, or orbit, out from the center describes the community in which an individual lives. Coming in closer to the center would be the next level which are subgroups within the community. These subgroups would have more interaction with the storyteller. A friend could be an example of someone in a subgroup. The next level towards the center describes family. The center itself is the individual with the social interaction that occurs within oneself.

Within these four orbital systems exist sub-levels of social interaction with certain people who were familiar to the child or youth. After reading the narratives, I discovered that the social interactions on the community level were primarily subgroups or friends. At the family level a whole cast of characters emerged: fathers, grandfathers, sibling, etc. At the individual level, I drew upon the theories of the lay-epistemologist and simply put down the elements in deductive thought processes: goals of the main character, conflicts, conclusions,
etc. What results, after using the social interaction levels and sub-levels of grounded theorists, is the creation of a schematic against which to order the narratives. The completed form follows in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Levels of Social Distancing based Upon Grounded Theory

A1 = Description of the community setting
AB = Description of sub-groupings in the community
   1 = Friends
   2 = Others
AC = Description of the family
   1 = Mom
   2 = Dad
   3 = Siblings
   4 = Grandparents
   5 = Extended family
AD = Description of the individuals
   1 = Male/female/age
   2 = Images of self
   3 = Conflict with stress factors in each life
   4 = Age of awareness
   5 = Patterns of interaction
   6 = The scenes of contrast
   7 = Source of light
   8 = How the light affected his/her awareness of life
   9 = Conclusions

I assigned a letter or number to each item from the following organizational schema. This numbering would later allow me to sort out items of similar reference to a particular social interaction level. In a given interview, the storyteller would make reference to the various items indicated in Figure 4, e.g., his/her mother. When a storyteller mentioned his/her mother, I would note that the word mother was one level of social interaction that would be sorted. Each time I found the word mother, I would copy the quote in which the word mother appeared, and then paste that quote. Each pasted quote would be assigned the
storyteller's number. The quote would also be assigned the appropriate level letter(s) and sub-level number. For example, the words that describe the sixth storyteller's mother would first be assigned the letters AC which designates family level, the number 1 which indicates that at the family level the first sub-level is mom, and then the number 6 to indicate that all this was told by storyteller number 6. A typical, categorized phrase would appear as follows: AC16 "That would be my mom! She's just a real classy lady."

Assigning the letters and numbers to selected quotes from a given narrative like AC16 above, allowed me to sort all the phrases from one storyteller about his/her mother or any of the other sub-levels together. After this first step of sorting occurred, I lumped all ten narratives together. The result was that all the storytellers' quotes about mother or conflict were compiled together. For example, what follows is a selected listing of quotes about conflict from storytellers 3 through 7.

AD33 When I see it as the sort of a gossipy town, the conflict would be that way of keeping secrets and not keeping secrets. It was her way of maintaining I am a good woman. I don't know what purpose it served in the town. There were so many sick things that went on in that town.

AD34 It's internal in the sense of trying to cope with the external. The things that went on in my family were so painful, but I really perceived it as a part of life. That I thought that life hurt that bad. That that's the way it was supposed to feel. I assumed that I was going to die young. I really hoped that I was going to die young! I would have to cope with the level of pain. I'd go catatonic at times. In a way that was rebuilding. No one could hurt me when I was that way.

AD35 **Was there any conflict with the interaction with your uncle?**
Well, I'm saying that there was always a little bit of conflict between he and I because of the athletics. He was going to make me quit one time. It was on a trip when I was about eighth grade, I think. He said I couldn't go. But I did. He drank a little bit and so he was a little bit overbearing. More so with boys than he was with women.
AD36 What were your feelings when you saw your mom like this?
Oh, a mixture I guess of fear, anxiety, helplessness. A ... for a combination of reasons I guess. I suppose you see someone who ... a mother or father ... your primary caregiver in a state of weakness. That's truly alarming ... but fear also because of her suffering. She was short on patience and ill-tempered. And would lash out. After some of that you're fearful for her as well as yourself. Fearful of her.

AD37 I am sure that that whole situation was hard for her because when I was a junior in high school, my junior and senior year I lived in town. We had a place in town and then we had a lake place, and in the spring my parents would always move out to the lake and they would live there until, oh, the middle of September. The summer before my junior and senior year I just lived in town by myself. I had my own car and it was just easier for my mom not to have me around at that point because my dad would really drink in the summer ... I think it was just easier and it was my choice.... It was easier for my mom because then she didn't have to deal with conflict between me and my dad because I didn't see him drunk all the time in the summer.

The organization of the narratives into workable pieces only prepared the narrative for analysis. It was like the bishop who organized the Bible according to chapter and verse. What was needed next was a way to interpret this organized material. This realization ushered in the second level in the methods of data analysis called hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics as a Method of Interpretation

The second method of data analysis sprang from my findings. I took the sorted, organized pieces of the narratives relating to each level of social interaction and started reading each one. For example, I took the cluster of narratives about conflict as shown above. I started reading those narratives about conflict and as I did I recognized that a set of rules needed to be used to organize the elements found in each narrative.

I was familiar with a field of study known as hermeneutics which is used to interpret Biblical narratives (Ramm, 1970 and Mickelson, 1974). I knew these
rules were not directly applicable, but that the idea of a hermeneutic for narratives made sense. My choice was to create my own hermeneutic for narratives based upon the key elements found in the narratives.

A New Hermeneutic for Narratives

Hermeneutics is a word that sounds like some contagious disease. In actuality, hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation (Ramm, 1970, Mickelson, 1974). The art and science of interpreting a narrative is much like fishing. When one comes to a favorite fishing hole one feels fairly confident that there are fish to be caught. All one needs to know is how to catch them. It is one thing to know that images exist within a narrative. It is another thing to actually catch, or recognize, an image in the context of a narrative.

Hermeneutics is the science and art of catching images in the pond of narratives. It is a science in that specific rules are used. Hermeneutics is also an art in that one has to know how to apply the rules.

The hermeneutic interpretation of narratives views the four levels of social interaction (community, subgroups in community, family, and the individual) as broad social arenas much like numerous baseball diamonds at a little league park. In a little league park with four separate playing fields, a number of games can be played at the same time. On each of the four playing fields, or in our case, levels of social interaction, the same rules would apply for each game. The rules for interpreting narratives played at the four different social interaction levels evolved by finding the major organizational elements in a given narrative. What follows in Figure 5 is a list of rules for narrative interpretation.
Figure 5. A Summary of Hermeneutical Rules Derived from Narratives

1) Nouns are persons, places, and things which may take on more than their original meaning.

2) The story line, or narrative, tells what social interactions are occurring in the context of a person, place, or thing.

3) Words that actually describe the person, place, or thing are images of reality that the storyteller ascribes to these nouns.

4) Scripted behaviors create new story lines based upon the actor's images of reality.

Integrating Grounded Theory with Hermeneutics

What I have done so far is to take the levels of social interactions which are organized along the thinking of grounded theorists and interpret these levels of social interaction according to a set of hermanutical rules. Perhaps a simple picture would be helpful.

Figure 4 represents the levels and sub-levels where the social interactions of the narrative actually occurred. It's as if Figure 4 is a street map. Figure 4 tells where, or with whom, or perhaps the topic of a given social interaction with one of the storytellers. What Figure 4 does not tell is what happened. For example, grounded theory tells a police officer that an accident occurred at the corner of Ninth and Tracy between Joe Smith and Jane Doe. Hermeneutics tells how the accident happened at the corner of Ninth and Tracy.

Figure 6 combines Figure 4 and Figure 5 to provide an organizational and interpretive matrix. This figure represents the theoretical configuration of the four levels of social interaction in which we could expect to find our storyteller: A) the community setting, AB) the sub-groups in the community setting, AC) the family, and AD) the individual. It also lists, across the top, the four basic elements
found in the stories: a) nouns, b) narrative (action), c) descriptive words, and d) scripted behaviors.

**Figure 6. The Assessment of Narratives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUNS</th>
<th>STORY LINE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIVE WORDS</th>
<th>SCRIPTED BEHAVIORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB) community</td>
<td>sub-groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC) family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD) individual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpreting Narratives**

A narrative can occur as a string of narratives from a single storyteller or as clusters. The above-mentioned narratives about conflict for storytellers three through six is an example of clustered narratives about one subject, but from different sources. The interpretation of a single storyteller's narratives is the simplest to understand and so I describe that process first. The comparison of a cluster of narratives from different sources is more complicated. I begin with the interpretation of a single storyteller's string of narratives using Figure 8.

**Interpreting a Single Narrative**

There are now actually four points where one can begin the interpretation of a single narrative: with the nouns, the story line, the images, or behaviors. One can list nouns that the storyteller might use or repeat in his/her narrative. The person may mention his/her father, the Popo Agie River, or his/her car. There is a good possibility that behind each noun is a story. One can ask the storyteller to share a few more narratives behind the persons, places, and things to which s/he
first made reference in his/her conversation. Take, for example, this storyteller's reference to his/her father when talking as an adult with his/her best friend.

A3 Did you know that Billy's dad was my father?
And she said, "Oh, yes."
When Billy grew up to be about 15 it was obvious he was beginning to look and talk and sound more like my dad than any kids from both families. That family moved away. Finding out when I was 30 or so that the whole town knew the secret that I had been keeping for years. Almost the whole town. I thought it was a secret I had to keep.

