

Temporality and the Phenomena of Addiction and Recovery:
Phenomenology, Symbolic Interaction and the Meaning/Interpretation Debate

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis is a hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of the phenomenon of addiction, particularly alcohol addiction. My thesis draws heavily from the phenomenological school of hermeneutic phenomenology, in particular Max Van Manen's (2006) text, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* as a frame of reference for my inquiry into and analysis of the lived experience of addiction and recovery. The Van Manen text is used as a research handbook, guiding my approach, my analysis, and the project more generally. My thesis found that, using the existential of lived time, temporality, in recovery the present is essentially different than the past, and that recovering addicts necessarily rethink and reorient themselves to the past to heal.

Acknowledgements

Sturgeon's Revelation "is an observation that once humans are exposed to excellence, mere average desirability is disappointing."

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Dedication

This manuscript is dedicated solely to my D'ad, John Hanemaayer.

Thank you for “question time”. Thank you for always encouraging me to follow my passions. Thank you for inspiring my desire and ambition to learn. Thank you for helping me realize my dreams and supporting me both financially and emotionally when I had nothing but an imagination. Thank you for being the steadfast touch stone to where I return when I am in need of advice and assistance. Or just a hug.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis is a hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of the phenomenon of addiction, particularly alcohol addiction. It draws heavily from the phenomenological school of hermeneutic phenomenology, staying close to Max Van Manen's (2006) text *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* as a frame of reference for my inquiry into and analysis of the lived experience of addiction and recovery. The Van Manen text is used as a research handbook, guiding my approach, my analysis, and the project more generally. I demonstrate that Van Manen's approach is best for getting at the essential characterization of addiction to alcohol. I develop materials from various types of research on alcohol addiction as well as interviews with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) members. I use the existential of lived time, temporality, to demonstrate that in recovery, the present is essentially different than the addicted past, and that recovering addicts necessarily rethink and reorient themselves to that past in order to heal.

1.1 Alcohol Addiction

With rising public interest in social problems and their remedies, various academic fields have taken up defining, explaining and resolving the problem of addiction in everyday life. The topic had gained importance particularly recently due to the evidence-based medical agenda to explicate addiction as a disease as well as "cure" addicted individuals. The *disease concept* of alcohol addiction introduced by E. Morton Jellinek in the mid-nineteen-fifties has spawned various types of research in psychology, chemistry and biology, pharmaceutical

science and engineering, global studies, health sciences, and the social sciences, classifying addiction as a disease of the body. The disease concept incited a trend in addiction research that (a) favours a scientific orientation; (b) externalizes addiction, moving the focus away from the experience of the addict; and (c) is supposed by empirical and positivist results that are verifiable by the scientific procedure.

In Midanik's (2006) book, *The Biomedicalization of Alcohol Studies*, she outlines benefits and costs of the use of the biomedical model of addiction in alcohol studies. Among the benefits she lists is the fact that the medicalized model allows addicts to be studied under the scrutiny of the medical lens, promising a hope of future cure, and relieving the addict from the responsibility of understanding his/her own experience (Midanik 2006:24). By making the body an object of study, the lived experience of the addict, how the addict understands and makes sense of his/her addiction, becomes lost in the positive relation addressed by science as cause and effect, and its orientation to curing the malfunctioning (addicted) body.

The notions of cause and consequence that underlay the biomedicalized research can be beneficial for concretely and biologically reducing the process of addiction and recovery to factors and reactions. Various research traditions have taken up explaining the phenomenon as a consequence of a cause, that people are caused to enter into addictive behaviours because of social factors, or biological ones, for example. The group Alcoholics Anonymous has embraced the explanation of their addiction as a biological one. However, this orientation falls short of addressing the lived experience of addiction and recovery

because, although biology does affect us, the way that we come to recognize addiction, the way that we relate to it, and the way that we experience it in our daily lives lies at the grounds of any understanding or research formulation. The issues in the field of addiction research and its grounds in the lived experience are addressed in the *Review of the Literature*.

1.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The approach

My thesis does not address the debate between the medicalized (objectified) model and the experience (subjective meaning) of the addict. Here, I am simply using this debate as an example of the emergence of the subjective and meaning-focused research in fields such as addiction studies that previously had been occupied by science. Addiction studies, as in the social science research agenda, assert to set itself apart from the positive cause and effect model of medical science that is chemically, bodily, and genetically oriented; and, instead, emphasize the agency of the addict, keeping its research focused on subjective meaning and its implications for understanding the actor's orientation to the problem.

Van Manen's approach to researching lived experience is one methodology that emphasizes the relation between the addict and her orientation to her own addiction. Hermeneutic phenomenology studies human experience by examining the relation between the particularity and uniqueness of an experience and the universality of human experience – what makes that experience possible? The inquirer becomes responsible for recovering the universal quality of human experience by practicing phenomenological analysis of texts about the phenomenon in question (here, addiction). In this thesis I gather individual voices from materials about the phenomenon of addiction, I transform the lived experience data into

a “textual representation of its essence” (Van Manen 2006:36). The essence of the experience of addiction reveals aspects of the human condition that are not necessarily limited to that particular experience. For example, the feeling of being lost can be experienced during various actions, being lost in a book, being geographically lost, and even in the feeling of being undecided. The textual expression of a phenomenon’s essence is a provocation for the reader, animating his/her own experiences and rethinking his/her own relation to that essence and action. Hermeneutic phenomenology engages both the inquirer and the reader to develop a better understanding of the phenomenon, also in part to rethink prior understandings or experiences.

Van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenological approach draws on a long tradition of phenomenology and its subfields, transforming their theoretical principles into a research agenda. Drawing on Dilthey’s (1986) *Poetry and Experience*, Van Manen describes the concept of the lived experience as, “a reflexive or self-given awareness which is, as awareness, unaware of itself” (2006:35). This concept is also described as the essence of an experience, it uses description to illuminate the ontological nature of a phenomenon. The lived experience is the reflexive meaning-making members do – but are also unaware of – as they act in the world. Each particular experience gains its significance and meaning through reflection, a retrospective attachment and interpretation of meaning to a particular event or action in relation to a larger context of memories (history), culture, interpretations from others (community), and so on. In this way, meaning can be uncovered through self-reflection focused on particular actions. For example, the action of drinking requires the

necessary knowledge of what alcohol is, how to hold a glass, how much alcohol will induce intoxication, and acknowledging the experience of drunkenness to the consciousness as it occurs. However, if people were continuously concerned with reflecting on every instance of what is happening, very little would be accomplished (c.f. Husserl 1970). It is in this way that this kind of deep reflection is uninteresting to people (and in my case, addicts). The lived experience is the pre-reflection of these experiences, the flow of life and how we live it. It is the task of the researcher and writer to describe, develop and analyze these experiences by engaging in deep reflection.

Lived experience research examines the in-and-of-itself of an action or activity. It emphasizes the action's essence, what it is and what it is not. The nature of the action and the member's self-knowledge and orientation to that action emerges through the inquirer's interest in reflective-thinking and the focused development of the lived experience of that phenomenon (addiction). For this kind of phenomenological focus, materials for the researcher can be anything. Van Manen describes data as "a thing given" (2006:53). The essence of a phenomenon or experience can be captured in texts of various kinds, academic sources from various fields (e.g. not limited to sociology), art, interviews, literature (e.g. fiction, poetry, journals), and so on. The lived experience of addiction will be found in texts about addiction. This kind of self-knowledge for members experiencing addiction will be "granted" to me, the researcher, through the materials that I use, which I have selected according to the standard outlined in my research question and emphasis. Using the research materials that I select, the lived experience of addiction will be developed through the

description of its essence, as found and uncovered through my work as an inquirer. The theory and method of phenomenology will be further developed in the *Theory and Methods* chapter of this thesis.

The dialectical relationship between the particular and universal are central to hermeneutic phenomenology. In forming descriptions of particular lived experience data, certain essences that make that experience possible are the focus of the analysis. The universal quality of the essence is the focus of the analysis. By focusing on the dialectical relation between the particular lived experience and the universal essence that makes that experience possible, hermeneutic phenomenology will produce a deeper understanding of the essential meaning of the phenomenon.

1.3 The Debate

Another field in the social sciences is the agency-focused research tradition of symbolic interaction and its ethnographic methodology (e.g. Blumer 1969). Symbolic interaction is focused on the interaction between individuals and the process by which individuals accomplish meaning, as opposed to the hermeneutic phenomenological focus on the relation between the particular experience and its universal essence. My thesis is a lively debate between symbolic interaction and hermeneutic phenomenology and how each method would develop my research question into addiction and recovery. I will demonstrate that the hermeneutic phenomenological method of researching lived experience is the method that best addresses the meaning of addiction and its experience by doing an analysis of the phenomenon. Symbolic interaction examines meaning as something that arises out of an

emergent process of negotiation between social actors. As a field trying to set itself and its research promise apart from that of science and positivism, symbolic interaction sets out to research the way that the actor is oriented to his/her own problem and experience of addiction and substance use. Symbolic interaction promises to explain addiction and its meaning as an instance that is social, contextually subjective, and negotiated. It is here that my thesis intersects with this tradition and methodology. By using symbolic interaction's promise to focus on the actor's experience of addiction, my thesis will demonstrate the value of the Van Manen lived experience method of inquiry in lieu of symbolic interaction, showing that it can fulfill that promise of the meaning of the human experience of addiction, where symbolic interaction cannot.

By using symbolic interaction and its ethnographic method in this way, I will be able to demonstrate the limitations of symbolic interaction and show that hermeneutic phenomenological analysis goes further in developing the essential structure of addiction. I will use symbolic interaction as part of my analysis. My thesis will primarily be an analysis of the lived experience of addiction and recovery, but it will also be a debate. So, while my project has a dual focus, the debate as well as the analysis, the emphasis is primarily on the lived experience analysis of my materials.

1.4 Research Contribution

My thesis will contribute to the current literature about addiction and alcohol addiction particularly by showing the problems in the current trends of addiction research, as well as reconnect those other studies to the grounds of their inquiry. Additionally, the product

of hermeneutic phenomenology provides formulations of new understandings of the phenomenon and human experience of the inquiry. By developing the essential nature of experience, that experience becomes significant to the reader in a way that was previously unseen. For my research, the experience of addiction will allow both me, as the inquirer, and the reader to see the experience of addiction in a new way. Because my particular insight into an essence of the experience of addiction will be different than another researcher writing and using the same materials, my contribution will be unique to the field of addiction research. Additionally, the reader will gain the experience of seeing the phenomenon as an essence, an experience made possible by the human condition, and will be helpful in provoking the reader to rethink his/her own relation to that essence and experience. In this way, hermeneutic phenomenology is an analysis that stands as one possible description of the experience addiction.

The product of symbolic interaction and ethnographic research is a description for further testing. Descriptions of processes are gathered by ethnographic researchers and writers to formulate concepts that are applicable to the data collected in relation to how meaning is negotiated. Concepts are meant to contribute to the larger research dialogue and tested and verified by further ethnographic research for their relevance to society as a whole. Concepts themselves are put into process language, and are granted to the community as the result of one research analysis. Although not explicit in symbolic interactionist theory, this method implies that the continuous verification of concepts will lead to a list of universally applicable, viable concepts that explain how meaning is negotiated in all human group life.

Instead of a concern with concepts that are verifiable, hermeneutic phenomenology is committed to creating a description of one essence that makes the experience of the phenomenon possible. My thesis will describe the essential structure of the experience of addiction and recovery as it relates to my materials. My thesis will show what understandings of addiction and recovery makes it possible to recognize addiction and recovery as experiences at all. It is this method that will allow my analysis to show the grounds of both my materials, as well as demonstrate how other approaches, such as symbolic interaction, take these grounds for granted, pre-assuming that addiction and recovery are experiences that exist. Hermeneutic phenomenology and the method of lived experience research will show how and why addiction and recovery have come to be understood as experiences that can be experienced at all.

In the words of Van Manen, hermeneutic phenomenology is “holistic and analytical, evocative and precise, unique and universal, powerful and sensitive” (2006:39). To be concerned with both the whole and the interdependence of its parts is the way that lived experience research attends to the relationship between the uniqueness of the experience and universal, human experience that makes the particular experience possible. It is this relationship that drives the analysis forward.

1.5 Research Question

Lived experience research begins with a research question. This research question guides the collection of materials and a boundary to focus the development of an analysis. For my thesis, I will use the question, *What is the lived experience of addiction and*

recovery? to guide my thesis project. Using this question, I will look for the essences of the experience of addiction and recovery by collecting materials from interviews that I collected during the winter of 2007 at an Alcoholics Anonymous group in an unnamed city. As part of a larger, five year interdisciplinary project funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research, “City Life and Well-Being: The grey zone of health and illness”, eight people were interviewed about their encounter with alcohol and the struggle with their addiction and recovery. Interviews were semi-structured; all participants were asked six particular questions, but generally the interviews were lucid, following threads that came up as I tried to get at the lived experience of addiction. Additionally, I attended AA meetings for a period of 3 months, taking notes to anecdotally describe what I encountered there.

I will use my research question as a standard by which to select materials about addiction in developing my thesis, and also as a guide to developing my analysis. I will do this by making the phenomena of addiction and recovery “puzzling”. By treating these phenomena as a “mystery” (Van Manen 2006:50), it will become present to me in a way that is not concerned with defining it or explicating it in relation to cause and consequence. Instead, I will be concerned with unravelling the mystery of addiction and recovery. What is it like to go through addiction and recovery? What does it feel like to experience this? This orientation requires discipline, as writing can often lead the writer astray, and my task will be to develop the lived experience descriptions in a manner that answers this question and illuminates the essence of addiction and recovery. I will ask what makes the experiences of

addiction and recovery possible experiences of the human condition. I will now briefly outline a chapter summary of my project.

1.6 Chapter Summary

Theory and Method. Chapter two begins with the theoretical and methodological description of the hermeneutic phenomenological method of my project. Following my introductory chapter, I will next develop the theoretical roots of the tradition, as well as a description of the method. I have chosen to combine the theory and methods because, in hermeneutic phenomenology, they are intertwined; in developing a lived experience description, thought and practice are entangled together as each informs and interrupts the other to make movement through the analysis of materials.

To take on a discussion of the theoretical roots, this chapter will develop the notion of a *lived experience* by tracing its ontological and intellectual foundations in phenomenology. While Van Manen appreciates the vastness of phenomenological scholarship and its offshoots, developing how each has contributed to the history of the tradition and its implications for the various forms that lived experience research can take, in my thesis I will only develop a few thinkers that will provide an adequate starting point for theoretical and methodological principles. In this interest of comprehensiveness and the inability to here address each scholarly contribution to the field of phenomenology with deference, I will limit my theoretical chapter to a few theorists whose work I will select to shape the grounds of my approach.

I will start my theoretical development with Husserl's phenomenology, his conceptions of its grounds, its interests and emphasis; it will provide a starting place from which to build upon the dialogue that emerged from his writings. Then, working through thinkers like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, I will develop their own contributions to the tradition, demonstrating their regard to Husserl's influence as well as expanding it. Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty took an interest in working through the actor's existential being in the world, ontological assumptions, as well as epistemological implications. Heidegger's approach, as well as conception of being, will provide historical context to the concept of the lived experience. Merleau-Ponty's work on perception and the mind/body relation are also important historically for the development of the phenomenological tradition and method within which I am working. For my theoretical emphasis on the lived experience, both these theorists have given substantial work that will help to demonstrate my own approach and methods to the lived experience of addiction and recovery.

Other important theorists will be included in my discussion of theoretical roots of the lived experience that will draw more particularly from the field of sociology. Alfred Schutz, for example, and his contribution to the understanding of the stranger will outline a methodological as well as ontological orientation of the inquirer – the process of making the phenomenon strange, and how this relates to the analysis of materials. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann also contribute to the sociological understanding of the lifeworld through their interest in its necessary recreation and maintenance by the everyday member. They focus primarily on the member's knowledge and self-understanding, which has implications

for my inquiry into the lived experience and the self-understanding of addiction and recovery. Lastly, in the tradition of hermeneutic phenomenology, I will explore how this tradition is alive today in the work of Max Van Manen and how he has developed a methodology for studying the lived experience of everyday members. By developing the intellectual history of phenomenology, and by staying particularly focused on the concept of the lived experience, my theory section will provide the foundation for my inquiry's approach to the lived experience of addiction.

Following a historical representation of the tradition of phenomenology with a particular emphasis on the lived experience concept, I will then develop the method of analysis of hermeneutic phenomenology. This section will stay close the Van Manen (2006) text, using it as a frame of reference for developing the analysis and working with the material. Additionally, I will detail the interviews and their collection.

While outlining the method procedurally, this chapter will emerge as both a grounding for the forthcoming analysis, as well as an example of the way that I will treat the lived experience while working through these descriptions. Theory and method are present throughout my thesis project and analysis, but this chapter's purpose is to clearly layout the foundational implications for this kind of inquiry into the self-understanding and lived experience of addiction and recovery, as well as provide a narrative about the emergence of the notion of a lived experience in hermeneutic phenomenology.

Review of the Literature. This section will cover key texts and developments in the field of addiction and alcohol studies. Using the method I outline in my theory and method

section, as well as demonstrate throughout my thesis, materials from various sources will be selected according to the standard of my research question, what is the lived experience of addiction and recovery. Because descriptions of this experience will be found in texts about these phenomena, chapter three will select only materials that will be helpful in answering my research question. I will demonstrate how each of the selected materials moves my question toward or away from the lived experience of addiction and recovery and my interest in teasing out the essence of this experience. This section will develop the texts as a way of learning more about my research question, but will also emphasize its necessity as a problem for inquiry, the key issues in the field, and show how my study contributes to the current bodies of literature about addiction and recovery.

This chapter will start by locating the concept of addiction as one that emerges in a historical context, from habituated drunkenness of colonial times, to the medicalized disease concept of the mid twentieth century. From here, I will draw on materials that have tried to explain the addict's experience of addiction and recovery from various fields, such as religious studies, sociology, psychology, biomedicine, and fiction. Each text will have implications for my own research question as well as on the addict's self-understanding. By connecting the threads from various texts, my inquiry will be strengthened by my collaboration with various speakers as well as the collaboration with various texts to develop my research question. This chapter will lead into my research materials as it addresses the experience of addiction and recovery through a historical collection of materials, as well as offering insights into my own research materials and interview data.

Research Materials. In Chapter four, I will organize my materials thematically, trying to understand how an actual experience, my interview data, is a possible experience. The theme of lostness will emerge through my reflexive engagement with the materials, considering the experience of addiction and recovery, its whatness and more universal themes. I will develop the theme of lostness through formulating lived experience descriptions and collecting my materials. The difference between themes and coding will be addressed, as the thematic organization is central to teasing out the deeper essence and phenomenon of my study. This chapter will close with a description of addiction and recovery that was made possible through the use of the theme of lostness to draw out an existential experience of being.

Analysis. Drawing on the description that emerged through the research theme of lostness, the phenomenon of my research question will be developed in relation to the existential experience of being, particularly, lived time. Chapter five will address the description by dialectically engaging the phenomenon in relation to temporality. The essence that emerges will be critically analyzed to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon in light of its existential, temporal relation to the phenomenon, the experience of addiction and recovery.

Conclusion. In chapter six, I will make some concluding remarks about my analysis in relation to the field of sociology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and the limitations of my study. Additionally, I will suggest some further possibilities for strengthening and deepening my analysis of the lived experience of addiction and recovery.

As mentioned, all my chapters will develop through my engagement with my research question, and will use symbolic interaction as an interlocutor, a voice that moves the dialogue with my materials forward, making distinctions, and demonstrating that hermeneutic phenomenology can best develop my research question into the lived experience of addiction and recovery.

Chapter 2

Theory and Method

This chapter outlines the theoretical orientation of this research project, as well as the methodology. Starting by exploring the phenomenological tradition of lived experience research, this chapter develops the notion of a phenomenon as the object of inquiry and interpretation – what is the meaning of the phenomenon? Drawing on various figures and concepts in the tradition, the chapter’s narrative will turn to the sociological implications for researching the human lived experience, and I will illuminate a problem for the interpretive investigation of meaning. Here, a distinction will be drawn between the empirically driven interests of symbolic interaction research and my research orientation, phenomenological hermeneutics. The chapter will close by outlining the specific methodology that will guide the rest of this research project, the phenomenological orientation to meaning, and the hermeneutic method of reading texts.

