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THE EFFECTS OF SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION CONFLICTS ON LENGTH OF TIME TO COMPLETE THE DISSERTATION

City University of New York PH.D. 1985

THE EFFECTS OF
SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION CONFLICTS
ON LENGTH OF TIME TO COMPLETE THE DISSERTATION

by

FREDERICK P. STERN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1985

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Abstract

THE EFFECTS OF
SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION CONFLICTS
ON LENGTH OF TIME TO COMPLETE THE DISSERTATION

by

Frederick P. Stern

Advisor: Professor Herbert Nechin

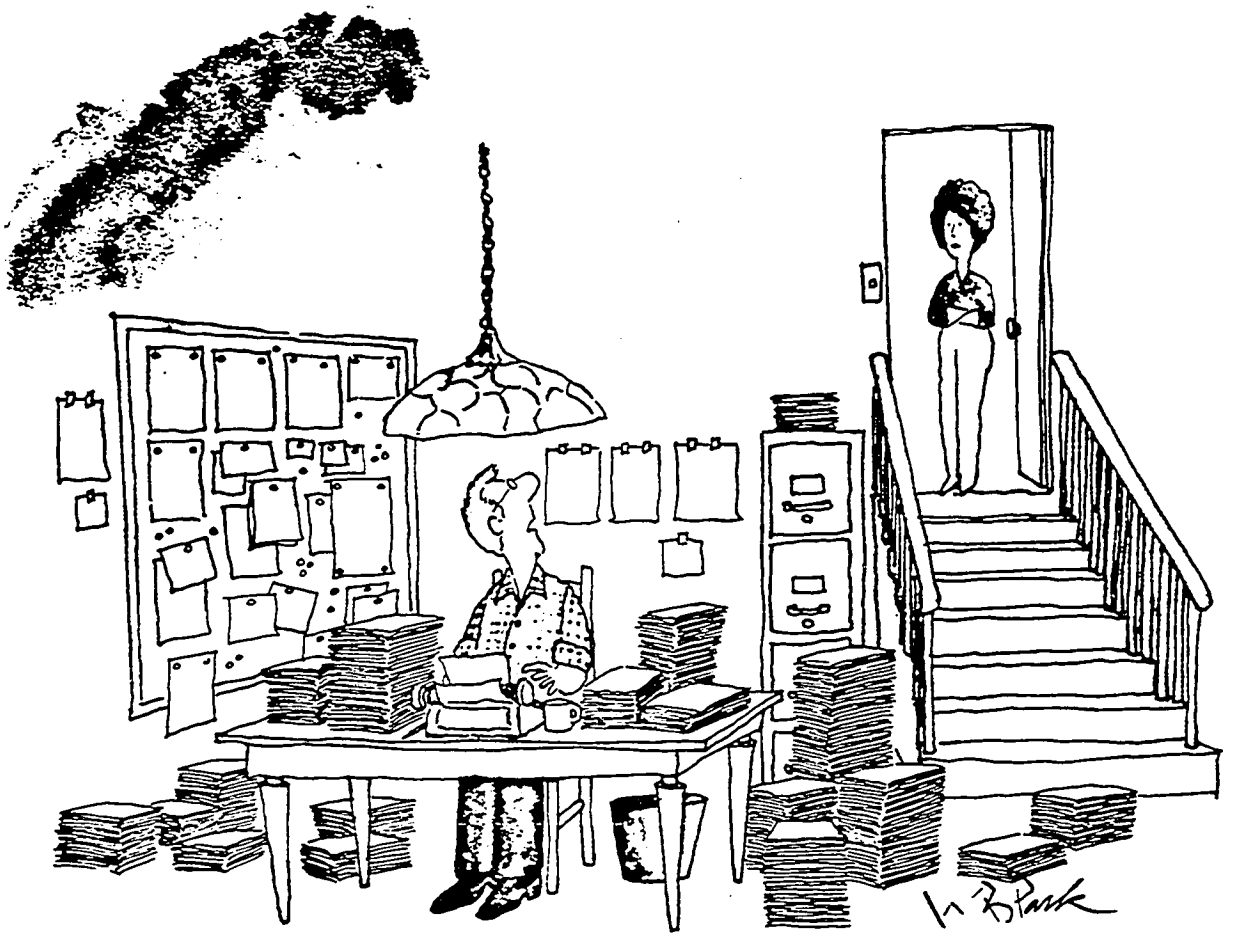
This study investigated the effects of psychological variables on the rates at which students finish their doctoral dissertations. Completing the dissertation was conceptualized as a major task in the professional development of graduate students. From this perspective four measures were developed by the author to identify subjects who were likely to be vulnerable to separation-individuation conflicts activated by the dissertation process. These four variables included a history of separation and loss in childhood, evidence of difficulty with separation and individuation from the family at the time of going to and leaving college, a history of indirection in the pursuit of professional goals during and after college, and a perception of traits in parents which are associated with difficulty in individuation. It was hypothesized that high scores on each of these measures, as well as on Cohen's Fear of Success Scale, would be correlated with longer time doing the

dissertation and longer time in graduate school. Data was collected from a questionnaire sent to 93 Ph.D graduates of City University of New York. The graduates came from the hard sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to examine the unique effect of each of the variables on length of time doing the dissertation and length of time in graduate school. The results supported the hypothesis that a history of early loss and separation is associated with longer time doing a dissertation. However, the other hypotheses tested were not confirmed. The lack of findings to support the other hypotheses were understood as the result of methodological problems. Additional findings included strong evidence that infrequent meetings with the advisor, high dependency, inability to plan ahead, periods of being unable to bring oneself to work on the dissertation, and stress (full time job) were associated with longer time doing the dissertation, and to a lesser extent with longer time in graduate school. Recommedations were made for a graduate school environment which would facilitate completing the dissertation.

A suitor says to a lady who has rejected him:

I will leave you excellent lady, and withal
Leave a heart with you so entirely yours,
That I protest, had I the least of hope
To enjoy you, though I were to wait the time
That scholars do in taking their degree
In the noble arts, 'twere nothing.

John Webster 1560-1625
The Devil's Law-Case



"Finish it? Why would I want to finish it?"

Drawing by W.B. Park;
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This topic has elicited much humor, enthusiasm and serious thought from many friends and family. For the titles they cooked up for my dissertation (Great Expectations, Creativity Under Compulsion, The Loneliness of the Long Dissertation Writer), for the New Yorker cartoon and the quote of John Webster they sent to me, indeed, for all their affectionate support and humor I remain happily indebted. I thank them for reading chapters, sharing their impressions, and above all, for their patience and their supportive impatience, offered with love and understanding. From among them, special thanks to Jonathan Cohen, David Ertel, Ed Weathers, George Northrup, Faye Margolis, Deborah Roberts and Jeff Maloney. Many other friends, Wendy Lubin, Lisa Director, Sally Donaldson, Philip Elmer-Dewitt extended a great variety of help from concrete coding of data, inspirational gifts, refuge in Vermont, and advice about the Macintosh. And thanks to those pioneers who filled out the pilot questionnaire and discussed it at length : Jim Brennan, Katherine Stern Brennan, Bill Bassett, Claire Basescu and Aryeh Kosman.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

OBSERVATIONS TO BE EXPLAINED

It is with a long history of academic success that a student enters graduate school. He has done well in high school, excellently in college, accumulating evidence of his competence and indications of respect from his professors. In short he comes to the graduate program highly recommended, and, one would presume, highly motivated. And yet there is a very good chance, in most departments it averages 40%, and in some it runs as high as 70% to 80% (Sternberg, 1981), that he will drop out of graduate school. There is evidence that the majority of those dropping out of graduate school do so in the course of working on the dissertation. Sternberg estimates from HEW data from 1979 that only half of those who become ABD (All But Dissertation) will complete the thesis and get the Ph.D. In addition to the high drop out rate, the fact that many students take a great number of years to complete the dissertation is further evidence that the process is extraordinarily difficult. In the humanities the median length of time from start of graduate school to finish is nine years (Wilson, 1965). Assuming that course work takes three years, then 50% of those who finally obtain the degree spend more than six years working intermittently on their dissertations.

The physical scientists are swifter: the median length of time they take to finish graduate school is 5.4 years (Wilson, 1965) which still means that 50% take over 2.4 years from the time they complete their course work to the time they finish the dissertation. It becomes evident that this is an extraordinary length of time when it is compared with the time taken to receive a degree in law or medicine.

In summary, approximately 40% of graduate students in all fields drop out, 30% finish in 6.1 years or less, while the other 30% take over that amount of time to finish (Wilson, 1965).

How are these observations to be explained? Is it simply that the dissertation is exponentially more difficult than any of the preceding assignments? Is it a question that many graduate students, particularly in the humanities are not financially supported during the time they are working on their dissertations and consequently divert time and energy to part-time or even full-time jobs?

All of the above external factors probably have a significant effect, yet from the informal talks I have had with students and faculty, as well as interviews with over 10 dissertations writers, it is my impression that among the major sources of difficulty are the uncounscious conflicts evoked by the process. The extent of the emotional distress that many of the students I interviewed reported lends support to this view. They remember the experience as

painful, as an unhappy time of inefficient work, with frequent periods of intense discouragement.

What sort of emotional conflicts are we talking about and how do they interfere in the student's progress through the dissertation?

As a point of departure for examining the dissertation process, let's look at the history of someone (who I will call John) who took nine years to finish graduate school. And let's bear in mind that for someone in the humanities the amount of time he took is right on the median. The following account is based on a five-hour interview I conducted with John.

John began graduate school, at the age of 24, in history, two years after graduating form college. He went through the first three years of graduate school including the comprehensive exams with ease. But it took him six years to finish his dissertation. He began early in graduate school to collect topics for his dissertation in a file. The first topic he seriously explored was rejected by a professor as insufficiently historical. He soon settled on another topic and gained access to an archive of unpublished material about an unusual man. He was determined from the start to write a definitive biography from the rich material he was collecting. At the end of that year of concentrated research, he returned with his notes to his university and expected to complete the dissertation during the following year. Instead, it was to

take him five more years. What happened? The first year back from the archival research, he accepted a position teaching a seminar at the university and agreed to be head resident of a dorm. He also spent considerable time pursuing his athletic interests. Of that period in time he said:

> Increasingly I didn't work on the dissertation. I enjoyed the process of research, but I didn't like making sense of the data. ... I deluded myself in believing that I would get more done.

He spent his fifth and sixth year in that fashion, and wrote two chapters of his dissertaiton. He also met a woman whom he married at the end of his sixth academic year. She had a fellowship to study abroad and he felt that if they did not get married and go abroad together they would drift apart. He believed he could work on the dissertation while abroad and so he shipped sixty pounds of books overseas. But that entire year abroad he did not work on the dissertation. Instead he avidly studied a foreign language and took up an artistic hobby. In retrospect he realized that he and his wife had had a tacit agreement rarely to discuss the fact that he was not writing his dissertation.

When, at the end of that year they returned to the United States, he began his eighth year, more with a resignation to a lesser achievement than with a resolution of conflict. He was still determined to finish his dissertation, but not in the form in which he had originally

conceived it. Instead of a biography, he would write a more general history of the social milieu in which the man he had researched lived. Although the switch may have made the completion of the project psychologically and intellectually possible, nevertheless six years after finishing the dissertaton he still expresses regret that he didn't stick to the biography. That was what he really wanted to write.

The change in topic necessitated his doing more archival research. For the next two years he worked about eight hours a day on the project. His wife supported them financially. But it was a period of growing estrangement. They talked little to one another, they were cirtical of each other. His wife made the decision to separate as soon as her husband finished the first draft of his dissertation. She left the day he handed in the 700 page draft. John managed that summer to revise and defend the dissertation and to get a job teaching in a private high school. A year later he and his wife got back together after they had been in therapy and after he had impressed upon his wife that she had so far known him only as a dissertation writer.

Several things are evident, even to John himself, the first being that he avoided the task. Although he had no trouble devoting his full attention to the archival research, he found it hard to give anywhere near the same undivided attention to "making sense of the data". He spent much of the time avoiding doing that work by doing other work. When he went abroad, taking his books and manuscript

with him, but did not open the trunk containing them, he was continuing the pattern. His change of topic from a biography to a cultural study may have contributed not only to a delay by requiring further archival research, but also diffused the anxiety he had about not feeling able to do justice to the material at hand. That he applied, somewhere towards the last phase of the project, when the end was in sight, for a job teaching high school, not college -- for which his degree was necessary preparation -- suggests that perhaps he had difficulty acknowledging the change of status that could accompany the degree.

However, just as striking as his repeated delays and procrastinations is the fact that he kept at the work with intermittent but unending tenacity. Whatever forces were present which interfered with his doing the dissertation, they were not for a lack of commitment to completing the project.

John's understanding of the difficulty was that the process was one long experience of coming to terms with his expectations and the limitations of his ability. The purpose of this study is to better understand what this painful procrastination and obstinate dedication is all about: John's experience is more typical than otherwise.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

We will begin the investigation of the psychological factors at work during the process of writing a dissertation with a review of the literature on dissertation writing. From there, guided by the fact that completing the dissertation marks a transition from student to scholar, we will look at the literature on transitions from the perspective of separation-individuation theory and finally we will examine the literature which indicates that conflicts around separation-individuation interfere with academic performance and contribute to a fear of success.

The literature on dissertation writing is remarkably sparse. Except for one recent study by Joan Strasser (1977) and a few articles (Engle, 1966; Loewenberg, 1969, 1983) there is no study which describes the emotional experience of students. Several studies survey graduate education and provide information about the context and parameters of the dissertation experience (Berelson, 1960; Heiss, 1970; Wilson,1965). There are numerous essays and proceedings of meetings which debate the purpose of graduate education and there are few studies on the individual differences of students and their success in graduate school. In addition there are two books (Davis & Parker, 1979; Sternberg, 1981) which aim at telling students how best to go about the task.

There are a number of non-psychological studies which may help orient us to the problem.

In 1960 Berelson did an extensive study which began with a history of graduate education. He notes that the system was adopted from the German University and he describes the spectacular rise in the number of Ph.D.'s conferred in the United States from approximately 250 in 1900 to 10,000 in 1960. (At present it is approximately 33,000). Using data from interviews, meetings, and the responses to questionnaires sent to a large number of faculty and Ph.D. recipients, he builds up a picture of the problems and attitudes of those involved.

In discussing the reasons for the extended time of graduate education he concludes, from the responses, that three factors are of particular significance. First, many students "can't afford to finish sooner, i.e., they cannot spend full-time on their studies because of lack of [financial] support. This is far and away the major reason given for the delay in completing the degree by the recent recipients themselves" (p. 163). Second, students are side-tracked away from their research into serving as teaching and research assistants and he cites the fact that a third of the students and faculty agreed with the statement: "Major professors often exploit doctoral candidates by keeping them as research assistants too long, by subordinating their interests in research programs, etc." (p. 162). The third significant factor in lengthening the

process is that students are inadequately supervised. He notes that a third of the recent recipients and one-quarter of the faculty believe that students get too little guidance on their dissertations from their advisors (p. 162).

In terms of understanding the high attrition rate, which he estimates at 40%, he uses the responses of graduate deans, faculty, and students to support his argument that it is lack of financial resources, lack of intellectual ability, lack of motivation, and lack of physical and emotional stamina that account for the high attrition rate.

Wilson's lengthy study Of Time and the Doctorate (1965) gathers important data about how students spend their time during the graduate years. It is based on questionnaire responses of 2,000 graduates. Wilson examines in great detail how the students spend their time, whether teaching, or in employment, and he constantly tries to assess what factors contribute to the lengthening of the dissertation process. Of 15 factors which he had recent recipients of the degree evaluate, five were more frequently listed than the others as having lengthened the process. Roughly one-third listed discontinuity of attendance as an important factor. This discontinuity was true for all fields, but was emphasized by students in fields such as English where the elapsed time to the doctorate is extensive. Work as teaching assistant ranked second. The nature of the dissertation topic was a factor that about 30% of the students listed as having contributed to their difficulty.

Writing the dissertation off-campus during a period of full-time employment was listed by one-quarter of the science students and by close to one-half of the sociology and humanity graduates.

Unlike Berelson, Wilson found that financial problems were not considered by recent recipients as the most important factor: it ranked only fifth. Other factors were inadequate preparation in the foreign languages, lack of coordination between the undergraduate preparation in the field of the graduate major, family obligations, transferring from one graduate institution to another, and working as a research assistant (p. 52).

Wilson's data documents that there are significant differences between the median time taken by students in different departments. In the humanities the median time taken is considerably longer than in the sciences. In accounting for these differences Wilson examines the high correlation between a number of factors and the median length of time taken in a particular field. For example, students in English report more interruptions in their graduate education than those in physics. The amount of discontinuity of attendance reported in different fields correlates ($r = .83$) with the median length of time students report taking for their doctoral education in those fields. These factors and the correlations are listed below.

Discontinuity of attendance	r= .83
Off-campus dissertation	r= .83
Financial problems	r= .72
Family obligations	r= .62
Health problems	r= .49

(Wilson, 1965, p. 56).

Why should there be greater discontinuity of attendance in some fields than in others? Students in the humanities tend to spend close to a year more between college and graduate school than those in the sciences. Among the reasons that students gave for the delay in entry, a lack of clarity of career goals was cited by 50% of those students in the humanities, but only 27% of students in the sciences. This suggests that the difficulty deciding on a goal may be a character trait that is more prevalent among those who enter the humanities. In a general sense it suggests that indecision and a lack of clear goals are an enduring characteristic which would certainly manifest themselves in the vagaries of dissertation writing.

There have been few studies which assess individual charactersitics in relationship to successful completion of the degree.

One article (Dawes, 1975) points out that criteria such as GRE scores and grade point averages are bound to correlate <u>negatively</u> with successful completion of graduate school because those criteria are used to screen out students and someone who is accepted into a graduate program

with low scores or grades is usually accepted because of demonstrable superiority in other areas of competence.