Figure 6 allows one to slowly break down all of this storyteller's narrative into simple parts. I began with the social interaction level of community and then worked downward. At each level of social interaction I used the same hermeneutical rules while interpreting the narratives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Images</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Community</td>
<td>Town</td>
<td>They really</td>
<td>Somehow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Social</td>
<td>interaction</td>
<td>knew</td>
<td>they all knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>the secret</td>
<td>the secret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sub-groups</td>
<td>She = the friend of the teller</td>
<td>She really</td>
<td>Somehow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>knew</td>
<td>she knew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the secret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sub-groups</td>
<td>Billy's family</td>
<td>They moved</td>
<td>The family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Social</td>
<td>interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Family</td>
<td>Billy</td>
<td>Billy looked</td>
<td>Billy had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Social</td>
<td>interaction</td>
<td>and sounded</td>
<td>to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>like dad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Family</td>
<td>Dad</td>
<td>Dad is</td>
<td>Dad fathered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Social</td>
<td>interaction</td>
<td>Billy's</td>
<td>other children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>father</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Individual</td>
<td>the narrator</td>
<td>The keeper</td>
<td>Don't tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Social</td>
<td>interaction</td>
<td>of secrets.</td>
<td>anyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>for 30 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the story line, or narrative, is told a whole new world opens. The narrative facilitates interpretation of a vast amount of information. The descriptive words, or images, begin to breathe life into the person, places, and things contained in the narrative.

Our storyteller until s/he was thirty years old held specific images about a) his/her town and his/her friend who wasn't suppose to know b) Billy's family that had to move because of Billy looking and sounding like dad c) Billy who was his/her brother d) dad who had an extra-marital affair, and e) him/herself who was supposed to keep the truth a secret. Based on the storyteller's knowledge s/he forms an hypothesis that concludes that s/he was to guard the family secret.

Interpreting A Cluster of Narratives

The next level of analysis involves examining clusters of narratives. A cluster of narratives is composed of a number of storytellers sharing their story line about what happened to them at a particular social interaction level or sub-level. E.g. I would pool together a number of persons stories about what they experienced with mother or perhaps the community.

A cluster of narratives begins with the same procedure as above. However, since it is a cluster, it is already assigned a level of interaction. What is being analyzed is not how levels of social interaction build upon one another. Instead, the difference being assessed is between the different storytellers' images of a particular level of social interaction. Take, for example, the narratives shared earlier about conflict.

AD33 When I see it as the sort of a gossipy town, the conflict would be that way of keeping secrets and not keeping secrets. It was her way of maintaining I am a good woman. I don’t know what purpose it served in the town. There were so many sick things that went on in that town.
AD34 It's internal in the sense of trying to cope with the external. The things that went on in my family were so painful, but I really perceived it as a part of life. That I thought that life hurt that bad. That that's the way it was supposed to feel. I assumed that I was going to die young. I really hoped that I was going to die young! I would have to cope with the level of pain. I'd go catatonic at times. In a way that was rebuilding. No one could hurt me when I was that way.

AD35 Was there any conflict with the interaction with your uncle?
Well, I'm saying that there was always a little bit of conflict between he and I because of the athletics. He was going to make me quit one time. It was on a trip when I was about eighth grade, I think. He said I couldn't go. But I did. He drank a little bit and so he was a little bit overbearing. More so with boys than he was with women.

AD36 What were your feelings when you saw your mom like this?
Oh, a mixture I guess of fear, anxiety, helplessness. A ... for a combination of reasons I guess. I suppose you see someone who...a mother or father ... your primary caregiver in a state of weakness. That's truly alarming, ... but fear also because of her suffering. She was short on patience and ill-tempered. And would lash out. After some of that you're fearful for her as well as yourself. Fearful of her.

AD37 I am sure that that whole situation was hard for her because when I was a junior in high school, my junior and senior year I lived in town. We had a place in town and then we had a lake place, and in the spring my parents would always move out to the lake and they would live there until, oh, the middle of September. The summer before my junior and senior year I just lived in town by myself. I had my own car and it was just easier for my mom not to have me around at that point because my dad would really drink in the summer... I think it was just easier and it was my choice.... It was easier for my mom because then she didn't have to deal with conflict between me and my dad because I didn't see him drunk all the time in the summer.

A comparison of the nouns, narratives, images and scripted behavior in this cluster of narratives reveals the following schematic of Figure 7. In Figure 7 I dissected out the nouns, narrative, images and scripted behaviors. From that point trends and patterns will need to be examined.

It needs to be recognized that differences will exist when comparing one narrative to another. The difference between each narrative can be described in both a qualitative and/or quantitative way. Take, for example, the different
nouns listed. The majority of nouns listed dealt with people. Specifically, they dealt with family figures.

Quantitatively, four out of five times a family member, in this cluster of narratives, is placed in a negative role. Qualitatively this means that in four out of five homes images like painful, overbearing, weak, and drunk paint a clear picture about the quality of family life these four storytellers remember.

These are the kind of observational questions asked when one looks at clusters of narratives. Observing what is there, but also looking for what is not there. None of these narratives mention grandparents. Would grandparents ever cause stress? With my findings right now I could propose that grandparents may not create conflict for our storytellers. I can entertain that possibility only until I find a contradiction. In this case, it would have been storyteller number two who viewed his/her grandfather as spreading a web of darkness.

Figure 7. Analysis of Clustered Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Images</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD33</td>
<td>town about secrecy sick gossipy</td>
<td>mom maintain a reputation good woman</td>
<td>keep secrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD34</td>
<td>family things went on painful coping</td>
<td>I tried to cope death</td>
<td>kept secrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I life supposed to hurt</td>
<td>overbearing</td>
<td>coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no one could hurt me safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD35</td>
<td>uncle make me quit drinking/overbear suffering</td>
<td>I athletics couldn’t go on child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feeling alarm weak</td>
<td>overbearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad state of weakness fear, anxious,</td>
<td>conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feeling alarm helpless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD36</td>
<td>mom living away from I hard/easy conflict dad &amp; I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad separate from I drinking/summer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I living in town easier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD37</td>
<td>mom conflict dad &amp; I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When one finds a common occurrence in all the clusters of narratives, then it can be assumed that a saturation point has been reached. A saturation point occurs when the narratives begin to repeat the same finding. Any knowledge added to the findings would repeat what had already been discovered. One common finding amongst the five storytellers listed below is that each one of them had images of pain concerning their conflict. If more storytellers shared their narratives, it may be that sub-themes concerning that pain may be identified. For example, pain that prompted decisions or a state of being or existed because of a place.

Summary

I found it necessary to develop my own rules for a narrative hermeneutic. These rules were based upon an examination of the text. This hermeneutic was meshed with the grounded theorist levels of social distancing. In the end, a mesh used to analyze a storyteller's narrative and clusters of narratives was produced. Interpretation of the narratives was done based upon the hermeneutical rules of nouns, narratives, images, and scripted behaviors which occur at differing levels of social interaction.
CHAPTER 4

THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to allow adults, who experienced severe stress as children or youth, to reconstruct and share their images encapsulating the social interactions that took place in their childhood or youth. These reconstructed images have probably undergone a process of maturation. Adult language and levels of abstraction have no doubt reinterpreted these childhood interactions. The outcome, therefore, is an adult image of what is remembered to have taken place based upon residual images from childhood and/or youth. These reconstructed adult images are regarded as reliable and are considered a valid part of each adult's present view of reality.

Three specific objectives that fall under the main purpose are itemized below.

1) The use of hermeneutics as a tool for interpreting narratives.

2) Findings that will examine the reconstituted images of well-functioning adults who in childhood or youth experienced severe stress.

3) A gleaning of wisdom from the participant whose history made him/her wise.

This chapter will address the findings related to each of the above objectives of this study. The first set of findings will address the implications of hermeneutics. The second set will talk about reconstructed images of well-functioning adults. Reconstructed images will be a recount of the severe stress present in childhood and/or youth. The third set of findings report wisdom gleamed from our adult population.
Findings Related to Hermeneutics

In chapter three hermeneutical rules were presented as tools to interpret narratives. These four hermeneutic rules emerged out of my findings. What follows is the context for those hermeneutic rules. These findings add validity to the hermeneutic rules and their usage and the entire interpretation of this study. A set of illustrations will follow the listing of these four sub-sections of findings.

**Hermeneutic Finding One:** Images live in stories. Images can be identified by finding nouns: persons, places, or things. Locating descriptive words comes next. These descriptive words are images concerning the nouns.

**Hermeneutic Finding Two:** A noun may take on more than its original meaning. Stories reveal meanings attached to nouns. Narratives describe interactions that take place with a person, or in a place, or with a thing. Images breathe life into nouns by ascribing to them a sense of essence, or quality.

**Hermeneutic Finding Three:** The story line tells what social interactions occurred. These narratives describe the action going on at that time.

**Hermeneutic Finding Four:** Scripted behaviors are actions adopted after an image was believed to be true. Scripted behaviors recur as long as an image is considered true. When scripted behaviors do recur, they can actually create the story line in the new narrative. Throughout the stories the scripted behaviors act out the storyteller's images of reality.