2.1 The Phenomenon, The Essence and Reflexivity

The focus of all phenomenological research lies in the inquiry into the whatness or essence of a particular phenomenon. What is the essential experience of addiction and recovery? For this research question, the phenomenon for phenomenological investigation is addiction; more particularly, what does addiction mean in recovery, and what does recovery mean in addiction? What is the essential experience that these phenomena illuminate, what does this relation *show itself as*?

Drawing on the Greek notion of phenomenon, Heidegger describes *phenomenon* as “That which shows itself in itself, the manifest” (Heidegger 1962:51). When we speak about addiction and recovery, these phenomena are taken-for-granted insofar as they are relied on, referred to, in relation to other things and predicates, but never developed in a way to let themselves show themselves. What is it about those phenomena that allows us to see those particular phenomena as something that is meaningful, that stands there on its own in relation to that meaning, and that meaning is available to us for recognizing and interpreting. Developing a phenomenon is staying with that phenomenon without distraction, working through what is essential about it, what makes it possible to exist so that it is recognizable. What is essential to addiction that we could interpret its appearance to us as addiction? In other words, what interpretive work is necessary for us to recognize addiction as an experience?

The notion of appearance, the manifest, is central to the development of phenomenologically oriented research. As a phenomenological researcher, the task at hand is to develop the phenomenon under inquiry in a way that it appears essentially as that thing. Readers should be able to recognize addiction in reading this text – although it may be a new or different way of seeing addiction, it should still be recognizable. In order for the phenomenon to appear is through writing, through working through the materials in such a way that continuously ask, what is this phenomenon? What is it essentially? What allows this phenomenon to become present to me, obvious to me?

Through the interpretation of texts, the writing must always return to the object, the phenomenon. This may seem circular, that in order to show the object as itself, you must return to the object, but this is reflexivity. Reflexivity is both a theoretical orientation to the phenomenon, as well as a methodology, as I will develop throughout this chapter. Reflexivity is a concept that demonstrates the intertwinedness of the theoretical orientation as well as the method when doing phenomenological hermeneutic research. Reflexivity is not circular, as will become clear throughout the chapter and thesis project, but is a way of learning to move within the circle of the phenomenon.

Recalling Van Manen (2006) in the introductory chapter, lived experience research as a way of researching that is reflexive towards the phenomenon under inquiry; lived experience research is an inquiry into the self-given awareness that is necessarily unaware of itself. For the phenomenon, the phenomenon is given, presenting itself in such a way that it is recognizable so that we can reference it, relate to it, but this givenness is necessarily unaware of itself to people (members). If every thought was conscious to the particular, essential meaning of every moment, word, utterance, and so on, there would be no progress or thought. If I was writing and thought, writing, what is that, what does it mean to write, what does writing look like, I would not be able to write anything at all. It is for this reason that the phenomenologist must, through writing, make the phenomenon clear, illuminate it, make it present, recognizable, let the phenomenon show itself, because its essence is known by members, but necessarily forgotten in order to function in everyday life. It is also for this reason that members find this kind of thinking, of inquiry, of work (reflexivity) uninteresting;

because every person already knows how to relate to objects, the desire to make present the essence of a phenomenon is unnecessary for them to carry on in their everyday lives and activities. This is, instead, the task of the phenomenological sociologist, but I will return to this notion later in the chapter.

Where do we find the phenomena for phenomenological investigation? Berger and Luckmann say that phenomenological sociology should start with the everyday worlds and lives of the members of society, saying that its concern is “with what people ‘know’ as ‘reality’ in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, common-sense ‘knowledge’ rather than ‘ideas’ must be the central focus” (1966:27). Because members already know about the objects/phenomena in their worlds, it is here that inquirers must start in order to understand how those phenomena are understood by members themselves. These objects in the everyday worlds of people are understood insofar as people relate to them and act in their daily lives. To know about addiction, the inquirer must enter the everyday world of the addict. How does the addict know what addiction is? What is it like to experience this, to know this? The pre-theoretical understanding, that which is essential to the experience of addiction that is relied on by addicts to know that they are addicts, is what is investigated by the phenomenological sociologist.

2.2 Being and The Lifeworld

Phenomena are found in the everyday worlds of the members. Husserl called this the *lifeworld* [lebenswelt]. Husserl (1936:104-105) describes the life-world as the world that pre-exists us, where we all consciously have our existence, but also the world where we

subjectively experience the lived-world. The lifeworld is where we find objects available to us. The lifeworld is not necessarily a particular, concrete space, but is where we find ourselves existing. Our experience becomes present to us because we already understand the world as a place where phenomena are for our disposal and interpretation. The lifeworld is what makes it possible for the member to access objects and to know them essentially. Because people always already understand what it means to understand objects, they find those things available to them in a space that makes available those things to them, in the lifeworld.

Further, Husserl said that the lifeworld is a relation between what is objectively a priori and what is grounded in the subjectively relative; for him, a phenomenon's "self-evidence has its source of meaning and source of legitimacy in the self-evidence of the lifeworld" (Husserl 1936:140). The lifeworld is the space that pre-exists us and is objectively a priori to us. The lifeworld, because it is already pre-understood as a place where we encounter things, is an objective space that becomes real to us, subjectively-relative to us, through our encounters with objects. In this way, objects themselves are already in our world that we always already pre-understand prior to our being in it and finding objects, but objects are also available to us in such a way that we always already know how to relate to them. How we subjectively experience them is a willed experience; we decide to relate to and recognize objects in our world. It is because we already know how to relate to them, that they are there, that we are able to experience them; this is a fundamental principle of the ontology of phenomenology. The self-evidence of a phenomenon is the way that the meaning

is available to us to interpret, understand, make meaningful to ourselves, and that is found in the lifeworld. The experience is legitimated by the way that the lifeworld is self-evident, already understood, by us. Because we already know the essence of objects and how to make those objects meaningful to ourselves, this is unthought of.

Heidegger further elaborates on this notion of the lifeworld and our ability to know and experience within it by what he calls our *being-in-the-world*. The way that we are conscious to the world, the way we experience, perceive, is possible not just because there is a lifeworld, but because of how we are in the lifeworld.

What is meant by “Being-in”? Our proximal reaction is to round out this expression to “being-in ‘in-the-world’”, and we are inclined to understand this Being-in as ‘Being in something’... This latter term designates the kind of Being which an entity has when it is ‘in’ another one, as in the water is in the glass... All entities whose Being ‘in’ one another can thus be described have the same kind of Being – that of Being-present-at-hand – as Thing occurring ‘within’ the social world. (Heidegger 1962:79)

Here Heidegger is making a distinction that being-in-the-world is not something that is concrete. Members are not *in* the world concretely, as occupying a physical space or location in order to relate to those things that are occupying that same space. Nor is the world a sum total of all the things in the world. Instead, being-in-the-world is a state of Dasein¹; Dasein is the being that has access to the world essentially. Dasein knows the world as something given before its encounter with objects. Dasein does not belong to this kind of

¹ Dasein is how Heidegger refers to individuals; Dasein is the being that has access to and understands the being of objects. A further discussion of this term is in Chapter Five, *Analysis*

being-in-the-world. Dasein is among objects, but only insofar as Dasein knows how to relate to objects because it *always already* understands being-in-the-world. In other words, Dasein's being in is an existential state of being-in the world, not a thing in the world.

So, people understand objects because they are in-the-world of objects, and know how to relate to what is essential about an object in focus. The experience of phenomena is made possible by this being-in-the-world because that is how Dasein finds objects present to her, and how Dasein knows how to relates to things in the world, experience.

2.3 Phenomenology and Objects

Drawing on Kant, Heidegger (1988) develops perception as the way that Dasein comports itself toward objects in order to know them, experience them. Calling this the *intentional comportment* toward things, objects are perceived through a decided manner in which to engage them in the world. Dasein knows how to encounter objects because the way it perceives objects is in a way that demonstrates that Dasein already knows the mode of being that allows it to uncover objects, to know how objects are. To experience addiction, addicts already pre-understand how to be in a world to encounter addiction, and also addiction itself has a way of being that makes it possible for the addict to know it, to posit it. In order to conceive of addiction, addiction must be pre-understood in order to perceive it. To see and recognize addiction, it must already be known as a mode of being. What is essential to the phenomenon is a priori the experience. To see a chair and I sit in the chair, I already know how a chair is – the chair's way of being is disclosed to me prior to my perceiving the chair. "Sitting" is not the way of being of the chair; the essence of the chair is that I

understand that it as something toward which I can comport myself in order to “sit” or “sleep” and so on.

This is the essential – the essence, the whatness of a being or phenomena; the essence is the mode of being that each person ontologically knows how to encounter in the everyday world. In researching the human lived experience, theoretically, researchers orient themselves to the essence of the experience, rather than attending to the object in a way that is already pre-understood. What is desired in lived experience research is to understand what that object is and what essentially makes that object recognizable to members. Merleau-Ponty critiques other research into human experience, saying “Instead of attending to the experience of perception, we overlook it in favour of the object perceived” (1962:4). By this Merleau-Ponty means that researchers are interested in the object of study insofar as they have already pre-conceived of it prior to their research questions. For example, scientific research may explore addiction as a genetic problem; but this orientation already pre-supposes what addiction is, it does and is not interested in grounding the phenomenon of study in its essence because it is already assumed, taken-for-granted. For lived experience research, the phenomenon is made strange, like a mystery, and the essence must be worked out, illuminated by working through the materials.

Additionally, Merleau-Ponty makes further distinctions for phenomenological research:

Quality is not an element of consciousness, but a property of the object. Instead of providing a simple means of delimiting sensations, if we consider it in the experience itself which

evinces it, the quality is as rich and mysterious as the object, or indeed the whole spectacle, perceived. (Merleau-Ponty 1962:5)

To bring out the essence of the phenomenon, the task is not ascribing qualities to the object under inquiry. While objects have qualities, it is the experience, the way that they are understood as belonging to that object that is interesting for the phenomenological researcher. Further, research that is concerned with the object insofar as assigning qualities to it has the result of making the object simple, defining it as having particular qualities. Lived experience research looks for the essence of the phenomenon, what makes that object possible to be recognized. To make a further distinction, the difference between assigning qualities and describing that objects essence is a categorical orientation. To say that the phenomenon under study has this quality or that quality, that addiction is drinking more than so many times a day, for example, is not a description of how addiction is experienced insofar as it is perceived through the whatness of what makes it possible to recognize addiction as a phenomenon in itself. By describing the experience and orienting to the phenomenon in such a way that is interested in showing the essence of addiction, the research can catch a glimpse at what it means to be addicted, what addiction is supposed to look like. The essence is already there, the task of lived experience research is to reconnect the phenomenon to its origin, its essence. By focusing on the qualities of the phenomenon, the object is assumed, not grounded essentially. Lived experience research reconnects the phenomenon with its essential origin because it is necessarily forgotten, unthought in everyday life.

The essence of any phenomenon is already there, the undertaking of a lived experience research project is to illuminate that essence, one possible way that essence makes possible the experience. In other words, my research project will essentially develop what makes addiction and recovery possible, a recognizable experience. By doing this, this research will reconnect addiction and recovery to the unthought, unaware relation that addicts always already understand about addiction. This research grounds the phenomena in a way that shows, makes visible, makes appear what they essentially are.

If members already do this reflexive work without knowing it, why is it necessary? It's true; members find this kind of reflexivity uninteresting in their daily lives, as mentioned above. People already know how to relate to objects despite the fact that they necessarily forget how this is possible. The task of a lived experience researcher and phenomenological sociologist is to ground these forgotten pre-understandings of the essence of phenomenon that we already know how to relate to. The phenomenon is grounded when the sociologist makes away that which is taken for granted in the everyday social world (Berger & Luckmann 1966).

This kind of reflection is uninteresting for the member because "the actor within the social world...experiences [the world] primarily as a field of his actual and possible acts and only secondarily as an object of his thinking" (Schutz 1964:92). Here Schutz is saying that actors (members) of the social world treat the world as something that doesn't need to be thought. While actors find their object present to them in their social world, because they already find them there and understand how they are, thinking becomes secondary to acting.

Thinking about what is essential to objects is something that is pre-understood by the actor, so thinking about what some thing is or what it means does not have to be worked out because it is already given. For the phenomenological sociologist, this is the work that is interesting because it will expose the essence of the object under study as well as socially connect it to our being in the world.

2.4 Meaning and Objects

Building on Schutz's phenomenology, Berger and Luckmann describe the way that ontology and meaning can be researched sociologically:

A 'sociology of knowledge' will have to deal not only with the empirical variety of 'knowledge' in human societies, but also with the processes by which *any* body of 'knowledge' comes to be socially established *as* 'reality'. (Berger & Luckmann 1966:15)

Phenomenological sociology's mandate is to reconnect the empirical knowledge of the everyday (as well as science, history, and other varieties of bodies of knowledge) to the unthought essences that make it possible for the individual and groups to recognize that knowledge. Phenomenological sociology must stay close to its phenomenon of study, be it in any body of knowledge, in order to develop its grounds, what makes it essentially possible. Additionally, Berger and Luckmann state that phenomenological sociology is interested in reconnecting the phenomenon to its whatness insofar as it demonstrates how that knowledge is and becomes a reality. Reality, as something shared, is social for phenomenological sociology because reality is continuously maintained and sustained by people in the social world. The focus on the social world is to show how the essence is dialogically something

that a) is a priori to the conceiving of an object that makes its perceiving possible, reconnecting the phenomenon to its origins, but also b) that the essence is social, created by interaction and the group.

It is here that symbolic interaction has oriented to the social construction of reality and knowledge rather than this phenomenological reading of Berger and Luckmann. For symbolic interaction, their reading starts with the desire to demonstrate the processes by which knowledge becomes reality; they focus on the creation as an empirical problem. Symbolic interaction examines the processes by which things become real to people through the assumption that meaning is not before the interpretation, but that meaning emerges throughout and after the interpretation process, through negotiation.

The first premise is that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings they have for them.... The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (Blumer 1969:2)

For Blumer, meaning emerges from interpretation and social interaction. A chair is something to sit on because a person has learned from others that a chair is called a chair and it holds that particular meaning as something to sit on. If a person knows that the chair's meaning is something to sit on, he will act toward that chair on that basis: he will sit in the chair. Symbolic interaction says that the meaning of an object does not exist prior to the social group's use of that object. Objects gain meaning through the *lines of action*, the use, people direct toward those objects (Blumer 1969). It is in this way that meaning is

negotiated; people approach new objects in such a way that meaning can be ascribed based on the social group's way of acting toward that new object. Meaning arises from the interaction with others as well as with the object. Meaning is not something given by the object's thingness; it is not something that pre-exists the object and is pre-understood by Dasein; meaning is created and negotiated by people, their interaction and their use of objects.

Symbolic interaction's research focus is on the process by which meaning is created, negotiated and emerges through interaction. To think of symbolic interaction as a sociology of knowledge, knowledge would be treated like an object. The way people use and act towards knowledge would be studied through a participant observation method of *direct examination* (Blumer 1969). This method is oriented to documenting how this process of negotiation occurs in regard to its object of study, knowledge, and concepts that illustrate the process would be developed that reflect and viable to the data collected in the study. The concepts are developed for further testing. Blumer suggests that all assumptions about the social world would be tested and retested to ensure that the concepts are empirically viable and could be empirically validated through further direct examination.

This method, however, one that is directed towards meaning in such a way that it can only be empirically accounted for by testing does not reconnect the meaning to the unthought. What it is that makes it possible for particular objects to be familiar in such a way that we know how to use them? If I see a chair, what was it that made it possible for the object-to-sit-on to be conceived of prior to its creation or use? Symbolic interaction cannot

answer this question because meaning only emerges throughout and after the interaction, not prior to an interaction. If one group held that a chair was something to sleep in and another group stated that a chair is something to sit in, and both acted towards the chair in accordance with these meanings, symbolic interaction would say that the chair has a different meaning for each group. However, this does not see that there was something about the chair that allowed it to be conceived of as a chair. The thing to sleep on or the thing to sit on are merely predicates for the chair. The chairness, what makes it possible for a person to recognize the chair as something to sit on, the thing that is given prior to the predication of meaning ascribed to the chair, is not accounted for by symbolic interaction. Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with exactly this notion of meaning as it relates to the unthought awareness and relation to objects that people always already have.

Symbolic interaction's desire for testability and generalizability of its concepts prevents the research agenda from going beyond the actual and the observable. Further, based on the "Sociology of Truth", Berger and Luckmann "exclude from the sociology of knowledge the epistemological and methodological problems", and call it a theoretical sociology (1966:26). While symbolic interaction focused on the process orientation of Berger and Luckmann and their sociology of knowledge, they themselves excluded and desire to make research testable or generalizable. Instead, Berger and Luckmann brought forth a sociology that could be both accountable to the social aspect of the world as well as reconnecting the phenomenon of inquiry to its unthought origins, the object's essence.

2.5 Lived Experience Research

If sociology must reconnect the phenomenological object (the phenomenon) to the unthought essence that makes it possible for the meaning to be recognized, what does this grounding look like? What will the analysis or finished work look like? These questions will help develop more practical explanations of lived experience research. For Van Manen (2006), the significance of the research question is to keep the project focused by making obvious the phenomenon of inquiry, in my case, addiction and recovery. The question itself is oriented by the essence, what makes it possible to ask that question, and to show, through reflexive engagement of the materials, how the phenomenon becomes present as something that can be related to and understood in the lifeworld.

Van Manen says that the question of knowledge “is what stands iconically behind the words, the speaking and the language” (Van Manen 2006:46). The speech act is something that has always already understood the nature, the essence, of the phenomenon. The speech has already oriented to the essential, making it possible to speak about the phenomenon. What stands iconically is what makes it possible for the phenomenon of speech to be imagined, conceived of in its understanding of it. For lived experience research, it is important to examine speech as a product of this relation to the unthought, the essential that is always already understood, taken-for-granted, and makes that speech possible as something sensible, knowable, and not babble. For everyday members, or addicts in my case, talk about addiction and recovery is oriented to the essential, the whatness of addiction that makes it possible for the speech to be understood, common sense, in a way, knowable. As a

researcher, I also already understand addiction and recovery; this is what enables me to ask the question, what is the lived experience of addiction and recovery? The task of lived experience research is to bring out that essence that is unthought by addicts, as well as myself. It is in this way that researchers are in the middle of the reflexive circle. Because both addicts and myself as a researcher already understand what is essential to addiction and recovery by virtue of our being able to talk about it and relate to it, lived experience writing must be accountable to this pre-understanding and strive to bring out the essential through reflexivity. Lived experience research already understands the essential nature of the phenomenon under inquiry, but must work at returning to it reflexively in such a way that it can be made recognizable through writing. In other words, because I am already in the circle of understanding the essence of my phenomenon, that I must return to its essence that makes it knowable and possible as a research topic; I am moving within the circle, not external to it.

Van Manen (2006) says that to ask a research question in such a way that keeps the researcher open to the possibility of seeing the essence and grasping at making it recognizable is to make the phenomenon *mysterious* or puzzling. By dropping any presumptions about the phenomenon, the researcher can ask the question in a way that does not assume any particular response or outcome. The research question does not assume the object and its relation to other objects. For example, science would ask what addiction is in relation to genetics. This question already presumes what addiction is as well as where and how to look for it; genetics make it possible to see addiction. Because of how this research question is oriented, it cannot see what makes it possible to recognize addiction as a

phenomenon, nor how its essence makes it possible to relate to the whatness of genetics.

Asking what the lived experience is of addiction and recovery, instead, keeps the research question focused to the phenomena, but also open to various relations and possibilities.

Without presuming what makes it possible, what is essential, this research project is able to develop data and materials in a way that lets them show themselves, and then put them in conversation with one another.