Wright (1964) hypothesized that students possessing qualities of academic endowment, motivation and ability to accommodate to graduate school would be more likely to succeed than others without such qualities. Few of the 63 variables studied were predictive of future success. However, he did find that age was inversely related to success. Of 12 students who entered the Ph.D. program below the age of 21, 11 got the degree, while of the 15 students who entered over the age of 30, only three got the degree. This finding supports Wilson's data that those fields in which students delay entry into graduate school tend also to be the fields in which the students take longer to complete the degree.

Two of the variables which measured accommodation to graduate school did suggest that better social adjustment and integration to the school was associated with later success in obtaining the degree. Seventy-three percent of those who saw the faculty as indifferent or uninterested failed to earn the degree. This finding is statistically significant and is similar to Friedenberg's finding (1954) that students who need more nurturance from faculty and are preoccupied with or resentful of the indifference or uninterest of faculty have more difficulty in graduate school and in getting through the dissertation.

In that study, Friedenberg and Roth (1954) compared the relationship that different groups of students had with Chicago University. The authors were not interested in the etiology of the differences, nor did they accept the frequently cited explanation that any variation in competence in graduate school had to do with intelligence. In particular they looked at the difference between the ways successful and unsuccessful students perceived the university. The distinction between successful and unsuccessful was made by "departmental councelors," professors who are designated to assist students in planning their programs and who are familiar with their work. Through interviews and through asking the students to prioritize pieces of advice and statements about the university, the authors determined the characteristic ways that the two groups saw and experienced the university.

They found that successful students do not resent the faculty's preoccupation with research, even if it is to the detriment of the instruction. They tend to work independently and to value the experience of periodic immersion in their work. They recognize the competition that exists and even feel that to some degree it brings out the best in students. They are comfortable with the university being an ivory tower, detached from the current social problems: they are not particularly interested in changing the world.

The unsuccessful students, on the other hand, tend to be much more dependent and demanding. They are quick to resent the faculty's preoccupation with its own research and the faculty's lack of attention to them. They feel that knowledge should lead to practical application and alleviation of social problems. They are not comfortable with the position of intellectual objectivity and detachment from social problems. They avoid seeing or acknowledging the competition that exists, and, except for their complaint about insufficient faculty succorance, they tend to be more docile, more conforming. Friedenberg states that these students value love and being loved yet these feelings "do not provide enough security for rebellion." (p. 27). In short, they function with less autonomy than the successful students and experience their dependency more intensely.

The picture then that Friedenberg and Roth draw from their data is of one group, composed of students who develop an ambivilent relationship with the university, who perceive the university as an active agent and see themselves frequently as victims (p. 71). The other group of successful students, Friedenberg describes as using the university as some would use a railroad -- aware of its inconsistent, flawed service, but using it nonetheless to get to their destination.

The results suggest to Friedenberg and Roth that the unsuccessful students suffer from unconscious dependency and

are crippled by their hostility which so frequently accompanies that dependency (p. 71).

These conclusions support Loewenberg's (1969) and Strasser's (1977) appraisal of the ambivalence of the relationship between student and sponsor and the idea that the ambivalent, dependent relationship impairs the student's ability to function with uninhibited competence.

Loewenberg, trained as an analyst and historian, disciplined in his understanding of both internal and external forces, was among the very first to apply a psychodynamic perspective to the understanding of the graduate student's experience.

Central to that experience, according to Loewenberg, is the student's relationship with faculty members, primarily the relationship he has with the professor who becomes the student's sponsor or mentor. Loewenberg describes the powerful dynamics evident in this relationship and emphasizes the tendency in both professor and student to re-enact the father-son relationship: "The professor combines the transference authority of the father with the actual power and institutional authority of director of graduate studies" (1969, p. 613).

As the student faces the crises and stresses of graduate school, he often regresses to infantile fantasies in which he wishes for reassurance and proof of affection from his professor. According to Loewenberg, "It is as if the student said: ...'Give me more intellect, more power, more

money, a job'" (p.614). The frustration of these wishes gives rise to anger which the student cannot safely express, but instead does so indirectly by trying to put the professor on the spot, to embarrass him, or by experiencing secret pleasure when the professor has misfortunes (1969, p. 615). But the full extent of his hostility he must keep secret even from himself: "the student is forced to repress the deeper levels of hostility, to hold in his murderous wishes. He wishes to destroy the master, to take his place and inherit his power." That being impossible he seeks the "advantages of being small: protection and a minimal competitive standard of performance." But at times of increased stress, such as the doctoral examination or the defense, the aggressive fantasies he has harbored lead him to anticipate annihilation. Even if the student passes the examination, be it the comprehensives or the orals, the outcome is not necessarily "welcomed by the unconscious" (p. 618). "To terminate an unresolved regressive relationship to a man and an institution who have protected, enclosed, defended, means growing up. The dangers of autonomy, threats of unknown destruction await" (1969, p. 618). In fact, the separation anxiety that the student experiences may be so great that the student never emerges into manhood (1969, p. 619).

Loewenberg likens the traumas of transference regression, dangerous rivalry, fear of incorporation and separation anxiety to an initiation rite from which the

student may or may not emerge with "new autonomy and strength" (1969, pp. 617, 619).

He is describing the internal struggles of the student who is immersed in this transitional period. And he is describing the interplay of two generations, when the members from one are readying themselves and being readied to cross the boundary and join the others. He makes abundantly clear that the dynamic conflicts and ambivalence are intense.

Although Loewenberg does not discuss the dissertation as such, he certainly discusses the social and dynamic context within which the dissertation is written. It is written within the interpersonal context of intense ambivalence, in a period of transition when the student may fear as much as long for professional adulthood.

And, in addition, in so far as the dissertation is a creative piece of work which marks the culmination of the transition, it is not surprising that the process is fraught with its own battles and conflicts, with fantasied ghosts that are all too real in their unconscious power.

In a later article, Loewenberg (1983) notes the relationship between author and his subject matter.

> Invariably an analysis of the intellectual processes of academics shows that the subjects to which they professionally commit themselves -- political power and authority, elites, dominance, deference and submission, revolution, slavery, conquest and control, to name only a few -- are the displacements to abstractions of the very problems that cause conflict in their psychic life (1983, p. 73).

It is the contention of this present study that the struggles and concerns as stated by Loewenberg do manifest themselves in the dissertation process, whether in the subject matter of the dissertation or in the way the student does or does not go about the process.

Having examined some of the ambivalence observed by Loewenberg, the findings of Strasser should come as no surprise. Strasser (1977) is the first to study the dissertation process in detail. Her data was collected from extensive (two or more hours) interviews of 92 former clinical psychology students, half of whom had been enrolled at Teacher's College, the other half at New York University. Twenty-eight of them were ABD's, the rest had graduated.

Strasser thoroughly traces the process, from the initial effort to find a topic and sponsor to the anxiety of finishing and defending. Her data richly tells of the struggles and issues that the students describe themselves as having gone through. Her interviewees, two-thirds of whom were in therapy during the time of writing the dissertation, speak candidly of the dynamics that they think were central to their having difficulty.

Although the study is full of keen observations and well organized conclusions, it lacks both statistical data to support her statements, and an attempt to unify her observations, to make broader theoretical sense of the struggles students describe. It is hoped that this present

study will build on her solid beginning by addressing itself to these omissions.

Strasser's observations and conclusions support Loewenberg's perspective that the graduate experience is fraught with ambivalence. There is much to suggest that the source of that ambivalence is in the experience of the transition from student to adulthood. Many of the students saw it in just those terms. And their feelings about that change influenced the speed and emotional experience of doing the dissertation. "Some people spoke of consciously exeriencing themselves as less than adult in some way and saw completing the dissertation as symbolic of entering adulthood" (1977, p. 218). Strasser concludes:

> Experiencing the dissertation's completion as symbolic of transition to adulthood, professional status, a higher socio-economic class, or indication of profundity hindered the progress of those for whom such status was incompatitible with their self-image, and spurred the process of those who wished such change in status (p. 390).

But what sort of issues are evoked by this transition? Why do some welcome it and others fear it? What is feared by so many students? The issues repeatedly quoted by Strasser are those which attend any separation-individuation phase. They are anxieties and conflicts around acting independently, thinking alone, thinking separately (p. 207). They are issues of dependency. Both Friedenberg and Strasser found that those students who were more dependent, who complained more bitterly about the lack of help (p. 192), tended to have been those who had more difficulty

finishing. They tended, just as Friedenberg discovered, to be more preoccupied with a lack of personal warmth.

At least one-half of the students that Strasser interviewed struggled with issues of working independently, or struggled with "feeling anxious about the independence that completing it [the dissertation] would bring" (p. 192). Some students expressed their anxiety around this issue of independence by being unable to ask for help even at appropriate points for fear of appearing childish (p. 196).

For many, this transitional period re-evokes struggles with parents. The struggles are usually unconscious, fought internally, experienced as an inability to work, and occasionally acted out in the relationship with the sponsor. If the interviewees in Strasser's study see the issues in these terms, it is from having been trained in understanding dynamics, and from having been in therapy.

One woman, who took years and years to finish, reflected on how she borrowed money from her mother: "It kept me a child rather than an adult, kept me tied to her. I keep myself tied to my mother, and finishing the dissertation would cut that cord. I saw the final stages of my dissertation as a late adolescent break" (p. 165).

Themes then, that involve parents, and memories of parents are re-experienced in this transition. They are, as Loewenberg suggests, and Strasser's data support, re-enacted in the transference relationship of the graduate student

with his sponsor. In a number of cases she documents the passivity of students in the face of powerfully painful relationships with their sponsors, their prolonged submission to the demands that their sponsors. might place on them (pp. 104, 112, 134). The passionate fury towards sponsors, rarely to be expressed directly, was also a common experience. As on student describes,

> I missed getting the degree by one full semester which infuriated me, because he (the sponsor) was absolutely unavailable, and when the end of the last possible moment to get a degree in January came, and I knew I couldn't do it, I could have murdered him, literally murdered him. I wanted to make him pay for my matriculation, I wanted to make him pay for the fact that I'd missed taking the certifying exam...(p. 121).

And like Loewenberg, Strasser recognizes the real power that faculty have and that if the student does protest there is plenty of room for the sponsor to retaliate, unconsciously (p.124), even if not consciously.

The inequality of the relationship, the demand to produce "an original contribution" and the neurotic fears and occasional real sadism of a sponsor, all conspire to make the dissertation and the orals a more or less painful initiation rite. Strasser refers to the experience as an initiation rite and it is interesting to note that she found that, "men seem to have had bad experiences with their orals far more often than women, reflecting perhaps an unconscious protectiveness toward women on the part of the faculty, who may have been willing to subject men to a more grueling 'initiation rite'" (p. 144).

But, it appears that it is the fear and the longing, the hallmark of a transition, which profoundly affects the dissertation process (p. 219). The dynamics of the transition are, I believe, played out in many ways over many years. To show the degree to which these forces are virtually stalemated we need only note that of the 28 ABD's that Strasser interviewed (many of them had begun graduate school more than 12 years earlier), only seven were willing to admit that they had given up all hope of finishing the dissertation. Many had a partially completed dissertation in their closet, several had gone through re-admission exams, submitted new proposals only to find that they were still stuck.

Yet even for those who finish, the struggle is common. Over half of the interviewees "spoke of having found the process of writing to be painful and difficult" (p.136) and the cause Strasser attributed to dynamics:

> The emotional agony of dissertation writing was for some a result of their perfectionism, fear of writing inadequately, but more often seemed to be related to the symbolic significance of completing the dissertation. Whereas fear of obtaining a Ph.D. affected some students when they began contemplating dissertation writing, or throughout the entire process, for others it seemed to surface only as they began their final stage (p. 138).

One student said: "During the writing, I felt very psychotic, depressed, suicidal. ...The closer I got, the harder it was to work. I would cry hours before I could write" (p. 209).

In exploring the ideas of Loewenberg and Strasser, it becomes evident that a central issue for students is the fact that the completion of the dissertation marks a transition from graduate student to professional. It is an assumption of this study that the issues and conflicts of this transition are not evoked, for the most part, in the earlier stages of graduate school because the earlier requirements do not finalize or symbolize that transition to the extent that the dissertation does.

It is my perception that the experience of a transition is signalled at the start of the dissertation by a shift in balance of responsibility and authority between the student and professor. It is the student who initiates the project and who sets his own deadlines. The fact that prior to this point virtually all requirements were accompanied by an externally imposed deadline is of the utmost significance. The absence of such structures as deadlines requires a change in the relationship that the student has to himself, his work and his professor. He has somewhat more authority and yet remains emphatically in the role of student who is being required to "submit" his thesis in "partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy."

The fact that the dissertation is worked upon during the transition from studenthood to vocational adulthood in and of itself would probably make it difficult to complete. Transitional periods are stressful and disruptive. But it

is not only that the dissertation is written during a difficult period, it is that, metaphorically, the dissertation is the vehicle of that transition. The dissertation is the demonstration to the student himself, as well as to faculty, that he deserves to graduate. Its meaning for the student is intimately bound up with the meaning of the transition. For those who see completing graduate school as a major transition, the dissertation must be constructed with special care to get them through the period safely. For those who see the transition as insignificant, a less elaborate work may suffice. The size of the transition is not a given. It is what the students imagine it to be: for some it is an enormous ravine that cannot be crossed except at great risk. For others, it is a small gap that is easily traversed. Those who imagine the change as gigantic, may well feel they need the protection of a magnum opus to survive.

In short, the dissertation is influenced both by the fact that it is written during a period of transition and that it is the vehicle of that transition.

In understanding transitions, the perspective I will take is a developmental one, drawing particularly from the theories of separation and individuation which are described for infants by Mahler (1975), for adolescents by Blos (1979), and for adults by Levinson (1978). I will introduce the process of separation-individuation from an ethological/ evolutionary perspective which emphasizes the nature of the

human organism's adaptive responses to the natural selection pressures which gave rise to the genetic components of this developmental process.

Separation-individuation is a theory and description of the psychological process by which the human organism develps autonomy and independence from the parents. It is a process which leads to a greater self-awareness, to representations of self as distinguished increasingly from other.

The human organism must mature not only physically but also psychologically to behave in such a way as to procreate and to parent its offspring. Although necessarily dependent in childhood, the youngster must become independent of the mother and family in adulthood.

In addition to our morphology, the pressures of natural selection are understood to give some shape to our behavioral systems (Konner, 1982). One can see the effect of natural selection upon two systems of behavior which Bowlby (1968) identifies as attachment behavior and exploratory behavior. Bowlby believes that attachment behavior was largely selected to preserve the immature organism from wandering out of sight of the mother and exposing itself to danger from predators. In the same way as the blink of the eye evolved as an adaptive response to the possible danger posed by the movement of an object towards the eye, so the activation of attachment behavior -- the running of the small child to be near the mother --

evolved as an adaptive response to the possible danger of predators. Exploratory behavior, on the other hand, evolved from the survival value that the organism acquires from knowing its surroundings, from developing its skills.

Evolution occurs through the minute random mutations of the genes. Gene mutations which give rise to excessive attachment and clinging to the mother would thwart the development of independence while gene mutations which gave rise to a premature loosening of attachment would expose the organism to greater risk of predation.

In summary, two separate, conflicting behavioral systems arose as genetic adaptations to the natural selection pressures. The evolutionary perspective is helpful in suggesting explanations for the ambivalent nature of the struggle which attends the maturational process. Mahler, Blos, and Levinson document the unfolding autonomy in humans which is so vulnerable to arrest and regression, so permeated with ambivalence.

The experiences of separation from the mother which can be beneficial to a development of internalized separateness must be only gradually extended. Excessively long early separation evokes a stong psychological reaction of abandonment and need; it does not lead to an internalized capacity to be separate, to an internalized representation of the self and mother as independent beings. This is a mechanism not unlike chinese handcuffs: any rapid attempt to disengage is thwarted, it is only the slow loosening

which serves to allow maturational separation to occur. The child must develop its separateness at an appropriate speed. We will now look more closely at the separation-individuation process.

Mahler (1975) sees that there are developmental processes that are crucial to a person becoming a separate person, with his own sense of identity. She sees this process as occurring along two intertwined developments; that of separation, by which she means the differentiation of the infant from his symbiotic fusion with the mother and the gradual development by the fourth year of a primitive sense of identity and representation of self and other (p. 8). The second development is that of individuation which is the acquisition of independent ego functions: motility, memory, perception (p. 6).

Mahler, Pine and Bergman trace the unfolding of these developments through four stages in their book The Psychological Birth of the Human Infant (1975). They focus on infancy because the main achievements of this process take place in that period of the life cycle (p. 3). Nevertheless, they believe that this process like others "reverberates throughout the life cycle" and that events stimulate conflicts around these issues in later life (1975, pp. 3, 5).

Mahler et al. describe how the normal infants move through a stage of differentiation in which they begin to "hatch" from the fusion with the mother and acquire a very

rudimentary sense of their own body. This separation continues through the practicing phase when the child's maturation of motor abilities gives him further experiences of his independence from his mother. But it is through gradually creating a representation of himself and his mother that he begins to tolerate being away from the mother for increasing lengths of time and to have some capacity to understand that, even though he can't see her, she exists and she will return. As this representation is consolidated in the rapprochment phase, the child oscillates between being competent at managing his increasing separateness and falling apart. Only in the fourth phase does he consolidate a rudimentary sense of his own identity.

Mahler et al. trace these developments through the first three years noting the pain and difficulties which attend the process, and pointing to the ways in which the mother facilitates or retards the process (p. 11).

Building on Mahler's theory, Blos (1968) sees the adolescent period as a second separation-individuation period. He notes that in both periods there is a vulnerability of personality organization, that the organism is under maturational pressure to make structural psychic changes and that in both phases, if development does not unfold, the result is psychopathology. He sees a parallel between the infant's emergence from the symbiotic tie with the mother and the adolescent's separation from his dependency on his family and the "loosening of infantile

object ties in order to become a member of society at large" (p. 141).