**Images: Expanding the Findings**

I printed out a copy of each narrative. This was done after the phrases of the narratives had been labeled. The narratives were labeled and sorted (Figure 5) according to the numerous levels and sub-levels of social interaction. My first reading of the text reacquainted me with the material. It was relatively easy to
remember the stories. During the second reading, I began asking myself what constitutes an image. I drew upon Kantor and Lehr's (1985) description of an image:

Images are internalized representations of action made or observed. The most basic form of an image can exist in the form of a kinetic imprint, a kind of memory which is muscular and energetic. An image may also be a picture of an event, whether literal or symbolic. It can exist as a sentiment or feeling about an event. An image may exist as a belief or an idea about an event. (p. 241)

I read the narratives and thought about this definition. I discovered that descriptive words and phrases captured the essence of an image. I started circling words and phrases that described the narrative. I did this for each of the four social distance levels and their sub-levels.

I realized that the descriptive words and phrases were images about persons, places, and things. Consequently, an image describes a noun. The image of that noun is revealed in the story. If numerous stories exist about a specific noun, then the images around that noun expand.

Take, for example, the Powder River. The name would not be significant unless a story is related to this river. If a story, or a series of stories with specific images, develops around the Powder River, then this name takes on a life of its own. In the following narrative, a number of stories with accompanying images describe the Powder River.

I remember the smell of cottonwoods walking along the Powder River. There were a lot of neat things that happened along the Powder River. We had a Vacation Bible School there once, an outdoor Vacation Bible School. I had a friend who had a little ranch outside of town and it was always great to go to somebody else's place. We used to go and we would have to get the milk cow and we would walk through the cottonwoods and bring in the milk cow. The Powder River is a big part of growing up.
Nouns: Expanding the Findings

I underlined the nouns on the printed copy of the narrative. I highlighted story line, or the action in the narrative. Descriptive words and phrases I circled. The following Powder River narrative was marked accordingly: circled descriptive words (in this example italicized), highlighted story lines (in this example in bold letters, and underlined nouns). This is a simple way to classify a narrative.

I remember the smell of cottonwoods walking along the Powder River. There were a lot of neat things that happened along the Powder River. We had a Vacation Bible School there once, an outdoor Vacation Bible School. I had a friend who had a little ranch outside of town and it was always great to go to somebody else's place. We used to go and we would have to get the milk cow and we would walk through the cottonwoods and bring in the milk cow. The Powder River is a big part of growing up.

A place called the Powder River contains stories about "I" and a "friend" (that composed "we"), "Vacation Bible School", a "ranch outside of town" (which is somebody else's place), a "milk cow", and "cottonwoods". Our storyteller sees the Powder River as more than a body of water. The Powder River was made up of persons, places, and things, the essence of which was captured in images described as smells and "neat things", "outdoor VBS", and "great places". These images were created by going to someone else's place where they would go out to get the milk cow as they walked along the river and smelled the cottonwood trees. This is why our storyteller can conclude that the Powder River was "a big part of growing up".

Story Lines and Scripted Behaviors: Expanding the Findings

From the narratives of our storytellers, I also discovered that scripted behaviors do exist. Scripted behaviors are actions that come after the fact or result from the closure of hypothesis formation. In the process of forming an
hypothesis there comes a time when an individual either runs out of time, motivation, or information. When this occurs a point of closure is reached. At the point of closure, an image is adopted as a belief about reality. Scripted behaviors are actions that come after an image is accepted as a belief about reality. Scripted means the behavior is acted out like a script one follows in a play. When I found evidence of scripted behaviors, I indicated these behaviors by placing them in brackets.

Clarification is needed between the action that occurs during a story, which is the narrative of the story, and the action that occurs after a story, which I refer to as scripted behavior. The following is a complete story that ties together the awareness of the presence of nouns (underlined), descriptive words (italicized), story lines (bold print) and scripted behaviors (in [brackets]).

One friend, whose mother had gone through a divorce, she did the same thing. We were extremely intimate in some ways, {but these things about our fathers, we did not talk to each other about}. One time my mom called and said, "I just got beat up." And this friend was going to come home from school with me. She said, "I've got some bruises on my face." And I started crying and I had to tell my friend what happened. And she said something like, "I went through that too." {That was the only thing we ever said to each other about it.}

As I became accustomed to distinguishing scripted behaviors from the story line of the narrative, I discovered that scripted behaviors based upon the storyteller's images of reality were creating the story lines of the future. In essence, images about reality spawn scripted behaviors and these scripted behaviors shape the future social interactions of the storyteller.

Summary

A process of hermeneutics evolved out of the findings of this study. The natural response to interpreting a narrative is to define elements that compose
that narrative. In this case it became evident from the findings that nouns, storylines, descriptive words, and scripted behaviors were such major elements. These major elements also had distinct characteristics or qualities which were discussed above. From these distinct characteristics, evolved the four rules of hermeneutics discussed in chapter three.

1) Nouns are persons, places, and things which may take on more than their original meaning.

2) The storyline, or narrative, tells what social interactions are occurring in the context of a person, place, or thing.

3) Words that actually describe the person, place, or thing are images of reality that the storyteller ascribes to these nouns.

4) Scripted behaviors create new storylines based upon the actor's images of reality.

Reconstructed Images of Severe Stress

This section takes the stories of our adults and, by using the rules of hermeneutics and, when needed, the social interaction levels of grounded theory, describes the images of the storytellers. There are two sub-sections. One sub-section deals with the findings of images in general. I believe that these insights may be applicable to the general use of images. The second sub-section deals specifically with images when an individual is under severe stress. The first sub-section lays the foundation for understanding the second.

General Uses of Images

My analysis of the images in this study suggest four general principles about images. The first explores what I call the "inarticulated" image, e.g., a possible link between images of childhood and adulthood. The second defines an interplay between scripted behaviors and images, e.g., scripted behaviors that generate
new images. The third discloses how one image can be shared with a number of nouns. The fourth expands our understanding of images into image sets.

Inarticulated Images

According to Kantor and Lehr (1985) images can be kinetic or reflexive in nature. An image which is of a kinetic or reflexive nature may be one that is felt, but cannot be articulated. At times, a child may know something, but be unable to describe or put to words what s/he knows to be true.

A major quandary in this study was the question of authenticity. Were the images which the adults shared, the authentic images they held as a child or youth? As explained earlier, there is no real way to know the difference between authentic images of childhood or youth and what adult language and abstract thought has done to these earlier images. This finding points to the idea that images may begin as inarticulated entities that later are defined by language. The change that language has upon the initial image if any is unknown.

The following narratives point to a time when, as a child, our storytellers were unable to articulate what image was inside of them. They simply knew that a feeling or a sense existed inside. One storyteller calls him/herself "naive" and the other considers her/himself as "unaware."

In a lot of ways I was extremely naive. I had a deep sense of shame and I didn't know what it was. There was a point where I became aware that a neighbor's child was my father's child. These two people had been involved.
Like the abuse ... I didn't tell her about that because I don't think she would do anything about it. And I ... right. I thought I would kind of make her feel ashamed of me.

So inside the little girl was some inner conflict?

Hum

When you used the word shame; that feeling of shame, or possibly of her feeling ashamed of you. When would you have been aware of that ... how old would you have been?
Well, it's not a thing that I could identify then. I mean like this is shame that I am feeling.
In following the full narratives of these two storytellers it appears that their unarticulated images of shame directed their future scripted behaviors. One child became the guardian of the family secrets. The other child turned toward withdrawal from any social interactions when the stress escalated in severity.

Perhaps the purity of the authenticity of childhood and adolescent images is not revealed by the cognitive abilities of an individual which change over the years with language usage and levels of abstraction. Instead, the authenticity of an early image can be judged by the consistency of one's scripted behaviors as seen over the years.

Take, for example, the scripted behavior of "muteness" that this individual links to early images of a father s/he feared, a muteness she exhibits to this day.

One of my friends said, "When I first knew you, you were mute." That is still my natural state, muteness. A lot of my responses, I don't have verbal ways of expressing what was going on.

Those incidents with my dad I can conjure up awful sick feelings ... I remember that he was ... he was always a terrifying figure to me. I felt that our lives were threatened. That's my main memory of him. When I was three or so, the earliest memories I have of him are him saying, "Damn it be quiet I am listening to the news".

**What was his goal when he said that?**
Umm, I think he wanted us to disappear.

**What was your goal when he said that?**
Not to. I certainly didn't want to get spanked and so I certainly learned to be quiet. On the other hand I think the bottom line is I am going to exist.

**Did you want his attention?**
I don't remember wanting anything from him except not wanting to be afraid of him. And I was always afraid of him. I didn't want him to spank me or my sister. During a lot of that time I often knew that he was angry at my sister and not at me so I felt like I had to keep her out of trouble. She was more defiant than I was, way more. He could beat her and she wouldn't cry. I would bawl at a drop of the hat, "Please don't spank me. I'll be good. I'll be good."

**What conclusion did you come to?**
Oh, that I had to be quiet. I am well aware of where that muteness comes from that my friend talked about.
Interplay Between Scripted Behaviors and Images

The lay-epistemologists Lalljee and Abelson (1983) visualize that in the process of hypothesis formation conclusions are reached that result in scripted behavior. They believe that this process of forming possible hypotheses, reaching a conclusion, and then developing scripted behavior forms the basis of our social interactions.

The findings reported in this sub-section show scripted behavior feeding a new image back into the hypothesis formation loop. This new image may be viewed as knowledge of new stress or as knowledge of what is to be done if ever one encounters a similar situation. Images may be seen as directing the scripting of behaviors and the images of the scripted behaviors themselves return to reinforce the images. The example that follows illustrates this point.