2.6 My Data

As mentioned in the *Introduction* chapter, for lived experience research data or materials can be from all sources so long as they are about addiction and recovery. These are lived experience descriptions, forms of text that describe or discuss the phenomenon; there can be etymological origins, interviews, experiential descriptions from others, observations, biography, literature, journals, art, and phenomenological literature (Van Manen 2006).

Using various sources that deal with the phenomenon under inquiry, a narrative about the phenomenon is then developed by the researcher that seeks to show what the phenomenon is, what its lived experience is. This is accomplished by orienting to the nature of the data itself.

Van Manen says that the nature of data is a “thing given” by the phenomenon, what is “granted” by the phenomenon (Van Manen 2006:53). What is given is what I can comport myself toward; this comporting relies on an interpretation, an understanding. This givenness draws on the phenomenological roots of Heidegger, as developed earlier in this chapter.

Heidegger’s discussion of ontology describes the essence of things as that which is given beforehand, the object’s mode of being that Dasein comport towards, and makes it possible

for Dasein to relate to that thing. The nature of data then is what is being given about the object through reflexively engaging what the text has said and has already understood about the object and how the phenomenon has been related to. The work of the researcher is to bring this out the interpretive work. The speaker has already understood the givenness of the phenomenon, and speaks in relation to that understanding and how she or he relates to it. The researcher must reflexively engage the text as a product of what has already been comported towards, already pre-understood insofar as it made that speech act possible. Then, in writing, the researcher will show what the speaker(s) were orienting-to essentially in their speech to come closer to the phenomenon under inquiry.

To bring out the essential character of the data, Van Manen suggests the use of themes. Themes are often used instrumentally to help move the lived experience descriptions toward the phenomenon. This process is further developed in chapter four, *Materials*.

In relation to the meaning of speech and action, two interpretations can be made in my research project, the symbolic interaction assumptions about meaning, and a phenomenological one. To outline the orientation of this research focus in relation to the treatment of materials, consider Weber's ontological assertion about action:

“Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby *oriented in its course*” (1994:3, my emphasis). For symbolic interaction, action is social because subjective meaning is constructed, taken into account, and negotiated by social actors. Actors, in taking the subjective meaning into account, would act toward others and

objects in a way that demonstrates the orientation to meaning. Actors orient to the group meaning and act by taking those meanings into account. People, then, would speak or write texts about objects based on the meanings they have for those objects. Other individuals would be able to read those texts and be able to understand the meanings that the speaker had for those objects. Prus (1996) calls this intersubjectivity. But what is it that is being understood? Meaning seems to be something ineffable, something that is transferred and oriented to, but not wholly explained in relation to the social interaction.

Phenomenologically, meaning is social insofar as the mode of being of the object to which that meaning belongs, be it an action, speech or text, is something that is universally understood. What is defined or comported towards, predicated about that object is subjective, but the way that meaning is given is something that is universally understood and something that actors always already do. For hermeneutic phenomenological research, it must capture and describe what is given in its givenness of objects and their way of being insofar as actors can orient towards it. This essence, givenness, whatness of the object and the way that it is given so that actors can understand it is already social, and is what must be brought out when interpreting texts in (hermeneutic) phenomenological sociology.

This orientation toward what is oriented-to in the lifeworld is a different emphasis than in symbolic interaction. While symbolic interaction claims to develop the meaning and the process by which the meaning is socially constructed and negotiated, meaning is assumed in the phenomenological sense. In Symbolic interaction, each individual has their own meaning or perspective that is developed socially from the group, but there is no one reality,

there are multiple realities and myriad perspectives. A symbolic interactionist project is interested in describing the various perspectives and how they came about. But, as Bonner (1994) points out, the problem then arises, how is the sociological analysis any different than just another perspective? Another way of negotiating the meaning of something? How is the sociologist's task different, what are the claims to truth in the authority of the analyst? For Bonner, the solution to the problem of solipsism in symbolic interaction is hermeneutics, as I will discuss in the following section. It is for this same reason that my thesis shares the assertion that hermeneutic phenomenology is best for developing and bringing out the deeper meaning of a phenomenon. Phenomenological reflection leads to the essential meaning of a thing (object, phenomenon) by engaging what is oriented-to, the essence, in the text through hermeneutic methods.

Prior to developing the hermeneutic reflection method, I will now briefly articulate how I collected my materials to assemble this research project. In 2008 I worked as a research assistant under the direction of Professor Kieran Bonner. As part of a larger, five-year, interdisciplinary research project funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research entitled "City Life and Well-Being: The Grey-Zone of Health and Illness", I conducted interviews with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) members. After research ethics board cleared the project, I began attending AA meetings in January. Eventually, I was able to connect with one of the pillars of the group, and she was very helpful in gathering people for me (as well as another student) to interview about their experiences with alcohol. There were eight semi-

structured interviews in total, with both men and women. There were six questions², developed by Dr. Kieran Bonner, that were asked of all AA members. These questions were developed to encourage the AA members to discuss their experiences with alcohol in order to get at how the AA members were making sense of their experiences and addiction. These questions are focused on bringing out the interpretive work that AA members were doing to relate to and understand their addiction. Their responses were probed further by the interviewer to encourage reflexive thinking and discussion about their experiences. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed for further reflection and analysis.

Additional to the interview process, I collected and read literature from various sources on alcoholism and addiction. I searched the library catalogue, as well as scholar's portal for relevant articles and monographs using the key words addiction, alcohol, alcoholism, experience, disease, recovery and treatment. I began reading these sources and writing various drafts that helped to focus my research question. In addition to this search, I began to look for themes in my transcribed interviews. At first I found it exceptionally difficult to separate the speech from actuality; by this I mean that I tended to treat the addiction talk and texts as standing for something that was reality, rather than treating it as a text phenomenologically. As time passed, and I grounded myself in phenomenological

² The following questions were asked at every interview: 1) A brief history of your experience with alcohol; 2) What was it that attracted you to alcohol; 3) What kind of destructiveness do you feel alcohol led you to; 4) There is a debate in the literature about alcoholism as a dependency or alcohol as a disease, what is your take on that; 5) What is your relationship to alcohol and celebration; and 6) What do you think is the relationship is between alcohol and urban sociability?

literature, I began to find it easier to work through the addiction texts and interviews as a relation to the phenomena rather than a definitive statement of actuality.

This project finally started to take shape by using Van Manen's (2006) text to help operationalize the phenomenological inquiry. With encouragement from my supervisor, Professor Bonner, the text became the central methodological statement guiding my writing. I followed Van Manen's research outline as a model for doing hermeneutic phenomenological inquiry.

2.7 Hermeneutics and Engaging the Materials

To get at the deeper meaning of the phenomena under inquiry, lived experience research describes and brings out what is oriented-to in speech but unthought and ungrounded by the speaker because the speaker always already understands how it is to understand what she is speaking about. For my project, I will develop the lived experience of addiction and recovery through hermeneutic reflection with the materials to show what is existentially beneath the text. This method of engaging data Van Manen (2006) calls a *conversational relation*. The conversation with materials is oriented by the research question, and develops an organized interpretation that argumentatively engages the materials, and is oriented towards answering the question. Bonner says conversation is a method that can overcome the problem of sociological solipsism, as seen in the symbolic interaction method, and that "conversation requires the art of questioning" (1994:243). That is, a conversational relation requires that the inquirer questions the grounds of the texts, of the speakers, what assumptions and understandings make the speech possible. This is a method of interpretation.

As an inquirer I engage the materials in a way that questions their foundations, their implications, and their limitations. This method is demonstrated throughout my project, found in every instance that I engage material related to the research question.

To carry on a conversational relation to material and data, I will first ask of any text, what is the experience of addiction and recovery in this text? What is this text about? What is it saying? Without any presumptions, I then try to develop the lens (or structure) through which this speaker sees addiction and recovery within the lifeworld, how he or she understands it, orients towards it. Returning to the phenomenon, the lens is then “asked” how this structure makes the experience of addiction and recovery possible. What is it? How is it? What is particular about it? What does it show us about the human condition? What is universal about it? As I work through various materials, the phenomenon in each text will be brought out in this way and developed in relation to the preceding and proceeding texts. The description of the lived experience will show a structural relation to addiction and recovery and will emerge through the work with the texts.

Hermeneutics shows that understanding is not one human characteristic among many, but is rather a constituent element of the human way of being in the world. Understanding is not just one of the things that humans do but is inextricably bound up with our being human (Bonner 1998:151).

Bonner emphasizes that the interpretive work of hermeneutics preserves the relation that individuals (or texts) have to understanding as well as the collective (universal) relation to the phenomenon of inquiry. When developing each text in relation to the research question, researchers will ask what is particular and what is universal? In other words, what

is this text saying that helps me understand addiction and recovery, and what does addiction and recovery help me to understand about the text. Further, what does this text illustrate more generally about the human condition? What does this text show me that helps me understand the way that addiction is a recognizable phenomenon in the human experience? What is it like? What does it do? It is this kind of interpretive work and engagement that will develop the research project.

In addition to developing my materials in a way that brings out the essence of addiction and recovery, I will also critically analyze my phenomenon in relation to the lived experience descriptions. For this project, I will follow Van Manen's (2006) existential model of reflection. In this model, I will use the existential of temporality to provide a frame of reference for interpreting the lived experience descriptions of addiction and recovery, working through the particular experiences and interpreting them in relation to the universal experience of lived time.

The hermeneutic method of interpretation will be demonstrated as best for dealing with the phenomenological essences as developed through lived experience descriptions throughout my thesis project. While this chapter has served as both a practical explanation of my method as well as a theoretical orientation to the nature of phenomena, the justification for this method will emerge throughout the written product of this project, as well as in some concluding remarks in the final chapter of this thesis. The whole project will be an example of working through the hermeneutic phenomenological method as a demonstration of both the theory and method of reflexivity. But it will be throughout the narrative that the

credibility of this method for this particular research question will become visible.

Reflexivity and the hermeneutic phenomenological method will be shown to be both a deeper and better way to address and develop the meaning of any phenomenon, and explicitly shown in my thesis. Finally, limitations of this project will also be dealt with in the *conclusion* chapter. I will now proceed into chapter three which deals with the current *literature* about addiction and recovery.

Chapter 3

Review of the Literature

For my analysis of the lived experience of addiction and recovery, I will first develop a few key texts that will contribute to my research question. Additionally, I will critically demonstrate each text's distance from lived experience research, as well as develop what can be learned about the lived experience of addiction and recovery from each text. Texts were selected based on their relevance to my research question. Using the method outlined in Chapter two, *Theory and Method*, this chapter will expose a need for lived experience research in the realm of addiction studies, as well as, by drawing on the key texts I have selected based on my research question and standard, demonstrate how each text is also material that brings my research closer to understanding the essence of addiction and recovery.

3.1 Etymology

In developing lived experience research, Van Manen outlines the importance of the etymological roots found in the language of texts; "The words we use to refer to the phenomenon have lost some of their original meaning" (Van Manen 2006:58). The use of "addiction" has been transformed in everyday speech, as people say that they are "addicted to a soft drink" or "addicted to the iPhone". In some ways this use of "addiction" seems reminiscent of an attraction or affection for something. But how is this different from the way that someone is "addicted to alcohol"? Clearly, saying that one is addicted to their cell phone

is different than being addicted to cocaine. The meaning of words can be changed by culture, and going back to the etymological root of words can be insightful into the research question at hand into the phenomenon under inquiry. To learn more about addiction, it is beneficial for me to consult where and when the word addiction emerged in language.

The Oxford English Dictionary traces the etymological roots of the word addiction to Roman times, where the term addiction referenced a legal implication, “the formal *giving over* by sentence of court; hence, a dedication of person *to a master*” (my emphasis). The action of giving over orients to a self-possessing, devoted commitment, giving yourself over to a commitment such as marriage. But in this case can also have implications in relation to the courts; that is, that giving over can also be adjudged onto a person. Whereas the first version of this orientation, a commitment, suggests a kind of dedication that is willfully given over, there is also the possibility of a surrendering to a master. The concept of a relation to something or someone as a master brings with it notions of power and coercion, that giving over can also be a forced upon giving up of free will.

As developed by Hegel, subordination, the action of dedicating oneself to a master, something or someone, can be a pleasurable experience; that is, the desire to dedicate oneself, one’s life or one’s actions to some thing. The slave, in recognizing the master’s dependence in him to carry out his will, is empowered by the enjoyment of servicing his master (Hegel 1977; see pages 115-119). While the master desires to enjoy the labours of his slave, the slave is satisfied by fulfilling the desires of the master insofar as being in thrall to the dedication and commitment to his work. For addiction, this reading suggests that addicts

can feel simultaneously overpowered by their will to use alcohol for pleasure, and also empowered by the satisfaction and enjoyment from the pleasure of intoxication.

Here we find a tension in this relationship to addiction. Through this perspective, not only are addicts orienting to the desire to dedicate themselves to a practice that is pleasurable, this practice is accompanied by a feeling of being governed over by that same desire. So while addicts may feel a kind of pleasure in giving themselves over to their desires – the pursuit of drinking for pleasure – that same desire brings with it the experience of powerlessness over that same desire, as if the desire governs them, is master over their actions, while simultaneously willing to devote themselves to it for pleasurable outcomes.

The implications for my research question about the lived experience of addiction and recovery point to the feeling of dependency that is both overwhelming as well as enjoyable. For addiction, the dependency on alcohol can cause pleasure seeking for continuous use of alcohol, but can also be a feeling of frustration and powerlessness over the will to stop. It may be difficult to cease doing the things we love, even if we know it is good for us.

To further explore the implications of the etymology of the word “addiction”, consider Levine’s text about the emergence of this word in the western world.

Beginning in the 19th century, terms like "overwhelming," "overpowering" and "irresistible" were used to describe the drunkard's desire for liquor. In the colonial period, however, these words were almost never used. Instead, the most commonly used words were "love" and "affection," terms seldom used in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the modern definition of alcoholism, the problem is not that alcoholics love to get drunk, but that they cannot help it – they cannot control themselves. They may actually hate getting drunk, wishing only to drink moderately or "socially." In the traditional view,

however, the drunkard's sin was the love of "excess" drink to the point of drunkenness. (Levine 1978:497)

Reminiscent of the Oxford definition and its implications between being a slave to a master and the pleasure associated with enthrallment, Levine's text demonstrates the emergence of addiction as a word once associated with pleasure and affection for alcohol and later developing into a force that overpowers the addict, and desires drunkenness. Levine's text brings out a tension; the distinction between the modern conception of addiction, the overwhelming of the will to control the need to drink, and the colonial conception of sin and the desire for excess. As Levine points out, the addict may *hate getting drunk*, but she is unable to control her desires and must get drunk every time she drinks. This is quite different than the early language of love and enjoyment of excess drinking. I will consider the implications of this change.

Affection for an object entails the self-understanding of the pleasure associated with that object. For drinkers, they are aware of their love for alcohol, and choose to indulge in what they love about alcohol, drinking to feel the pleasure of intoxication. The drinker in this case knows that drinking excess alcohol will lead to drunkenness, and chooses to drink heavily because she desires that feeling. In this self-awareness of the love and desire for the pleasure of alcohol, the drinker is accountable to her choice and is responsible for those choices insofar as she is aware of the effects of alcohol and desires them. In this formulation, some people enjoy drinking more than others, and those who really enjoy the affects of alcohol choose to drink more often and drink to excess.

This is very different from the addict who is not responsible for her drinking because she is overpowered by her desire for alcohol, and instead hates getting drunk, but cannot help herself. The addict who cannot control her desires to drink does not intend on getting drunk, but ends up drunk as her will to not drink is overpowered by her need to feel the effects of alcohol. In this way, the addict is “out of control”, unable to restrain but perhaps desiring to abstain. The loathing of hate could illustrate the frustration between the overwhelming of will power and the self-knowledge of desiring to stop drinking. However, in this formulation of the addict who hates to drink, there is an ambiguous relationship to who exactly is in control. The addict who does not desire to drink but cannot help herself is at the mercy of a force other than her will power. This language removes the responsibility and agency of self-control away from the addict, and the addict is no longer accountable to her desires in the same way as the addict who loves to drink.

This tension between the language of the past, the affection for drunkenness, and the modern addict who is out of control, reveals a particular relationship to my research question. One possible essence of addiction is feeling love and simultaneously being overwhelmed by that love. Addiction is both the desire for and love of pleasure and the feeling of being controlled by that desire. The experience of addiction is made possible by this element of the human condition, that people have the ability to love but to also feel as though the objects they love have a mysterious power over them.

What does the shift from language about affection to language of irresistibility reveal about the addiction literature? It suggests that agency is removed from the addict, and the

self-understanding and awareness of pleasure is no longer associated with addiction research. The addict's self-knowledge is not accountable to the study of addiction if she, as an addict, is no longer in control of her desires. In this way, we can expect that this trend will be thematic in the materials I collect in this chapter as well as chapter four, *Materials*. Lived experience research offers a way to reconnect the addict's self-understanding as one experience that is possible in the human condition, as well as reconnect the addict to her desire.

3.2 Disease and the Body

To further explore this ambiguity and relation between dependency and its enjoyment as well as overpowering desire, I will now consult a few texts that have sought to explain dependency based on the standard of my research question; I am looking for texts that are interested in explaining the experience of addiction and recovery. These texts will both contribute to my question into the lived experience of addiction and recovery, and also be exemplary of research that is not fulfilling the need do this kind of research. The first text introduced the notion of the *disease concept* of alcohol as an addiction in 1960. In Jellinek's (1960) famous typologies, he describes various kinds of heavy drinking, but classifies only one as a disease:

...That species of alcoholism in which (1) acquired increased tissue tolerance to alcohol, (2) adaptive cell metabolism, (3) withdrawal symptoms and "craving," i.e., physical dependence, and (4) loss of control are involved. In gamma alcoholism there is a definite progression from psychological to physical dependence and marked behaviour changes...This species produces the greatest and most serious kinds of damage. The

loss of control, of course, impairs interpersonal relations to the highest degree. The damage to health in general and to financial and social standing are also more prominent than in other species of alcoholism. (Jellinek 1960:37)

This text identifies craving as a sickness of the body. As the body biologically develops an increased tolerance, the desired pleasure of drunkenness becomes more difficult to obtain; the drinker must drink more and more to have the same sensations of drunkenness. The desire has the potential to become endless, as the drinker strives to achieve intoxication, each time needing to drink more and more alcohol. In this way, the desire could become overwhelming, leading to out of control drinking and transforming the drinker into an addict. For Jellinek's typology of an alcoholic, the out of control drinking is what characterizes the disease of addiction.

Jellinek's classification of alcoholism is named a species. A species is a being onto itself. The implication of calling alcoholism a disease gives it a quality independent of the action of drinking. The disease concept is like saying that addiction is similar to a virus, a species that attacks the body; but that species is within the body, and is brought into the body by continuous drinking. Analogous to a virus, the affliction is purely physical, affecting the cell tissues and body. Jellinek emphasizes the disease as passing from the realm of psychological interest, like the pleasure of drunkenness, dependence becomes a purely physical phenomenon. By attributing alcoholism the characterizations of disease causation, the symptoms of alcoholism become externalized from the drinker, beyond control. When the need to drink is beyond control, psychological intervention, which, according to Jellinek once was possible, becomes difficult, as it is the will of the body that becomes the perpetrator

against the addict and less so the will of the mind. In this formulation of addiction, the will of the mind is powerless against the need of the body for more alcohol.

Through Jellinek's interest in anatomy and biological causation, alcoholism becomes a sickness; alcoholism is progressive, he says, and transforms the heavy drinker into a physically dependent drinker. The physically dependent drinker is no longer in control of his drinking, it is beyond his control, and his body now relies on the presence of alcohol in its operation and functioning. In this way, normality is one who is in control of her drinking, who is not physically ailed and dependent on alcohol consumption. The addict now suffers from somatic constraints, that the body is overpowering the mind, craving alcohol, and functioning irregularly. The interest in causation in this literature forces the addict into a sick role; one who is beyond control of the disease.