He points to the development and transformations of psychic structures to yield a less rigid super-ego, to consolidate the ego ideal. "These structural changes render the constancy of self-esteem and of mood increasingly independent of external sources..." (p. 143). In his attention to the unfolding of this increased independence, he, like Mahler, is attentive to those experiences and conflicts which may inhibit the process and cause it to miscarry.

Levinson (1978) carries theories of development into adulthood, and even though he rarely uses the terminology of Mahler and Blos, he does often highlight, in the stages he describes, the process of becoming increasingly independent.

He studies different stages of the adult male life cycle primarily in terms of the evolution of the "life structure" (p. 42) which he defines as the"basic pattern or design of a person's life at a given time" (p. 41). The most common, central components of this pattern are occupation and marriage-family. The primary task of a stable period is building a life structure while the task of a transitional period is to examine and question existing structures and explore possibilites (p. 49). He too recognizes how this is similar to, or a continuation of, the separation-individuation process (p. 51).

In describing this process for the period from age 22 to 28 years, which he calls "Entering the Adult World," Levinson notes that a man must become "on his own." He must set up his own base away from his family of origin (p. 57). During this period, the person has two "antithetical tasks," on the one hand to keep options open and on the other to begin to create a stable life structure (pp. 58, 80). The balance is not easy to maintain, it is often a confusing and painful period (p. 58). From 28 to 33 is what Levinson calls the "Age Thirty Transition". It is at this point that a man feels that any dissatisfactions he has with his life he "must change before it's too late" (p. 58).

Levinson sees a continuity of tasks that run through each of the stages. These tasks focus on "forming a Dream and giving it a place in the life structure". [By Dream, he means "an imagined possibility that generates excitement and vitality" (p. 91), forming mentor relationships, forming an occupation and forming love relationships, marriage and family (p. 90).]

These three developmental theorists all recognize that development often miscarries, that a person becomes arreested at one stage or another, that he cannot proceed because of traumas or internal conflicts or structural deficits.

Given that we are interested in better understanding how someone becomes stuck in the process of writing the dissertation, it behooves us to examine how any person

becomes stuck in a developmental process and to see if it has bearing on the dissertation experience.

Mahler came to her study of the separation-individuation process in normal children via her interest in and treatment of autistic children in which that process fails to occur and in which the child maintains either an illusion of symbiotic fusion with the mother or a sense of total separateness from her. she is, therefore, alert in her observations of normal separation-individuation to the configuration of events or interactions which accelerate or impede the process. Ane these impediments may occur in spite of the fact that there is an innate "drive for and toward individuation" (author's italics, p. 206). She recognizes in the process the facilitative role the mother can play as well as how the precocious development of either separation or individuation can interfere with the smooth unfolding of the joint process. A child who learns to walk prematurely will not have the representational structures to deal with the precocious experience of separateness from mother.

Although the child is constantly moving toward greater separateness, this must be a gradual process. Where separation from the mother is prolonged or too abrupt the child may take a position of refusing to accept his separateness and will live with the "delusion of symbiotic union" (p. 8).

The painful difficulty the child has in developing his separate identity is particularly evident in the struggle that toddlers exhibit as they move from the practicing to the rapprochment phase. In this transition, they go from having a blissful sense of their own omnipotence and invulnerability to the discovery, in rapprochment, that they are separate and alone, prone to hurt and dangers which they cannot readily protect themselves from, and which they increasingly realize are even beyond the control of their parents. Giving up the "delusion of omnipotence" (pp. 216, 223), does not come easily.

> Here is the conflict: On the one hand is the toddler's feeling of helplessness in his realization of separateness and on the other hand is his valiant defense of what he cherishes as the emerging autonomy of his body. In this struggle for individuation, and the concomitant anger about his helplessness, the toddler tries to reinflate his sense of self, to approximate the forever lost illusion of omnipotence of the practicing period (p. 222).

Gradually he will need to replace the illusion of omnipotence with the development of secondary narcissism and self esteem. The mother plays an important role in facilitating this transition; her availability and constancy of tolerance is important in helping the toddler weather the oscillations between feeling he doesn't need his mother and feeling he can't survive without her (pp. 63, 77, 79).

Looking at similar phenomena in adolescents, Blos suggests a number of fixation points and a constellation of forces which can contribute to an impasse in development. Perhaps more relevant to us, and most reminiscent of Mahler,

is his study of "prolonged male adolescence." He finds that this particular group of adolescents share a similar childhood background (p. 44). It is a childhood in which the son is highly appreciated by his parents, indeed over-appreciated, where his parents, particularly his mother, sees enormous potential for her son. To the extent that as children these adolesents depended for their self-esteem upon these impressions, they find they cannot tolerate the "crushing realization" that outside of the family such unconditional hope and expectation is unavailable, or is at best available only after prolonged, hard work for a lifetime of achievement. "The adolescent boy of this type becomes apprehensive when he realizes that he falls short of his exaggerated self-expectations..." (p. 47).

In his study of the "over-appreciated child", Blos (1968) continues his description, "With adolescence the day of fulfillment should have arrived, but the promise remains unfulfilled... Disbelief, rage, and a sense of betrayal fill their tortured, helpless souls..." (p. 307). In this description of the prolonged adolescent, we have the description of a person who cannot get beyond a certain stage because he has a way of being in the world which no longer works. He cannot make the transition because the assault upon his self-esteem is too great.

Both Mahler and Blos have discussed the precarious process of separation-individuation in which the experience of greater separateness is accompanied with and so often

thwarted by a sense of helplessness. Most toddlers with the help of their mothers get through the process of renouncing their illusion of omnipotence. On the other hand, some adolescents who have depended upon their mother's inflated image of their infinite potential have difficulty giving up that illusion and consolidating a system of self-esteem which is more or less independent of external sources of praise and adulation and may need the help of a therapist to succeed at this task.

In these examples we can easily see parallels with the experience of graduate students described by Strasser and also clearly in the experience of John described in the first chapter. One of John's struggles, as he described it, was renouncing, with the greatest of reluctance, his exaggerated expectations. He saw the process of doing the dissertation as dependent upon a psychological process of readjusting his image of himslf, his sense of his own potential. As one of Strasser's interviewees said: the writing of the dissertation was a time of confronting the question "Am I what I think I am?"

Does Levinson, who addresses very directly the periods in which most dissertations are written, find similar developmental struggles? In his concept of the Dream and in his recognition that a young man has to find ways to give that dreamed of expectation of himself more definition and realistic ways of concretizing it, he is addressing, at least peripherally, similar structures.

> Those who betray the Dream in their twenties will have to deal later with the consequences. Those who build a life structure around the Dream in early adulthood have a better chance for personal fulfillment, though years of struggle may be required to maintain the commitment and work toward its realization. During the Mid-Life Transition they will have to reappraise the magical aspects of the Dream and modify its place in their middle adult lives (p.92).

When he talks of reappraising the magical aspects of the Dream he seems to be suggesting that there are unrealistic aspects of the Dream. Even if he does not directly discuss the necessity of modulating aspirations, he does give us a vocabulary which is useful in discussing these developmental issues in graduate students.

Our examination of the literature on dissertations, with its suggestions that students who had difficulty in doing their dissertations were caught up in a negative or ambivalent relationship with the university, led us to theories about how people separate themselves from their parents. But the question that we can now ask is: Are there studies which link difficulty with separation-individuation tasks to academic functioning? There are. There are primarily two areas of study. The first has to do with studies of dynamically determined learning inhibition, in particular, studies of the underachiever. The second area is the "Fear of Success" studies which establish the fact that many persons are predisposed to avoid success and even to sabotage themselves when they get near to accomplishing a goal which they define as successful. Many of these studies conceptualize these inhibitions of achievement strivings as

arising from difficulties around separation-individuation issues in childhood.

Let us begin with the first area, academic work inhibitions or as some have referred to it -- "underachievement" or even "anti-achievement." Halpern (1964), basing his conclusions on clinical observations, finds two main patterns. First, that the parents of some children tend to be narcissistic and controlling (p. 9) and as a consequence evoke anger in the child and force "him to employ extreme measures to attain individuation." Second, the "familial interrelationships intensify the child's Oedipal conflict and resulting fears, thus making his extreme efforts toward individuation express themselves negativistically" (p. 9). Halpern believes that such students express their rebellion passively because they experience that as safer -- because, among other things, open rebellion would create considerable guilt (p. 10).

He also sees the passive refusal to work as serving two "antagonistic purposes." On the one hand it represents an act of individuation from his parents and on the other it "serves his powerful primitive need to remain eternally united with his mother."

In a later article (1966), he makes clear that one of the reasons that the adolescent can't individuate and become competent and active is that he feels "almost every accomplishment to be in the service of his parents,

therefore offering no separation. For another, he fears achievement will mean growth and separation."

In addition, Halpern notes that the adolescent may avoid success in order to avoid "castration or abandonment which may result from Oedipal competition" (p. 87). And finally the self-defeating stance can be part of a wider tendency towards masochism (p. 89).

Several hypotheses that Kimball (1952, 1953) generated from careful clinical observation were borne out by statistical analysis of projective test data. She found that a larger number of underachievers revealed a negative relationship with the father than was found in the total population, and that underachievers introduced physical aggression toward animate objects as a source of guilt and anxiety more frequently than the population as a whole.

Here in these findings we have echoes of Loewenberg's analysis of the ambivalent relationship that the graduate student may reproduce with his sponsor, in which anger and frustration are experienced but cannot find direct expression, and tend to find expression often in passive-aggressive ways. Aggression may find expression through procrastination if the student believes that withholding his own progress in some way thwarts the sponsor (often a repetition of the real relationship with the father).

Newman et al. (1973), in their excellent article entitled "He Can But He Won't," discuss their clinical impressions of 15 male underachievers. They focus in

particular on how precocious development of one ego function, verbal ability, in the context of an environment in which parents appear to value over-achievement, causes a progressive uneveness in ego development to the detriment of overall effective ego functioning. A child's excessive narcissistic gratification in one area makes him more susceptible to narcissistic injury in other areas. His performance in one area may be as inadequate as his verbal performance may be superior. Like Halpern, Newman and her co-authors note that parents, particularly the mother, exploit their child for their own gratification of narcissistic needs (p. 93). They will exaggerate the early precocity of their son's potential with such statements as "he talked like a little man, there was no baby talk ... He could recite 25 pages at 2 1/2 and make like he was reading" (p. 93). The mothers who felt that their husbands were all aloof reported filling the void with conversations with their toddler son (p. 101).

To the extent that a mother used her child to express "her own unconscious masculine wishes" (p. 100) she would find it all the more difficult to allow her son to individuate from her, to become a separate person, and male (p. 114). Whatever ways she may actively impede his separation, so also the fact that he experienced his close idealized relationship with his mother as an "unearned 'oedipal victory'" makes development more difficult.

> This early apparent triumph through verbalization makes the oedipal strivings more guilt-producing and the

> inevitable defeat more humiliating. The same boy who posed a castration threat to his mother as he attained some forms of independence from her now enters the oedipal phase to face not only his inevitable inadequacy but the hidden wrath of a depreciated, passive father whom he "deposed" long ago, and with whom it is dangerous to identify least he suffer the same depreciated fate (Newman et al., p. 114).

I quote at length because it is likely that in a milder form this dynamic persists even into graduate school. It is probable and likely that many graduate students were verbally precocious as children and in their prolonged career as students maintain a process of feeding their self-esteem with the fantasies of the potential accomplishment. They do so in the face of fear of separation and narcissistic injury when they do try to give substantive proof of that potential.

There is, in addition, a study by Kurash (1979) of students undergoing separation-individuation as they make the transition to college. Those students who gave evidence of a capacity to separate from their families and attach themselves to their college had higher grade point avrages than those who gave evidence of having more difficulty with the transition. This gives, again, some support to the idea that difficulty with separation-individuation can impair the ability to function academically either because of anxiety or because of the meaning that such competent functioning has for the student.

We now come logically to the "fear of success" studies. A number of authors who have studied the phenomenon of a person avoiding success, avoiding accomplishments, have

looked to theories of separation-individuation to explain the origin of such a phobia. Canavan-Gumpert et al.'s (1978) formulations are remarkably similar to those we have just examined of Newman's, and her findings give plentiful evidence that this fear of success repeatedly interferes with academic performance. In fact, early in their book, the authors point to the observations that many graduate students seem to suffer from a fear of success and she relates the anecdote of the student who for fear of having his manuscript burn up in his absence carried it everywhere with him. Twice he lost it, once in a fast food restaurant, once in a taxi, both times, by good luck, he recovered it. But the authors decribe experimentally based data as well.

Basing their explanation for the fear of success and definitions of it on many different clinical theorists (including Freud, Horney and Sullivan), Canavan-Gumpert et al. arrive at an understanding that the success fearing person has three related motives: 1) a motive to avoid failure, 2) a motive to achieve success, and 3) a motive to avoid success. Using Lewin's theory, they see that the third motive is activated only as the person approaches the success. At that time, he will show signs of anxiety and ambivalence and may change his behavior or his representation of the nature or distance from the success.

As for the origins of a fear of success, Canavan-Gumpert et al. note that for such a trait to exist in a person, he must have had all three motives instilled: he must have

been taught that 1) performing well is important, 2) that performing poorly is terrible, and 3) that performing well is also bad or dangerous to a person's welfare (p. 27). The authors speculate that the origins of such learning would occur in the context of early separation-individuation when the child would learn that his efforts at achievement and mastery and independence elicited negative or ambivalent reactions from a parent, particularly the mother (p. 27).

Second, the authors base the origin of fear of success on the oedipal stage as described by Freud and Horney. This "version assumes that fear of success is generated through competitive struggles between the child and the parents and /or between siblings" (Canavan-Gumpert, 1978, p. 27). In fact two of their findings support these assumptions. First, after designing a fear of success scale for children, they found that the parents of children who feared success tended to interfere (supposedly) to help in the performance activities of their children far more frequently than the parents of those who didn't fear success. The authors felt that this (over) involvement by the parents could be interpreted by the children either as a put-down or as a competition. But in any case, the involvement of the parent often interfered with the child's own concentration on finding the solution himself. Second, that an oedipal component may exist is suggested by results of Cohen (1974), who found that those high school students who scored high on the fear of success scale were more likely to demonstrate

self-sabotaging behavior when they were competing with someone of the same sex than with someone of the opposite sex. This was particularly true of the male students.

The authors believe that a person who fears success, although unable to report the unconscious conflict which motivates him to avoid success, will be able to observe and report his self-defeating behaviors. The scales are based on this assumption.

Canavan-Gumpert et al. report the experiments of Pappo (1972) and Cohen (1974) which gave some experimental validity to the scales. But the authors wanted to see whether in fact these scales predicted behavior in everday life. And, in a study particularly relevant to this investigation, she examined the academic performance of college students, to see if those who scored high on the scale gave subsequent evidence of engaging in behaviors which could be understood as self-sabotaging or indicative of anxiety around success. Her findings give support to the idea that the fear of success scale does predict actual behavior. Using the transcripts and responses to questionnaires of students who had taken the fear of success scale two years earlier, she found that not only did a higher percentage of those students who feared success report a lack of clarity of future occupational goals and a greater difficulty in making decisions about which college to attend, which area to major in (p. 100), but there were also significant differences in the consistency of those

students' work. Those who scored high showed much greater range in the grades that they received (p. 104). In addition, the findings concerning the behavior of the work patterns of those who feared success in a self-paced psychology course (p. 105) were of great relevance to this study. Those who scored high on fear of success demonstrated more procrastination in getting work done and the need to repeat units of work more often than did those who scored low on the scale.

Given these findings, it would hardly be surprising to find that some graduate students who score high on fear of success will take a longer time to finish their dissertations than those who score low.

This study conceptualizes doing the dissertation as a real and symbolic transition from studenthood to professional adulthood. Completing the dissertation and receiving the Ph.D. leads to a separation from the university and mentor, and marks the end of the doctoral candidate's sense of identity as a student.

This study seeks to examine whether the high attrition rate and the extended time it takes most students to do the dissertation are in fact related to separation-individuation anxieties and conflicts. In the literature reviewed in this chapter we have examined different descriptions and understandings of such difficulties. Bowlby has pointed to early separations as traumatic experiences which often restrict later experiences and interfere with the

development of relationships. We have seen from Mahler and Blos how separation anxiety is warded off by the illusion of omnipotence and how such a defense arrests development. We have seen how underachievement of children is described in the literature as associated with separation-individuation problems. We have examined, from the perspective of sepration-individuation, the literature which deals with the experience of graduate students at work on their dissertation. We have looked at the concept of fear of success as decribed by Canavan-Gumpert et al. who see the origin of that fear as arising in part from difficulties in separation-individuation.

In the course of the life cycle people must go through many changes and make many transitions. Often such changes and separations are unavoidable and are forced upon people. But that is not the case with the dissertation. The dissertation writer is more or less in control of his progress through this project which leads to separation. To the extent that he may need to avoid the separation, he will have difficulty doing the dissertation. Perhaps there is no area of functioning more susceptible to the interference of unconscious fears and conflicts than thinking and creating. Thinking is not a conflict-free ego function and graduate students have described to me their inability to do in the dissertation what they know they have been capable of at other times. The conflicts can be so severe that many

students go through periods when they cease to be able to write or concentrate on what they are reading.

Only by persisting at the dissertation while making little or no progress can a graduate student fend off separation. Either quitting the dissertation or completing it are two options which both lead to separations from their relationship with the university and a change in their perception of themselves. It is a task that often traps a person in a situation where her cannot go forward and he cannot let go. Thus many students spend a whole decade of their lives with a project which they often feel powerless to complete and equally powerless to walk away from.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: It is predicted that those students who report a history of separation and loss will have more difficulty completing the dissertation than those students who do not report such a history. Experiences of separation and loss will be assessed on the author's Loss and Separation measure (LOSS). Difficulty doing the dissertation will be measured in terms of relative length of time to complete the dissertation.