The scripted behaviors of the following seventh grader includes "running the house", "cooking", and "being a spouse in a lot of ways". These scripted behaviors actually become generators of stress as this seventh grader tried to assume these massive responsibilities. This assumed, scripted behavior initially began with the desire of "being needed". The aftermath of, or fallout from, the stress of the scripted behavior was a new image of being "trapped". In this way scripted behaviors can become like forest fires that create their own weather pattern in a second image.

It's almost like I woke up in seventh grade. And that was my worst year seventh grade. My parents at the time didn't get along very well. My dad resented her illness. Dad was in the ministry. He was in a phase of his life where he was too success oriented. He has repented and turned from his evil ways. Back then he took this little tiny church and made it a mega church. So that's where he was and I resented him for that. {Because he wasn't there for me}.

It used to ...both of them ... a lot of talking to me like I was a grown up. {They talked about their marital problems. They talked about problems with other kids. Dad talked about problems at work}. I got this sense that without me they couldn't survive. So I felt needed. That
was good. There was self-esteem. {I could run a house, I could cook. I could ... really I was a spouse in a lot of ways other than sexual.} I was {anorexic during that time as well}. But it worked for me. It was something I do well. {There was a lot to carry around.} ...

Seventh grade was the year {I was depressed all the time. I didn't sleep. I was very suicidal}, but I had an aunt that had killed herself two years earlier and so I saw all the damage it did. So I really felt trapped. {I couldn't even kill myself.} And I knew my family needed me.

A new weather pattern or image had been created. The thought of suicide only accentuated that reality. Our seventh grader adopted a second scripted behavior of depression which may have been partly directed by his/her new awareness of being trapped.

One Image Applied to Many Nouns

One image can be ascribed to a number of nouns. This means that the conclusions, or image, of one social interaction may interpret a future social interaction. A storyteller may draw upon previous images obtained from an earlier social interaction when making conclusions about a present situation. Take, for example, Little Albert (Davison & Neale, 1978) whose past "conditioned" him to react negatively to future encounters with white objects.

A single picture was shown to one storyteller and this one visual image reminded him/her of three nouns; the devil, his/her brother, and death. Each one of these nouns (devil, brother, death) has a totally separate dictionary meaning. However, to our storyteller each of these nouns had stories behind them that created the common images of power and/or evil.

There are three. The first one is the devil and then it was my brother and then death. These were three powerful figures in my life. The sense of sin was real strong growing up. The sexual stuff. There were some drinking and drugs on my part. I knew that the way we treated each other was wrong. I ... really bad self-image. That's what I thought of myself as bad, but I also knew that most of my sins didn't stack up to ... I knew I wasn't that bad of a kid. I was a curious kid. I just think
that home felt kind of evil to me. I think there was a lot of evil in my home.

Satan is just the most frightening, darkest thing that I can imagine. It's only been in the last year that some of that power has just been lost. When you live with people who aren't in control. It doesn't seem like God is in charge. It seems like Satan is in charge. I think Satan was very much in charge of my brother. And just a terrifying figure for me. I don't believe it's only Satan that's making people do stuff. I even sometimes see him as a metaphorical figure. It's more of an image in my mind, a nightmare.

With my brother ... there was a lot of ways that he was a bad seed. Because this figure looks real powerful to me. There's a way he spreads the darkness. And George had that affect on my life of anything I had, he could take away. Anything I could do I felt, I felt like he could do better. He was just powerful. And the death thing. The grim reaper. It was just such a theme of ... whether I was just thinking of my own death. Or, just the obsession of who is going to die next? Every phone call is going to be another death. It really haunted things. It also provided me hope. That one day I would die.

The implications of this finding for projection is profound. This finding conveys the idea that one may be able to script one noun to a particular behavior of a second noun. By loosely associating the first noun with similar descriptive qualities of the second noun a linkage of scripted behaviors may occur where by social interaction with the first noun would be generated from the scripted behavior of the second.

The narrative above that dealt with "muteness" may serve as an illustration. The scripted behavior of muteness emerges from the social interaction with his/her father. The image of terror quieted the child. The scripted behavior of muteness became his/her way of continuing to exist. S/he states that this scripted behavior continued to be his/her natural state. The questions that still remain are, "What images inherent in his/her present social interactions still elicits the response for muteness? Does a scripted behavior remain intact without the need for an image to sustain that behavior?"
Images as Sets

The findings reported in this sub-section suggest that images combine together to direct scripted behaviors. It would be accurate to anticipate the possibility that all scripted behaviors do not run in a linear fashion from a single image to a single behavior. In actuality, it is fair to assume that sets of images blended together result in each person's own unique response to a given social interaction.

In the previous sub-section, "Inarticulated Images", two narratives concerning shame were used as examples. These two narratives illustrated that the image of shame shared by two separate people does not result in the same scripted behavior. One person chose to become a guardian of the family secret and the other person chose to close him/herself off from the rest of the world by withdrawing.

I can only speculate as to why child A chose path A and why child B chose path B. It may be possible that the store of knowledge that child A possessed was quantitatively and qualitatively different from child B's. It may also be an issue of motivation which is tied to the comfort level one possesses after reaching a conclusion.

I cannot address the motivational factors, but I can address in a small way the difference in the store of knowledge these persons possessed. Person A had three other siblings and was his/herself the oldest child. S/he lived in a community where gossiping was the national pastime. In that community setting, one's pride, what little one could muster while being poor, needed to be protected from intrusion by the neighbors. Person A experienced firsthand the humiliation his/her mother felt when the family name was printed in the paper because they received welfare at one time. The shame person A felt had to be weighed against
the social backdrop of his/her town. Shame over his/her father's affair was
treated like any of the other family needs, like their poverty, it was never to be
talked about. Images are a form of knowledge. Child A takes the knowledge of
his/her family's need for privacy and chooses to exercise the scripted behavior of
guarding the family secrets.

Child B, on the other hand, was a single child whose pattern of social
interaction was one of seclusion. As s/he said,

I just remember feeling like I was not a part of the rest of the world or
the rest of the people. And just like feeling like, 'What are we doing
here?'.

A lot of times I just liked being alone. I sort of liked to watch ...
like being here I would feel safe. If I were with other kids I would
not feel very safe. I'm very kind of hypersensitive to things. Unless my
environment is just sort of ... seemed overwhelming to me.

The shame of child B drew upon a knowledge/experiential base of "feeling like I
was not a part of the rest of the world or the rest of the people". This image,
combined with shame, resulted in a scripted behavior much different from that of
child A. Child B drew upon isolation and shame and blended the two to arrive at
a scripted behavior of dropping out of school and finally retreating into his/her
bedroom for two years.

To say that the blending of shame and secrecy for child A and then shame
and isolation for child B were the only contributors to each child's scripted
behaviors is probably not accurate. These examples are used only to illustrate
that numerous images may combine as a set of images to direct a scripted
behavior. The use of Figure 6 which looks at the four levels of social interaction
and the accompanying nouns, narratives, images, and scripted behaviors would
aid in a more complete analysis of sets of images.
The Affect Severe Stress Has on Images

All together I discovered five findings from this sample population in regard to images associated with severe stress. The first finding explores the area of what I call the "dual nature" of an image. For example, within a person are images that hold remembrances of stress and those that are of a non-stressful nature. The second finding defines an interplay between images, stress, and scripted behaviors. For example, when an individual's image of a resource is weaker than the stress they are encountering, then this could result in scripted behaviors oriented toward escape. The third finding shares how scripted behaviors of escape led away from stress and toward safety. The fourth finding expands our understanding of the raw resources that individuals draw upon to fuel their imaginations for daydreaming. For example, daydreaming can be a scripted behavior used for escape from stress. The fifth finding shares the images of the storytellers as they spoke about their experiences of escape and the healing purpose they see in its usage.

Each of our storytellers encountered social interactions which resulted in severe stress. Each held sets of images associated with this severe stress that direct scripted behaviors. The one theme that appears to unite the narratives of children encountering severe stress is that of scripted behaviors oriented towards escape.

Each storyteller developed a scripted behavior(s) that allowed him/her to find a way of escaping. What is interesting is that many of these individuals today, as adults, find it easy to slip back into this scripted behavior which provides for them a means of escape. The following sub-sections, a) dual images of stress and competency b) scripted behaviors that create future story lines c)
patterns of safety and escape; d) the raw resources of daydreaming, and e) images generated from escape, build upon one another to expand this findings related to escape.

**Dual Images of Stress and Competency**

The narratives of our storytellers reveal two separate sets of images co-existing. One set revolves around images associated with stress and the other around social interactions that radiate health and competency. From the narratives there is an awareness that certain nouns carry specific images which lie in direct contrast to another set of images.

The example of this narrative captures the co-existence of two separate sets of images. This storyteller shares about two worlds. Images associated with one world is that of "light" and "normalcy". Images of the other world are ones of "wretched things, darkness and sin". This storyteller shares that he/she reconstructed images placed him/her right in between these two sets of images.

That's me. I guess I felt like this is ... this being in two worlds of ... There is this world of lightness and normalcy where you're with friends at school or work or wherever. Then this sort of underworld. Of wretched things that are happening. Darkness and sin and all kinds of things ... that I often felt just right in between the two. A foot in both worlds. Kind of obsessed with this one. S/he is looking down at the dark one ... that was still there, even if it was just other people that had it.