However, in Jellinek's diction he declares the addict's drinking behaviour is *out of control*, not beyond control. Out of control suggests a closer relation to the mind, an overpowering of will, rather than the biology's overpowering of the body. The overpowering of will points to an ethical dilemma, one where the addict is actively engaged in understanding and appeasing his desires to drink for the pleasure of alcohol. Desire is a self-knowledge of want and need, leading to pleasure. If the addict is orienting to his desires, he has a self-understanding of those needs; whereas if it were a bodily affliction he may not understand his reactions and symptoms. Here, in Jellinek's own typology, is an ambiguity between his description of its causes, what he calls a biological nature, and the struggle for the addict, the understandings of desire and the loss of control.

Is the physical dependence intertwined with this out of control desire? One can have a self-knowledge of the body's reliance on food and hunger, and then desire food. This medicalized characterization of drinking, that it is like a virus, changing cells tissue (metabolic functions, and so on), causing physical dependence on alcohol, can become self-aware to the addict. But this desire is overwhelming; the addict is engaged in this struggle, not merely victim to it. What is the self-understanding of this phenomenon? As I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, this kind of research, classifying addiction as a disease of the body, is not lived experience research. The self-understanding of the addict is not taken into consideration in the narrative of the addiction and dependency explanation. As I have developed in the Jellinek literature, the possibility of this model is tied to the experience of actions that are "out of control". Removing the engagement of the addict by externalizing the relation to the experience as one of the body omits the understanding of the will and the self-knowledge of that will being overwhelmed by a desire. The omission is evident in the implications of the biological model of dependency and disease and its relation to an out of control desire, as developed above. This omission, as present in literature following this disease concept model, is in need of further development of the self-knowledge that is present in the desire for more alcohol. Current implications suggest that, like hunger, the need for more alcohol is merely an experience that can be indicated to self-awareness – my stomach can growl and I can understand that I am hungry – but this concept does not yet develop self-awareness to the full extent of the implied struggle of the mind over the body – to refrain from feeding my hunger or deny my desire for alcohol.

Jellinek's disease concept radically changed addiction studies when it was first published; and, since, has spawned an entire field of medically related research on the topic of addiction. However, the implications for an understanding of addiction that is reliant on notions of the sick body, omitting the understanding of endless desire, weigh on my own research question into the lived experience of addiction and recovery. While medical texts would not deny that the alcoholic desires alcohol, they are interested in explaining it as a function of the body. For my research question, I am interested in understanding how alcoholics make sense of this desire, how they recognize and understand their experiences. As demonstrated through my work with the Jellinek text, the body becomes a site for disease, and research into the understanding of the disease is singularly interested in the causation of the need for alcohol. Additionally, being ill requires a cure; "coming down with" addiction is a linear relation between ill health and necessary remedy. Addiction is characterized as a disfiguration of the body in need of correction. The notion of the lived experience and the self-understanding is overlooked by this model, despite its reliance on the very understanding of the notion of a need (for more). The phenomenon of addiction and recovery both needs further development of the understanding of endless desire, in light of this model, as well as appears like an endless desire that becomes overwhelming to manage.

From Jellinek, the future of the disease concept moved into the popular medical realm of genetics. Recent texts search for genetic factors that explain and account for addiction in the family as a pattern and trait passed from one generation to the next.

Family, adoption and twin studies have clearly demonstrated that genetic factors are important in moderating vulnerability to

alcoholism. Based on analyses of large, well-characterized cohorts of twins including nearly 10 000 twin pairs, alcoholism is a moderately to highly heritable psychiatric disease (Ducci & Goldman 2008:1415)

As stated, addiction, alcoholism in this case, remains in the realm of the disease concept – the body’s need for alcohol. In the Ducci and Goldman text, it is caused by a silent structure, the genetic DNA chain. The search for genes is a modern version of the disease model from the 1960s; it turns the causation away from the species hypothesis, the virus analogy, to a predetermined cause of the illness, one put in place at the time of conception. Genes are the factors that determine the physical appearances of a person – everything from hair colour to bone structure. Expanding the influence a person’s genes has on their later actions, such as addiction, has vast implications for my investigation into the phenomenon of addiction. Can people’s actions be a consequence of the same force that causes a person’s physical appearance?

The genetic concept, the theory that genes and DNA can cause particular predispositions in addition to particular physical traits, suggests a relation to predetermination and preordination. What does it mean to be fated to become an addict? Predetermined laws, such as the laws of genetics, and fate are silent forces that, no matter what human intervention is attempted, always lead to the predetermined outcome. To be genetically configured to have an addiction means that choice is not a viable or successful intervention. Addictions, as classified by the above illness concept, are negative characterizations, as disease is not healthy (positive). To be genetically marked as an addict means that a person is born with unhealthy genes, not normative, disfigured DNA. Because

DNA is dumb and invisible, people who are disfigured by the genetic mark of addiction may not even be aware of their predisposition to excessive drinking.

People have little control over their natural traits such as hair colour or eye colour; a person cannot will their hair to change colour, but they can influence it by acting on it – hair dye, for example. For addiction, people would not be able to control their predisposition or disfigured DNA, but could they influence it with choice? Like changing the colour of one's hair by decisive intervention, choosing to not become an addict could be possible. But here is an ambiguity located in this formulation of an addict. If one is fated to a certain end, choice is futile. And, like, hair dye, would an addict always be addicted? Just masking the addiction beneath the intervention of recovery? And if addiction could be changed, how is choice possible if predisposition naturally supersedes agency?

This research offers a particular possibility to my research question about the lived experience of addiction and recovery. Relating to the experience of being enthralled to a master, the genetic heritability concept contributes to the self-understanding of the addict as someone who is controlled by an invisible and dumb force, the genetic code. But the traits of that force are recognizable and correctable, like seeing one's own natural hair colour in the mirror, the addict can recognize that drinking is unhealthy; addiction can be changed by prosthetic intervention, as demonstrated through the analogy about hair dye, but the addict will always naturally be predisposed to drinking. The addict can see that drinking is causing a health problem, but is unable to intervene, leaving the addict feeling helpless against her own will to control her desire to drink – it is not her choice. As an essence, the feeling of

helplessness contributes to the self-understanding of the addict, she is one who wants to mediate in her own practices, but is unable to because she is at the will of another force. This self-understanding universally contributes to our understanding of the feeling of helplessness as if one is victim to conditions beyond control.

Like the disease concept literature developed above, the dangers of the externalization of the body (genetics) from the mind (free will) poses a problem for the self-responsibility of the addict and her agency; it is overlooked by this characterization. Additionally, the assumptions that make the conceptualization of addiction as a disfiguration that curses and fates those marked with unhealthy DNA possible are not accountable to the lived experience of addiction. The essence of addiction is assumed in this kind of research. The genetic question moves away from the lived experience interpretation and understanding of addiction and recovery. By assuming the phenomenon, the whatness of the experience and how it is a possible one in the human condition, the feeling of helplessness as I describe here, the research relies on an understanding that isn't fully described.

Other research endeavours into the experience of addiction and recovery have also developed in relation to this biomedicalized characterization, the disease concept and genetic research. The phenomenon of addiction in the medical field is addressed in Medanik's (2006) *Biomedicalization of Alcohol Studies* and is developed in relation to the consequences associated with the medicalized model of the disease and genetic concepts.

Medicalizing social problems allows the deviant to assume the sick role and derive its benefits. The deviant is not seen as the cause of his or her condition but rather an unfortunate, yet

legitimately sick individual who happens to have an illness but is not responsible for it. (Medanik 2006:23)

This statement describes the addict as someone who is *legitimately sick*. Being sick is a biological infliction, where one is lacking in health. The legitimacy of illness is prescribed by experts in the medical profession; the naming and definitions of disease and symptoms are systematically in the realm of doctors, medical researchers, and the like. Being legitimately sick would be an instance of having those prescribed symptoms of an illness, where the body is not functioning in the medical definition of health, but is instead functioning at a reduced level that is medically evident and recognizable. These symptoms become self-aware to the ill person, as the patient learns to recognize the symptoms, and then orients to their existence in their actions. Unlike someone who pretends to be sick, who knows the symptoms, but is exhibiting them by mimicry, the legitimately sick person both exhibits the medical symptoms, and they can be found to be evident. For example, the “faker” can pretend to have a sore throat by talking hoarsely and complaining of pain, but if there is no redness, swelling or presence of a medical problem, like the species of bacteria known as strep A, the sick person cannot be said to have a legitimate reason for having a sore throat. The medical profession validates a symptom; it can give the sick person credibility for her sick behaviour as well as an explanation for it.

For the addict, this suggests that their behaviours are medically evident, that is that they are present and identifiable, and relevant to their prescription as an illness or lack of health. It also excuses the addict in a way that it explains her symptoms, out of control drinking, as being biologically caused; she is sick. The implications of this definition is that it

opens up the possibility for the addict to see the causes of her actions and her desires to pursue the pleasure of alcohol as external to her self-awareness and, subsequently, her responsibility. She can assume the role of the sick person because, not only is her behaviour legitimate, she is cast into the part.

Two implications follow: the addict's illness becomes incorporated into her self-understanding; and the casting of the sick role requires the addict to get better and restore herself to good health (c.f. Parsons 1971). If the addict becomes aware of her drinking and desire for pleasure as symptoms of an illness, she comes to understand herself as a sick person: her desires for alcohol as a result of an affliction in her body. On the other hand, however, if she is beyond control of her illness, she has to find a way to become reempowered to overcome her desires for alcohol: she has to "get better". An ambiguity starts to surface here as there is a simultaneous alleviation of responsibility and also a required repossession of it. A dilemma for action emerges as the sick role has imposing implications for both illness and health; admission of powerlessness over the symptoms of an illness as well as the need to repossess that self-same will power to stop or moderate the symptoms (drinking). While this typology of causation and disease as well as orienting towards the consequences of disabled responsibility, the above description has foundations on which it relies that are not accounted for. An inquiry into the consequences of the medicalized model of addiction assumes not only the essence of the addiction experience, but also the experience of coming down with an illness.

As I develop above, one essence of the experience of addiction offered by the Midanik text is the experience of being sick. For my inquiry into the lived experience of addiction and recovery, feeling and being sick offers further insight into the self-understanding of the addict. Getting well is a necessary responsibility of the sick person; so, while the understanding of an illness is externalized to the body, the addict remains accountable to the commitment to restoring good health. The essence of being sick universally implies that having an illness has particular constraints; not only are the symptoms of illness a deviation from health, but refusing or failing to remedy the symptoms of illness is characterized as deviant as well. Socially, the imposition of illness is the compulsory expectation of recovery.

3.3 Agency and Self-Understanding

Thus far I have handled significant perspectives and texts regarding the disease concept of addiction and its implications for my research question, as well as exposing the gaps that lived experience research offers to fill. The above research has favoured the externalization of the struggle of the lived experience of addiction and recovery to the body's function, or malfunctioning. Following, I will address research suggesting that the disease concept is a social construction. As I will demonstrate, while this move is closer to the orientation of an inquiry into the lived experience of addiction and recovery, I will show that it is still concerned with the causes and consequences of addiction rather than accounting for the assumptions of what makes it a possible human experience.

What are commonly termed the social problems of drinking can be viewed in this light as deviations from norms of individual behaviour which someone else has decided to “notice” rather than to overlook and which are seen as alcohol related. The concept of norms, then, directs our attention to the sociocultural factors, not only in drinking behaviour but also in the social problems of drinking. Too often, we forget that most drinking, including most heavy drinking, is social drinking in the sense that it is carried on with others and is heavily influenced by ‘their’ expectations. Too often, we think of social problems with drinking as opaque properties of the individual – “he has a job problem with his drinking” or “she has had problems with the police,” we will say – rather than as arising out of the interaction between the drinker’s behaviour and the various responses of others. Concepts like alcohol dependence or addiction direct our attention to the individual and the drug to the exclusion of elements of the social context ... The concept of norms, then is simply a tool for focusing our attention on the details of sociocultural forces – the social incentives and constraints – which bear upon our individual drinking behaviours. (Room 1975:360)

This description relates alcoholism and the addict to forces; drinking behaviours are consequences of the actor’s agency interacting with the force of cultural norms. While Room’s text rejects the medicalized understanding of addiction because of its externalized nature, that the body governs over the will of mind, it is still oriented to an understanding of addiction that is related to its encounter with external forces that he calls “norms”. Room calls this *incentives* and *constraints*. The notion of sociocultural forces in relation to incentive and constraint is a kind of orientation to the experience of addiction that is reminiscent of a stimulus-response in social contexts. The addict *chooses* to drink because drunkenness is pleasurable. The addict, in this textual expression, is a rational thinker, able to choose between the choice offering immediate pleasure and the choice that has undesirable consequences.

The reward of immediate pleasure for the addict is the incentive to drink alcohol; addicts drink for the pleasure that alcohol's affects and drunkenness offers them. Constraints for addicts may be the undesirable sanctions of losing their job due to drunkenness at work, for example. Or, that they do not want to be drunk at an office Christmas party in case they do something they may later regret. As a rational thinker, the addict is able to assess the risk of each side, hypothesizing possible consequences. To drink, addicts face a dilemma to drink for pleasure if it could possibly lead to self-harm. The further the addict pursues pleasure, undesirable sanctions could arise. For my research question, this text offers the possibility of the phenomenon of facing dilemmas in the experience of addiction and recovery. Particularly, the case of addiction demonstrates that this phenomenon can be related to the desire for pleasure when known consequences can be potentially harmful.

The orientation of Room's text and research constructs the addict as someone who must think through the imposed conditions of the social world. An addict is someone who chooses pleasure over the possibility of constraining social forces. Addiction is the consequence of choosing the stimulus of pleasure from alcohol over the possible constraints of drunkenness. This kind of choice, however, is limited, as the addict is herself constrained by the assumptions implied by this formulation. Surely the struggle of addiction and the dilemma of drinking are greater than a simple choice between what is enjoyable and desirable and what is potentially harmful. In fact, the stimulus-response mechanism used to explain the social forces are limited by implications of an addict that is not reflecting; social

forces pose as simple choices driving the addict to make decisions that are without thought or self-awareness.

The kind of agency suggested in the Room text is limited in comparison with lived experience research. My research project frames the addict as oriented towards a struggle with addiction and that this problem is part of the addict's self-understanding. While this text brings my description of the lived experience closer to addiction through its interest in the social relation between the addict and her environment, its conception is too limited, painting the addict as facing bilinear choices, pleasure and undesirable consequences.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, however, offers a different perspective on the struggle for control over the relentless desires for drunkenness:

That may be true of certain non-alcoholic people who, though drinking foolishly and heavily at the present time, are able to stop or moderate, because their brains and bodies have not been damaged as ours were. But the actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be *absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge*. (Alcoholics Anonymous :39; emphasis original)

This describes particular people, addicts, who may not be able to control their drinking, while others can choose to drink moderately, enjoying alcohol, but avoiding drunkenness because it is not desired. This weakness in control suggests that the self-knowledge of the alcoholic drinker is not strong enough to overcome the urges of the desire for the pleasure of drunkenness. However, considering this more generally, not only is the control and restraint of drinking practices necessary for the alcoholic drinker, over indulgence in pleasure is unrecognizable to them. Giving in to the desire to drink leads to

drunkenness despite attentions to moderate or control drinking activity. For the addict, self-knowledge is powerless against the desires to overindulge to the point of intoxication. As opposed to a child, for example, who lacks self-knowledge and understanding – the child who eats candy until they are sick, who does not know he should stop – the addict has a self-knowledge that they should stop drinking, but they are unable to stop, powerless against their own desires.

With the above orientation to the problem of alcoholic drinking, the addict who desires restraint could be seen as someone who cannot self-reflect once engaging in drinking of any kind, that he is unable to make recognizable his own overindulgences, or to be ethically oriented to a self-understanding of what is good for him. The struggle for addicts is to recognize when to stop and follow through on that choice, not to let their desires for pleasure overwhelm them. At the intersection of this ethical dilemma and the deliberation to drink, the addict is encountering a problem with her desire for the pleasure of alcohol, but cannot recognize when she has over-indulged.

Unlike the drinker who does not see a problem in self-indulgence, who goes out with the particular desire to get intoxicated, the addict goes out with the desire to abstain and to show restraint, but ends up intoxicated. For the addict, what becomes unrecognizable in practice (drinking) is the desire to show self-restraint from drunkenness (the self-knowledge that “I should stop”) once the experience of pleasure is present. Once the addict has succumbed to the desire to have one drink, she is unable to stop, and the result ends with her being drunk. It is not that the addict is incapable of seeing her own restrictions, that she

knows she should not drink, but that she struggles to show self-restraint as she pursues her desire for pleasure. Unlike someone who seeks pleasure and eschews self-restraint, like a daredevil who seeks the thrill of being at risk, who does not hesitate to act in dangerous situations, the addict's self-knowledge of her own limitations, that she should not drink dangerously or overindulge, is different: she does desire to moderate or abstain from drinking, she knows that it leads to self-harm; whereas, the daredevil does not care if the situation at hand would lead to self-harm. For the addict, the powerlessness of being overwhelmed by the desire for the pleasure of drunkenness, leads to the pursuit of deeper indulgence.

The problem of self-knowledge and making recognizable over-indulgence is not one of ignorance nor is it one of recklessness. Instead, it is the experience of getting carried away. Getting carried away is redeemed by the choice to pursue action that it is enjoyable, and that it also has a metaphoric quality of that agency being taken away or becoming secondary to the enjoyment. For addiction, drinking is started on the basis of the desire for pleasure, and in continuing to enjoy the pleasure of drinking, the thoughtful reflection of choice, responsibility and self-moderation becomes superseded by the pursuit of pleasure. In this way, self-knowledge becomes governed by the initial choice for pleasure, rather than a continued engagement of reflection and further drinking or ceasing to drink. Pleasure allows for the experience of getting carried away as an enjoyable one, and the need for self-reflection becomes unnecessary.

While language in this text is similar to that which was seen in the *disease and the body* section, particularly in reference to the damaged body as a cause of addiction, the text maintains an orientation to agency through its use of the self-knowledge concept. However, it is the text's unthought relation between self-knowledge and the body that has not been accounted for by its author. This relationship, as I have tried to develop in relation to the phenomenon of addiction, is relied on, but not explored and developed. In this way, lived experience research is particularly concerned with how this relationship between self-understanding and the body contributes to the possible essences in the experience of addiction and recovery, while methodically being accountable to that relationship in its discovery and analysis.

3.4 Relapse and Desire

For the development of my research question, the experience of addiction and recovery, texts about addiction have implications for recovery as well as vice versa. Following, I am developing some texts that have dealt more explicitly with the phenomenon of recovery, but are of particular importance to my inquiry into addiction as well. As seen in the previous sections, addiction literature often invokes definitions of unnormativity and an implied prescription for correction and remedy. As I will develop in this section and the following section, *treatment*, the phenomenon of recovery relies on particular assumptions about addiction.

This craving for alcohol that occurs later in recovery likely is caused by a long-term recollection of “what it was like to drink.” Situations in which alcohol previously was experienced

as pleasurable or in which alcohol previously served to relieve stress may activate this memory. The conditioning models of craving and relapse attempt to explain these situations in the terms of classical stimulus-response relationships. According to those models, environmental events or changes in internal emotional states trigger a series of neurochemical reactions that through past experience have been programmed to activate various brain systems, thereby leading to the experience of craving. (Anton 1999:168)

Craving in this text is developed as a bodily force that overwhelms the addict's will power. Whilst seeking pleasure, the addiction is characterized as a cognitive-body reaction. In this way, addicts are victims of a dumb force, like Pavlov's dog unable to control his salivation, so too are alcoholics unable to resist the craving for drunkenness in this particular way. Closer to my research question, however, this research opens up the possibility that the pleasure of alcohol is a wonderful experience for the addict, and that the memory of its pleasure has the potential to overwhelm the addict and lead to reengaging the desire to drink. The pleasurable memory rests on the foundations of a sensitive awareness that becomes present to self-knowledge through the body.