Hypothesis 2: It is hypothesized that those subjects who report a parental set of attitudes (as measured by the author's Perception of Parents Scale, [POP]) which are considered in the literature as unconducive to the smooth unfolding of the separation-individuation process will tend to have more difficulty completing the dissertation than subjects who don't report such a history.

Hypothesis 3: It is predicted that those subjects who report a history of difficulty separating and individuating from their parents (DIFF-SEP measure) will have greater difficulty completing the dissertation.

Hypothesis 4: It is predicted that those subjects who report a history of indirection and lack of clarity of goals will have greater difficulty completing the dissertation than those who don't report such a history (measured by scale of Indirection [INDIR]).

Hypothesis 5: It is predicted that those students who score high on the Fear of Success scale will have had more

difficulty completing the degree than students who do not give indication of experiencing such anxiety.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The investigation of the effects of separation-individuation issues on the length of time students take to do a dissertation was studied by analyzing the data from a questionnaire which was completed by current and former graduate students.

SUBJECTS

Subjects were drawn from a list of graduate students who were admitted to any one of six Ph.D. programs at C.U.N.Y. between 1969 and 1980. The doctoral programs included biology, chemistry, political science, sociology, english and history. The list was compiled by an assistant at the registrar's office according to the specifications of the author. The list included Ph.D.'s, active students, and students who had ceased to matriculate, having been terminated or having otherwise dropped out. The list lacked the information on those students who dropped out between 1976 and 1978, because of a change-over of computer systems that would have made the retrieval of that information extremely difficult.

The list was reduced to include only students who had gotten to the dissertation stage or beyond. Consequently all students who had been terminated or who had dropped out prior to advancement to candidacy were omitted from the

list. The list included 2,015 students fairly equally distributed between the different departments; 508 had Ph.D's. The list was further reduced by more than a half, to those people for whom either the alumni office or the registrar's office had current addresses.

PROCEDURE

An invitation to participate in the study was sent to 793 current and former students in May and June 1984. The invitation included a statement of the research, a standard consent form, a one page demographic form and a stamped envelope with the researchers address (appendix B and C). A second invitation to participate was sent to subjects who were non Ph.D. because the rate of return for that group was poor. If a subject indicated a willingness to participate, he was sent a questionnaire which had been designed by the author (Appendix C). A request urging participants to complete the questionnnaire was sent after approximately 4 weeks to those who had not returned the questionnaire. The data from questionnaires received after September 1984 were not included in the study.

The invitation was sent out by the registrar's office to current and former students who did not have a Ph.D. An invitation to Ph.D. holders was sent using addresses provided by the alumni office because these were deemed to be more up to date than the addresses that the registrar had for that population.

RATES OF RETURN

Adjusted for the postal returned letters (9% were returned), the initial mailing reached a population of 722 people. Of this total who were invited to participate, 212 or 29% filled out the demographic form and agreed to be in the study. Of these, 84% returned completed questionnaires.

According to registrar's records in the spring of 1984, of the population invited to participate 221 were Ph.D's, 396 were actively registered, 105 were not registered, but had reached the dissertation stage. The rates of return of the questionnaire in these categories were: 38% of the Ph.D.s; 18% for those currently registered; and 13% for those not registered. The difference in rate of return by the subjects in each category was probably due to different level's of motivation of the groups involved. The Ph.D.'s who belong to the alumni association are not necessarily representative of the entire CUNY Ph.D. population. They may have more of a commitment than those who do not belong to the alumni association to remain in touch with the university and consequently to answer the questionnnaire.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

The final sample included 93 Ph.D.'s, 77 students who were still actively intending to finish the doctoral program (3 of these were on leave), and 9 who had reached a decision to cease pursuing the Ph.D. (1 of these was on leave).

TABLE 1

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE
BY
SUBJECT AREA, DEPARTMENT AND STATUS IN DOCTORAL PROGRAM

	Number of Ph.D.'s	Number of Still Working towards Ph.D.	Number of who stopped	Number in Sample
Hard Sciences	35	14	4	53
Biology	22	10	3	35
Chemistry	13	4	1	18
Humanities	23	35	4	62
English	15	21	2	38
History	8	14	2	24
Social Sci	35	28	1	64
Political Sci	10	8	1	19
Sociology	25	20	0	45
Total Sample	93	77	9	179

TABLE 2

DESCRIPTION OF ENTIRE SAMPLE
BY
SEX AND SUBJECT AREA

	N	Hard Sciences	Humanities	Social Sciences
Men	82	25	24	33
Women	97	28	38	31
Total	179	53	62	64

TABLE 3

DESCRIPTION OF PH.D. GROUP
BY
SEX AND SUBJECT AREA

	N	Hard Sciences	Humanities	Social Sciences
Men	44	18	9	17
Women	47	17	14	18
Total	93	35	23	35

TABLE 4

A COMPARISON OF MEANS AND MEDIANS FOR PHD YRS IN THIS SAMPLE WITH THE POPULATION OF ALL GRADUATES OF CUNY WHO WERE ADMITTED BETWEEN 1969 AND 1980

Field		N	Mean	SD	Median
Bio:	CUNY data	128	5.83	1.96	5.58
	This study's	19	5.73	1.92	6.00
Chem:	CUNY data	124	5.33	1.56	5.00
	This study's	13	5.62	2.22	5.00
English	CUNY data	63	7.07	1.84	6.75
	This study's	15	7.95	1.38	8.42
History	CUNY data	45	7.46	2.51	7.58
	This study's	8	7.43	2.25	7.46
Pol Sci	CUNY data	53	7.76	2.23	7.75
	This study's	11	7.97	1.61	8.00
Soc	CUNY data	95	6.56	2.54	6.00
	This study's	22	7.24	2.49	7.46

Note that some of the actively registered group had, between the time that the list of the registrar's was compiled to the time when the questionnnaire was sent out, become Ph.D's, so that these numbers do not correspond exactly to the percents described in the paragraph above).

In the final sample there were 97 women and 82 men, virtually all were caucasian and just over half reported (by their own definition) coming from middle and upper class families. Of the 77 who were actively intending to finish, 67 expected to finish with in 3 years and10 didn't know when they would finish.

In the PhD category, with which this study is most concerned, 35 are in the hard sciences, 23 are in the humanities, and 35 are in the social sciences. A further description of the subjects by department and sex as well as other characteristics are included in tables 1, 2, 3.

With regard to the mean lengths of time spent in graduate school, the sample of students in this study appears to be reasonably representative.

See table 4 for a comparison of mean length of time in graduate school in different fields for Ph.D.'s in this study as compared with the mean lengths for all Ph.D.'s in CUNY during the same time period.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality was insured by the registrar's office assigning a code number to each subject. This code number

served as the means of identification on all data. At no point did a subject's name appear on a questionnaire.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE

The preliminary phase of constructing the questionnaire consisted of the formal and informal interviewing of students. Interviews lasting several hours were conducted with two students in history, one in theology, one in English and two in clinical psychology. These interviews, although not reported in this study, were used to generate areas of inquiry, hypotheses and items for a questionnaire. An early version of the questionnaire was filled out and discussed with approximately 10 current and former students. The information resulting from these inquiries was instrumental in the construction of the final questionnaire. In addition, the literature reviewed in the first chapter was important in suggesting items for the questionnaire. Finally, throughout this study, self-observation by the author of his own difficulties were noted and informed aspects of the study. The questionnaire includes standard demographic questions as well as questions which form measures for different variables. Some of the demographic questions were included in a form sent out with the initial invitation to participate.

MEASURES OF THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE:

There is no simple measure for the dependent variable, length of time taken to do a dissertation. The project overlaps different phases of graduate school and the point at which it begins is difficult to identify. Out of the many measures of time that could have been looked at, this study focuses on two. The first of these is the total number of years reported for doing the dissertation requirement, including false starts (abbreviated as DISS YRS). It was chosen because it closely approximates what this study is most interested in, namely the amount of time that people spend on the dissertation requirement including any time spent working on a topic that didn't work out, including unproductive as well as productive years. The second measure is the total length of time from the beginning of graduate school at CUNY to the conferral of the Ph.D.(abbreviated PHD YRS), excluding years spent earning MA's that were earned in a program separate from the Ph.D. program. This measure was chosen because it was the most accurate, and because data from the registrar's office could be relied upon rather than the memories of subjects. It is also a measure that lends itself most easily to comparison with measures used in other studies.

CONSTRUCTION OF MEASUREMENTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Several measures were put together of factors associated with, or predictive of, difficulty in the

separation-individuation process. Two of these measures tap events and relationships which are assumed to lead to difficulty with separation-individuation. Note that the actual questions can be found in the questionnaire which is included in Appendix C. After each item listed in the measures below the number of the question is recorded in parentheses. The roman numeral stands for part I or part II of the questionnaire, and the arabic numeral stands for the number of the question as it appears in the questionnaire.

1. Separation and Loss Variable (LOSS)

The LOSS variable is composed of 19 items and roughly measures the number and severity of traumatic separations that occurred in the childhood of the subject. It includes hospitalizations, death of parents, close relatives, close friends, the divorce of parents. The items of this scale are based on Bowlby's review of the effects of early separation and loss on later functioning (Bowlby, 1969; 1980).

The weighting and scoring of the items in this measure are described below.

Item 1: Hospitalization overnight. (Q. # I,18.)

0 = no hospitalization before the age of 18. Or any hospitalization after the age of 18.

1 = one hospitalization between ages 12 and 17 years inclusive.

2 = one hospitalization between ages of 7 and 11, inclusive.

3 = one hospitalization between ages of 0 and 6, inclusive.

Item 2: Length of hospital stay. (Q. # I,18)

0 = any length less than 10 days.

1 = any hospitalizatioin of more than 10 days before the age of 17, inclusive.

Item 3 - 5: Second, third and fourth hospitalizations. (Q. #I,18)

0 = no hospitalization, or any hospitalization after the age of 18, inclusive.

1 = each additional hospitaliation before the age of 17 inclusive.

Item 6: Parent divorce. (Q.#I,19)

0 = no divorce

1 = any divorce of parents that occurred after the subject was 17 years old.

5 = any divorce before the age of 17.

Item 7: Death of mother (Q.#I,20)

7 = death of mother if subject was 11 years and under at the time.

5 = death occurring when subject was between 12 and 16 inclusive.

2 = death occurring after the subject was 16.

Item 8: Death of father (Q.#I,20)

Same scoring as for mother.

Item 9 and 10: Death of brother or sister.

1 = death of sibbling occurring at or after subject was 17.

2 = death of sibbling occurring at or before 16.

Item 11,12,13: Death of close relative, close friend, close additional friend.(Q.#I, 20)

1 = death occurred when subject was age 16 or younger.

Item 14,15: One or two separations from both parents for more than 2 days before the age of 8. (Q.#I, 21)

1 = each separation

Item 16,17: Length of separation from both parents.

0 = no separation, or any separation less than months long.

1 = any separation of 60 days or more.

Item 18: Attendance at boarding school in 5th,6th, or 7th grade.(Q.# I, 17)

1 = any attendance of boarding school.

Item 19: Attendance at camp away from home between ages 5 and 7. (Q.#15)

1 = any such attendance.

Items 1 to 19 were added together to give a measure of separation and loss experienced by the subjects.

The range of possible responses varied from item to item. This required that each item be rescored on a consistent scale. The cut off values were established logically, not on the basis of inspection of the data. It is possible that a system which weighted the traumas differently would have been more appropriate.

2. The Perception of Parents Variable (POP)

The POP variable is composed of items which attempt to measure the extent to which subjects reported relationshipis with their parents which would have been unconducive to the

separation-individuation process. This would include the perception of parents as controlling, over-praising, intruding, and clinging. Qualities described by Halpern (1964), Blos (1979) and Silber et al. (1961) were used in the construction of the variable.

All the items on this measure are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The scores were simply added with the scoring on questions 41,42 and 53 reversed. Full agreement with each question was scored 1. Full disagreement was scored 5. A low score was presumed to indicate a perception of parents which would make separation and individuation difficult.

Items 1,2: Mother/father wants subject to go to college near home. (QI,39,40)

Items 3,4. .Mother/father supported subject making an informed decision .about which college to attend. (Q.#41,42)

Items 5,6: Subject found it hard to disagree with mother/father.(Q.#43,44)

Items 7,8: Mother/father was overly concerned that subject would make the wrong decisions. (Q.#45,46)

Items 9,10: Mother/father had definite ideas about what the subject should become. (Q.#47,48)

Items 11,12: Subject received excessive praise from mother/father. (Q.#51,52)

Item 13: Parents had an openly affectionate relationship. (Q.#53)

Item 14: Parents weren't emotionally very close.
.(Q.# 54)

3. Difficulty with Past Separations Variable (DIFF-SEP)

This variable was composed of items which the literature suggest are indications of difficulty separating and individuating from parents and family. These include indications of difficulty individuating in junior high school, difficulty in coping with the transition to college. Kurash (1979), Silber et al. (1961) and Erikson (1950) have described such factors.

The weighting of the items is described below:

Item 1: Distance from home to college.(Q#I, 24)

0 = more than 700 miles away

1 = 101 to 700 miles

2 = 40 to 100 miles

3 = less than 40.

Item 2: Drop in grades at the time of preparing for or arriving at college, indicating difficulty separating. (Q.#I, 7)

1 = a drop in grades from 11th to 12th grade.
or a drop in grades from 12th grade to freshman year in college.

Item 3: Had difficulty taking on responsibilities, individuating as suggested by low number of summer jobs. (Q.I, 13)

1 = if subject held a summer job less than 2 summers between ages 12 and 17 or if subject held a summer job less than 4 summers between ages 18 and 24.

Item 4: Infrequent participation in extra-curricular activities. (Q.#I, 10)

1 = a score of less than 12 when sum is calculated for all years from high school through college.

Item 5: Living with parents as a sign of dependency.(Q.#I, 14)

1 = if subject lived more than approximately 50% of his time with his parents between the ages of 18 and 22.

1 = if subject lived more than approximately 40% of his time at home between the ages of 23 and 27.

Item 6: Unhappy at camp during the age of 14-17. (Q. # I, 15)

1 = any score of 3 or less on this item.

Item 7: Unhappy around the time of separation to and from college. (Q.#I, 16)

1 = any drop in rating of happiness from 11th to 12th grade. or between 12th grade and freshman year in college, or any drop from senior year to the time after.

4.Indirection Variable (INDIR)

The Indirection variable was constructed to reflect the difficulty students were having in making direct progress towards a career. It includes such things as lack of clarity of career goals at time of graduation from college. Items in this scale were primarly suggested by Wilson (1965).

The weighting of the items in this measure is as follows.

Item 1: Subject unclear as to which college he wanted to attend. (Q.#I,28)

7= yes

1= no

Item 2: Did the subject transfer from one college to another. (Q.#I,29)

7= yes

1= no

Item 3: Did the subject take a leave of absense from college. (Q.#I,30)

7= yes

1= no

Item 4: Did the subject graduate late from college. (Q. #I,33)

7= Late

4= Barely on schedule

1= On schedule

Item 5: Change in major from undergraduate to graduate study. (Q.#I,31)

7= yes

1= no

Item 6: Clarity of occupational goals at the time of graduation from college. (Q.#I,32.)

1= Not Clear

7= Very Clear

(with numbers in between for gradations)

The total score was then divided by 6, the number of items in the measure.

5.Cohen's Fear of Success Scale (FOS)

This questionnaire includes 64 true-false items aimed at measuring the defensive nature of the success-fearing person. It is reasoned by Pappo (1972/73) and Cohen (1974)

that although success fearers would be unable to report unconscious fears, they should be able to report various defense mechanisms and maneuvers they use to deal with situations in which fear is likely to be aroused. Building on the work of Pappo, Cohen developed and tested this scale. Her experiments and those reported by Canavan-Gumpert et al. (1978) provide evidence for the measure's validity.

Given that there are 64 items these will not be inserted here, they can be found in Appendix C. Except for four questions all "yes" responses were scored 1 point, the four exceptions were scored 1 point for "no" responses. All other responses were scored 0.

The scale takes account of nine factors associated with the success-fearing person. These factors are:

Factor 1. Anxiety over the expression of needs and preferences.

It makes me feel uneasy to have to ask other people for things. (Yes)

Factor 2 Reluctance to acknowledge personal competence

I'm pretty competent at most things I try. (No)

Factor 3. Impaired concentration and distractability

Before getting down to work on a project, I suddenly find a whole bunch of other things to take care of first. (Yes)

Factor 4. Indecisiveness

It pays to check out your ideas with other people

before making a final decision. (Yes)

Factor 5. Safety valve syndrome - fear of loss of control.

It's important not to get too excited about things one really desires. (Yes)

Factor 6. Illegitimacy of self-promotive behavior.

I tend to believe that people who look out for themselves first are selfish. (Yes)

Factor 7. Anxiety over being the center of attention.

I hate having a fuss made over me. (Yes)

Factor 8. Preoccupation with competition and evaluation.

When I'm praised for something, I sometimes wonder if I will be able to do as well the next time. (Yes)

Factor 9. Preoccupation with underplaying of effectiveness:

I sometimes "play down" my competence in front of others so they won't think I'm bragging. (Yes)

6. Environmental Stress Variable (STRESS)

This variable includes a number of items which might logically (some have been reported in the literature) be assumed to make writing a dissertation difficult. Areas of such stress were suggested in studies by Berelson (1960), Wilson (1965), Strasser (1977), and Wright (1964). It is recognized that over a longer span of time the chance of stressful situations occurring increases. Consequently, the

subjects were asked to limit their assessment of adverse circumstances to those occurring during the first two years following completion of course work. This measure (Q.#II, 8) includes items which would contribute to an environment that would make working on the dissertation difficult. An affirmative response to each item was scored 1 point. The points were simply summed.