**Scripted Behaviors That Create Future Story Lines**

The findings in this sub-section define an interplay between images, stress, and scripted behaviors. When an individual's image of a resource is weaker than the stress s/he is encountering, then this could result in scripted behaviors oriented toward escape. The narratives that follow illustrate that when an image of a resource, in this case a parental or adult figure, is viewed as inept in helping
solve a stressful event that the adopted scripted behavior can escalate an attempt to escape.

The following three sets of narratives illustrate how images develop into scripted behaviors. The first set of narratives illustrates the social interaction between child and mother. This social interaction leaves the child with an image that s/he is all alone to solve his/her own problems. The second set of narratives in this series adds a stressful situation to the image of being left alone to solve his/her own problems. The story line of adults not being of any help follows the story line of mother not being of any help with problems. The conclusion, or image created by the storyteller, is that s/he is isolated. The third set of narratives indicates how a scripted behavior of withdrawal becomes the solution to an image that s/he is isolated and left alone to solve his/her own problems.

I begin with our storyteller sharing about his/her reconstructed social interactions with his/her mother. Accompanying this is the image of his/her mother and his/her self-image.

AC18 This one just reminds me of my mother and myself. It's a mother and a daughter. She is reading a book. My mom always read a lot. I guess this would be a doll. I'm in therapy right now and I talk a lot about my mom and sort of how I was kind of alone with my problems because she didn't know what to do. She just sort of avoided things. She likes to think real positively about things. So she appears outwardly to be happy. She looks kind of forlorn. I was kind of like that. Well, my mom would do things with me like play games with me and things like that, but when it came to problems, I had to ... it was sort of like this. She looked just kind of ... read or something like that.

AD58 (Questions of clarification asked of the storyteller about the narrative above.)
Your mom would kind of interact with you, but if you had a problem, that interaction would break down and you would feel alone? How would that process work? She would just be really engrossed in her book and she would ... she might if I said something she might just say, "Uh Huh". Or just sort of pretend she is there when she's not really there.
So she really wasn’t connecting with you then?
Yah!

This image of being "left alone with my problems" played havoc when this child was faced with severe stress. This severe stress was caused by some boys who in the sixth grade harassed him/her. Our storyteller's image of adults begins to take on the same descriptive qualities as the image of his/her mother. The adults weren't really there, as if the adults were not real, or of much help to him/her. The reconstructed conclusion our storyteller reaches is that s/he is isolated. Our storyteller felt that if s/he told his/her mother, then mother would be ashamed of him/her.

AD38 Was it sixth grade when you started getting beat up by the boys?
Yah, sixth grade. When I was 12.

Why did they pick on you?
I was overweight and I didn't do anything. I was this quiet, shy person and was overweight and I guess they felt like they needed to feel like they had some control in their life or something. So they kind of used me as a ... It was just constant. And anytime like class got out and you were in the hallways. They would be there and would trip me or knock my notebooks out of my arms and all the papers would go all around. Then I would be late for class. And they would call me names. There were so many of them that I could never get away from them. They were a group. So wherever I went at school, inside the school or outside, I would always be running into one or more of them. And they would kind of stalk me.

I get really upset thinking about none of the grown ups did anything about it. It's like I was going through all these personality changes and all this depression. They just ... it was just like they really weren't there. Sort of like how a lot of my childhood was, so isolated and almost like the grown ups around me not really being real. Just, not really helping me much.

AD48 It's bigger things that were going on because I would stop telling her things after a while. Like the abuse ... I didn't tell her about that because I don't think she would do anything about it. And I was right. I thought I would kind of make her feel ashamed of me.

When this child encounters severe stress, the reconstructed scripted behavior is one of withdrawal. Also, this child's image of adults is that adults are
not involved. This child is afraid to ask for help because s/he is afraid that the adult's reaction would make the adults feel ashamed of him/her.

This reconstructed *scripted behavior of withdrawal* builds upon itself. At first, withdrawal was "acting strange" and "faking being sick to get out of school". This escalated to the point of "dropping out of school" completely. It continued to gain momentum and soon s/he would "no longer go out". Our storyteller shares that s/he started sleeping during the day and staying awake at night. Life in his/her room revolved around the scripted behavior of the parents who went to work or stayed home. The ultimate form of withdrawal was through suicide. Suicide became a scripted option to the child's self-image of being "total, totally hopeless".

The narrative of our storyteller reveals that the reconstructed *scripted behavior of withdrawal* gets more severe over time. Once a scripted behavior begins, it starts shaping future stories.

AD38 It sort of makes me think of when I was in school. I would, this is when I was getting beaten up and stuff. It's really kind of strange because the teachers never really did anything about it and they had to know about it. I was acting strange and my parents really didn't really do anything about it. So, I would start... {fake being sick to get out of going to school}.

AD68 I was ... those boys, the teachers, and my parents for taking that, my education away I guess, you know. You just can't learn if you don't feel safe. I {dropped out of school before I had finished my first semester of high school} and I was only 14. I've never regretted it at all. {Dropping out.} I've always felt like I did the right thing. That there was no other choice. My parents were really upset about it. They thought it was the end of the world. But it wasn't.

AD48 Well, I think I felt like that there were a lot of things as a kid you don't have very much power... {I was so afraid to go out} because I always thought I was always going to run into those guys.

AD58 Well, also I {stopped going out of the house for a few years}. Like I was an agoraphobic. And I was afraid to go outside. {I was afraid to go anywhere.} To be around people... I {started sleeping
during the day and being awake at night} and my parents {would work during the day}. So I {would be awake and come out of my room then}. But when they {were home} I {would stay in my bedroom}. It was really weird.

AD38 I had an extremely low self-esteem. I had a lot of fear of people. Including my parents and I felt like they were really ashamed of me. That I was just a total, totally hopeless. I’ve also had {a number of suicide attempts}.

The reconstructed narrative points out the escalation of scripted behaviors and the way shame and fear affected the way s/he chose to withdraw. These scripted behaviors helped to create the future story line of the individual.

Patterns of Safety and Escape

This sub-section reports that reconstructed, scripted behaviors that lead toward escape can be categorized into three areas. There are scripted behaviors that lead to physical escape, scripted behaviors that lead to emotional distancing, and scripted behaviors that result in total emotional shutdown.

The scripted behaviors that utilize physical space include such behaviors that lead our storyteller to a person, place, or thing or away from a person, place, or thing. For example, many of our storytellers found escape with "friends", or in his/her "music", "reading", by "living alone", or "staying in this/her room". One storyteller indicated s/he used marriage as an escape from his/her family of origin. This storyteller uses the image of sanctuary to describe the safe physical spaces in his/her home.

One of the sanctuaries in our home was around music. We had a piano and we each played an instrument in band. Reading was the same way for all of us. Things like reading and music were places where we were safe. It was something that we agreed upon ... maybe it was genetic or something.

The idea of moving into safe physical spaces and away from severely stressful physical spaces makes sense. A number of our storytellers speak of physically
distancing themselves from their fathers, grandfathers, and brothers with whom social interaction created severe stress. This physical distancing involved emotional detachment as well. In other words, an attitude developed that prevented them from getting emotionally close to these male figures. This storyteller lived in town while his/her parents stayed at the lake shore property. The two narratives that follow are his/hers. This set of narratives captures both the physical and emotional distancing s/he went through as a youth.

The summer before my junior and senior year I just lived in town by myself. I had my own car and it was just easier for my mom not to have me around at that point because my dad would really drink in the summer... I think it was just easier and it was my choice. ... It was easier for my mom because then she didn't have to deal with conflict between me and my dad because I didn't see him drunk all the time in the summer.

I cared about my mom and I didn't like the way he was treating her and I just couldn't keep my mouth shut. Plus I was so angry a lot of the time it made me feel better just to tell him what I thought. I truly didn't care for him. I didn't like him. I don't think I ever truly loved him like my kids love George and I. It was ruined a long time ago. There really wasn't a lot that my dad could do to hurt me, because after a while I didn't care about him.

The emotional distancing of no longer caring for another family member has been addressed. There were, however, a number of other ways that scripted behaviors created emotional distancing when severe stress was present. The narratives spoke of "depression", "anorexia", and of "removing my spirit" because s/he could not remove his/her body. The scripted behavior of disassociation is narrated by this storyteller.

I spent years disassociating. And that was one of my major survival mechanisms. When I was remembering and talking about the things that happened, umm, I usually use the third person. It happened to her. She is feeling this. Until I was able to own, own that. It's only been 12 years since I've been dealing with this. It was only in the last year I stopped disassociating. It was only in the last year that I really stopped disassociating, because I didn't want to. I liked it. But then I realized I wasn't living my life either. I was absorbing my life in a lot of occurrence and that isn't what I want.
The final area of scripted behaviors that lead towards escape has to deal with total emotional shutdown. The storytellers spoke of "going catatonic", or "shutting down", or being "blanked out all the time". This storyteller sheds a different light on what it meant for him/her to shut down.

The things that went on in my family were so painful, but I really perceived it as a part of life. That I thought that life hurt that bad. That that's the way it was supposed to feel. I assumed that I was going to die young. I really hoped that I was going to die young! I would have to cope with the level of pain. I'd go catatonic at times. In a way that was rebuilding. No one could hurt me when I was that way.