Reviving this phenomenological perspective – the mind/body relation – of memory can help develop a stronger reading of the above explanation of craving, the memory of pleasure leading to desire. “The body expresses total existence, not because it is an external accompaniment to that existence, but because existence comes into its own in the body” (Merleau-Ponty 1962:166). In this orientation, the body is not an external force acting on the mind, instead, the mind and one's being in the world is possible through the presence of the body's existence. The body and mind are intertwined in their existence, each needing the other in its presence. Memory, then, is a recollection of sensational acuity, and the mind's

self-knowledge of pleasure comes into its existence through the body. The recalling of that pleasurable memory can create a longing to again experience that sensation.

With this orientation to the problem posed here in the literature, there is an intertwined relation between the location – the body's being in the world – at a bar, for example, or being together with friends, and self-reflection that reminds the addict of a memory of past pleasurable experiences. Encountering and reflecting on memories of pleasure happens simultaneously in a dialectical relation between the bodily, the biological being, and self-reflection and recognition of those past instances of pleasure. A struggle emerges as the addict remembers the pleasure of drinking by reflecting on its affects on the body. The addict is courted by her own reflections, overcoming her hesitations and reservations to abstain or restrain. The addict's awareness and self-indication of the recollected sensation and remembrance of the pleasure from alcohol is an overwhelming memory.

The feeling of lust encounters the addict in relation to remembered sensations of pleasure. The addict desires to have that experience again, relive it. Addiction is universally related to the feeling of lust, an overpowering desire for sensations of pleasure felt in the body. Through this essence that is shaped by a situated location of memory and its relation to time and space and the body, recovery is an experience that must deal with forming new relationships with those situations. The notion of recollection implies that addiction is related to the situated body and to pleasure; recovery and its encounter with those highly sensualized experiences can be influenced by a lustful return to those sensory memories.

While the literature implies that addicts should avoid situations that could lead to lust, the addict who is aware of her lust can develop a new relation to those spaces in light of her restraint from over indulgence.

For my research question, the lived experience of addiction and recovery is the struggle with the problem of lust and the senses. Rather than examining the situational memory as an externalized force acting on the addict and causing her to relapse and drink to excess – a “trigger” in the brain – the lived experience is interested in how the essence of lust makes the experience of addiction and recovery a possible human experience.

Other research into relapse focuses on the cycle of addiction and recovery as a process.

The control phase inevitably breaks down, whether it is for 1 hour, 1 week, 1 month, or 1 year, and the addict is back in the behavior again despite his or her promise to himself or herself or others never to do it again. When the ecstasy of the release is spent, the addict will often feel remorse at his or her failure and, with great resolve, will switch back to another “white knuckle” period of abstaining from the behaviour. (Young 2008:28)

In the above description of relapse, recovery is referred to as a series of phases. Young calls relapse the breakdown of the control phase. She characterizes this breakdown as a broken promise. A promise is a commitment made to oneself or to others that dedicates a person to practicing, in this case, abstinence. A promise is a wilful devotion, not adjudged onto someone, but is a free choice to ongoingly preserve that commitment. Recovery, in this sense, is a promise to abstain; the addict freely dedicates herself to stopping the behaviour,

drinking. This implies that addiction is also a choice, and with the right amount of commitment to ceasing, recovery is possible.

Further, Young describes the promise of abstinence as a “white knuckled” commitment. The notion of white knuckling, a kind of will, or determination, in relation to the lived experience of alcohol consumption is a steadfast abstinence from drinking. The practice of, or omission from practicing drinking, white knuckle quitting is holding onto that abstinence and refusing to let go of that will power to refuse to drink. If this practice is particular to the experience of recovery, it suggests that the desire to not drink can overcome the need for pleasure that addicts seek. If the phenomenon of white knuckling is considered as a necessary self-understanding for addicts restraining themselves from drinking, this commitment demonstrates a member actively engaging his will to control his desires to drink for pleasure by abstaining. Giving in to the pleasure of drinking, is giving over to an uncontrolled desire to drink. Drinking socially, the practice of indulgence in the pleasure of alcohol without drinking to intoxication, is not possible if the addict is upholding this promise to abstain. Restraint from the pleasure of drinking is a kind of “all or nothing” relation; white knuckling is the only way to avoid overindulgence and intoxication. For the addict, it seems, the pleasure of alcohol must be necessarily controlled through the restraint or abstinence from drinking.

White knuckling relies on the assumption that the promise of recovery is made under duress. To further consider this phenomenon, Edwards (2000) offers insight into the self-understanding of dependency. He states that, when someone purchases

...alcohol, an individual's control over choice can become impaired by dependency. When such a person slips yet another bottle of gin into the supermarket trolley, the purchase will have been made under an inner duress of a kind not experienced with any other item in the shop, save nicotine. Dependence is duress. (Edwards 2000:72)

Duress is here described in relation to addiction. To feel under duress is to feel threatened or forced to do something. Addiction in this case is characterized as a desire that imposes a sense of urgency and coercion on an addict. Addicts feel they must drink, that they must buy the alcohol to carry on. To make the promise to recover requires a certain kind of courage, standing up against the desires that threaten and keep the addict at bay. Addiction, then, is an experience that can be willfully overcome with a promise, but making that promise is made in the shadows of a sense of duress, and that absolute restraint and steadfastness to that promise is necessary to succeed. White knuckling is a necessity for the addict to uphold her vow to a life of abstinence because further drinking enters the addict into that same threatened relationship of coercion, that she must continue to drink. The promise of recovery is made under difficult circumstances. Relapse, breaking the promise, denotes the struggle between the duress of desire and the dedication to recovery.

For lived experience research, the phenomena of addiction and recovery as an essential experience made under duress would seek to illustrate the struggle as a universal of the human condition. Keeping alive the concept of desire, the experience of recovery as it relates to the experience of addiction would lead the inquiry in the direction of the self-understanding of the addict in the midst of a struggle. While the above research has contributed to the lived experience understanding of addiction and recovery as an experience

of duress, there remains a gap in describing what that experience and struggle is. In this way, my thesis addresses this experience by using my research materials (chapter four) to develop lived experience descriptions as well as perform an analysis (chapter five).

3.5 Treatment

In addition to the topics I have covered throughout my review of the literature in my inquiry into the lived experience of addiction and recovery, I will lastly address a trend in the literature that assesses the need for treatment. The concept of treatment has implications for my research question, as it relies on the assumption of a problem, addiction, and a method for cure, recovery. Below I will develop two texts in relation to my research problem.

One research interest in studies on treatment of addiction, is the therapeutic community. Kaplan and Broekaert (2003) explain that this

concept was based on the more conventional goal of psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation, the social inclusion and integration into society of the recovered addict. The TC [therapeutic community] recovered ‘graduates’ could act as role models for a drug-free lifestyle and therefore exert the social impact of the TC on the wider society. They also could instil the hope in society that although addiction may be characterised at best as a chronically relapsing disease, recovery was possible and the fearsome experience of addiction could be transformed into something that eventually strengthens the fabric of a democratic society. The TC, when managed with an eye to protect against the dangers of cultism and the substitution of an authoritarian personality for an addiction disorder, enabled individuals to develop a set of personal and social skills that empowered them for a steady path of autonomous and continual change in themselves and in the larger society (Kaplan & Broekaert 2003:205)

Kaplan emphasizes the importance of community for recovering addicts. By this orientation to recovery, it is suggested that addicts wanting to recover must first feel as if they “belong” to the sober community. The community is structured towards “leading by example” principles and instructing addicts how to lead a “normal”, sober life with everyday social skills. This assumes that addicts belong to a community that does not have these “skills”. In this text, the addict community that fails to have “normative” skill and has differing practices, is segregated from the sober/nonaddict community. The text points to a need to integrate addicts and nonaddicts so that the addict might conform to the “normative” nonaddict practices.

This orientation of integration implies that addiction is both not normal and also fundamentally different at the level of community. Restoration and assimilation to normal is treated as a requirement for recovery. The therapeutic community takes on the role of a training experience, demonstrating normative practices – without becoming deviant and “cult-like” – to addicts in hopes that they will be successful in learning the acceptable kinds of social skills. This community has implications for addiction, that it is a deviance from the normative ways of living; and thus recovery is a transformation away from the addict’s reversion into deviance, and restores the new, normative, social person into the wider society.

To treat the experience of addiction and recovery as a problem for integration of deviants back in the wider society, ignores the assumptions that are made by orienting to the phenomenon of addiction and recovery in this way. The research masks its construction of addiction as deviance and its prescription for integration by language that is, at the surface,

seemingly holistic. The deeper essence of addiction is ignored by its implicit assertions about normativity and deviance in relation to the community. Lived experience research would be instead interested in the phenomena of addiction and recovery as it existentially relates to shared space and the relationship with the community. This text has the potential to contribute to the self-understanding of the addict as it relates to her spatiality and relationality in the lifeworld. However, this text is not oriented to the phenomenon in the way that lived experience research would be, and is instead condemning and prescriptive toward the addict.

Aside from research that examines treatment as a process of integration to the normative practices of the community, some research questions the validity and necessity of treatment at all. Prins' (2008) article examines the phenomenon of recovery by mapping out the biography of addicts and demonstrates that recovery is an inevitability related to maturity.

I hope to have shown important features of the trajectories of hard-drug addicts and of their maturing out. A distinguishing feature is, for example, the fact that such trajectories are "follow-up" or secondary trajectories. In order to understand their course one has to take into account the prior experiences of suffering and turmoil. Something which I focused on in my discussion of the process of maturing out is the necessity of doing biographical work—work which can be encouraged by professionals but which might also be performed totally independently from them. Some of it may also be marked by a critical distance from professionals and institutional services. (Prins 2008)

As I illustrated in previous sections, the formulation of addiction as a sickness or social problem implies that it must be corrected or resolved. Treatment programs created around this assumption claim to restore the addict to good health and normality through various methods ranging across a wide spectrum. Prins' research suggests that it is possible

that treatment is not necessary, and that the life course of the addict and her personal choices may be all that is necessary, rather than a medical intervention. The notion of biographical work illuminates an addict's relation to self-reflection, that medical practices and "cures" may not be the central turning point in an addict's recovery.

The implications of this research conclusion demonstrates a need to further understand the addict's self-knowledge and reflective relation to her own lived experience of addiction and recovery. If the maturity of the addict is particular to her commitment to recovery, it suggests that addiction is not as an impossible overpowering force, but is a relation to a substance that has self-possessing qualities for the addict. Addicts experiencing recovery are engaged in their own life choices and experiences, and are culpable to them. Working through materials that are particularly and universally concerned with the essence of the experience of addiction and its recovery would be able to expose the addict's self-understanding of this journey, focusing less on the success rates of medical intervention and more on the intervention of the addict's self-knowledge that moves her to dedicate herself to recovery.

Additional to the texts that I have worked through and developed in this chapter, I would like to summarize a few concluding remarks that collect my work with the texts and what they offer for my current inquiry, as well as reiterate the necessity for the kind of analysis I am doing in my research. While the word addict has transformed drastically since its first occurrence in language, most speech has come to use this term as a reference to

dependency. But, as I have demonstrated, this dependency develops through an encounter with a desire for pleasure.

Dependency, as it appears in medical research, is a concept that moves away from the addict's self-understanding and agency. Research thus far constructs the addict as biologically malfunctioning, genetically disfigured, a victim of both a kind of "viral affliction" and fate. These formulations result in the addict's social obligation to "get well soon" as well as integrate back into the normative community. For addiction research, the medicalized model offers a focus on the body that assumes the addict's self-awareness. Medicalization offers great advances into the understanding of the biological function of the addict, but it takes for granted the self-reflective work that addicts do in relation to their illness or addiction. For example, as discussed above, the medical model explains the desire of the addict as a physical urge or biological function. Like hunger, addicts are able to identify, reflect on, and understand their urges. In the medical model, the addict's urges can be "cured" and corrected with proper treatment. These implications, that the addict's desire is recognized as a physical urge, and that the urges are in need of correction rely on the fact that addicts have the self-awareness to reflect on their physical bodies and their desires to make sense of the addiction. As discussed, the responsibility of the sick role is to self-correct, to get well. To say this is to recognize and make sense of the physical urge and the body. The medical model does not uncover the reflection that addicts do to recognize the illness. My research will contribute to this field by developing the self-reflection and awareness of the

addict – it will show the sense-making that is relied on to understand addiction – what makes it possible for addicts to recognize their urges.

Lived experience research focuses on this desire and self-understanding of the body, how addiction becomes a recognizable object of the body. Lived experience research allows for the focus on self-understanding by engaging the materials reflexively. Reflexivity reconnects the object of study (the medicalized body) to the assumptions being relied on (desire as a physical urge). The reflexive reconnection is a better way to develop the assumptions and deeper meaning of the phenomenon of addiction, as I demonstrate throughout the project. Reflexivity makes explicit the meaning making and interpretive processes that both the addict and other research approaches rely on but do not make explicit. For this reason, lived experience research is necessary for alcohol and addiction studies; I reconnect the medical model's assumptions to the deeper meaning and self-understanding of the addict.

Further, the medical model is also embraced by the AA member to understand addiction and recovery. As described above in the *Big Book*, understanding addiction and alcoholism as a disease is a way to help make sense of it as a physical urge that requires treatment and correction. For the AA member, too, there underlies particular interpretive work that assumes an understanding of the body, what it means to be sick, and how biological urges determine behaviour. My thesis shows this interpretive work by making it recognizable, by describing it, and analyzing it. The orientation of lived experience research keeps the agency of the addict alive as well as explicitly shows the interpretive work that

addicts do to understand their experiences as possible ones. My research reconnects these above implications of the current research to the self-understanding of the addict through the method of lived experience research and my research inquiry into the essence of addiction and recovery.

I will now proceed to chapter four, *Materials*, where I will further develop my research question by using the interview data collected from alcoholic anonymous members. While this chapter of literature review has been both a demonstration of the treatment of text as materials that bring the inquirer closer to the essence of the phenomenon, I have also taken this opportunity to show why my research is necessary in the field of addiction studies. Because the texts that I have worked with here were not interested in describing the lived experience of the addict, nor were they oriented to their materials in the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition, in the next chapter I will be introducing my interview materials. These additional materials will be put into play with what I have here to develop themes and move towards an *Analysis* (chapter five).

Chapter 4

Materials

In this chapter I will develop the interview materials with the Alcoholics Anonymous members about their struggle with alcohol in order to examine the lived experience of addiction and recovery. In this section, I will treat the interview narratives as anecdotal expressions that can be thematically organized to reveal something universal about the essence of addiction and recovery. Prior to this work with the texts, I will first develop a detailed argument for the pedagogical use of the “theme” in hermeneutic phenomenological research as distinct from the symbolic interactionist method, as well as a better way to bring out the lived experience and essence of the human experience of addiction and recovery. Staying close with the Van Manen (2006) text, the use of a theme will be illustrated as a good tool for uncovering, discovering, and revealing the meaning of the experience under inquiry. First by providing an account and justification for the use of the theme in the hermeneutic phenomenological method, I will make use of symbolic interaction literature as an interlocutor that will distinguish thematic lived experience research from the concept driven symbolic interaction method, as well as illuminate the orientedness of the theme to meaning in a way that the concept does not. Then, I will develop my materials as an example of the reflexive use of the theme, and concluding with a lived experience description of the phenomenon of addiction and recovery.

4.1 What is a theme?

Van Manen describes the use and significance of the theme in a variety of ways. The use of a theme helps to illuminate the meaning, focus and point of the speech (text) (Van Manen 2006:87). The theme is the first intersection that the interpreter has with the significance of the essence of the experience under inquiry. It is the “deepened and reflexive understanding” of the experience that is telling of the essence, is points to something meaningful about the phenomenon (Van Manen 2006:86). In my inquiry into the lived experience of addiction and recovery, the theme of lostness, for example, points at a possible essence that makes addiction a significant experience in the human condition.

The theme, however, is not the depth of the inquiry and its analysis, it instead simplifies the essence and falls short of its deeper meaning (Van Manen 2006:87). As outlined in chapter two, *theory and method*, language is merely a construction; a theme is a linguistic reference that is constructed based on various pre-understandings. The theme acknowledges this limitation, as it is merely a tool to open up the following analysis of the material to develop the phenomenon in more particular ways. Themes point to possible universal experiences, albeit a simplified version of them. Using the example of lostness, the word lostness does not encompass the experience of lostness in the particular lived experience of addiction. Using lostness as a theme, however, does start to open up the possibility of further depth to the phenomenon of addiction. Lostness is both a universal possibility, that someone could experience lostness in a strange city, for example, and it is also a way to further think about the particular experience of addiction and recovery. The

word lostness does not encompass the overall meaning of addiction, but it is a way into developing the deeper meaning of this lived experience.

Further, a theme is intransitive (Van Manen 2006:87). This assumption does not mean that the theme is an abstraction from the text; it is not an object in the text already, but it is interpreted from the text. This requires reflexive work of the inquirer. The text will not state that lostness is how addicts feel prior to recovery, but it will instead have qualities that are both reminiscent of feeling lost and that can be further understood if illuminated by the notion of lostness. How does lostness help us understand the text? How does the text help us understand lostness? The interpretive work requires a kind of creativity and thinking that examines what experience is being relied on, is pre-thought, in the description of the experience.

The theme then leads to a formulation of the text. The theme gives the phenomenon a structure and a form (Van Manen 2006:87). By giving it structure, it does not mean that the lived experience is generalizable or predictable, but, rather, that it is an essence that universally relates to the human condition. Further, the universal relation gives the particular phenomenon a way of understanding and interpreting its importance. For example, understanding addiction as the feeling of lostness shapes the experience of the phenomenon as one among many in universal understanding of lostness. Not only could lostness be a feeling experienced in other situations, as mentioned before, lostness provides a way to think about addiction, with certain implications for its form. What does the addicted experience look like if it is the feeling of being lost? In describing this essence of lostness, it gives

meaning and form to the phenomenon of addiction, providing both insight and shape to a word and experience that is open to a number of subjective understandings.

4.2 How to develop a theme

In order for the inquirer to formulate and develop the themes in her materials, it requires a particular orientation to the phenomenon: the desire to make sense; an openness to the possibilities; and invention, discovery, and disclosure (Van Manen 2006:88). The desire to make sense implies that the inquirer treats the phenomenon as a “mystery”, as something “puzzling” or “odd”. By making the phenomenon unfamiliar this allows for the inquirer to orient herself to the text in a way that desires to make it something familiar and palpable. Further, treating the experience as a mystery demonstrates that the essence uncovered is merely one possibility, that it cannot fully be known; the essence is only known in relation to the interpretation of its meaning. The essence can be described by showing the interpretive work being relied on within the text. The mystery of the phenomenon means that it is knowable, but only through interpretation, and never as a fixed, prescriptive, or definite certainty. For my materials about addiction, I will treat addiction as an unfamiliar experience. This orientation may pedagogically allow me to leave possible assumptions behind, insofar as I am searching for what makes addiction what it is: how is it a possible experience? What is the essence of that experience?

Treating the phenomenon as mysterious does not mean mystification; it is not an approach that assumes a particular moral implication. By treating the phenomenon under question as unfamiliar allows the inquirer to be open to any possibility. The phenomenon is

transformed by the theme, and the researcher must be open to seeing the phenomenon in a way that is new. For addiction, the feeling of lostness is not necessarily a way that addiction is described everyday, but it is a theme that emerges through the way that people talk about their experiences with addiction. In order to arrive at this creative form of addiction, I have to be open to thinking about addiction as an experience that is more than the biological body or disease. These assumptions do not allow for an examination of the lived experience, as I demonstrated in chapter three, and they strive to make the phenomenon definite. Lostness, as a form, is an essential experience that is both unique and universal to my phenomenon. Developing the lived experience of lostness in relation to the phenomenon of addiction would not have been possible if I was not open to seeing addiction in a new way and if I assumed that addiction was a definable disease. The theme is a tool that renders a kind of openness to the approach of the phenomenon.