Item 1.

Had one or more children to care for and/or support.

Item 2.

Got separated or divorced from spouse or equivalent.

Item 3.

Had death or illness of someone very close to you.

Item 4.

Got married or began a long-term relationship.

Item 5.

Had a full time job.

Item 6.

Had a part-time job.

Item 7.

Other obligation or circumstances that took away from energy or time to work on dissertation. (specify.)

OTHER EXPLORATORY VARIABLES, ADDED AFTER INSPECTION OF DATA

1. Conflicted Dependency (CONFL DEP)

The 4 items which make up this measure were seen upon inspection of the data to correlate with DISS YRS and PHD YRS.

Item 1: "My advisor was often too involved in his/her own work to fully meet his/her responsibilities to me." (Q.II,51)

0= no

1= sometimes

2= yes

Item 2: "I often felt that my advisor didn't give me enough direction and guidance." (Q.II,49)

0= no

1= sometimes

2= yes

Item 3: "I had trouble accepting advice from my advisor; I wanted to do the dissertation my way." (Q.II,48)

0= no

1= sometimes

2= yes

Item 4: "When I was stuck, I was rarely able to ask my advisor for help." (Q.II,55)

0= no

1= sometimes

2= yes

2. Planfulness, Looking Ahead (PLAN)

This measure includes 4 items which identify behaviors of a person who looked ahead, who consulted with people who were further along than himself.

Item1: "Before I even began graduate school, I talked to people who had gone through the program to see if it were something that I really wanted to do." (Q,II,14)

1= yes

0= no

Item 2: "In the iniital stages of the dissertation, I sought out a lot of information from recent graduates of the program as to how best to go about the dissertation." (Q, II, 15)

1= yes

0= no

Item 3: "Before I began looking for a topic, I read several dissertations." (Q,II, 16)

1= yes

0= no

Item 4: "Before selecting a dissertation advisor, I found outfrom other students how they had experienced working with that professor." (Q. II, 17)

1= yes

0= no

3.Inability to Work Even When Substantial Time Was Available (UNABLE)

This measure has only one item. It seemed important to include because it appears to be a catch all for any difficulty (of a primarily psychological nature) in doing the dissertation.

Item 1: "I went through long periods of time (over one month) when I had the time to work on the dissertation but was unable to bring myself to do so." (Q. II, 23)

1= yes

0= no

4. Change Advisor (ADV-CHA)

Item 1: "Did you change dissertation advisors in the course of working on the dissertation?" (Q.II,26)

1= yes

0= no

5. Change Topic (CHA-TOPIC)

Item 1: "Changes in dissertation topic after some work already completed." (QII,92) Rescored as:

1= (2,3,4,5,6,7) = yes

0= (1) = no

6. Frequency of Meeting with the Advisor (FRQADV)

Item 1: "Estimate how frequently you met with each of the following persons to discuss your dissertation during the bulk of your work on it. " (Q.II,33)

Recoded as:

1= rarely or never

2= once in 4 months

3= once a month

4= once a week

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

1. Sex

Item 1: Sex: Male, Female (Demo, Q. 1.)

0= female

1= male

2. Mother's and Father's Level of Education (M EDU, F EDU)

Item 1: "Please indicate the education of your parents by circling the highest grade attained for each."

0= no education

1= first grade

2= second grade,

Etc.

16= Senior year of College

18= MA or MS degree

20= law degree

21= MD

22= Ph.D.

23= post doctoral training

3. Family Status (FAMST)

Item 1: Family of Origin's socioeconomic status. (Q. I, 2)

1= lower class

2= lower middle class

3= middle

4= middle to upper

5= upper

STATISTICAL PROCEDURES

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to test for the effect of separation-individuation difficulties and other variables on two measures of time taken to complete different phases of graduate school. This proceedure makes it possible to determine how much of the variance in the dependent variables (PHD YRS and DISS YRS) can be uniquely accounted for by each independent variable, over and above the ones that precede it in the multiple regression equation. The independent variables were arranged in a schema which takes into account the possibility of causal relationships among the variables. Demographic variables were entered first, measures which referred to earlier points in time (childhood) were entered next, and more recent variables were entered last. Interaction effects for sex were examined on all variables, and, in addition interaction effects were examined for subject area on the variables Frequency of Meeting with the Advisor and Stress. The specific order of the independent variables is listed below.

Order of Independent Variables in the First Multiple Regression (Findings are reported in Tables 5 and 6)

Sex.....SEX

Family Status.....FAMST

Family Status by sex interaction

Father's and Mother's Education.....FEDU, MEDU

Father's and mother's education by sex interaction

Separation and loss.....LOSS

Separation and loss by sex interaction

Fear of Success .....FOS

Comparative area of study:

Hard Sciences versus Social Sciences....HdS-SS

Humanities versus Social Sciences.....Hu-SS

Hard Sciences versus Humanities.....HdS-Hu

Comparative area of study by sex interaction

Previous Degree.....PREVDEG

Perception of Parents .....POP

Perception of Parents by Sex Interaction

Difficulty with Past Separations.....DIFF-SEP

Difficulty with Separation by Sex Interaction

History of Indirection.....INDIREC

History of Indirection by Sex Interaction

Age at the Beginning of Doctoral Program AGE

Stress During the 2 Years Following
Completion of Course Work.....STRESS

Stress by Sex Interaction

Frequency of Meeting with Advisor.....FRQADV

Frequency of Meeting with Advisor by
Subject Area Interaction

Frequency of Meeting with Advisor by
Sex Interaction

Since this study was primarily exploratory in nature, a second multiple regression analysis was run excluding variables which did not approach statistical significance and including other variables considered, upon inspection of the data, to be important. The three variables which were not included in the second regression analysis were POP, DIFF, IND and will be discussed in terms of the first multiple regression analysis. The variables added to the second regression analysis were change of dissertation topic (CHA TOPIC) or change of advisor (ADV CHA), inability to work on dissertation even though substantial time was available (UNABLE), a measure of dependency-counterdependency (CONFL DEP), a measure of planning or looking ahead (PLAN) The questions which make up these variables and the reliability scores for the measures are reported on pages 59-74.

The Order of Variables in the Second Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis (Findings reported in Tables 7 and 8)

Sex.....SEX

Mother's and Father's Education.....MEDU, FEDU

Education by sex interaction

Family Status.....FAMST

Family Status by Sex Interaction

Separation and Loss.....LOSS

Fear of Success.....FOS

Comparative Area of Study:

Hard Sciences versus Social Sciences....HdS-SS

Humanities versus Social Sciences.....Hu-SS

Hard Sciences versus Humanities.....HdS-Hu

Age at Beginning of Program.....AGE

Conflicted Dependency.....CONFL-DEP

Planfulness, Looking Ahead Behaviors....PLAN

Planfulness by Sex Interaction

Unable to Work on Dissertation Even When Time Was Available.....UNABLE

Inability to Work by Sex Interaction

Change of Advisor.....ADV-CHA

Change of Topic.....CHA-TOPIC

Stress.....STRESS

Frequency of Meeting with the Advisor...FRQADV

It will be noted that the number of subjects included in the multiple regression analyses vary slightly. In the analysis on PHD YRS there are only 77 subjects in the first analysis and 81 in the second analysis, and on DISS YRS 80 and 84 respectively on the first and second analysis. These differences in the number of the subjects included is explained by the fact that the second analysis contains fewer variables with missing data. Both multiple regression analyses were run on as many of the 93 subjects with Phd's as was possible, however the absense of data for some subjects on some variables meant that a few subjects being dropped from the multiple regression analysis. Slight

variations can be seen in the results for the variables which appear in both equations. This is a consequence of the difference in number of subjects. The results of the multiple regression analyses are displayed in tables 5 through 8 in next chapter.

Both the First and Second multiple regression analyses were run two separate times. One time the coding for the three subject area groups used two dummy coded variables in which Hard Science was compared to Social Science and Humanities was compared with Social Science. In the other run, the three groups were analysed using two dummy coded variables to examine the difference between Hard Science and Humanities. In this way all three pairwise comparisons between the groups were tested.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses described in the methodology section will be reported after a section describing the means, standard deviations and reliabilities of the measures employed. In addition, the mean values of the dependent variables, years doing the dissertation (DISS YRS) and the total time in graduate school (PHD YRS) will be reported for the different subject areas in order to give clarity to the findings in the multiple regression analyses.

MEAN VALUES AND CRONBACH'S RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The mean values, standard deviations and Cronbach's reliability coefficients that follow are based on the total 93 Ph.D. subjects.

Loss and Separation Measure (LOSS)

The LOSS measure is composed of 19 items. The mean score is 3.17 and the standard deviation is 3.64. Cronbach's reliability coefficient would be low because the items which make up the measure refer to events which occur independently. There is no reason for a person who lost one family member to necessarily have lost another member. Unlike an attitude or opinion scale, the items in this

measure are not assessing a psychological construct and the rationale for their grouping into one measure is not based on high internal reliability. The rationale for inclusion of these events in one measure is that these events are roughly similar in that they are all known to be disruptive to the attachment bond and consequently disruptive to the separation-individuation process. A scale which is similarly based on descrete events and not on internal reliability is the Holmes and Rahe scale of social readjustment (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

A test-retest reliability on items in this measure would be high because of the factual nature of the items which make it up.

I recognize that the weighting of the different items in the LOSS measure is based not on research but on my subjective sense informed by the literature on loss and separation. The problem of weighting is avoided (except for weights assigned to an occurrence of loss at different ages) in the Pearson correlations which were run on the separate items and groupings of items from the LOSS measure. The results of these analyses are reported in Tables 18 and 19 in Appendix A. It should be noted that it is the items referring to hospitalization and loss in early childhood which yield statistically significant positive correlations with length of time to do a dissertation. The items which measure other separations are not significantly correlated.

Perception of Parents Measure (POP)

This measure is composed of 14 items with a mean score of 3.26 and a standard deviation of .59. Reliability was moderate (alpha = .72) suggesting that these items do measure, to some extent, an underlying consistent perception of parents.

History of Difficulty with Separation-Individuation (DIFF SEP)

The measure is composed of 7 items. The mean score is 5.7 and the standard deviation is 1.9. This had a surprizingly low reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .21), for although the items are based on independent events, the items included behaviors considered to reflect the same underlying difficulty and consequently it had been expected that a covariation in the events which make up the items would have been reflected by a higher reliability.

Indirection Measure (INDIR)

Six items make up this measure. The mean is 3.70 the standard deviation is .93. The reliability for this scale is non-existent, alpha = -.26. Clearly there is no underlying consistent psychological difficulty which causes these experiences of lack of direction to occur together in the lives of people.

Cohen's Fear of Success Scale (FOS)

The scale is composed of 64 items. The mean score is 27.70 and the standard deviation is 10.24. In the present study the reliability is alpha=.89. This reliability is similar to that reported in other studies (Canavan-Gumpert et. al, 1978).

Environmental Stress (STRESS)

There are 7 items which make up this measure. The mean score is 1.70 with a standard deviation of 1.08. The reliability coefficient is appropriately low (alpha = .08) given that each item represented an independent event. No theoretical perspective suggests that the events should correlate. Test-retest reliability would probably be high given the factual nature of the items.

Conflicted Dependency (CONFL DEP)

This variable is composed of 4 items. The mean value is 1.97 with a standard deviation of 2.32. The reliability coefficient is of moderate magnitude (alpha=.60).

Planfulness (PLAN)

This variable is composed of 4 items. The mean value is .80 and the standard deviation is 1.00. The reliability coefficient, alpha = .58. The test- retest reliability would probably be high given the factual nature of the questions.

Inability to Work Even When Time was Available (UNABLE)

Only one item makes up this variable. The mean score is .25 with a standard deviation of .44.

Change of Advisor (ADV CHA)

The variable is composed of one item. The mean value is .16; standard deviation = .36.

Change Topic (CHA TOPIC)

The mean value is .27 and the standard deviation is .45. The variable is composed of one item.

Frequency of meeting with the advisor (FRQADV)

Mean value is 2.26 with standard deviation of .95. The variable is composed of one item.

SEX

There were 44 men in the study and 47 women.

Mother's and Father's Level of Education (MEDU, FEDU)

The mean score for mother's education is 12.56 years with a standard deviation of 3.23 and for father's education the mean level is 12.69 years with a standard deviation of 4.08.

Family Status (FAMST)

Mean value is 2.56 and a standard deviation of .78. The variable is composed of one item, which is a subjective report of family status of origin.

FINDINGS PERTAINING TO THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES DISS YRS AND PHD YRS AND OTHER PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

The total number of years that students work on their dissertations, DISS YRS, correlates highly with the total length of time students spend in the doctoral program, PHD YRS, ($r=.60$) $df=85$, $p < .001$). This means that variations in the years students work on their dissertations accounts for 36% of the variance, or variability of the total time they are in graduate school.

The mean length of time for DISS YRS was 4.6 years (84 subjects, sd=2.3), The variation in DISS YRS between subject areas is insignificant. In the hard sciences students the mean time reported spent on the dissertation requirement is 4.6 years (sd=2.3) on the dissertation requirement, in the social sciences 4.3 years (sd=1.9) and in the humanities 4.4 years (sd=2.5). However, it should be noted that the median times are somewhat different. In the hard sciences the median time for DISS YRS is 4.0 years; in the humanities, 5.0 years; in the social sciences 3.5 years.

The time that they begin work on the dissertation requirement varies significantly from subject area to

subject area. This measure was calculated by subtracting the mean for DISS YRS from the mean for PHD YRS. The time for beginning work on the dissertation in the hard sciences is 1.1 years, in the social sciences it is 3.1 years and in the humanities it is 3.5 years. This is an important finding which suggests that in the hard sciences students begin work on the dissertation, probably in terms of the research and collection of data, comparatively early before course work is completed. In the social sciences they begin it somewhat later and in the humanities they begin it on the average late in the third year, which may be after course work is completed.

These differences in starting time between the hard sciences, the social sciences and the humanities, may go a long way in explaining the differences that exist between the average time students take in the three subject areas. In the hard sciences students spend on the average (mean time) 5.7 years (sd=2.0), in the social sciences 7.5 years (sd=2.2), in the humanities 7.8 years (sd=1.7) from starting the program to obtaining the Ph.D.

No signficant differences were found between the average age that students began graduate work in the three subject areas. (Hard Sciences: mean = 28.5, sd=6.6, median 26.4; Social sciences: mean=28.5, sd=6.4, median=27.3; Humanites: mean=28.7, sd=7.0, median 26.5)

Women tend to begin Ph.D programs about 2 years later than men. (men: mean =26.8 sd=3.8,N=39,; women: 28.8,

sd=6.8, N=42) However, once in the program they take approximately the same amount of time (Women: mean=7.0, sd=1.9, Men: mean=6.9, sd=2.6). There is some inconclusive evidence to suggest that women take longer than men in DISS YRS but not in PHD YRS. This will be discussed below in the section on demographic variables.

FINDINGS PERTAINING TO THE MAJOR HYPOTHESES

As described in the methodology section, two multiple regression analyses were computed. The first included all the variables pertaining to the major hypotheses, the second excluded variables which were not statistically significant and included new variables which, upon inspection of the data, were considered important factors in the rate at which students finish their dissertations. Where the variables appear in both multiple regressions the results will be reported for the second equation because that included more subjects. In order to distinguish between the two types of correlations referred to in this text "semipartial correlations" (from the multiple regression analyses) will be referred to as "correlations" or "sr" and "Pearson correlations" will be referred to as "Pearson correlations" or "r." The results of the two multiple regression analyses are summarized in Tables 5-8 and the principal Pearson correlations are summarized in Table 9. The findings of additional multiple regression analyses and Pearson

correlations of items within the different measures are presented in Tables in Appendix A.

Findings Pertaining to Loss and Separation

Hypothesis I predicted that subjects who report a history of separation and loss will take longer completing the dissertation than subjects who do not report such a history. More specifically, this hypothesis predicts that there would be positive correlations between all the measures of time and the measure of loss.

There was support for this hypothesis. LOSS was significantly related to DISS YRS (sr=.27, df=75, p=.01) and a trend was found for loss as it related to PHD YRS (sr=.19, df=72, p=.10). See Tables 7 and 8. The correlation of LOSS with DISS YRS predicts that a person who reports a history of several separations in childhood or suffers the loss of a parent before the age of 11 would take approximately 1.2 years longer to do the dissertation than someone who did not report such a history. The correlation of LOSS with PHD YRS predicts that the same LOSS would lengthen the total time in graduate school by approximately .84 years. The LOSS by SEX interaction effect was not significant for either DISS YRS or PHD YRS as reported in the first multiple regression analyses (see Tables 5 and 6), and consequently this interaction effect was omitted from the second multiple regression analyses.