The Raw Resources of Daydreaming

The findings reported in this subsection expand our understanding of the raw resources that individuals draw upon to fuel their imaginations for daydreaming. The use of daydreaming was a prevalent, reconstructed scripted behavior used by our storytellers to escape. Our storytellers tell of drawing upon existing images to form and fashion their daydreams.

What I call here "raw materials for daydreaming" came from direct experiences such as near death experiences, farming, relationships with girls, carnivals, and other such material related to daily life. At other times, the raw materials came from reading books or seeing a movie. These raw materials even emerged out of the felt needs, or images, that the storyteller had concerning him/herself. For example, when I asked these two storytellers the themes of their daydreams they replied:

My biggest one was being taken care of. That some one would see what a hard time I was having. Or that I would even become sick. I even ... deathly ill and have people take care of me. I felt like such a missing of that, an absence of that. That even the fantasies with the camp counselors, they were about them coming to my rescue. I wanted that. Being important enough. Mattering enough to somebody. For them to notice, the barely teary eyes, or the stiffness, or maybe if your kid isn't sleeping last night telling you about that, or telling you about her brother coming into her room at night. That, that should alarm you.
That that is a problem. Rescuing was big. It still is. I have to struggle getting lost in the fantasies now.

Probably the basic theme of my daydreams at one point or another was ... Oh, the hero stepping into resolve the crisis somehow. Of course, it was always the hero and somebody else was in crisis. Big heart, big something ... Generally that was a good portion of the theme, at least in daydreams later on. As I became older it became probably the primary theme.

The unique feature of this reality created by the images of daydreams is that no matter what really happened, to the storyteller it is real. This is best summed up by a storyteller who had an NDE as a child. The daydreaming drew upon the images of angels encountered in his/her NDE.

I had angels with me. And that was probably the most powerful light. And I have often wondered if I made them up. And then I realized it doesn't matter. I don't believe that I did make them up. That is my reality. As an adult now and certainly very powerful for me as a child.

**Images Generated from Escape**

The findings reported in this subsection share the images of the storytellers as they speak about their experiences of escape and the healing purpose they see in its usage. The images generated from the scripted behaviors that led to escape varied from storyteller to storyteller. Some storytellers described these times of escape as "powerful", "very healing", "a connection to life", "very hopeful", "possessing a sense of wholeness", "rich", "safe", "valuable", a time when s/he was "never alone", "a time just to think about things".

The narrative that follows is a sample of the images that our storyteller shared. My favorite phrase is, "I think the resilient ones somehow create their own window even if it is in their mind. Yah." This window is one of hope that is not realized in social interactions that generate severe stress. For this storyteller, and perhaps for many, it was only a window, just as this storyteller reminds us, "the darkness in my childhood was bigger than the light".
I see this one as, a, a means of escaping ... One of the things I loved to do and I still love to do is to look at the sky. Either in the day or I love a full moon. It's a way of escaping. Just kind of, a way of leaving. And I used to go to the clouds. I spent a lot of the time in the clouds, on the clouds, with the clouds. Or at night I'd be with the stars. It was very wonderful. It was one of the most wonderful memories of my childhood actually. The stars were very powerful and very inviting. There is a lot of darkness here, but there is an escape. The escape is very powerful and very healing and somehow for me as a child it was very hopeful. I had moments of hopelessness as a child. And I still have to deal with those occasionally as an adult. Underneath all of that there had to be some hope or I would be dead. I'm very convinced of that. I think that is one of the places that I got it.

From the stars came that connectedness ... a connectedness. Uh huh. And the darkness in my childhood was bigger than the light. Can you imagine a child without any hope? No! I think the resilient ones somehow create their own window even if it is in their mind. Yah.

Summary

Images have general characteristics that exist regardless of whether or not stress is present. These general characteristics include: a) the inarticulated nature of images, b) the way scripted behaviors generate new images, c) the fact that one image may be applicable to many nouns, and d) the combination of images into sets of images. Images also have certain qualities that are apparent when stress is present. Images of light and darkness can co-exist within an individual. When stress exists and the image of the resources is considered as being less than adequate then escape becomes a natural response. Escape expresses itself through physical and emotional means. The raw resources of escape through daydreaming are pre-existing images that an individual possesses. Finally, escape is viewed as a place of hope.

Wisdom Literature

Someone once said, "the only way you can know what you want is by knowing what you do not want". This section of the findings builds upon these adult
reconstructed images of what they do not want by asking the respondents to reconstruct a contrast to their past scenes of severe stress as a child or youth. The following are excerpts of what Sharon Parks (1991) refers to as wisdom—knowledge that is true because people have lived it and experienced it and found it to be true.

The contrasts which these storytellers share are filled with what they hope for, what they want, both now and in the future. They speak of "loving" where there is no "desire to hurt each other". They talk of "parties" that express that the "kingdom of God has come". They speak of "concern" and "connectedness" with parents, a place of "harmony" and "affection". They speak of a place where a child could learn "how to play an instrument" and take "ballet lessons". These niceties may appear small, but are the precious things of life.

Storyteller one shares a dream of what s/he would have wanted in his/her family.

"We would be talking, problem solving, learning from each other, accepting each other, loving each other. Without a desire to hurt each other."

Storyteller two explains what the experience of wholeness would mean for him/her.

To be together at a big party. It's just so interesting and fun and exciting!

**Why is this so great?**

Because the kingdom would have come. People would stop working so much to accumulate. That the rivers would run free. That they would not make anymore Buttes. That God-awful hole upsets me! I just don't think the world has to be screwed up. If we all did that (just got together) it wouldn't be.

Storyteller three speaks of what could have been and projects forward what can now be in his/her own life as a parent.

This is my mother and this is how I would have liked it to have been. It's her looking in on me in my bedroom ... She looks tired, but
concerned. That sense of confidence that she could do something, that she could make a difference. Or even knew to look.

Storyteller four holds on to a childhood feeling and creates a life the way s/he had always envisioned.

I can remember so many things up till the time of my dad's death. There was such a closeness there, you know. I think if I could make it the way that I remembered him what he ... he loved to farm. He just loved farming. And a ... I would have liked to have seen a life where, you know ... I think if I could draw back the things that I really desire to have been able to spend more time with him on a ranch. If I could set things up the way I wanted to I'm sure it would be on a little ranch some place.

Storyteller five paints a picture out of a deep knowledge of what it feels like to go without. His/her gratitude for her spouses family is captured in these words.

A picture I would look for would probably be one with a big family ... there wouldn't be the drinking. They're really close, but they are also very private with their own families. They never gossip. They get together a lot and they have a great time. It is someone to depend on. They are not intrusive, but if you want help, they will be there. I guess it's just someone to depend on.

Storyteller six blends images with interactions in describing his/her desire of their present family.

Peaceful, harmony, affection, touching, positive touching, laughter, lots of laughter. Husband, present child, and I now. A relationship with God. To become closer together and know one another and find harmony in that.

Storyteller seven doesn't ask for a lot. His/her words are simple and thus powerful creators of images for others.

I'd have parents who would ... well-adjusted ones and I think I would probably maybe have a brother and a sister. It would feel safe and protected and loving and a ... feel a connection to those people. A connection of being a family. The opposite of isolated ... to be myself, who I was supposed to be. I would be able to concentrate on school and learn things and doing art and maybe learning how to play an instrument and take ballet lessons.
Summary

The findings of this study built upon the narratives of the adult population who reconstructed narratives about their childhood or youth. As a person I have been deeply touched by the moving accounts of their reconstructed memories that have resulted in this paper's hermeneutic schema, understanding of images, scripting of wisdom, and therapeutic entry based upon images. The confirmation that these findings held validity came as selected storytellers critiqued this findings section.

Again, I am indebted to the storytellers who shared their narratives. Without their courage to share their wisdom this section of the paper could not have been written. Their narratives have touched my heart and expanded my vision of the impact of severe stress upon a child or youth.
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THIS STUDY

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the study's findings in relation to the theories covered in chapter one to show how the current findings support or expand existing theory. The implications section identifies a number of entry points for therapy which enables one to have the skills necessary to do therapeutic assessment and intervention. Such assessment and intervention rely, not only upon the rules of hermeneutics, but also upon an understanding of the levels of social interaction and a general knowledge of images. The third section of this chapter re-addresses the subjective nature of reality. Reality is framed in the context of degrees of probability. The degree of probability is equal to the predictability of a given social interaction. If a given social interaction is consistent, then the degree of probability that a social interaction will reoccur as predicted increases.

One limitation of this study stems from the size and composition of the sample population. The sample population size may have limited the scope of the findings. If the sample population had been larger then perhaps more diverse findings may have been possible. The narratives also come from a Caucasian perspective and may not represent the findings of other nationalities.

Another limitation of this study is its design. This study was conducted with a select groups of persons by a specific interpreter. These findings represent my analysis of this specific group of people, at this given time.
A Review of Theoretical Assumptions

Theory and findings mesh in this section. The theoretical constructs upon which this study was built are also confirmed, in part, by the findings of the study. The findings also expand the theoretical constructs and create open questions for further study. What follows is an overview of the theories in chapter one along with a review and implications of the findings interwoven. Questions for further study are interspersed as well.

Meshing Theories with Findings

Kantor and Lehr (1985) understand images as internalized representations of action made or observed" (p. 241). This places images squarely in the context of social transactions. This study affirms that observation and actual interaction in social transactions does create images. Images were discovered to be words that describe the persons, places, or things in each storyteller's narrative.