For the theme to emerge, invention, discovery, and disclosure are present throughout the development of the phenomenon. The aspect of invention points to the researcher's interpretation of the phenomenon (Van Manen 2006:88). This acknowledges the creativity of the inquirer who desires to make sense of the mystery and is open to the possibilities that the research question makes available for the interpretation of the materials. As well, the notion of invention admits the hermeneutic exchange between the inquirer's history and location as the textual expression encounters her. As mentioned before, the inquirer interprets the text, and it is one interpretation possible among many. The research enters into a metaphorical dialogue with the life of the text – what does the text offer to the experiential interpretation of

life (the particular text and the universal possibilities)? The hermeneutic method of interpretation assumes that the text has voice that encounters the inquirer. The discovery of the theme is a result of that dialectical interpretation of the text. How does the theme shape the text? What does the text illuminate about the nature of the theme? In other words, lostness both shapes the interpretation of the text, leading to discoveries about the phenomenon of addiction that may have not yet be thought of; and, the experience of addiction points to one possible essence and nature of the experience of lostness. It is in this way that the theme allows for the text to disclose something to the inquirer. The theme *gives* the text something that was not present at the surface; it is granted as part of a deeper reading of the text.

4.3 What does a theme do?

The theme has an instrumental quality; it is a tool to get at the notion or essence of the text (Van Manen 2006:88). The theme is not the final result of an inquiry; it is the tool that moves the inquiry forward. Van Manen calls the theme a *techne*, also called a craft. This implies that the theme is part of a practice that moves the interpretation toward an appearance (the desired essence of the experience and phenomenon under question). The appearance is the notion of a whole, that the phenomenon is a particular experience, but also part of a universally understood human experience. To say universally understood draws on the principle foundation of the ontology of phenomenology; that is, what is universally understood is the way that objects are there. The task of the theme is to describe how people relate to the object, and show that they understand how to relate to it. The theme as a tool is

only one part of the whole, as something that allows the whole to be shaped and crafted, brought to life in the parts of text and larger than the texts from which it emerges. The notion of lostness brings the experience of addiction to a meaning that is greater than the parts of the text, but also connects that experience to a larger and deeper understanding. The theme, both created by and guiding the inquirer, allows for the phenomenon to take shape, connecting it to the universal feeling of lostness, and to transform the words of the particular text to have a relationship to the whole of the essential, universal quality that the experience of addiction makes possible.

As a tool, the theme also enables the description of an ineffable essence – giving “shape to the shapeless” (Van Manen 2006:88). Because lived experience research strives to get at the pre-understanding and unawareness of experience, describing an essence that is unthought is not a task that renders concrete formulations. The essence is itself a shapeless and indescribable whatness that makes the experience what it is and what it is not through a way of experiencing a phenomenon that is relied on but not conscious. That is, the essence is not concrete, our relation to something and our interpretive work is not a thing, but a happening. The theme provides a way to give form to that whatness; it gives one possible shape for a particular experience, fixing it to both the content as well as the universal.

The essence is grounded in the text but also greater than the text. The theme describes the content of the text (Van Manen 2006:88). In addition to being a universal quality, the theme is grounded in the particular words of the text; the theme emerges through working with the text. The theme of lostness can describe the text that offered that theme as a possible

formulation. And, the theme can also connect the text to the larger, universal understanding of what it means to be lost.

Finally, the theme is a “reduction of a notion”; it lights a small part of a deeper meaning of the mystery and essence of the lived experience under inquiry (Van Manen 2006:88). The theme does not capture the entire realm of possible essences that make up the experience of the phenomenon, but it does develop the research in a way that sheds light on part of the human experience. The theme is not all encompassing or in any way verifiable or generalizable. The deeper meaning that emerges through the theme is only a small part of the complex nature of the phenomenon. The interpretation of the inquirer is only one insight into the deeper meaning of the experience, not an overarching theme that could characterize all experiences of the particular phenomenon. While the theme does describe the text, the theme is merely a reduction that grasps at one particular meaning that illuminates the possibility of a universal essence; it is not definitive. The theme of lostness is not an understanding that is overwhelmingly descriptive of all addiction experiences. Lostness merely represents an object, an experience, of one essence that makes the description within the text possible, one possible lived experience, and emerges from the text. Lostness is also a way to see a deeper meaning associated with the phenomenon of addiction; the mystery, the essence, is shown to me, the researcher, through my interpretation and work with the text as well as through my dialectical engagement with the text (particular) and the theme (universal).

To make the distinction between the universal notion of a theme and a generalizable concept, I will now use symbolic interaction to demonstrate how the concept does not get at

the meaning of a phenomenon in the same way that a theme does, all the while making it clear the difference between the two terms and approaches.

4.4 How is a theme different than a concept?

Symbolic interaction uses a similar method of data collection for their sociological analysis, the interview. However, what they do with the material, construct concepts, is far different than the hermeneutic phenomenological method that I am using in this lived experience research project. The concept, for symbolic interactionists, is a generalizable term that claims to represent the process by which something happens in relation to subjective meaning. I will demonstrate that the emphasis of the concept, however, does not get at the lived experience, despite its claim to do so and the method of data collection and interpretation.

While the method of data collection for symbolic interaction, interviews and participant observation, is meant to get at the actual, lived, everyday experiences of the members and participants in particular activities and groups, the treatment of the data is where the meaning becomes lost. Additionally, while the method of analyzing the text, description, sounds similar to hermeneutic phenomenology, it is, in fact, very different. Symbolic interaction focuses on how meaning is negotiated, not what something means. This may seem like a subtle difference, but it is, instead, this emphasis on the process of meaning negotiation ignores the meaning of the phenomenon under question; symbolic interaction research assumes the whatness, the essence of the phenomenon. The formulation and description of concepts, in relation to the meaning negotiated process, is not interested in the

particular and the universal, but instead interested in the generalizable. I will further elaborate by discussing the following prominent symbolic interaction scholars, Blumer (1969), Goffman (1974), Glaser and Strauss (1967), and Prus (1996).

Herbert Blumer describes symbolic interaction research as the need to produce *sensitizing concepts*: “Sensitizing concepts...gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances” (Blumer 1969:148). The user in this case is both the researcher and the reader. The concept gives to the researcher a frame of reference for understanding the empirical instances in relation to the general. The concept is a way of suggesting, of making meaning available for comparing and contrasting other instances of the same context. While this may sound similar to the theme, the concept is not oriented by a desire to develop the meaning of a phenomenon; its referential relation to the generalizable deemphasizes the essence of the phenomenon.

Blumer goes on to say that “sensitizing concepts can be tested, improved and refined. Their validity can be assayed through careful study of empirical instances which they are presumed to cover” (Blumer 1969:150). Essentially, Blumer’s argument for the creation of sensitizing concepts is one that calls for a general theory that explains all instances of behaviour. Blumer prescribes that creating such concepts are possible if they are continuously tested against instances from different situational contexts, and then current concepts are modified and changed to explain the new as well as the old instances.

A few implications follow from Blumer’s proposed research strategy. Blumer’s postulation to continuously change the concept never fully uncovers or develops the

concept's meaning, essence, and whatness. The concern with applicability keeps the focus of the concept on the empirical world; that the concept must accurately explain something is very different than having a concept that describes that thing. The theme, which is a description of the content, emphasizes the phenomenon's relation to the universal without the need for testing. The concept, however, is related to the universal insofar as it must be viable for explaining all kinds of social action. The theme is different from the concept because of its desire for understanding the phenomenon under question. Phenomenological research takes the case and materials under question as an occasion to develop a deeper relation to an experience in light of both what that experience is, and how it is possible in the human condition. Symbolic interaction research sees its data as only possible instances that are parts of a sum; the concepts should explain both the parts (the data) as well as the sum of all human actions. Symbolic interaction's concern with testing removes the need for deep understanding, and instead is only interested in the concept's generalizability, its ability to explain every possible instance.

Erving Goffman's research has also been grouped in the symbolic interaction literature. His research called for the development of "Schematics of interpretation...which enables people to locate, perceive, identify and label 'occurrences of information'" (Goffman 1974:515). For Goffman, the schematics are procedures related to interpretation that enable the naming of action. Naming, a process that characterizes and categorizes, implies that all action will be grouped in to various types of action, or what Goffman calls *occurrences of*

information. Not only is interpretation formatted to a procedural relation, but action is viewed in this procedure as part of a number of subset groups of kinds of action.

To organize the instances of action, called information, into groups, removes the emphasis on interpretation in the hermeneutic sense. First, consider that action becomes an occurrence of information. Phenomenological research states that all kinds of action have an essence, a meaning, a whatness. To think about that whatness, the ineffable quality of action that makes it humanly possible, instead as information suggests that has a notifying quality; information reports and purports to be concretely ground in actuality. Schematics, then, is a procedure that groups empirical instances into kinds of action, categorizes them, and conveys information to the reader about the phenomenon. This is different than the theme because the theme is not interested in categorizations as the end through which information is conveyed about the phenomenon, as the concept does, but instead treats the phenomenon as one possible particular manifestation in action of a universal human experience. The text under hermeneutic scrutiny is not relaying information about the phenomenon, it is an experience that reveals itself in that particular instance. The theme gets at what is not said in the instances of the text, what makes that text possible, that experience a possible one. The concept in the form of a schematic works at merely making the experience a categorical one, and that naming reveals information about the actuality of that kind of experience. Goffman's proposed scheme of interpretation that is conceptually oriented does not interpret the text at all; instead, it names that text under the assumption of what the text means without doing the work to develop the essential qualities of the text.

Further, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss were also concerned with the creation of many concepts to form larger theory.

Theory...must fit the situation being researched, and work when put into use. By 'fit' we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study; by 'work' we mean that they must be meaningfully relevant to and be able to explain the behavior under study.
(Glaser & Strauss 1967:3)

These symbolic interaction – also called “grounded theory” – researchers are concerned not with the whatness of the phenomenon, but with the applicability of the research results. Further, their proposed notion of a theoretical understanding of a phenomenon is simply its ability to explain it, and that same concept could explain other kinds of behaviour as well. The concern with relevance, how the concept “fits” and “works”, is related to the consequences of the concept; the result of creating concepts is to produce concepts that are important and can have general applicability. While the theme is concerned with “fitting” with the text, this is only insofar as it can describe the content. The theme acknowledges the “reduction” of the notion it seeks to describe, and makes recognizable a relation to the universal essence without purporting to be the universal rule, as the concept does. To reiterate, the difference between the explanation of the text and the description is its implications for the interpretation of the phenomenon. The notion of a description is related to an appearance, something that is not concretely related, but is aesthetically. That appearance is the universal quality. The theme represents one possible universal. On the other hand, the notion of an explanation gives reason to the behaviours it explains. Further, the concept shows the intention of the action in a way that can rationally explain other

behaviours as well. There is an elucidated concern with the concept's purpose, that it is generally clarifying many kinds of behaviour; whereas the theme is a representation of an ineffable essence, that it is only one possibility among many, and not a testable or practically relevant explanation of the phenomenon. The theme seeks a deeper relation to the content. Not only does it seek to describe it, that description is radically related to the universal, social quality of the human condition. The question of the concept is what does this explain, whereas the question of the theme is what essence makes this description possible.

Elaborating on Glaser & Strauss, Prus refers to concepts as *generic social processes*.

He defines these kinds of concepts as,

The transsituational elements of interaction...denoting parallel sequences of activity across diverse contexts, generic social processes highlight the emergent, interpretive features of association. They focus our attention on the activities involved in the "doing" or accomplishing of human group life. (Prus 1996:142)

The "transsituational" orientation of the generic social process appeals to the creation of concepts that are empirically grounded and applicable to all situations. This implies that activity is categorical, that it can be characterized, and that those characterizations are valid across every situation. The generic social process is focused on the creation of a generic, generalizable concept. While the above describes an interpretive nature of the method for creating the generic social process, the "features of association" suggests an interest in characterized relationships to things.

The method of creating a concept that is generalizable requires a categorical relation to the world and the phenomenon under study. Naming, grouping behaviours together,

assumes the whatness of the phenomenon. The name is a result of the research's desire to make categorical groups; it is not driven by the desire to understand the meaning of the experience, only to name and group the experience. The meaning is lost if it is assumed, and the action and its significance is typified. Hermeneutic phenomenology looks for the deeper meaning of the phenomenon, but does not assume the meaning of the experience or its essence. This allows for the significant relationship between the universal essence and the particular experience to emerge through interpretation with the text and the creation of themes.

Building further on the implications of the four above methodological statements of the concept in symbolic interaction, to develop the concept, the data must be coded. Coding involves searching for repeated patterns in the data to formulate categories that both group and explain the data. Essentially, coding looks for what is already there. It is a counting procedure that groups repeated words or phrases, for example, and the researcher develops the concept based on its ability to explain the majority of the data. The theme, however, does not emerge through a counting of repeated words. The theme is developed through reflexively engaging the text to find what is not present in the text, but is ineffably present, making the text's speech possible and rational. As a description of what is there, the theme illuminates something about the text that is only present through reflexive engagement. The theme desires to make sense of the text, but does not explain it; it does not give reason to the data, but instead locates it in the realm of possible human experiences. In other words, the theme is not coding, it searches for something that essentially there, not necessarily repeated.

Following the method outlined in the symbolic interaction tradition, to carry out this kind of research, the creation of concepts would seek to both accurately explain addiction as well as other kinds of social action. Concepts would be focused on linking the current study's research to other concepts and themes from other, past studies, as well as proposing new concepts to test in future research. For example, to look at the lifecycle, or the process of getting involved, of addiction, the research would try to create concepts that both explain how addicts go through the cycle of addiction, as well as explain how someone might also get involved in a career of, say, sports. The data would modify other, past concepts that explain the lifecycle of sports, to now include an explanation of the addict's lifecycle. As well, symbolic interaction research would focus on creating concepts that explain addiction, but that could also explain other kinds of action. In this way, the focus would be on a process of meaning negotiation that is generically oriented, rather than on a phenomenological kind of meaning that is experientially located in the particularity of addiction, but also socially connected to the universal nature of any possible human experience. The concept *explains* and is concerned with universal applicability, whereas the theme is universally related in that it is a possible human experience.

Further, the concept is the final product from a symbolic interaction analysis. The purpose of that research is to create testable concepts that viably explain particular data, and that can be applied and generalized to any behaviour. Hermeneutic phenomenological research uses the theme in a different way. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the theme is a tool that starts to unravel the mystery of the text's essential aspects. The theme is part of the

analysis but not the final product. The theme is not generalizable, but is instead a reduction of a deeper experience. Because the theme is not an object of the text, it has an interpretive quality that is accounted for in its very creation; themes are brought out through work with the text as one possible path to one possible essence. The theme is related to the universal, social quality of action in that the universal essence is what makes the particular experience a possible one. The theme is not meant for testing or application to verifiable experiences or expression. The theme is something that emerges through the hermeneutic encounter with the text, so the theme emerges from the human experience, but the theme is only part of a larger analysis that aims at the deeper understanding of the phenomenon and its relationship to the human condition.

4.5 Lostness: A Thematic Understanding of Addiction and Recovery

Now that I have described what the theme is and its significance in relation to the hermeneutic phenomenological analysis, as well as its distinction from the concept in other interpretive traditions, I will thematically tease out the theme of lostness that will lead to my analysis in the following chapter. While the theme emerges through working with the text, I will first present various texts that will constitute my materials for developing the theme of lostness. Following the materials, I will then go through the texts, putting them in conversation with one another to show how the theme of lostness describes the content of the materials and makes the experience of addiction and recovery possible experiences. Additionally, this chapter will lead into the analysis by establishing the temporal relation of lostness to the essential quality of the theme.

I was a very shy person. I failed grade two, um, I was always yelled at, I stuttered an awful lot. I had hand-me-down clothes from my uncle who was about 5 years older than me. I mean, we had money we had a nice house and that. But I could just never approach people and talk to them – I was shy. And growing up I was always a hanger on to a follow – not a leader a follower – I’d follow people around. But I did sports a lot of gymnastics as well, baseball and hockey – it was always team sports and I wouldn’t open my mouth at all. So, when I got into high school I still didn’t fit in, but once I had that alcohol I fit in with people now, right? I’d do my hair, have a moustache – that was in the late sixties early seventies. I fit right in. I got into a group that accepted me and I could drink as much as they could. (Alex)

For Alex’s particular experience, addiction was the feeling of wandering, of having no direction. The words “shyness” and “I wouldn’t open my mouth” reveal a lack of confidence. Similarly, having clothes passed on from an older family member suggests a feeling of insignificance, of not being worthy of personal and new belongings. For the lived experience of addiction, this particular text illuminates sense of no direction. He not only feels doubt about his ability to lead, he is a “follower”, but also feels as if he is not a worthy leader. But, when the experience of alcohol is present, Alex feels guided, confident and “accepted”. Here, the deeper implications are that Alex is making sense of his addiction, and he talks about his past as if it is the reason he became an alcoholic. In giving the accounts about his past, having hand me downs, being yelled at by his father, he speaks about his past as if it was a time of not fitting in and lostness, but also that he feels determined by his past; his understands his alcoholism as a solution to the problem of his not fitting in during his childhood. Although Alex says that he understands his addiction as an illness and craving for alcohol, his speech here shows that his interpretive work relies on the understanding of

alcoholism as the solution to the feeling of lostness, being accepted, social, fitting in to the group.

For the experience of lostness, this particular experience reveals that wandering, being undirected and unworthy of leading, is related to addiction insofar as drinking is the solution to the missing confidence. The experience of addiction is interpreted as being guided by alcohol, and lost without that guidance. Alcohol, if it is a solution, shows that Alex's desire is to solve the problem of fitting in. Alex's understanding of addiction relies on his desire to belong and to fit in. The experience of addiction is the desire to fit in.

What that is, is that it gets to a point where it doesn't do the trick anymore. Because it doesn't fill the hole in your soul anymore. It doesn't hide you from yourself anymore. So it's not taking you out of yourself anymore. It's just, you're drinking, but you're not getting the effects. Whatever that booze was when I was thirteen, I don't know what it was. I would drink and I could feel it go down, and it hit my stomach, and it, it like, woosh! You know, like those commercials, where the Baileys comes out? And I know you can't see that [gestures with hands]. But, that feeling of "I am hot, I have arrived". I'm thirteen, ninety pounds, bowl haircut, and I think I'm the hottest thing since sliced bread, right? And it was—I always chase that feeling. And when I speak, when I talk about it with Alcoholics Anonymous, I call it my first love. Alcohol told me it loved me, it would never leave me, and it would make me feel 100 percent, like a million dollars every time. But it lied. It didn't do that for me. It did for a while, but then it stopped. I had to drink, right. And I could always find any excuse if I am trying to have a drink. You know, whatever, oh, it's Sunday, I'm watching golf, I must have a ceasar. You know, you can't watch golf and have a glass of water. So it gets easier. And you may want to stop, but you can't. It's a part of who you are (Jennifer)

The addiction is described as a hole in the soul, a bottomless pit. For Jennifer, she drank to chase the first high from alcohol, but after a while, “it stopped” giving her the desired effects of drinking. The bottomless pit of drinking is revealed by her discussion of the inability to stop, that she must keep drinking to chase the first high, the desired effects of alcohol. Chasing in an interesting idea, it is as if she is pursuing something concrete, perhaps her first alcohol experience. But, in relation to the bottomless pit of drinking, it suggests that she is chasing it down a rabbit hole, an unending and unrewarding pursuit. For the experience of lostness, this suggests that being lost can, indeed, have a sense of following or direction, in contrast to Alex’s experience, but that that pursuit never ends, has no destination. In that way, it is reminiscent of the misdirection imagery in Alex’s text.

Also similar to Alex is Jennifer’s relationship to her past. She speaks about chasing her past experience of being thirteen and having that first elated experience with alcohol. For Jennifer, she, too, understands her addiction as determined by her past, as though that past experience is causing her to continue to drink. When Jennifer speaks, her past, first, thirteen-year-old experience incites her drinking, that she is determined by this past experience, that she must keep drinking in order to feel that same feeling, of “being hot”. She makes sense of her addiction as if alcohol is in order to experience feeling desired and attractive. Alcohol is the solution to the problem of not feeling desired, being loved. Drinking allowed her to feel desirable, and she “chased” that feeling by drinking. When she says that alcohol no longer lets her feel hot or loved, she attributes her alcoholism to the need to feel attractive. By

saying that she chased that first experience of being hot, her interpretive work shows that her understanding of alcoholism is the desire to solve the problem of being attractive.