TABLE 5

FIRST HIERARCHICAL MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS
(N=80)

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
1	SEX	-.85	-.19#	.035#	-1.68	78	.10
2	MEDU	.01	.02	.00	.14	76	.89
	FEDU	-.08	-.10	.01	-.91	76	.36
3	FEDU X SEX	.14	-.09	.01	.79	74	.43
	MEDU X SEX	.08	.04	.00	.40	74	.69
4	FAMST	.36	.10	.01	.91	73	.36
5	FAMST X SEX	-1.85	-.26*	.07*	-2.41	72	.02
6	LOSS	.15	.21*	.04*	1.97	71	.05
7	LOSS X SEX	.01	.01	.00	.07	70	.94
8	FOS	.04	.17	.03	1.62	69	.11
9	FOS X SEX	.02	.04	.00	.36	68	.72
10	HdS-SS^^	-.30	-.05	.00	-.51	66	.61
	Hu-SS	-.57	-.09	.01	-.81	66	.42
	HdS-Hu	.27	.04	.00	.12	66	.69
11	HdS-SSXSEX	.00	.00	.00	.00	64	.99
	Hu-SSXSEX	-1.31	-.12	.01	-1.12	66	.27
	HdS-HuXSEX	-1.31	-.10	.01	-.96	64	.34
12	PREVDEG	-.11	-.02	.00	-.20	63	.84

\# p < .01
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

^^HdS (Hard Science) coded 1
SS (Social Science) coded 0
Hu (Humanities) coded 1

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TABLE 5 CONTINUED
FIRST MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
13	POP	-.03	-.01	.00	-.06	62	.95
14	POP X SEX	-.62	-.07	.00	-.62	61	.54
15	DIFF	.14	.11	.01	.98	60	.33
16	DIFFXSEX	-.10	-.04	.00	-.34	59	.74
17	IND	.10	.03	.00	.28	58	.78
18	IND X SEX	.49	.08	.01	.69	57	.49
19	AGE	-.08	-.15	.02	-1.36	56	.18
20	AGE X SEX	-.06	-.06	.00	-.49	55	.62
21	STRESS	.75	.28**	.08**	2.90	50	.00
22	FRQADV	-1.34	-.35***	.12***	-3.43	54	.00
23	FRQA X HdS-SS	-.32	-.04	.00	-.38	52	.71
	FRQA X Hu-SS	.81	.09	.01	.82	52	.41
	FRQAXHdS-Hu	-1.13	-.12	.01	-1.14	52	.26
24	FRQAXSEX	-.76	-.09	.01	-.87	51	.39

\# p < .01
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

^^HdS (Hard Science) coded 1
SS (Social Science) coded 0
Hu (Humanities) coded 1

TABLE 6

FIRST HIERARICHAL MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
(N=77)

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
1	SEX	-.15	-.03	.00	-.28	75	.78
2	FEDU	-.03	-.03	.00	-.30	73	.77
	MEDU	-.04	-.05	.00	-.40	73	.69
3	FEDU X SEX	.15	.10	.01	.84	71	.40
	MEDU X SEX	-.05	-.02	.00	-.20	71	.84
4	FAMST	-.19	-.05	.00	-.44	70	.66
5	FAMST X SEX	-1.34	-.19	.04	-1.61	69	.11
6	LOSS	.13	.18	.03	1.52	68	.13
7	LOSS X SEX	.11	.08	.01	.66	67	.51
8	FOS	.038	.16	.02	1.36	66	.18
9	FOS X SEX	.013	.03	.00	.24	65	.81
10	HdS-SS^^	-2.04	-.37***	.14***	-3.65	63	.00
	Hu-SS	.54	.08	.01	.81	63	.42
	HdS-Hu	-2.58	-.40***	.16***	-.393	63	.00
11	HdS-SSXSEX	.58	.04	.00	.44	61	.66
	Hu-SSXSEX	-1.51	-.14	.02	-1.36	61	.18
	HdS-HuXSEX	-2.09	-.16	.03	-1.61	61	.11
12	PREVDEG	-.50	-.10	.00	-.96	60	.34

\# p < .01
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

^^HdS (Hard Science) coded 1
SS (Social Science) coded 0
Hu (Humanities) coded 1

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TABLE 6 CONTINUED
FIRST MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
13	POP	.18	.04	.00	.40	59	.69
14	POP X SEX	1.46	.16	.03	1.63	58	.11
15	DIFF	.18	.13	.02	1.32	57	.20
16	DIFFXSEX	-.13	-.05	.00	-.47	56	.64
17	IND	-.06	-.02	.00	-.19	55	.85
18	INDXSEX	.13	.02	.00	.19	54	.85
19	AGE	-.02	-.04	.00	-.32	53	.75
20	AGEXSEX	-.09	-.07	.00	-.63	52	.53
24	STRESS	.87	.31**	.10**	3.32	47	.00
21	FRQADV	-.78	-.19#	.04#	-1.91	51	.06
22	FRQA X HdS-SS	-.35	-.04	.00	-.36	49	.72
	FRQA X Hu-SS	.87	.09	.01	.87	49	.39
	FRQA X HdS-HU	-1.22	-.12	.01	-1.17	49	.25
23	FRQA X SEX	.17	.02	.00	.20	48	.85

\# p < .10
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

TABLE 7

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS
(N=84)

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
1	SEX	-.65	-.14	.02	-1.31	82	.19
2	FEDU	-.05	-.07	.00	-.61	80	.54
	MEDU	-.00	-.00	.00	-.04	80	.97
3	FEDU⁄SEX	.05	.03	.00	.31	78	.76
	MEDU⁄SEX	.12	.06	.00	.55	78	.58
4	FAMST	.58	.17	.03	1.52	77	.13
5	FAMST⁄SEX	-1.60	-.23*	.05*	2.15	76	.03
6	LOSS	.17	.27**	.07**	2.57	75	.01
7	FOS	.041	.19#	.03#	1.70	74	.09
8	HdS-SS^^	-.21	-.04	.00	-.38	72	.70
	Hu-SS	-.51	-.08	.01	-.76	72	.45
	HdS-Hu	.31	.05	.00	.47	72	.64
9	AGE	-.08	-.19#	.04#	-1.87	71	.07
10	CONFL DEP	.17	.16	.02	1.34	70	.18
11	PLAN	-.55	-.22*	.05*	-2.19	69	.03
12	PLAN⁄SEX	-.88	-.18#	.03#	-1.87	68	.07

\# p < .01
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

^^HdS (Hard Science) coded 1
SS (Social Science) coded 0
Hu (Humanities) coded 1

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TABLE 7 CONTINUED
SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
13	UNABLE	1.31	.22*	.05*	2.33	67	.02
14	UNABLE*SEX	.58	.05	.00	.52	66	.60
15	ADV CHA	1.26	.18*	.03*	1.96	65	.05
16	CHA TOPIC	.07	.01	.00	.12	64	.90
17	STRESS	.55	.19*	.04*	2.15	63	.04
18	FRQADV	-.77	-.19*	.04*	-2.22	62	.03

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 8

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
(N=81)

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
1	SEX	-.11	-.02	.00	-.21	79	.83
2	F EDU	-.03	-.05	.00	-.40	77	.68
	M EDU	-.04	-.04	.00	-.36	77	.72
3	F EDU X SEX	.15	.10	.01	.86	75	.39
	M EDU X SEX	-.05	-.03	.00	-.23	75	.82
4	FAMST	-.11	-.03	.00	-.28	74	.78
5	FAMST X SEX	-1.07	-.16	.02	1.37	73	.17
6	LOSS	.12	.19#	.03#	1.66	72	.10
7	FOS	.04	.17	.03	1.56	71	.12
8	HdS-SS^^	-1.96	-.38***	.14***	3.78	69	.00
	Hu-SS	.43	.07	.00	.68	69	.50
	HdS-Hu	-2.39	-.38***	.14***	3.87	69	.00
9	AGE	-.02	-.05	.00	-.55	68	.58
10	CONFL DEP	.08	.07	.00	.67	67	.50
11	PLAN	-.19	-.07	.01	-.73	66	.47
12	PLAN X SEX	-1.03	-.21*	.05*	-2.17	65	.03

\# p < .01
* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001

^^HdS (Hard Science) coded 1
SS (Social Science) coded 0
Hu (Humanities) coded 1

Table continued on next page.

TABLE 8 CONTINUED
SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS

Step	Variable	B	Semipartial correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	P
13	UNABLE	1.19	.20*	.04*	2.10	64	.04
14	UNABLEXSEX	1.17	.10	.01	1.03	63	.31
15	ADV CHA	1.56	.23*	.05*	2.48	62	.02
16	CHA TOPIC	.87	.14	.02	1.57	61	.12
17	STRESS	.59	.21*	.04*	2.38	60	.02
18	FRQADV	-.46	-.11	.01	-1.21	59	.23

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 9

PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS
FOR INDEPENDENT VARIABLES
WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

VARIABLE	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
SEX	-.09	91	-.04	85
SEX	-.09	91	-.04	85
M EDU	-.08	90	-.09	84
F EDU	-.12	90	-.10	84
FAMST	.05	91	-.07	85
LOSS	.27**	91	.21#	85
FOS	.13	89	.13	83
PREVDEG	-.12	91	-.10	85
POP	-.11	84	.00	78
DIFF-SEP	.09	91	.09	85
INDIREC	.04	91	-.02	85
AGE	-.18#	87	-.00	83
FRQ-ADV	-.27**	90	-.46***	84
STRESS	.24*	91	.38***	85
ADV-CHA	.30**	91	.29**	85
CHA-TOPIC	.07	90	.13	84
CONF-DEP	.26**	91	.04	85
PLAN	-.16	91	-.16	85
UNABLE	.39***	91	.34***	85

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

Pearson correlations yield similar results to those from the multiple regression analyses. See Table 9. In addition Pearson correlations were obtained for all the items which make up the LOSS measure; these appear in Appendix A, Table 18. Pearson correlations were also calculated for different groupings of items in the LOSS measure. These subgroupings show that the loss of either parent is associated with longer DISS YRS ($r=.23$, $df=91$, $p<.05$). The loss of a parent, family member or close relative, or a combination of the three, is associated with longer DISS YRS ($r=.26$, $df=91$, $p<.05$) and longer PHD YRS ($r=.20$, $df=86$, $p< .05$). The loss of a friend is also associated with longer DISS YRS ($r=.26$, $df=91$, $p=.01$) and with PHD YRS ($r=.21$, $df=86$, $p<.05$). See Appendix A, Table 19.

There are additional findings to suggest some of the ways in which a history of loss affects students at work on their dissertations. By placing LOSS at the end of the hierarchical multiple regression, other variables are free to acquire the effect on DISS YRS previously partialled out and explained by LOSS. Both the variance explained by CONFL DEP and the variance explained by UNABLE increase when LOSS is placed after them in the multiple regression analysis. See Table 14. CONFL DEP goes from explaining only 2% ($p=.18$) of the variance to explaining 5% ($p=.03$). UNABLE goes from explaining 5% ($p=.02$) to explaining 7% ($p=.01$). In short, CONFL DEP goes from explaining a small amount of the variance, which is not even statistically significant,

to explaining a larger amount which is statistically significant. This suggests that a meaningful portion of the effect that LOSS has on DISS YRS is through the variable CONFL DEP. The same reasoning explains the increase in the variance explained by UNABLE when LOSS is placed at the end of the equation. These findings combined with the results of the Pearson correlations (LOSS with CONFL DEP: r=.23, df=91, p<.05. LOSS with UNABLE: r=.18, df=91, p<.10; see Table 24) suggest that a history of loss and separation lengthens students' time doing the dissertation by making them prone to developing an attitude of conflicted dependency and prone to periods of being unable to work.

Findings Relating to Perception of Parents (POP)

Hypothesis 2 predicted that those subjects who perceived their parents as holding a particular set of values described in the literature as unconducive to separation-individuation would have more difficulty completing the dissertation than subjects who did not report such perceptions.

There was no support for this hypothesis. In the regression analysis the variable POP was not correlated with DISS YRS (sr=-.01, df=62, p=.95) or with PHD YRS (sr=.04, df=59, p=.69). And there were no significant interaction by SEX effects for either DISS YRS (sr=-.07, df=61, p=.54) or PHD YRS (sr=.16, df=58, p=.11) See Tables 5 and 6.

Pearson correlations for the individual items in this measure appear in Appendix A, Table 20.

Findings Relating to Difficulty Separating and Individuating (DIFF SEP)

Hypothesis 3 predicted that subjects who had a history of difficulty separating and individuating from their parents before beginning graduate school would have difficulty completing the dissertation.

No evidence was found to support this hypothesis. DISS YRS did not correlate with DIFF SEP (sr=.11, df=60, p=.33), nor with PHD YRS (sr=.13, df=57, p=.20).

There were no sex interaction effects of DIFF SEP for either DISS YRS (sr=-.04, df=59, p=.74) PHD YRS (sr=-.05, df=56, p=.64). See Tables 5 and 6.

The Pearson correlations for the DIFF SEP measure were not significant. See Table 9. Pearson correlations on the individual items are reported in Table 21.

Findings Relating to Indirection (INDIR)

Hypothesis 4 predicted that those students who report a history of uncertainty of direction and career goals will have difficulty finishing the dissertation. There were no significant results. INDIR does not correlate significantly with DISS YRS (sr=.03, df=58, p=.78) or with PHD YRS (sr=-.02, df=55, p=.85). INDIR by SEX interaction yielded no significant effects for either DISS YRS (sr=.08, df=57,

p=.49) or PHD YRS (sr=.02, df=54, p=.85). See Tables 5 and 6.

Pearson correlations for the measure were also not significant. See Table 9. Pearson correlations for the separate items in the measure are reported in Appendix A, Table 22.

Findings Relating to Fear of Success (FOS)

Hypothesis 5 predicted that those students who score high on Cohen's Fear of Success scale would have more difficulty completing the dissertation. There was some evidence to support this hypothesis. In the multiple regression analysis of variables with DISS YRS (sr=.19, df=74, p=.09). However FOS does not correlate at a statistically significant level with PHD YRS (sr=.17, df=71, p=.12) See Tables 7 and 8.

Pearson correlations with DISS YRS and PHD YRS were not statistically significant. See Table 9.

FOS by SEX interaction was excluded from the second multiple regression because it was not significant in the first equation either for DISS YRS or PHD YRS (see Tables 5 and 6).

FINDINGS RELATING TO DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Effects of Sex

There were no significant results in the 2nd multiple regression analyses pertaining to the effect of SEX on the dependent variables DISS YRS (sr=-.14, df=82, p=.19) or PHD YRS (sr=-.02, df= 79, p=.83). See Tables 7 and 8. A trend for SEX with DISS YRS is found in the first multiple regression (sr=-.85, df=78, p=.10) [See table 5]. We are inclined to go by the findings of the second multiple regression because it includes a larger number of subjects than the first analysis. The results of the second multiple regression would, if they were significant, predict that women take .65 years longer than men.

The Pearson correlations for SEX with both DISS YRS and PHD YRS are not statistically significant. See Table 9.

Effects of Mother's and Father's Level of Education

No statistically significant effects were found for mother's and father's level of education on either DISS YRS or PHD YRS. Nor were interaction effects of education by sex significant.

A summary of the findings are listed below. For the full multiple regression figures see Tables 7 and 8.

F EDU	DISS YRS	(sr=-.07, df=80, p=.54)
	PHD YRS	(sr=-.05, df=77, p=.68)
M EDU	DISS YRS	(sr=-.00, df=80, p=.97)

	PHD YRS	(sr=-.04, df=77, p=.72)
F EDU SEX	DISS YRS	(sr= .03, df=78, p=.76)
	PHD YRS	(sr= .10, df=75, p=.39)
M EDU SEX	DISS YRS	(sr= .06, df=78, p=.58)
	PHD YRS	(sr=-.03, df=75, p=.82)

Effects of Family Status (FAMST)

Although there is no main effect for FAMST on DISS YRS (sr=.17, df=77, p=.13) and PHD YRS (sr=-.03, df=75, p=.82), there is an interaction effect of FAMST by SEX for DISS YRS (sr=-.23, df=76, p=.03). This indicates that FAMST for women is correlated positively with DISS YRS. A multiple regression run on women alone yields (sr=.40, df=40, p=.007) [see Appendix A, Table 10]. Whereas for men there is no significant correlation with DISS YRS (sr=-.04, df=36, p=.78) [see Appendix A, Table12]. Women who report coming from an upper class family take approximately 2.9 years more (DISS YRS) than those who report coming from a middle class family. There is no significant interaction effect of FAMST by SEX for PHD YRS (sr=-16, df=73, p=.17).

Effects an M.A. Degree Prior to Beginning Doctoral Program.(PREV DEG)

No significant effects were found for holding an M.A. in the same field prior to beginning work towards a Ph.D. PREVDEG did not correlate significantly with DISS YRS (sr=-.02, df=63,p=.84) and with PHD YRS (sr=-.10, df=60, p=.34)

over and above the other variables entered in the equation. See tables 5 and 6.

Pearson correlations are also not statistically significant. See Table 9.

THE EFFECTS OF CERTAIN BEHAVIORS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDES IN GRADUATE SCHOOL

Effects of Frequency of Meeting with the Advisor (FRQADV)

Greater frequency of meeting with the advisor is consistently correlated in a negative direction with DISS YRS (sr=-.19, df=62, p=.03). See Table 7. The more frequently a student met with his advisor the more rapidly he finished his dissertation. The finding is strong and consistent and it should be noted that the effect is sustained even after the effects of all the other independent variables have been partialled out.

The effect of FRQADV on PHD YRS is also strong, but only when it is placed early on in the multiple regression equation (sr=-.52, df=72, p< .000). See Table 17 in Appendix A. However, when it is placed after all independent variables, it ceases to be statistically significant (sr=-.11, df=59, p=.23). See Table 8. The variance that it explains early on in the equation is now accounted for by the other variables which precede it.

The Pearson Correlations of FRQADV with DISS YRS (r=-.27, df=90, p<.01) and with PHD YRS (r=-.46, df=84, p<.001) show the strength of both variables before the effect of any other variable is partialled out. See Table 9.

Effects of Changing Advisors (ADV CHA).

Changing the advisor (ADV CHA) correlates positively with DISS YRS (sr=.18, df=65, p=.05) and with PHD YRS (sr=.23, df=62, p=.02). See Tables 7 and 8. This suggests that changing advisors for whatever reason tends to increase the length of time students spend in graduate school by about 1.6 years and the time they spend working on their dissertations by about 1.3 years.

Effect of Changing Topics (CHA TOPIC)

Depending where it is placed in the multiple regression analysis, the variable CHA TOPIC does or does not correlate at a statistically significant level with PHD YRS. When it is placed just before UNABLE in the 13th step of the equation, CHA TOPIC has a sufficiently large effect to be statistically significant (sr=.21, df=64, p=.02), but when it is placed later, after UNABLE, and ADV CHA, then it does not correlate at a statistically significant level. (sr=.14, df=60, p=.13). Nonetheless, even at this point, if it were statistically significant, it would predict that those who change topic would spend .8 years longer in graduate school than those who had not changed topic. See Tables 8.