Nichols' ego-object relationship paradigm (1984) places a heavy emphasis upon the first thirty-six months of life for the creation of images. Other theorists support that maternal-type figures do have a tremendous influence upon the development of an infant's images about reality (Crittenden, 1985; Feldman, Stiffman, & Jung, 1987; Lancaster & Adler, 1989).

The study's findings do not deny the influence in the first thirty-six months of ego-object interactions. Some storytellers told of very early experiences that shaped their views of life. For one storyteller it was a near death experience around age four and for another, an experience in "Kiros" time at age three.

There is evidence from the study that the influence of social interactions upon ego-object interactions goes far beyond the first thirty-six months of life. This study supports an Hegelian dialectic (Burr & Klein, 1994) appreciation for
social interactions that builds upon a lay-epistemic view of knowledge that is ever expanding, challenging, and changing our images of reality (Kruglanski, Baldwin, & Towson, 1983; Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). It would be fair to say that first impressions made during the infant and toddler years are powerful contributors, but that as we grow, new knowledge, or perhaps the expansion of our cognitive abilities, reshapes and refines our images of reality.

The findings support that subsequent ego-object interactions, that occurred beyond the first thirty-six months, do have a tremendous impact upon images. The powers of articulation or symbolic representation of events through the use of language also expanded earlier images held by an individual.

Hypothesis formation for a lay-epistemologist is actually an explanation of an ego-object interaction. Hypotheses are created to explain, a) the goals of the main characters, b) the plans for reaching those goals, and c) the patterns of interaction between the ego and the object (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). Lalljee and Abelson view this process as the way we organize an understanding of our social lives. Lalljee and Abelson also viewed scripted behaviors, that are the outcomes of synthesized social interactions, as indicators that have reached a point of closure (Lalljee & Abelson, 1983). This closure may be due to time restraints or a lack of capacity or motivation (Kruglanski, Baldwin, & Towson, 1983).

This study viewed scripted behaviors as just that, indicators. These indicators signaled that closure on a given hypothesis had occurred. There was no measurement available to determine time restraints, capacity, or motivation. The only indication that motivators existed was through the presence of contrasting views of reality posed by a grandmother, friend, or a life experience.

The interpretations throughout this study drew upon the basic process of attributional theorists like Kruglanski, Baldwin, and Towson (1983). These three
authors indicate that individuals create and test hypotheses according to a person's capacity and motivation. The capacity to generate an hypothesis is dependent upon one's past knowledge (e.g., the residue of stored images) and the present availability of new knowledge. One powerful source of new knowledge that was evident in the narratives were experiences that were in direct contrast to the norm.

Motivators, according to Kruglanski, Baldwin, and Towson (1983), are internalized factors that draw upon a person's need for structure (the knowledge that gives one confidence), validity (the believability of one's knowledge), and conclusions (which support one's belief system). When the sample population reconstructed images about their childhood and youth, there was an awareness that their childhood realities were an extension of a reality held by an adult in their lives. This area needs further study.

Individuals store images of living events within a data base, or imagistic memory bank, for future use (Hess & Handel, 1959; Nichols, 1984). These conceptualizations of actions made or observed yield a view of reality that is subjective, fluid, perceptual, and interpretive in nature (Burr & Klein, 1994). This reality is validated by its pragmatic usefulness and its need to support a given belief system (Burr & Klein, 1994; Kruglanski, Baldwin, & Towson, 1983).

The adults of this population had diverse views of reality as was evident in their own unique expressions of scripted behaviors. Reality for all was subjective and based upon perceptual abilities. They survived. Many children subjected to such stressors do not. Their narratives support the fluid, pragmatic embrace of reality.
Future Research

Three questions for future study emerge from the findings. The first question focuses on family process. How do families use the social interactions of history to create reality that shapes subsequent generations.

A second question is an open ended ethical question. It simply asks if a need exists for clients to know prior to therapy that certain therapeutic techniques actually attempt to reconstruct images of the past.

A third area that needs further research is in the area of escape. When a person who is subjected to severe stress attempts to escape physically or mentally, are they fleeing from the residual image of the event, or from the persons that placed them at-risk, or from the possibility that the severe stressor may reoccur?

Implications: Theory Driven Therapy

Therapy that is theory driven need not be complex. One of the simplest forms of counseling comes in the form of storytelling. Stories provide a powerful tool for therapeutic analysis. Therapy based upon a knowledge of images directing behaviors and behaviors creating new images can provide a means for both therapeutic analysis and intervention. Figure 6, which was used as a hermeneutical framework in chapter three, provides a conceptualization for these four points of therapeutic entry in counseling. These four points of therapeutic assessment and intervention take place where nouns, narrative, scripted behaviors, and images appear.
Nouns

A therapist can suggest that a person list the persons, places, and things which are most prominent. I would suggest two lists of nouns, one list containing nouns that have positive images attached and another list containing nouns that have negative images attached. After the lists are completed, to which more nouns can be added later, the person should describe each person, place, or thing. Another approach would be to have the person relate a story about each noun with descriptive words picked out as s/he tells the story.

Narratives

A therapist may encounter a person who simply wants to tell his/her story. As the therapist listens to the story, Figure 6 can be used to interpret the story as it unfolds. The therapist looks for positive images that foster scripted behaviors that point the individual towards health and competence. At the same time the therapist looks for negative images that direct scripted behaviors towards escape. At this point, a number of directions are possible:

1) The therapist may call forth a cognitive realization about nouns. Nouns can elicit two imagistic paths. These two paths lead to contrasting behaviors. One set of behaviors leads to health and competence and another set leads to escape.

2) The goal of therapy could be to develop a behavior plan. This plan would redirect scripted behaviors away from negative images and towards positive images.

3) Another direction might be to desensitize images. This would be done by going back and reinterpreting the stressful social interactions of the past. New images of health and competence would be interjected.
Scripted Behaviors

A therapist may want to tackle presenting behaviors that need correction, like alcoholism. When a behavior is recognized as a response to formed images, then an attempt can be made to discover what set of images directs that behavior. If the behavior entails shutting down, then this form of escapism may be a means of avoiding the images themselves. In cases of shutdown, the therapist should take time and slowly call forth images by returning to listing nouns or telling stories.

Images

Images describe the nouns of a given social interaction. An image is biased by the knowledge one possesses from previous scripted behaviors. The social interaction with a given noun may follow past scripts. If the nature of the social interaction is totally new, a process of hypothesis formation will begin to create a new image. The social interaction with nouns not only defines that noun, but also the individual who creates the images.

Reality as Subjective Interpretation

The conceptualization of reality embodying only the tangible, or concrete, is popular in the hard sciences. Tangible entities like a tree, a bicycle, or a marble can be measured and weighed. The social interaction between a tree and a bicyclist, who unfortunately hits the tree at thirty miles per hour, is fairly predictable and constant. The problem arises when the entities being studied in a social interaction are no longer predictable.

In the arena of social interactions, it is the predictability of scripted behaviors that makes something real. In actuality scripted behaviors can only
possess a degree of probability. The higher the degree of probability that a scripted behavior will be followed, then the higher the degree of probability that a given social interaction will occur. For example, the last time I visited my neighbor his Blue Heeler bit my ankles. My experiences with Blue Heelers tells me that I if go back to my neighbor's house, I'd better watch my back side. However, if I go to a movie with my friend I do not know if s/he will enjoy the movie. Probability is more certain in some social interactions than it is in others.

This aspect of subjective reality does not negate the ability to create propositional truths about life. It simply places prepositional truths on a continuum of degrees of probability. Reality is merely an image we create after socially interacting with a person, place, or thing.

Summary

I have found the conceptualization of images as a window into another's reality to be refreshing. It sets aside the need to judge another person in exchange for a position that invites me to see what another sees, what is contained in another's reality base.

I find the idea of images, scripted behaviors, nouns, and narratives a simple way to work with individuals in the context of therapy. By nature I enjoy analyzing information. This study enabled me to follow a simple guide for analysis and intervention. I hope that the reader has gleaned a portion of the significance and practicality that I have obtained from this project.
REFERENCES


Appendices
Contained in this section are the four major documents of this study and their subsequent subsections.

I. The Story Telling Procedure
   A. The creation of hypothesis
   B. The contrasting of hypothesis

II. Selecting Participants
   A. Initial criteria used to select well-functioning adults
      (Beavers & Hampson)
   B. Criteria used to determine if a person was an at-risk child
      (Werner & Smith)

III. Screening Tool for the Selection of Well-functioning Adults.
     (Beavers & Hampson)

IV. Release of Information
Appendix A

The Story Telling Procedure
The Story Telling Procedure

I. The Construction of a Hypothesis

In hypothesis construction individual's logically deduces the goals of main actors, any resident conflict between those goals, plus any known scripts for the main actors, and the presence of any covariance or existing pre-conditions. An individual's power to utilize deductive logic is dependent upon their capacity to freeze or unfreeze specific conclusions, to store ideas, and to link ideas to one another via language and other forms of imagery.

Scene One. From the TAT pictures choose a set of pictures that would represent your life as a child and/or youth.

A. In this first set of pictures identify the main characters. (Even if the interviewed person does not identify themselves as a main character, treat them as one during the questioning process.)