Further, Jennifer's speech also describes the futility of the pursuit of the desire to feel attractive. This sheds light on the angst associated with the lostness and unsatisfied pursuit of the effects of drinking. The futility of the pursuit is part of the AA discourse of helplessness, that addicts are helpless against their desires to stop. Here, as shown, Jennifer talks as though her alcoholism is part of this craving, the inability to stop drinking, but instead, her talk is not only part of the AA discourse, but she is relying on an understanding of alcoholism as the solution to the problem of feeling desirable. Her deeper problem is the desire to feel and know if she is attractive.

I would make up lies, because I knew at one point, if the girls at work asked me to go out for supper, and if they were having a drink I knew I couldn't go because I couldn't stop at one drink. So I made excuses. It ruined a lot of family functions. It ruined a lot of time with my grandchildren when they were first little, because I would always make an excuse that I wasn't feeling well on weekends, while I would be too drunk to travel. But I think that it not only destroys you, it destroys all those around you who you care about because they can see what it's doing to you. But I was in denial. I had a drinking problem, but I couldn't stop. At first I didn't think that I had a problem, and it didn't bother me, but then there was a point when I couldn't stop. And they know you can't stop, but there's nothing they can do about it. They try, but as an alcoholic, I put up my defenses and say, no, I don't need help, I'm ok, I can stop anytime I want, I don't drink too much.
(Kathy)

Kathy says her addiction isolated her from relationships. She says that she "made up lies" and "excuses" to purposefully exclude herself from her friends and family because of

her embarrassment about her drinking. Her deliberate self-exclusion demonstrates that her isolation is treated as a kind of solution to her drinking; she knows that her drinking is not socially acceptable, but she also denies it. Her denial is in light of her recovery. Kathy reflects on her isolating drinking practices, calling it denial, but only does so in relation to the present. In recovery she sees her denial as being disconnected from her past. For Kathy, she was unable to change her addiction because she would not accept her past drinking practices. Kathy speaks about her denial in a way that determines her. Kathy says the denial of her past made her unable to stop drinking. Denial is an interesting problem; Kathy speaks about denial as if it was the force making her unable to see the problem and stop drinking. The denial led to her lies about being ill instead of seeing her grandchildren, it caused her to keep drinking because she “could stop anytime she wanted”. Denial itself has an interesting relationship to time and the past. Denial is a way of feeling determined by the past all the while not acknowledging it.

For the experience of lostness as few key points here. In addition to Kathy’s feelings of misguidedness, that she did indeed have a drinking problem she refused to admit, the lostness Kathy felt was her disconnect from her past. Without realizing her past practices, she continued to act as if things were status quo. However, once Kathy came to see her drinking as a problem she was able to change her perspective on her past drinking. For Kathy, she describes her drinking as something that she “couldn’t stop”, in contrast to Jennifer’s pursuit of the effects of drinking. Kathy’s sense of misguidedness stemmed from her deliberate isolation as a solution to her desire to drink heavily. For Jennifer and Alex, lostness and the

misguidedness has to do more with being undirected and pursuing a futile end. In saying that she “couldn’t stop” the lostness of denial illuminates the way that a person can feel lost because they have no sense of their past.

Yeah, well, again the coping, well, um, you know when I needed to deal with my problems I would have a couple drinks, you know. I’m not talking fall-down drunk, I would have a problem then take a couple drinks. Then I would try and figure out my issue. I found that sometimes it worked, but of course, the more I began drinking, when I sat down and started to drink, the more it became warped – my thinking and the problem solving didn’t really work. But actually created more problems, but I was thinking solving problems. It was coping in the way of being able to communicate. Being able to approach people. Um, kinda made me fit it, you know – it broke a lot of barriers, emotionally. Emotional barriers. And so, that’s how I used it, to cope. (Ned)

For Ned, coping and his “need to deal with problems” were his admitted reasons for drinking. If he turned to the bottle for his coping and support for dealing with trouble, this shows how he found friendly comfort in alcohol and drinking. Similar to Alex’s text, alcohol was Ned’s solution to the desire to “approach people” and to “fit in”. Like the other texts seen thus far, Ned reflects on those thoughts as being misguided. The recovery perspective is shown through Ned’s use of the words “didn’t really work”. He sees those past experiences as not only misguided but as a pre-understanding. Prior to his recovery, the support he sought in the bottle was seen as comforting. Now, in his current understanding of his drinking, he reflects on those practices as wrong, “creating more problems” rather than “solving problems”. Bringing the last few texts together that connected on a theme of misguidedness, like this text does as well, bring new light to the development of the theme of lostness.

Alex's desire for acceptance, Jennifer's love of alcohol and its effects, Kathy's solution of isolation, and now Ned's comfort and support for dealing with trouble are all related to a notion of a pre-understanding, looking back on past drinking practices. For lostness, then, the experience of misguidedness or misdirection comes into play with the experience of looking back, reflecting on the past. The past is seen as a time when the practices were a time of pre-understanding of reality. The misguided perspective of the past was an experience of wandering, searching for the truth; now, the past is a time of lostness, and the present is a time of understanding. Further, the past is treated as something that determined their becoming an alcoholic and their ability to quit drinking. To say that the past was a time of misunderstanding or lostness, implies that the conditions of the past were causing their addiction. Let us consider one further example of reflection and pre-understanding in relation to the past.

And I don't have a desire to drink; I don't think of drinking.
But I think of what alcoholism has done in the past by tearing
away my whole social life and taking it away because of my
alcoholic thinking. And my alcoholic thinking is the "ism" that
I call in the fact that it affects every thought pattern; everything
I do. So I have to dismiss that, I have to get rid of that. I have
to look at many selves. Self delusion, lying to myself – there
are many selves and I can't think of them all right now but the
book is based on the idea that there is selves. And if get into
myself then I will go back to that way of life, so I can't do that.
(Joe)

Joe refers to his "alcoholic thinking" as part of his past. This suggests that, for him, there was something significantly different about his past perspective and thinking from the present. For Joe, the past entailed a "desire to drink" that affected "every thought pattern".

The addiction, for Joe, was his overwhelming desire for alcohol; it was part of his everyday life. Alcoholism is the perpetrator that was “tearing away” his social life. There is a reference here to being a victim of the alcoholism while simultaneously treating it as self-possession, that it was his thinking. In this regard, Joe alcoholism and desire to drink, as perpetrator, not only was a misguided way of thinking, but it misled him. The notion of misleading that Joe is discussing is how he refers to his past when speaking about his recovery. When he switches to the present tense, he talks about what he has to do in the present to avoid being misled by alcohol and his past perspective. By the use of the two different tenses to describe his past desire and present recovery, Joe’s reflection on his pre-understanding is a condemning one. He refers to his pre-understanding as a separate self, that his present self is different than that of the past. In this way Joe’s intentions are to lead his new self away from alcohol and the desire to drink to avoid “going back to that [pre-understanding] way of life”. For the essential quality of lostness, Joe’s orientation to his past as a pre-understanding that misled him demonstrates how the past can bring out a kind of angst in relation to its perspective and subsequent acts. In speaking about the past as something that determines him, bringing about alcoholism, the present is a time that he must act, have agency over the past. This leads to anxiety as the past is spoken about as an entity determining his alcohol addiction, but it is not a real “thing”, per se. Joe talks about the past as something that he is, but should not be anymore. This is a real struggle in Joe’s text, as he tries to work through his relationship to the past as one that he treats as causing him to drink uncontrollably, but also that he must, in the present, take responsibility for himself, be the self that is not addicted. The feeling of

lostness, then, in alcoholism is the experience of anxiety towards the past, that the past is something separate from the present, but it is also part of what constitutes being in the present.

By looking at the above few quotations one possible theme has been used to develop the phenomenon, what is one possible essential about the lived experience of addiction and recovery. The work with the materials is what brings about the transformation from the actualities of the anecdotes and stories of the experience with addiction and recovery from each interviewee. In looking beyond the words, using a reflexive hermeneutic thematic structure, my inquiry sought to tease out one possible essential about the phenomenon. What culminated through the work with the theme and the materials was that lostness is related to the way the addict relates to time. For the alcoholic, addiction is seen in relation to time as a period of pre-understanding, a wrong, misleading or misguided understanding, about which the alcoholic harbours some anxiety. From this anxiety emerges a desire for permanence in the present, not wanting to “slip back” into past practices and perspectives. The past is treated as a separate time, part of the journey to the present. The AA voices heard in this chapter relate to the past as something that determines them insofar as alcoholism is the solution to a past problem. In speaking about their addiction as solutions to problems, the members show themselves and their interpretive work as struggling to understand their addiction not only as a cravings of the body, but that alcoholism is related to deeper desires, such as fitting in. Further, there is an anxiety about the past in the texts here as the addicts speak about recovery as the need to have agency over the past, no longer allowing it to

determine their alcoholism. The task of my analysis is to further develop the relationship between the past (addiction) and the present (recovery) by formulating a theoretical understanding of the past. This requires me to engage the existential of temporality to further explore the relationship between the desire for alcohol and recovery as the understanding of time.

This preliminary analysis of the data has brought out a phenomenon that can be addressed in a focused and sustained manner. Using the theme of lostness as a tool to work through lived experience descriptions, there appears to be a relationship between the experience of time, particularly the past and the present, and the phenomenon of addiction and recovery. Not only are alcoholics treating their past as a separate time, a time of lostness, that determined their addiction, they are also anxious about the past. For the proceeding analysis, it will be beneficial to further phenomenologically develop the experience of lived time, the experience of time, and the understanding of time in relation to these materials and the phenomenon of addiction and recovery. The development of an existential frame of reference will help the inquiry delve deeper into the lived experience of the phenomenon by exposing the *being*, the lived experience, of time in addiction and recovery. In the following chapter I will gather texts on temporality to develop my *Analysis*.

Chapter 5

Analysis

The theme of lostness served as a tool that benefitted the analysis of the materials selected from the alcoholics anonymous members insofar as it provided a way of looking at the texts in a way that transformed the materials and drew the inquiry closer to the essential quality of the lived experience of addiction and recovery. As demonstrated, the theme of lostness was not imposed onto the materials as a concept might be, but rather was used instrumentally to open up a possible essential of the lived experience of the phenomenon. After the development of the materials, the description of addiction and recovery was shown to be an experience relating to lived time. In the texts, the speakers reflected on their experiences with addiction as a time of misdirection, lostness, misguidedness. Speaking from a present relation to addiction, their experiences with recovery reflected on the past with anxiety, separating their present being from the being of their past. It was through this orientation of the texts that leads to an analysis of the phenomenon of addiction as it is lived temporally.

In this chapter I will address this lived experience description of addiction and recovery by developing a theoretical frame of reference for temporality. This will allow the inquiry to form a relation to both the particular experiences (texts) used in the *Materials* chapter, as well as to address a collective, universal relation to lived time. In this way, the theoretical development of temporality, as an existential of the lived experience, will phenomenologically and dialectically inform my analysis. In the previous chapter, the

particular experiences opened up a way to analyze the phenomenon in relation to a universal, existential experience of lived time. Using temporality as a theoretical frame that understands and sees these particular texts, as well as shows how the particular texts informed this lens, the phenomenological experience of the being of addiction and recovery will be a temporal experience.

In this section, the focus will be on the development of this temporal framework to strengthen the essential experience of time in relation to addiction. The framework will provide a way of seeing the lived experience in a way that tries to make the ineffable visible. Of the many possible essential experiences of addiction and recovery, this framework will be a way of seeing only one, in this case, lived time. As I move through the development of temporality, I will dialectically reengage the lived experience description and phenomenon to strengthen my case as well as my framework. In this way, temporality represents the universal or collective appearance of time, and I will demonstrate how seeing through the lens of this appearance is a way of making visible the essential and lived experience of my phenomenon. Some of the ways that I will address the particularity of my phenomenon will be using my framework to see how the addict's experience of time is different than the nonaddict's experience of time. Likewise, I will also explore how an existential relation to time in this case of addiction and recovery is a way of seeing the essential, universal experience of lived time. I will now begin to work with some key texts that I have selected to develop this notion of lived time.

Van Manen describes lived time as “subjective time...our temporal way of being in the world” (Van Manen 2006:104). Lived time has both a particular and a universal relation to being. On the one hand, time is a subjective experience; each person experiences time in their own way, and in relation to their conscious presence and existence in time. Universally speaking, time is a collective experience because, although it is subjectively particular, it is universally experienced; the passing and unfolding of time is a collective experience, no one lives a static life. Everyone lives in time, but it is this analysis’ interest to develop how it is that people relate to the passing of time. For this, I will now turn to phenomenological roots of temporality and consciousness.

Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* situated the coming into being of consciousness as a temporal relation.

Dasein’s Being finds its meaning in temporality. But temporality is also the condition which makes historicity possible as a temporal kind of Being which Dasein itself possesses, regardless of whether or how Dasein is an entity “in time”... In its factual Being, any Dasein is as it already was, and it is “what” it already was. It *is* its past, whether explicitly or not. And this is so not only in that its past is, as it were, pushing itself along “behind” it, and that Dasein possesses what is past as a property which is still present at-hand and which sometimes has after-effects upon it: Dasein “is” its past in the way of *its* own Being, which, to put it roughly, “historizes” out of its future on each occasion. (Heidegger 2008:41)

While the culmination of Heidegger’s work addresses the way that time has been misconceptualized since the time of antiquity, this passage, nevertheless, contributes to a framework for temporality through its acknowledgement of the present experience and its

relation to the past. Heidegger says that being finds its meaning in the relation between Dasein and temporality. Dasein is a term that represents a characterization of a relation between an entity (human) and its relation to being-there. Sein is German for the verb to be, and Da means there. Dasein is to-be there, it is the being that has a way of being there, present. In other words, this way of being is the Dasein's self-understanding.

The Dasein finds itself always already understanding the things alongside it, entities. What is understood is the being of an object, what is given to Dasein in its commerce with them, what the entity is, its whatness, and what it is in order to do. Entities are given in a way that makes what is there (entity) accessible to a relation to Being. Dasein can relate to entities and objects because, in understanding what they are in order to, Dasein understands itself and what it is for the sake of. If a hammer is in order to build a table, Dasein knows it is for the sake of building a table.

Heidegger explains Dasein's self-understanding is made possible on the horizon of Temporality. Everyday time, treated here as an entity, is given in a way that the Dasein has access to its own understanding of the whatness of events in relation to time, "it is time for this", or "it is not yet time for that". It is that relation to time that allows for Dasein to understand happening, the givenness of time allows Dasein to understand itself. In saying "it is time for this", the Dasein understands that what it is for the sake of now. In this way, Dasein's relation to self-understanding and happening (historicality) is a temporal one.

Heidegger says that Dasein is its past, its already-has-been-ness. Considering the temporality of Dasein, this illuminates self-understanding as a relationship between the past

as a thing, and what the past gives by way of understanding the present happening.

Happening is Dasein's understanding of the relationship between the past as a region of events, and also the past as what makes possible the understanding of the present. Happening is what makes Being possible. The experience of time is this relationship to the past as both an entity and a way of understanding the present.

This development reveals that the relationship to the past has a dualism: the past can be treated as something that is external, a series of events, a region of things that happened, and so on; but, the past is also "how I am myself". This relationship to the past allows a subject to engage with the past as a thing, an entity, but also gives the subject (consciousness, Dasein) a way of understanding and being in the present moment and situation. The addict's understanding of recovery, then, can be a way of relating to the past as events of addiction, but also is a way of understanding the meaning of sobriety and recovery. Recovery is thus demonstrated as both an existential relation to the past as a series of actions, understandings, and moments in time, and also as an essential relation, as the past gives the addict access to a way of being (a relation to recovery). Temporality is the very way that addicts can understand recovery.

So, addiction and recovery are experiences made possible by a temporal relation to them. Recalling the lived experience description of the anxiety toward time, the analysis will now move in a direction to dialectically engage this problem from the foundational statements of Heidegger. Consider Maurice Merleau-Ponty's description of time as a necessary experience of consciousness:

Time is thought of by us before its parts, and temporal relations make possible the events in time. Correspondingly, therefore, the subject, must not be himself situated in it, in order to be able to be present in intention to the past as to the future. Let us no longer say that time is a 'datum of consciousness'; let us be more precise and say that consciousness deploys or constitutes time. (Merleau-Ponty 1962:481)

Heidegger's notion of Being as made possible by happening shapes Being as something prior to the recognition or designation of entities or events. While consciousness acknowledges that events are real through the movement of acknowledgement (of entities), the experience of Being occurs prior to that movement. The very looking at an object (recognition) is in a way that makes that looking possible. Being is the givenness that is given by the object in such a way that the givenness is accessible to Dasein. It is through this foundational statement that time, as something that is given, is "thought of by us before its parts". The events of time are given in such a way that they are accessible to Dasein and the understanding of happening. This temporality, this experience that is prior to thought, is what makes Being possible in relation to the events of time. Lived time is not an entity; lived time is the temporal relation that makes possible the givenness of happening (the events in time).

Lived time is the presence prior to the experience as an event. It is in this way that Dasein is not situated in an event, but, rather, that the subject is in relation to what time has given her. Merleau-Ponty is making a distinction between the past as an entity, that people are not entities to their past, nor entities in the present, but that they are entities made possible by their access to the givenness of the past and the happening of the present-oriented future. He says this is due to an intentional relation to time (past and future). Insofar as the givenness needs to be given in a way that a subject can enter into a relation to what is and

what is there (an entity), there is an intentional comportment to Being. Being does not just happen; the intentionality of the subject is what makes the givenness of an entity or event meaningful, significant. So, while temporality is prior to the relation between consciousness and object, it is the subject that acts towards entities through entering into a meaningful relation with the givenness of what is there.

Merleau-Ponty says that time is not a “datum of consciousness” and that “consciousness deploys time”. The former statement articulates that time is not merely an entity of consciousness; as demonstrated through Heidegger, time is a prior condition of consciousness, and makes Being possible. The latter statement refers to the intentional comportment of time; consciousness organizes the givenness of time in a directed and engaged way to make experience meaningful. This is the movement between the Dasein and the relation to the event of time.

Remembering the lived experience description of addiction and recovery, anxiety is a way of treating time and the past events. In this way subjects can act towards the past (time) in a way that is regretful, anxious, or even deny the past, because the manner in which consciousness organizes the experiences and understandings of time is a way that allows the subject to make meaning however she likes out of the movement of recognizing the events. However, interestingly, the addict can say that they are no longer an addict, but they always are an addict insofar as their current Being is historically related to the present. To further consider this notion I will now turn Jean Paul Sartre.

The term “was” is a mode of being. In this sense I *am* my past.
I do not have it; I am it. A remark made by someone

concerning an act which I performed yesterday or a mood which I had does not leave me indifferent; I am hurt or flattered, I protest or I let it pass; I am touched to the quick. I do not dissociate myself from my past. Of course, in time, I can attempt this dissociation; I can declare that "I am no longer what I was," argue that there has been a change, progress. But this is a matter of a secondary reaction which is given as such. To deny my solidarity of being with my past at this or that particular point is to affirm it for the whole of my life. (Sartre 1956:168-169)

It seems as though the development of this framework has moved into a way of understanding in relation to the past, and yet see the past as something that is no longer "how I am myself". There appears to be a tension between treating an event of the past as no longer part of a self-understanding or way of being, all the while it is that very way of being that allows for the present understanding. It is this tension that Sartre develops in the above passage. Sartre says that the verb, the action of being, is itself a way of Being. By stating that one *is* some thing (adjective), Dasein is intentionally aligning its relationship with being to the givenness of a particular quality or experience. Through the subject's intentional use of the being verb, the subject asserts an entity's Being as giving a self-meaningfulness. Sartre is arguing that the verb's usage itself, the intention-towards the self designation, is how the subject constitutes her way of Being to herself, through speech. For this reason, saying that one *was* some thing (adjective) is acknowledging that experience as part of what constitutes the present being. But the use of *was* also demonstrates a kind of intentionality towards the past that disavows it in the present.