In puzzling contrast, no matter where CHA TOPIC is placed in multiple regression for DISS YRS it never correlates at a statistically significant level (see Table 7).

Effects of Stress

Several questions designed to measure the effects of a stressful environment in which to write the dissertation were included in the study. This measure is consistently correlated with every measure of the dependent variable. If you were in an adverse environment during the two years following course work it was much more likely that you would take a longer time completing the degree than those who did not have such circumstances to contend with. STRESS correlated positively at a statistically significant level over and above the effect of all other variables, except FRQADV, for DISS YRS (sr=.19, df=63, p=.04) and for PHD YRS (sr=.21, df=60, p=.02). This predicts that students spend over half year longer doing their dissertations and in graduate school if they begin a full time job or start a long term relationship. If they do both they are likely to take over a year longer. See Tables 7 and 8.

Conflicted Dependence CONFL DEP

This measure addresses an ambivalent feeling on the part of students towards getting help from their advisors. Four questions contained in the measure are "my advisor was too

involved in his own work to fully meet his responsibilites to me (Q51)," and "I had trouble accepting advice from my advisor; I wanted to do the dissertation my way (Q48)," and "When I was stuck, I was rarely able to ask my advisor for help (Q55)." and "I often felt that my advisor didn't give me enough direction and guidance (Q49). These items have a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of alpha=. 60. Although this variable has no statistically significant effect on DISS YRS (sr=.14, df=70, p=.18), when LOSS is placed at the end of the equation, then CONFL DEP has a significant effect on DISS YRS (r=.23, df=71, p=.03). This suggests that a significant proportion of the effect of LOSS on DISS YRS is expressed through CONFL DEP. This suggests that those people who suffered from a history of loss develop dependent and counter dependent feelings about their advisor which in turn is associated with increased time doing the dissertation.

Planfulness (PLAN)

This measure included four questions relating to behaviors which clearly demonstrated the capacity of the student to look ahead and to get advice from people who were ahead of him in the process. This capacity to look ahead and integrate information from students who are ahead of one in the program (PLAN) is correlated negatively with DISS YRS (sr=-.22, df=69, p=.03). It is interesting to note that

there is a trend to suggest an interaction effect on DISS YRS of PLAN by SEX (sr=-.18, df=68, p=.07).

Although there is no significant correlation of PLAN with PHD YRS (sr=-.07, df=66, p=.47), there is a statistically significant interaction effect on PHD YRS of PLAN by SEX (r=-.21, df=65, p=.03). This indicates that the behavior of planfulness is far more correlated with both DISS YRS and PHD YRS for men than it is for women. When the analyses are run separately for each sex the results for men of PLAN on DISS YRS is (r=-.38, df=29, p=.01) [Table12]. and for women it is (r=-.07, df=33, p=.61) [See Table 10]. Those who score one standard deviation higher than others on this behavior tend to finish the dissertation 1 year earlier than the others.

Inability to Work Even Though Time is Available (UNABLE)

UNABLE TO WORK is a catchall variable for psychological difficulties. Obviously when a person reports that he had "substantial time to work on the dissertation but could not bring himself to do so," we are talking about someone who is conflicted about the task. It is significantly correlated with DISS YRS (sr=.22, df=67, p=.02) and PHD YRS (sr=.20, df=64, p=.04) over and above other pyschological and demographic variables. There are no statistically significant interaction effects by SEX for DISS YRS (sr=.05, df=66, p=.60) or for PHD YRS (sr=.10, df=63, p=.31) [see Tables 7 and 8].

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The central finding of this study is the confirmation of the first hypothesis that experiences of separation and loss in childhood are associated with longer times doing the dissertation (DISS YRS). The fact that those students with a history of separation and loss take longer doing the dissertation suggests that conflicts are aroused involving issues of separation and loss which makes the process of doing a dissertation more difficult and more time consuming for them than for students who have not suffered loss and separations early in their lives. This finding lends support for the conceptualization of the dissertation process as evoking issues of separation and possibly issues of individuation. It is recognized that people with a history of separation and loss are more vulnerable to separation and loss in their adulthood (Bowlby 1980) and to difficulty negociating separation-individuation stages generally (Mahler1975). It is probable that the dissertation evokes separation-individuation conflicts for virtually all students, but those conflicts are intensified students who have a history of loss and separation in their childhoods.

The second, third, and fourth hypotheses which were based on separation-individuation theory were not supported by the data. The lack of statistical findings to support these hypotheses is, we believe, the result of

methodological flaws in the measures used to verify them. Consequently, we continue to believe that the conceptualization of the dissertation process as the major task of a phase of development involving separation-individuation issues is a valid perspective and that the results from this study, although not conclusive, lend considerable support to it. A discussion of the results of each hypothesis will be followed by a discussion of the demographic variables and additional findings.

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR HYPOTHESES

Separation and Loss

As reported in the chapter on results there is strong evidence to support the hypothesis that those people who experienced losses and separations in childhood take a longer time working on the dissertation and there is a trend to suggest that they also take longer in graduate school as a whole. A person who had been hospitalized several times before the age of 12 or had lost a parent before the age of 12 takes about 1.2 year longer doing the dissertation and about .8 years longer in graduate school.

This hypothesis was generated primarily from Bowlby's work (1980) which contends that there are often lasting effects in adulthood of experiences of loss and separation in childhood. The adulthood effects may consist of a vulnerability to depression which may be precipitated by

current experiences of loss. In addition, an individual may show pathological variations in attachment behavior, ranging from anxious attachment to detachment. Mahler's work (1975) also supports the idea that the trauma of loss in childhood would often cause later difficulties or arrests in the separation-individuation process.

In this study doing the dissertation was conceptualized as completing a major task within a separation-individuation phase of development: the person moves from a stage of studenthood, with dependency on faculty to a phase of professional adulthood with the responsibilities of independence and self sufficiency. As with progress through other separation-individuation phases, doing the dissertation evokes a multitude of real and psychic losses. Beginning early on in the work of the dissertation, the student, particularly in the social sciences and the humanities where the dissertation is started late, often after course work is completed, is left more on his own, and is expected by the faculty of the university to work much more independently than during the earlier phases of graduate school. Generally the student is expected to generate a topic, to set up meetings with a sponsor, to set deadlines for himself, to work alone separated from the more structured support of peers that accompanies regular classes. All of these expectations require greater independence and individuation and may be experienced to varying degrees by the student as losses. Efforts by the

student to carry on and to assume the new responsibilities of independence requires that the student accept or initiate substitutes for the loss of supportive structures, rather than to protest the losses and complain about the university. Students early in graduate school may have relied upon the professors, upon the classes and the community, upon the schedules for turning in papers and contact with professors. As the student becomes unmoored from the supportive structures of the university, he must have the psychological strength to deal with the losses and make further strides in the long development of increased separateness and individuation.

In addition to feeling to a greater or lesser degree abandoned by the university, the student faces the additional meanings, conscious and unconcious, of finishing the dissertation. These meanings as we have seen from the interviews conducted by Strasser (1977) and from the observations of Loewenberg (1969) include finally ceasing to be a student, leaving the protection of a status in which his self esteem rested more on illusions of potential than on concrete achievements. He must face his limited competence and give up a world of largely uncompromised dreams. Like the child in the rapprochment phase who struggles to accept the painful reality of his separateness and to accept the loss of the illusion of his omnipotence which sustained him in the practicing period, so the student struggles to come to grips with what he is able to produce

compared with what he longs to produce. The dissertation can also acquire the meaning of proof to the student that he is ready to be an adult, no longer in a position in which he feels entitled to receive the care of others or to have all his greatest dreams uncompromised.

In summary, doing the dissertation entails continual losses, first through the loss of a support system and then through the completion of the dissertation the loss of a less responsible status, of comforting illusions of competence and unconcious wishes to remain dependent and cared for. While this would pose psychological difficulty to many students, the ones who, according to Bowlby's theory (1980) would have the most difficulty, would be those who were most vulnerable to experiences of loss, having suffered loss and separation in childhood.

There are additional findings to suggest some ways in which the student with a history of separation and loss has difficulty with the dissertation. As reported in the result section (p.98), when LOSS is placed at the end of the equation other variables are free to account for some of the variance previously accounted for and partialled out by LOSS. The variance of both CONFL DEP and UNABLE increase as a result of LOSS being placed at the end of the multiple regression (see Table 14). The increase in the variance explained by CONFL DEP suggests that students who have experienced early loss and separation take longer doing the dissertation because they are prone to adopt a position of

conflicted dependency in which they feel neglected by the advisor and are unable to ask for help when stuck.

A student with an attitude of conflicted dependency may be struggling with a number of unconscious fantasies which would interfere with his finishing. The student who scores high on CONFL DEP is reporting that he feels he isn't getting enough help, that his advisor is too busy and in addition he has difficulty asking for help even when he's stuck. One position is dependent in nature, the other counter dependent, but both positions suggest impulses arising from experiences of deprivation. Objectively, the student reports meeting as frequently with the advisor as someone who does not score high on CONFL DEP: the correlation of CONFL DEP with FRQ ADV is not statistically significant. However, the student's experience is that the advisor is not sufficently available. There are a number of ways that feeling inadequately cared for can give rise to difficulties in finishing. One unconscious fantasy may be that the student feels that if he holds out long enough he will eventually receive reparation for what he feels he didn't get when he was younger. This may include the fantasy that the person he longs for will return either to help him finish or as a reward for finishing. If such a fantasy is present, then finishing the dissertation, assuming responsiblity and putting himself in a position of getting on with his life all mean relinquishing infantile wishes and hopes for the care and affection that he felt he

needed as a child in order to survive and which he may on some unconscious level feel entitled to receive before he becomes an adult. A corollary to that fantasy is the expectation that even if he doesn't receive what he feels he deserved, at least he will not relinquish his anger and his position of holding the parental figures responsible. Also for some, particularly, for the student who feels his parents are narcissistically invested in his success, not finishing can be a form of individuation (Halpern,1966). Some may masochistically find some satisfaction in the pain they imagine or see their parents experience as a result of their suffering and lack of success. No matter which of these fantasies is unconsciously operating, to finish the dissertation is an admission by the student that he is ready to and capable of going on and taking care of himself. Such a step necessitates giving up dependent childhood wishes.

It is remarkable how powerful these early wishes may be. Many students under the influence of these unconcious longings are willing to put off for years such adult gratifications as increased salary, freedom to be involved in other projects, time to talk and be with family and friends. No matter how much the unconscious holding out for some childhood gratification or the fending off of mourning a loss is interfering with getting on with their adult life, no matter how painful they find working on the dissertation, they cannot bring themselves to finish.

In psychotherapy patients are often seen who refuse to do things for themsleves, refuse to get on with their own lives because they are held in the grip of a childhood fantasy that something is owed to them and they will not grow up until it is given to them. Very often they are ashamed of the wish. The student who has trouble asking for help from the advisor, is also the person who is ashamed of, or embarrased by, what he perceives as an infantile quality to his wish for help. Ironically, this embarrassment in fact may deprive him from receiving or accepting help and direction which he very reasonably requires and appropriately deserves at this stage of his professional development. Joan Strasser (1977) arrives at a similar conclusion from the data in her study.

The fact that the variance explained by UNABLE also increased when LOSS was placed later in the equation suggests that a history of loss and separation, in addition to stimulating an attitude of conflicted dependency, stimulates a state of being unable to work on the dissertation. Since UNABLE appears after CONFL DEP, this inability to work arises from different conflicts than those picked up by CONFL DEP. However, the data does not clarify the nature of the difficulties which prevent some students with a history of loss from being able to work on their dissertations. We can speculate that students with a history of loss, may have difficulty being alone while working (Winnicott, 1958). A dissertation requires long

periods of time working alone. Some students find it hard to tolerate being alone, and as a consequence have difficulty working. In the course, of interviewing students, it was my impression that a number of students who had been unable to work were helped by joining a dissertation support group which met every other week or by seeking help from a "dissertation therapist" outside of the university whom the student often paid and who was much more accessible to the student. I spoke to one such therapist and one of the techniques that he used was to have the student discuss his ideas with the therapist and then, while the therapist sat and read a book, the student sat down and typed up his ideas. An important ingredient in the effectiveness of this technique may well have been the presence of a supportive person. The student, feeling less alone, could begin to work.

Finally, LOSS continues to explain a statistically significant proportion of the variance (4%.) in DISS YRS when it is placed at the end of the multiple regression analysis and the variance explained by all the other variables in the equation is partialled out. (See Table 14) The fact that the effect is still statistically significant is testimony to the strength of the effect of the variable, but it is not clear how that effect on DISS YRS is caused. A history of loss and separation may give rise to other types of conflicts and defensive behavior which were not identified in this study. These include a perfectionistic,

obsessive attitude and an inability to limit the topic. Future research may show that LOSS is correlated positively with the page lengths of dissertation.

It is important to note that LOSS does not show its effect on DISS YRS through any of the other variables. LOSS does not express its effect on DISS YRS through an increased fear of success, or less frequent meetings with the advisor or less of an ability to look ahead. People with a history of loss do not take longer because they get full time jobs or change topics or change advisors. Clearly, a history of loss and separation gives rise to behaviors that prolong the dissertation process only some of these have been identified in this study.

Difficulty with Separation-Individuation

The second hypothesis of this study was that people who had a history of difficulty separating and individuating from their families (as assessed by the measure DIFF SEP) would have difficulty doing the dissertation. There was no evidence in the results to support this hypothesis. In the multiple regression analyses, difficulty with past separations (DIFF SEP) explained none of the variance at a statistically significant level. Even on individual items within the scale, support for this hypothesis was lacking. The question is why did these items taken together not correlate with DISS YRS or PHD YRS.

Although psychological difficulties in separating and individuating may manifest themselves in behaviors such as living with parents during college years, choosing a college near home, receiving poor grades during the first year of college, the converse is not necessarily true. A person may exhibit all those behaviors for reasons, such as finance, which have nothing to do with separation individuation difficulties. This measure of separation difficulties does not include a method for sorting out those issues from other factors that may have given rise to the behavior which composes the items on the measure. It would also appear from the low reliability (alpha=.21) that separation-individuation difficulty is not the overriding cause of the behavior in each item. If it were a principal cause of the behavior in each item then when the items were put together the reliability would be higher than it is. Consequently it is impossible to use these items to determine whether separation-individuation difficulties experienced in a young adult phase of life reassert themselves during graduate school.

History of Indirection

The measure of a history of indirection suffers from the same limitations described above with regard to the measure DIFF SEP. The items on this measure also refer to behavior which may be determined by multiple factors, of which a lack of direction is only one. The items have no reliability

(Cronbach's alpha =-.14). This scale is not composed of a group of items which intercorrelate; each item does not measure a similar difficulty. It is not surprizing that this measure predicts none of the variance in the multiple regressions.

One of the items in the scale, leave of absense from college, actually correlates negatively with time in PHD YRS (r=-.21). See Appendix A, Table 22. Those who took a leave of absence in college tended to be the ones who finished more quickly than those who didn't take such a leave. This is in the direction opposite from the one predicted. It suggests that the behavior of taking a leave of absence may be an act of rebellion. As such a leave of absence can be seen as an active working through of separation-individuation issues and consequently by the time the student goes on graduate school he has reached a level of separateness which allows him to proceed uninteruptedly to the Ph.D. For some students behaviors that appear as evidence of difficulty around the transition to college may be evidence of the successful working through of separation-individuation issues. Students who manifest no difficulty, may have postponed working through separation individuation issues and as a result demonstrate difficulty at the end of graduate school. In short, evidence of difficulty with separation-individuation at the point of transition to college may not be associated with difficulty ten years later at the point of departure from graduate school.

Perception of Parents (POP)

It was predicted that this measure of the perception of parental attitudes would correlate positively with difficulty doing the dissertation and with time in graduate school. No support was found for this prediction. The measure did not account for any of the variance in the multiple regression at a statistically significant level. Even though the measure had a reliability that approached acceptable levels (alpha=.72) no correlations were found at statistically significant levels. The items which compose the measure (POP) do not directly assess parental attitudes, at best they measure the conscious perception of parental attitudes by the subjects, the items may have little direct relation with the actual behavior of parents and the impact of those parents on the subjects. In addition, the measure only taps conscious attitudes and it is reasonable to think that subjects may have responded with various psychological defenses.

Four of the items on the scale were faulty in construction, asking the subject to respond simultaneously to whether an attitude was present and whether it was excessively so (Questions Part I: 45, 46, 51, 52: e.g. "Was your mother overly concerned that you would make the wrong decisions?" and Did you receive excessive praise?").

The lack of findings with regard to DIFF SEP, INDIR and POP may also speak to the difficulty in finding ways of assessing separation-individuation difficulty. Techniques

for assessing unconscious conflicts such as projective tests and interviews are probably necessary for the assessment of separation-individuation difficulty. Joan Rodman (Personal Communication, 1984) has proceded in that direction with her methodology.

Fear of Success

The Pearson correlation coefficients for FOS with DISS YRS or PHD YRS do not reach statistically significant levels. When FOS is run in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis there is evidence of a trend for FOS with DISS YRS (sr=.19; see Table 7). The fact that FOS reaches the level of a trend in this analysis is due to the suppression of part of the error of the measurement by the variance explained by some of the preceding variables in the multiple regression analysis. This correlation predicts that an increase in one standard deviation (10.3 units) in a FOS score will be associated with an increase of .42 years in length of time to do the dissertation (DISS YRS). The effect on DISS YRS is relatively small and given that it is only significant at the .10 level, the result should be viewed cautiously. The correlation of FOS with PHD YRS is even small than with DISS YRS. It is not statistically significant.