1. What is the goal for each main characters?
2. Where there any conflicts between the goals of the main characters?
3. What pattern of behaviors did each character follow?
4. What immediately preceded this scene?
5. What specific conclusion did you reach after experiencing this scene?

Scene Two. From the TAT pictures choose a set of pictures that represents the direct opposite to what you experienced as a child and/or youth.

B. In this second set of pictures identify the main characters. (Even if the interviewed person does not identify themselves as a main character, treat them as one during the questioning process.)

1. What is the goal for each main characters?
2. Where there any conflicts between the goals of the main characters?
3. What pattern of behaviors did each character follow?
4. What immediately preceded this scene?
5. What specific conclusion would you have reached after experiencing this scene?
II. Contrasting the Hypothesis

Individuals construct contrasting hypothesis to provide a congruent and valid organizational framework of reality which will support specific conclusions. The deductive ability of an individual enables them to construct a new contrasting hypothesis. Again, this ability is dependent upon their capacity to freeze or unfreeze specific conclusions, to store ideas, and to link ideas to one another via language and other forms of imagery.

A. Contrast the first set of pictures with the second set.

"What contrast can you see

1. between the goals for each set of the main characters?

2. between the conflict over goals for each set of the main characters?

3. between the pattern of behaviors for each set of the main characters?

4. between what immediately preceded each of these scenes?

5. between the specific conclusion you would reach after experiencing each of these scenes.

B. After contrasting the two sets of pictures ....

1. Was there ever a time in your life when you were unable/unwilling to see the contrast between these two sets of pictures?

   a. if so what kept your eyes closed?

   b. if so what opened your eyes?

2. In a very simplistic way these two sets of pictures suggest the presence of a source of light in life. For you

   a. what was that source of light in the midst of darkness?

   b. what words describe this light?

   c. what images surrounded it's presence?

   (Explore both external and internal sources of light)

3. Was there ever a time when the light got dim, or at time when you forget that the light existed?

4. What kept the light alive?
5. When the light was present how did it make you
   a. feel?
   b. what were some of your thoughts?
   c. how did it affect your behaviors?

6. How did your encounter with the light effect
   a. the goals for each of the main characters?
   b. the conflict over goals for each of the main characters?
   c. the pattern of behaviors for each of the main characters?
   d. what immediately preceded this scene?
   e. the specific conclusion you would reach after experiencing this scenes.
Appendix B

Selecting Participants
I am working on a Master's Thesis that reviews the meanings an at-risk child gives to stressful life events. The meaning attributed to an event, by an at-risk child, may help him/her overcome the odds and enable them to become a well functioning adult.

My need is to interview well-functioning adults who were once children at-risk. That is, adults whose childhood had stress present that could have kept them from developing into well functioning adults.

Two sets of criteria need to be met to qualify for this study. 

The first set of criteria defines your present style of relating to others. Please circle the item(s) that are generally characteristic of you as an adult. (List adapted from Successful Families, Beavers & Hampson, 1990)

1. I seek after and usually find a sense of emotional closeness to others.
2. I respect others who are different from me; ethnically, gender socially, etc.
3. I allow others persons to have different points of view from my own.
4. I am able to negotiate with others so there is a clear understanding of both what I believe and what they believe and what together we will do.
5. Because I value my own thoughts and feelings and ability to act, I am able to handle conflict or ambivalence as it arises through direct dialogue and open negotiation.
6. I am able to acknowledge others authority and respect their position and/or wisdom.
7. I am flexible and able to adapt to my own developmental changes or life stresses.
8. I am able to lovingly respect others as equals or in the case of children and youth as emerging equals.

If most of the above mentioned characteristics are present in your life, then please continue with the second set of criteria.

Please check the items that applied to your life at the ages so indicated below. (List adapted from Overcoming the Odds, Werner & Smith, 1992)

Before age 2

I lived in poverty.
My mother was not married when I was born.
I experienced prolonged disruption in my family life at age 1.
My mother was pregnant with a sibling before I was age 2.
I had a number of personal illnesses.
I was below normal in physical development or I was handicapped.
I was below normal in intellectually development.
I was below normal in social development.
Between Age 2 through 10

I lived in poverty.
My mother was permanently absent (divorce, separation, death).
My father was permanently absent (divorce, separation, death).
I had a sibling leave home.
I had a number of illnesses.
I had a sibling who was handicapped.
My mother was alcoholic, mentally ill, or developmental disabled.
My mother remarried and/or I had conflict with my step father.
I experienced continual conflict between my parents.
I needed special education, Chapter I etc.
I needed to see a mental health counselor.

Between Ages 11 through 18

I lived in poverty.
My mother was permanently absent(divorced, separated, death).
My father was permanently absent (divorced, separated, death).
I was placed in a foster care.
I got marriage.
I had conflict with my mother.
I had conflict with my father.

During the Ages 17/18

I had a record of delinquency.
I had mental health problems.
I failed school.
I became pregnant.

If four of these childhood/youth characteristics were present in your history then your insights would be of value to researchers studying children and youth who are presently at-risk. Please consider your insights as a contribution to a pool of knowledge that attempts to understand how perceptions of life events can help an at-risk child overcome the odds.

I ask that those desiring to share their insights take an hour-and-a-half to be interviewed by me concerning recollections of childhood. Confidentiality is maintained throughout the study. Please contact me if you can help, or please pass this sheet on to someone else who you know whose wisdom could be of value.

Thank You.

John Plummer  763-4109 (hm) / 586-6743 (wk, leave message)
Appendix C

Present Profile Assessment
Present Profile Assessment

For each question, mark the answer that best fits how you see your interactions with others now. If you feel that your answer is between two of the labeled numbers (the odd numbers), then choose the even number that is between them.

1. I pay attention to other people’s feelings.

2. I enjoy doing things together with my present family/friends?

3. I have and also give other people a say in making plans?

4. When I make decisions with others I am able to understand and agree on those decisions?

5. I compete and fight with others.

6. I sense a closeness with my present family/friends and yet allow them to be special and unique.

7. I can accept the friends of my present family/friends.

8. There is confusion in my life because there is no leader.

9. I am able to touch and hug others.

10. Put downs are normal interactions between me and others.

11. I speak my mind, no matter what.

12. Amongst my present family/friends I feel loved.

13. My present family/friends and I may feel close, but we are embarrassed to admit it.

14. I argue a lot and never solve problems with others.

15. My happiest times are with those closest to me.

16. When I am responsible for something then I am a strong leader.

17. The future looks good for me.

18. When things don’t go right I usually find someone to blame.

19. My present family/friends and I usually go our own way most of the time.

20. I am proud of being close to my present family/friends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes: Fits me very well</th>
<th>Some: Fits me</th>
<th>No: Does not fit me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. I am good at solving problems with others. | Yes: Fits me well | Some: Fits me some | No: Does not fit me |
---|---|---|---|
22. I am able to easily express warmth and care towards others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
23. It's OK to fight and yell at my present family/friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
24. Amongst those I care for I have my favorites. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
25. When things go wrong I blame another. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
26. I say what I think and feel. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
27. My present family and friends would rather do things with other people than with me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
28. I pay attention to other people and listen to what they say. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
29. I worry about hurting other's feelings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
30. My mood is usually sad and blue. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
31. I argue a lot. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
32. Amongst my present family/friends I or another will control or lead. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
33. I am happy most of the time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
34. I allow others to take responsibility for their own actions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
35. I function well with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
36. I rely upon my present family/friends and they rely upon me for satisfaction rather than seeking it elsewhere. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
Appendix D

Release of Information
Release of Information

The intent of this study is to gain insights into how you as an adult perceived yourself, other persons, and the setting in which people functioned when you were a child. Your insights will be collated with others' insights and together will create a pool of wisdom that can help developmentally at-risk children create resiliency.

You will be asked to share your insights in two areas. Altogether it will take approximately an hour and a half of your time.

The first area will utilize TAT (Thematic Appreciation Test) pictures. The TAT can be used specifically as a test instrument. In our case we will not be administering the TAT. We will simply use the TAT as a source for obtaining some classic pictures that will help recall your childhood. You will be shown a set of pictures and asked to select one or more that best describes your childhood and a second set of pictures that is in direct contrast to the first set. In these sets of pictures you will be asked to identify the main characters, their behavior and goals, what preceded the scene in the picture, and specific conclusions that can be made about each picture.

The second area of questioning will focus upon the contrasts that exist within the sets of pictures and we will explore how you store idea and link new ideas together.

The interview should be of benefit to yourself as well as to the study. The areas of questioning are not intended to be therapeutic, although it may allow individuals an opportunity to organize their thoughts and gain new insights. It needs to be clear that if you desire to withdraw from the interview at any time you may do so without any obligation to continue. Confidentiality is guaranteed, with access of raw information being open only to my professors who over-sees this thesis. Response will be taped in order to assure that all answers are accurately portrayed in the study.

A signature of consent is required in order to allow me to interview and to share your insights in a published form. If at any time you have a concern and feel the need to talk to my immediate supervisor at MSU, then please call Dr. Carmen Knudsen-Martin at 994-3299. It needs to be recognized that this interview process is entered into with certain inherent risk; that it may create feelings that are discomforting. Signing this form indicates a willingness to assume that risk and to withdraw oneself from the interview if need arises.

_________________________________________  _______________________
your signature  date

_________________________________________  _______________________
interviewer's signature  date