Sartre says that the action of denying the past, saying that one *was* and no longer *is*, is a further example of intention towards the constitution of Being. Despite speech that may

deny the past or that Dasein's Being continues to be the past, the past is still present in Dasein's Being because the denial in fact affirms the past's presence. What Sartre calls the "secondary reaction" is the conscious reconstituting of Being, making time meaningful. The intention towards Being is the reliance on the past as making the present possible. While time is prior to Being insofar as it allows for Dasein to have a relationship to the givenness of entities, treating time as an entity is a secondary movement only made possible by time and happening itself. As well, intentional reflection on the past, treating the events as entities, in a way that denies the past as belonging to the present way of being affirms the past. Denying the past is also a way of acknowledging it. While the subject may state that "I am no longer what I was", this statement relies on the past, demonstrating that the subject *was* once, once *is*, and therefore is still the past but only in a present way of Being. For an addict to state that "I am no longer an addict", this statement affirms that she was once an addict, and that past has constituted her Being through its relation to historicity. While the statement expresses a denial of the past way of Being, addiction, the possibility of the assertion to deny the past affirms that the speaker was in fact an addict.

The denial of time is the intentional movement of the subject towards the events of time. While the subject is very much an essential part of her past temporally, the denial of time illuminates the way the subject's relation to the past changes. The intentional comportment of existence allows the subject to relate to the givenness of the events of the past in a way that alters the past's meaningfulness. As Sartre explained above, there is great emotion associated with the recollection of a denied past, a lived experience of emotion that

is alive to the past during its very denial. This meaningfulness that is an emotionally lived experience finds its presence in the addict's relation to time and intentionality towards it as an event (entity) in memory.

Van Manen states that "The past changes under the pressures and influences of the present" (2006:104). How does the past change if the past's events are unchangeable in the persisting passing of time? The influence of the present is the movement between the subject and the event. The change that occurs can only be designated to the meaning ascription that is made possible through the affirmation of the past through the present recollection of it. Lived time is the intentionality of the subject towards the events of the past. The memories of the past gain significance in hindsight, and through Dasein's engagement with the past as an entity. This reflection is what both shapes the memories of the past, the encounter with its events, as well as the emotional experience of the present.

The addict's engagement with the past and its related emotions of anxiety and worry emerge through the addict's relation to time. As developed in the framework for temporality, the addict is essentially related to the past through its part in constituting the present. The notion of lived time illuminated the emotional experience of reflecting on the past. While addicts may deny their past, saying they are no longer addicts and intentionally relating to their past in a way that alters its significance to them, their lived experiences of addiction and recovery are phenomenologically related to temporal memory. The act of recalling the past in a way that is significantly different temporally affirms the past's role in the present happening, as well as demonstrates that the past has an emotional affectivity that becomes

significant through the addict's relationship to it. To further explore the way that the addict's relation to the past is possible through a temporal relation to memory, two more texts about memory will be considered to further develop this analytic focus.

What is the relationship between Dasein's intentionality towards the past and the significance it has emotionally in memory? What does it mean to say that memory alters the past, if time is the (temporal) pre-understanding that allows the present to happen and be understood?

Memory constructs the past and reconstructs it. This is not a question of revising the facts but, as with the modifications in neurological pathways, of placing experiential information in new – sometimes larger and richer – contexts. In that sense, the past changes under the pressure of the present, as well as vice versa. (Hoffman 2009:108)

Developing from the temporal framework that this chapter has been assembling, the construction of memory appears to be related to the intentional comportment of Being. But what does it mean for memory to both construct and deconstruct the past? What is the relationship of memory to constructing and dismantling and reconstructing? How is this possible? To begin with the first assertion in the first sentence, memory constructs the past, suggests a peculiar characteristic to say that memory, something retroactive, is active in recollection. Memory as a construction is related to the temporal relation to Being insofar as the past connects Being to its presentness in the world; this was developed above in the temporal framework. The characterization of an active memory is the mode in which the experience and relationship to the past shapes the way the present is understood, but also the way that the present is remembered. The experience of the moment is made possible through

the historicity of Being, as well as the intentional comportment towards the events of time; it becomes significant in this process and is understood and stored as such. Recollection is being alive to that construction as if it is happening now, directing consciousness towards the past (as an object). For addicts, this was illustrated by their reflections of the desire they have for alcohol. The addict's memory of their first experience with alcohol, the "chase" of that first experience is the one way memory constructs the past. The first episode of drinking is remembered as an emotional experience. So, memory has an emotional relationship to the past. Memory is like an emotional lens that constructs the past; the events are given in such a way that Dasein engages them through that emotional remembrance.

The temporality of memory is both Dasein's accessibility to the present as made possible through the past, but also that Dasein's intentional comportment relates to the way in which memory gives the event, and that mode of giving is essentially emotional. So what about the latter assertion in Hoffman's first sentence, that memory reconstructs the past. This statement suggests that memory can dismantle and reassemble the past in new ways, that the past in memory is itself not fixed, but subject to ongoing reformation. The constancy of reformation is the dialogical relation between the memory of the past as related to by Dasein in the present, and Dasein's reshaping of the past as re-engaged temporally in the present moment, temporally. This relation also appeared in the construction of the past. As such, the present both constructs the past, as well as reconstructs it. The act of remembering has both a temporal relation to the past as well as an intentional one in the present. To say this means

that memory is an intertwined happening between the temporal past as well as the intentional comportment as directed toward the past as an event.

Before working through this statement, I will first, drawing on Hoffman's own words, make a distinction between the intentional character of experiencing (remembering the past) and the notion of information reordering. To start with the latter, the reordering of information in a neurological sense, suggests that one's relation to the past is merely a physical, plastic relation in the brain as it is able to recall particular events, and the information that is stored in them, such as emotions. Recollection in this sense is a series of brain happenings, as information is brought to fore and then processed in the now. The past, in this sense would be reordered as the information is changed in the present moment. This is different than the intentional comportment of experiencing. Additionally, reordering also suggests a relation to time that is merely informational. This could mean that Dasein's relation to time is not emotional, that the reconstruction of events is only a reformed way of recalling and processing them, having no emotionality attached to the intentional judgement recollection and reconstruction implied in the case of this research focus. It is not my plan to work through neuroscience here or cognitive research on brain function, but to use this distinction between memory reconstruction as the reordering of information versus the emotional reconstruction of events as a way of identifying the difference between seeing the past as a piece of stored information and seeing the past as a temporal and emotional relation to the present.

The intentional comportment of memory is, as mentioned above, the happening between the temporal being, the past as constituting the present, as well as the way that Dasein makes significant the events of the past. As mentioned earlier, the memory, as such, constructs the past, as the emotional experience of events emphasizes the events' significance in reflection. To say that memory reconstructs the past suggests that the present can reshape, rethink the past emotion and find new significance, meaning and interpretation for it in light of the passing of time. In such a way, being alive to the past moment can be found in an altered way in light of the present moment as it relates to the temporal character of being. The past makes the present possible, and through this unfolding of time, this changing of experience, the past's events can be intentionally altered and reinterpreted in their significance. To further work through this dialogical relation, let us consider an example of the deconstruction and reconstruction of the past in addict interview material.

It's a very lonely and dark world because – I really can't describe the feeling because you feel like there's no hope. You are in a black hole and it's getting blacker and blacker and there's no light left. And you can't get out. And, if I could come back to what it does, along with destroying everybody else, it kills you as a person. And then I had to find myself again. Once I found recovery, once I found that I didn't have to drink, that I could cry if I did feel pain. I had to learn who I was... I never felt like I was good enough, I was never good enough at school, I was never good enough as a wife, I was never good enough as a mother, I was never good enough as a daughter. That's how I felt. Now I know that I am a good mother, I am a good sister, I am a good daughter. I am a really good person. And it's difficult to try and enjoy everything.
(Kathy)

To highlight the past in its relation to the present thematically in this quotation, Kathy is reflecting on her experience of addiction in light of “finding recovery”. There is juxtaposition in Kathy’s reflections that points to the reformation of her experiences in her past addiction, and her present experiences in recovery. When Kathy speaks about the past, she uses diction that is dark, overwhelming, and bound up with sad emotions. Her description of a black hole with “not light left” that “destroys” and “kills you as a person” are reminiscent of a time with no hope. Her present, however, is a more hopeful discussion. She says that she is “good enough” and is a “good person”. These two emotions in contrast show that *who she is in her past is different than how she knows herself in the present*. Knowing the self is a temporally lived experience. Kathy knows herself now in the present by deciding she is no longer her self in the past. She sees herself in relation to the past and can reconstruct her own relation to who she is now.

The past allows Dasein to know itself in the present through reflexive returning to the present from the perspective of the past. Dasein can not only uncover the past in a way that changes its own emotional comportment toward the significance of the past events, but Dasein can also relate to itself in a way that knows itself presently through the past and also reconstructs the past through its intentional comportment toward the past as an object. Dasein encounters the past through being-in-the-world, Dasein is with its past insofar as it is how it knows itself. But the past, as an object, is disclosed in the same way as other objects in the world, and therefore its meaning and understanding of the past’s significance can change if Dasein decides to comport itself towards it in a way that changes its significance. In other

words, the understanding of the self emerges through both the past as making possible the present as well as by treating the past as an object that allows Dasein to know itself as a who, as a self. But, the past is also an object that reveals and unveils itself to Dasein in the way that all objects already do for Dasein. Dasein always already understands how to know itself through the past, and can change its self-understanding of the self by reflexively returning to its recollection of the past to decidedly change its significant relation to it. It is in this way that the pressure of the present is proverbially said to change the past.

An extreme fragmentation of destructuring of time can become a torment, a nightmare in which we cannot make even minimal sense of our own experience. In order to know ourselves as selves at all – in order to perceive ourselves as subjects and sources of meaning – we need to re-cognise our existence over time. (Hoffman 2009:76)

Remembering can mean great anxiety, as seen in the addict's experience. The past can cause a fragmentation between the present self and the past understanding of the self. This fragmentation can become a nightmare if the present Dasein does not recognize that it can restructure the self in relation to time however it decides. It is necessary to reconstruct the past and the self in relation to the past to avoid the haunting anxiety can be possible if Dasein does not decide to be who it is by choosing to act and know itself in its own way. Because the ability to know the self and to understand the past is always already understood by Dasein, it is unthought, it is possible that Dasein may not intentionally decide to make itself.

For addicts, recovery can only become possible if addicts decide to reengage who they are and what their past is in relation to who they want to be now. Addiction can become

a nightmare, a tormenting reality, if addicts do not choose to recognize and reorganize the past as a way they no longer are. Because the nature of the addict is to always already understand the past and their experiences as things that are real, it can be easily forgotten that the past has made it possible for them to understand themselves and that this understanding is what makes it possible for them to choose what is meaningful to them, what is significant, real to them. It is easy to forget that I choose what is meaningful to who I am when my ability to choose is natural to my being in the world. The lived experience of addiction and recovery can thus be seen as a lived experience of how addicts relate to their past. Recovery can only be possible once addicts recognize that their own understanding of things and their experiences not only make them who they are, but that it is possible to change the how-I-know-myself of the present by reengaging the past as who they no longer are. In other words, recovery is only possible if addicts act like they chose addiction.

The theoretic problem this analysis raises, that healing requires repossessing responsibility and embracing the agency of choice, has deeper implications for further exploration. In the voices in the *Materials* chapter, the interpretive work of the AA members relied on an understanding of being determined by the past. AA members understood their addiction as if alcohol was a solution to a problem, an external force from the past causing addiction, such as wearing hand-me-down clothes. Alcohol solved a deep desire, such as fitting in or feeling loved. Additionally, there was anxiety about the past, and the addict's angst to solve the desire, if no longer by alcohol, and worry to slip back into the alcohol solution.

This chapter illuminated the existential problem of temporality as it relates to the anxiety about the past. The conclusions here described the theoretical problem of accepting the past as part of the possibilities for being who you already are. It developed the necessity for repossessing the desire for recovery, not letting time, or the past, determine self-understanding. For addiction, this helped us understand the anxiety of the past in the addict talk. The problem of the addict, as developed here, is to understand the past as who they are, part of their utmost possibilities. The addict texts in chapter four showed themselves as treating these past times of lostness as problems that determined their solutions; that is, they were drinking to solve a problem in their past, such as fitting in. In their reflection, the past drinking is seen as a 'bad' thing, drinking to solve problems is bad. In speaking, the addicts show that in recovery their alcoholism was misguided and wrong, whereas, in the present, choosing to take responsibility, acting like they choose recovery, was the good thing to do. The problem of the addict is one where he externalizes the bad. My conclusion suggests that he must merely take up his own possibilities now for the agency and reflection necessary for change, and to enjoy the good rewards of recovery. In other words, the addict will enjoy the good experience of recovery and healing if he acts like he chose his past, rather than externalizing it. What appears to be a deeper problem is that my solution suggests something more fundamentally relied on than a problem of agency. Instead, my conclusion brings the following into question: how is it that the bad is necessarily externalized? The addict treated alcoholism as if it was external, that it determined their choices. Further, the addict's accomplishments, such as quitting drinking to recover and heal, are spoken of with self-

possession and agency. The good experiences of healing are treated as results of agency, of self-action; whereas the bad experiences, the past addiction and its consequences, are treated as external problems imposed onto them. Here is a tension, a contradiction in the AA voices and my analysis of the existential relation to the anxiety about the past. This is one area that could be addressed in further research, which I discuss in the following chapter, my

Conclusion.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

My thesis project was guided by the research question what is the lived experience of addiction and recovery? and the methodological handbook of Max Van Manen (2006). Following this guide, I moved through the chapters by first developing the theoretical and methodological orientation of the project. Then by working through some relevant and provoking literature about addiction and recovery I demonstrated a need for a research project guided by my question and hermeneutic phenomenological method. Following, I developed my interview materials as they related to the theme of lostness. From this work, addiction and recovery were revealed to have a relationship to time, particularly the past. To complete this analysis, I then developed a frame of reference of time that allowed us to re-imagine addiction and recovery as they related to memory and the understanding of the self. In this final chapter, I will now briefly consider some implications of this project as whole, rearticulate the necessity of the hermeneutic phenomenology and its method, as opposed to symbolic interaction, as well as articulate some limitations of my project and places and direction for further development.

6.1 Understanding the Whole

While other research has sought to examine addiction and recovery by assuming their relation to disease, the body, the social system, among other orientations covered in the literature chapter, this thesis developed the phenomena of addiction and recovery through

engagements with lived experience descriptions in interview materials with AA members. By staying true to the phenomena of the experiences given by the AA interviews, this project developed in such a way that it transformed those experiences by imagining them in relation to time, particularly the past. To further my elaboration on the whole of this project, I want to develop an excerpt from Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium Eater*. In this passage, De Quincey is reflecting on his sense of time during his addiction to opium.

The sense of space, and in the end the sense of time, were both powerfully affected. Buildings, landscapes, etc., were exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive. Space swelled, and was amplified to an extent of unutterable infinity. This, however, did not disturb me so much as the vast expansion of time. I sometimes seemed to have lived for seventy or one hundred years in one night; nay, sometimes had feelings representative of a millennium, passed in that time, or, however, of a duration far beyond the limits of any human experience (De Quincey 1960:234)

Here De Quincey describes the way that addiction can be disturbing insofar as one can lose track of time. Relating back to my own materials, the theme of lostness not only helped to bring out the relation to the past that became central to our understanding of the phenomena, but that being lost in time can be the cause of a great anxiety, as seen here in this passage. This losing track of time is a disconnect between how we have come to know ourselves and our forgetting, unawareness and unthought relation to our temporality as pre-understood for our being-in-the-world. And, what can become disturbing or a nightmare is how losing track of one's past is also losing one's sense of self. In forgetting that the past is what makes the present possible, and more importantly that our ability to relate to the past is a way of knowing ourselves through this reflexive understanding of time, that we choose to

make the past meaningful by reengaging our experience in relation to our sense of history and community can lead to disruption in our lives.

In saying that addicts need to act like they chose addiction in order to recover, I do not mean to sound prescriptive. Instead, I am saying that to authentically be oneself, in the Heideggerian (1988) sense, it is necessary to not allow the world to (or the past) to define you, but rather that you act towards things, and to recognize this and act on this. For addicts, they must not let the addiction define who they are. This would be an act of bad faith (c.f. Berger and Luckmann 1966), addicts are not recognizing that they are choosing to let the addiction be their reality, as if it chosen for them. Instead, by restructuring their past, to see it as choices for which they are responsible, addicts are able to take hold of who they are now by reflecting on their past and reorganizing it in relation to who they no longer are and who they are now. For healing to happen, then, there must be forgiveness for actions in bad faith, and a promise to be authentic to oneself and who one is now. It is in this way that recovery is healing: promising to see that we each have the ability to be ourselves as we decide it, and acting on that possibility.

6.2 Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Throughout this thesis I demonstrated the theoretical method of hermeneutic phenomenology. Additionally, I stated how symbolic interaction's conceptual orientation to testability failed to capture the meaning of phenomena through its epistemological orientation to the ontology that all knowledge is subjective. In saying that meaning is created, the emphasis was placed on how this process occurs, rather than on the phenomenological

focus on what is essential about any phenomenon that makes knowledge about it possible, usable, knowable, something that can be created. It is our very being in the world that allows us to have access to knowledge; we have the access to the mode of being of things. In order to see meaning, it is necessary to first recognize this a priori understanding, and then develop what is essential to any particular phenomenon.

With this orientation to phenomena, the only method that can develop the essential nature of any phenomenon is hermeneutic phenomenology. Symbolic interaction cannot do this because of its interest in generalizability and process focus, taking-for-granted the access to meaning that we ourselves have in the very first place. Additionally, hermeneutic phenomenology allows for one development of any phenomenon because of the element of interpretation; the researcher can go anywhere she likes with the materials, as they encounter her. So long as the researcher stays focused on the phenomenon, the essence can be re-imagined by engaging various materials. Lastly, because the relation is not presumed at the beginning of the project, as with other methods more scientifically oriented, the openness of the hermeneutic method allows for a creative engagement with the material when moving within the circle of reflexivity.

6.3 Limitations

In this final section I will briefly mention a few limitations of my project as well as where this project could possibly go in the future.

My use of temporality and lived time, while engaged reflexively, was an extrapolation of Heidegger's work on time and in fact was "fallen" by treating time as an

object. What Heidegger means by fallen is a tendency of theorizing to fall toward the perception of the object as constituted by consciousness. In other words, our looking at and perceiving of objects are constituting their meaning. Heidegger's work sought to demonstrate how this way of looking, the dichotomy between the subject and the object, could not explain being, but could only explain the way that Dasein uncovers beings. This does not explain how we know ourselves, only how we know objects. In relation to my project, time and memory are imagined as objects as well as experiences that constitute the happenings of the present. This distinction between the two modes of time as it happens simultaneously in my analysis description would need to be worked through if I were to engage the Heideggarian work in a deeper way.

Another limitation of my project is in the way that texts about addiction and recovery were taken to be mouthpieces for those very same phenomena, answers to my research question. This is a presumption of my study that has not been grounded, nor am I accountable to it. In following the Van Manen guide, this relationship to materials became apparent to me; this orientation towards texts as being actually about the phenomena of the inquiry is never in question. The Van Manen research agenda is interested in grounding the phenomenon, but only insofar as grounding the phenomenon within the text; it is not accountable to grounding the talk in the text, what are the unthought grounds of each particular speaker. Further development of this project could work at re-orienting to this notion of developing the grounds of the speakers, not being a slave to their speech (not assuming that they are indeed speaking about their experiences of addiction and recovery),

questioning their grounds and weaving a new narrative that emerges through this reengagement that is accountable to the grounds of their speech as well as to the phenomena of the inquiry.

Finally, one further direction that I could possibly see this research going is developing a Heideggarian focus. Further work could address the notion of inauthenticity as it relates to the experience of addiction. If recovery is an action of deciding to be who one is and to no longer be as one once was, choosing to be authentic to the ability to choose, how is addiction an example of inauthentic action? Is it?

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