The fact that FOS turned out to have so little predictive value suggests that either the psychological difficulties measured by the FOS scale do not effect

students, or that there is something faulty in the manner in which the measure was administered. The weakness of the findings might be best explained by a faulty assumption that was made when this scale was included in the study. The assumption was that a student's level of FOS remains relatively constant over time. In retrospect, this appears to have been a weak assumption. Herron (1984) reports changes in the mean values of the scale for populations with different mean ages. The score that a subject achieves on the FOS scale five years after completion of the dissertation may correspond only vaguely to the score he would have gotten just prior to beginning the dissertation or during the process of working on it. Subjects in the study itself provided evidence that their scores had changed over the years: they noted in the margin of the questionnaire that their response would have been different had they been filling this questionnaire out during graduate school. Simply going through the process of writing a dissertation, and being successful at it may have a substantial effect on a student's perception of himself, particularly as relates to his perception of his capacity to deal with success. Had subjects been instructed to fill out the qustionnaire in reference to themselves at the beginning of graduate school, the correlations might well have turned out statistically significant. Methodologically, the best solution would be to do a prospective study in which the

scale would be administered at the beginning of graduate school.

DISSCUSSION OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND EXPLORATORY FINDINGS

SEX

The Pearson correlation coefficient for SEX with either DISS YRS or PHD YRS is not statistically significant. It is possible that these correlations would have proven to be statistically significant if the population of subjects had been larger. However, it is important to note that in any event the effect of SEX on DISS YRS would be small; the multiple regression analyses predict that women take a little over half a year longer to do the dissertation than men (Tables10 and12). There is virtually no difference between men and women with regard to the total length of time they are in graduate school (Tables 11 and13). This finding is important because it suggests that women are not appreciably different from men in the rate at which they apply themselves to finishing.

Level of Parents' Education

The fact that the results indicate no significant correlations of either mother's or father's educational level with either DISS YRS or PHD YRS suggests that coming from a family of either well or poorly educated parents is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage in terms of rates of

finishing. Although the conflicts that may be evoked by the dissertation process for someone who has well educated parents may be different from the conflicts of someone whose parents are poorly educated, the effects on length of time to do the dissertation is roughly the same. There is no evidence for an interaction effect of EDUCATION with SEX.

Family Status

Although there is no main effect of family status (FAMST) on either DISS YRS or PHD YRS, an interaction effect of FAMST by SEX is present for DISS YRS but not PHD YRS. This interaction effect for FAMST indicates that family status has an effect on the rate at which women finish their dissertations but no effect on the rate at which men do. Women who report coming from a family of origin of higher socio-economic status take a statistically significant longer amount of time than those women who report coming from families of lower status. In fact women who report coming from upper class families (subjectively defined) take approximately 2.9 years longer at their dissertations than those who report coming from a middle class family. This finding is surprising. One might have predicted that women who came from higher status families would have a financial advantage as well as a greater self confidence born of advantages. Both factors could aid them in finishing more rapidly. That the reverse is true suggests that the lack of financial pressure may in fact contribute to a lack of

pressure to finish and that higher family status may not be associated with greater self confidence. This finding should be explored in future studies using objective measures for socio-economic status.

Frequency of Meeting with the Advisor

A persistent and consistent finding is the correlation of frequency of meeting with the advisor (FRQADV) and DISS YRS. In the multiple regression analysis the effect is present over and above the contributions of all the other independent variables including STRESS. The results (Table 7) predict that a student who meets once a week with his advisor will finish approximately 2.3 years earlier than the student who meets rarely or never. This finding strongly implies that meetings with the advisor provide a student with something which enhances his ability to work on the dissertation and that the more frequently he meets with his advisor, the more rapidly he will finish the dissertation. Given that the correlation of FRQADV is significant over and above the psychological variables, LOSS, CONFL DEP, FOS, it suggests that the effect is not likely to be due to the covariation of a psychological profile with FRQADV. In fact there are no significant Pearson correlations of FRQADV with the prinicipal psychological measures. Although there may well be psychological variables not identified in this study which effect the frequency with which a student seeks out his advisor, it should be tentatively concluded that it is the accessibility of the advisor which has a major effect on

frequency of meetings and on the rate of finishing. Presumably, those students who had advisors who were more accessible tended to finish more quickly because there is something in the process of meeting with the advisor which is genuinely helpful.

There is one methodological consideration which should be mentioned because it sheds a little uncertainty on the strength of this result and should be taken into account for future studies. Assume that of the total number of times a person meets with the advisor there is a proportion which is the same for each student, for example say that most students meet their advisor after the completion of each chapter. Then it is obvious that those who overall take less time to do the dissertation will take less time doing each chapter and consequently will report that they met more often per unit of time than the subject who took longer to do the dissertation and longer to do each chapter. Consequently, if a proportion of the number of times a person meets with the advisor is roughly the same per person, then it stands to reason that that the frequency of meeting described by that portion of the total number of times would by definition correlate with rate of finishing. Had the subjects of this study also been asked to estimate the total number of times they had discussed the dissertation with their advisors, and then some proportion had been subtracted and then a rate established by dividing the remaining number of times by the total time the person

took to do the dissertation, the effect of meeting with the advisor might have been better assessed.

Given the strength of the effect of FRQADV on DISS YRS over and above all the other variables in the multiple regression analysis, we believe that the effect would hold up even if the above consideration were taken into account. We believe that the results strongly suggest the beneficial effects of meeting frequently with the advisor in terms of rate of finishing. This makes obvious and intuitive sense. But the implications are important and have tended to be neglected by professors and students alike.

Conflicted dependency

This variable has already been discussed in the section dealing with separation and loss. This variable is not significantly correlated with DISS YRS except when LOSS is placed after it in the multiple regression analysis. Approximately half of the variance explained by the variable is the result of experiences of loss and separation, but the other half of the variance explained arises for other reasons, not explained by these data. Regardless of the reasons, the four questions which compose CONFL-DEP define an attitude which correlates with longer times doing a dissertation and suggests that dependency and ambivalence about that dependency interfere with work on the dissertation. Those people who feel dependent have difficulty doing the dissertation, presumably because they

are fearful of the independence that finishing will bring, or are reluctant to give up the childhood wishes which were discussed above, in the section dealing with loss and separation. Friedenberg and Roth (1954) describe dependent students as typically complaining, but not feeling safe enough to genuinely rebel. In addition, those students who are counter dependent will take longer doing the dissertation for similar unconscious reasons, but in addition they will have difficulty asking for advice from the advisor as well as difficulty in using the advice they do get.

Effect of Subject Area

It is noted consistently in the literature that the average length of time to get a doctorate in the hard sciences is consistently less than in the humanities, with the time in the social sciences in between (Wilson, 1965). This result was true for the subject population of this study. In the multiple regression analysis, subject area accounts for a comparatively large portion (21%) of the variance in PHD YRS. (See Table 8). The variable predicts that a student in the hard sciences will finish 2.4 years before someone in the humanities. In striking contrast to this, is the finding that subject area does not account for a statistically significant portion of the variance of DISS YRS (Table 7). There is no statistically significant difference in DISS YRS predicted by someone being in the

hard sciences as compared with the humanities. In all three subject areas students report taking roughly the same amount of time to do the dissertation. The question arises as to what accounts for the differences in the lengths of time that students spend overall in graduate school (PHD YRS). If the difference is not due to a difference in the length of time students spend on their dissertations then what is it due to? The difference is unlikely to be due to significant variations in different lengths of time taken to do course work. These may be relatively standard, given that the number of required course credits is relatively the same in the different fields. An explanation is suggested by the data for the mean times that students begin the dissertation in each subject area. Students in the hard sciences begin the dissertation early, approximately two years earlier than they do in the social sciences and in the humanities (see p.86). In the hard sciences students start research which will often be used for their dissertation sometime in the beginning of the second year, while in the humanities they start considerably later in their fourth year of graduate school. This raises further questions. Is it the nature of the disciplines (English and History) which necessitates students putting off beginning the dissertation until after all their course work is completed? Could the humanities institute changes which would help students to begin the dissertation much earlier in their graduate

training with the possible consequence of students finishing sooner?

Work on the dissertation can fruitfully, at least in the sciences, proceed simultaneously as students progress through their course curriculum. In the different fields students report spending roughly the same amount of time from the beginning of the project to finish (See p.85). This suggests that something in the nature of the project takes approximately 4.6 years while the mean for the total length of time in graduate school is 7.0 years. The difference in length of time taken in graduate school in the different subject areas may be directly related to when those departments encourage students to begin work on their dissertations. Further, it may be that by encouraging students to begin work early on the dissertation, the association of finishing the dissertation with leaving the university is diminished.

Inability to Work Even Though the Time Was Available (UNABLE)

This variable consists of the single item, a statement to which subjects reported "Yes" or "No". "I went through long periods (over one month) when I had the time to work on the dissertation but was unable to bring myself to do so." This item correlated with both DISS YRS AND PHD YRS, predicting that someone who said "yes" would take approximately 1.3 years longer doing the dissertation and

approximately 1.2 years longer in graduate school. This variable could have been labeled "work inhibition" or "writer's block". It identifies a conflicted psychological state in which the person is free to do the task, but is unable to muster the will power to do so. It is a catchall for psychological conflicts. The nature of the conflict is not identified by the question, but what is suggested by the finding is that being in conflict about doing the dissertation explains, over and above the other variables, a statistically significant proportion of the variance. The nature of the conflicts which go into this state of being unable to work on the dissertation needs to be further explored.

Previous Degree

Holding an M.A. degree before beginning a doctoral program in the same field does not significantly lessen the time a student is in graduate school or the amount of time he spends on his dissertation. The lack of a statistically significant correlation between PREVDEG and either DISS YRS or PHD YRS (see Tables 5 and 6) is surpising considering that at least part of the work towards an M.A. is credited towards the Ph.D. degree. There are a number of possible explanations. First, although credits may be transferred, the number of courses that the student is expected to take may remain approximately the same. Second, a student who arrives in the doctoral program still needs to go through

many of the accomodations to a particular department as does someone who begins without the degree. Finally, there may be some pressure that the student feels to take roughly the same time as the majority of the people with whom he began graduate school.

Age at time of beginning Ph.D. Program

In the multiple regression analysis the semipartial correlation of AGE with DISS YRS is small (sr=-.19; see Table 7). The correlation predicts that some one who is ten years older at the beginning of the doctoral program is likely to finish the dissertation .8 of a year sooner than his younger counterpart. However, AGE is not correlated with PHD YRS and the older student is not likely to finish graduate school sooner than someone who is younger. This suggests that although there may be a slight advantage in doing the dissertation when one is older, it is not an advantage in terms of the overall time spent in graduate school. Presumably, a person who returns to graduate school late in life may be at a stage of development where separation-individuation issues are diminished, and greater experience in self motivated work will aid in doing the dissertation. However, the advantage in terms of time working on the dissertation will be offset by commitments which a younger person may not have and which may interfere with taking courses full time.

Capacity to Plan Ahead

The findings pertaining to PLAN suggest that a history of looking ahead is correlated negatively with DISS YRS and there is an interaction effect of PLAN by SEX making it clear that the effect on DISS YRS is much stronger for men than women. There is no main effect of PLAN on PHD YRS; however there is a statistically significant interaction effect by SEX. PLAN by Sex does have an effect on PHD YRS. The men who looked ahead, who consulted with recent graduates from the doctoral program to see if they really wanted to go to graduate school and who got information from more advanced students or graduates on how best to go about the dissertation finished both the dissertation and graduate school sooner than those who did not look ahead. It is possible that these behaviors are associated with a psychological attitude which is conducive to finishing the dissertation, or it is possible that the actual information gained from looking ahead is helpful in finishing more quickly. The idea that there is a psychologically conducive attitude associated with looking ahead makes intuitive sense. A person who is anxious about the future, fearful of the independence associated with it, may be incapacitated in his ability to consult people who are ahead of him in the process. Consequently, we might expect a positive correlation of PLAN with both LOSS and CONFL DEP; this is not the case (see Table 24). If there is a psychological attitude associated with the ability to look ahead, it does

not appear to be associated with the absense of issues of separation. Rather, the capacity to plan seems to be associated with more frequent meetings with the advisor (Table 24) and it is associated with CHA TOPIC. Perhaps what is being defined by the behaviors elicited in the questions which make up this variable is not so much a capacity to look or plan ahead, but the capacity to get relevant information from the environment. One of the forms this ability takes is to meet more frequently with a dissertation advisor. The fact that PLAN is correlated with change of topic suggests that getting information from faculty or more advanced students may lead a person to revise the course he is heading on.

CHANGE OF TOPIC

This variable is not significantly correlated with either DISS YRS or PHD YRS. This is a counter-intuitive finding. One might have expected that changing topic would be associated with time lost on a false start and consequently would have correlated with both DISS YRS and PHD YRS. However, the finding that CHA TOPIC is significantly correlated with PLAN ($r = .32$, $df=90$, $p=.002$) suggests that changing topic may mark a sensible accomodation to information that the original topic is too difficult or too broad and that a different topic will allow for a more successful or rapid completion of the task.

Change Advisor (ADV CHA)

Although change of topic (CHA TOPIC) was not significantly correlated in the multiple regression analysis with either DISS YRS and PHD YRS, change of advisor (ADV CHA) is. On the average, students who switch advisors take 1.4 years longer in graduate school and 1.1 years longer on their dissertations than those who do not change advisors. Clearly, disruption of the relationship with the advisor appears to be associated with a major disruption of the dissertation process. This result does not indicate the cause of the disruption, whether there was an incompatibility or whether the professor moved to another university. There is a non-statistically significant finding that LOSS with ADV CHA yields a low Pearson correlation (r=.14). If, in a larger sample, this finding were significant, then the possibility exists that students with a history of LOSS are repeating the earlier trauma.

In addition to the time that the student loses as he adjusts to working with the new advisor, the break of the relationship may be associated with psychological difficulties in doing the task. There is some evidence to suggest this. Change of advisor (ADV CHA) is correlated with going through periods of being unable to work on the dissertation (UNABLE) (r=.28, df=91, r=.007).

Stress

There is a Pearson correlation between STRESS and both DISS YRS and PHD YRS (Table 9) and in addition there is a statistically significant semipartial correlation of STRESS with both DISS YRS and PHD YRS over and above all the variables that precede it in the multiple regression analysis (See Table 7 and 8) . An increase of one standard deviation in the STRESS measure is correlated with an increase .6 years in both PHD YRS and DISS YRS. This stands to reason. People who have full time jobs, or have other disruptions in their lives have less time and energy for their dissertation. If we look at the items that make up the measure (Table 23) it is evident that two of the items, working at a full time job, and starting a long term relationship, are by themselves associated with longer DISS YRS and/or PHD YRS. These findings corroborated the findings in Strasser's study (1977). In addition these findings support Sternberg's observations and suggestions (1981).

SUMMARY

The goal of this study was to add to the research about the impact of psychological factors on the rate at which students are able to finish their dissertations. The confirmation of the hypothesis that a history of loss and separation is correlated with increased time doing the dissertation is important in and of itself, but also because it lends support to the thesis that doing the dissertation is a developmental process that evokes separation-individuation conflicts.

The study did not succeed in measuring a pattern of behaviors indicative of separation-individuation conflicts at the time of transition to college. The items which were included in the measures (DIFF SEP, INDIR) yielded low Cronbach reliabilities. Behaviors that may indicate lasting separation-individuation difficulties in one student, may be evidence, in another, of facing and working through the conflicts. As a consequence of these methodological problems, the lack of statistically significant correlations was not interpreted as evidence for the rejection of the perspective that the dissertation process evokes separation-individuation issues. Similarly, methodological problems were held responsible for the lack of findings with regard to the measure of students' perception of their parents (POP) as well as the lack of findings pertaining to the fear of success scale (FOS).

Additional findings included the identification of other psychological variables which affect length of time doing the dissertation. These variables included a measure of behaviors which demonstrated the capacity to look ahead and to get information from other people further along in the dissertation process (PLAN). This capacity was correlated with relatively rapid finishing, particularly for men. In addition there was evidence to suggest that students who felt dependent or counter-dependent (CONFL DEP) took longer to finish. Finally, the variable which identified those who suffered from an inability to work on the dissertation, even though they had the time to do so (UNABLE), accounted for a statistically significant proportion of the variance in both dependent variables. Altogether, the psychological variables accounted for approximately 25% of the variance in DISS YRS and 17% of the variance in PHD YRS.

Other factors were identified as being correlated with increased length of time doing the dissertation and being in graduate school. These included infrequent meetings with the advisor, changing advisors, and stressful situations (e.g. doing the dissertation while working full time). Together these factors accounted for 10% of the variance in DISS YRS and 14% of the variance in PHD YRS. Demographic variables, including SUBJECT AREA, accounted for 14% of the variance in DISS YRS and 32% of the variance in PHD YRS.

The total variance accounted for by all the variables included in the second multiple regression analyses was 49% for DISS YRS and 63% for PHD YRS.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Limitations of the Study

Although a number of limitations of this study have been identified in the course of the discussion, there are several additional ones which should be noted. First, there is the question of the representativeness of the sample. The 93 Ph.D. graduates in this sample are not necessarily representative of the general population of CUNY graduates. The sample of Ph.D.'s was restricted to those graduates who had maintained contact with the alumni office. The restriction was imposed by the necessity for current addresses which only the alumni office could provide. This restriction could conceivably have biased the sample to those students with traits (including difficulty separating from the university) which led them to maintain contact with the alumni office. Since a restriction of range deflates correlations, the inclusion into the study of the population who did not stay in touch with the alumni office, might have yielded stronger results, particularly in reference to issues of separation and loss.

The representativeness of this population of CUNY students in terms of other graduate populations is difficult

to assess. The fact that the findings for the differences in the mean lengths of time in graduate school in different subject areas is in reasonable accord with the findings of other studies (Wilson, 1965) suggests that, at least on that dimension, this population of CUNY students is representative. The replication of this study using other graduate schools would be important.

This study is limited to Ph.D.'s for two reasons. First, there is no comparable measures to DISS YRS and PHD YRS for the subjects who were still working on their dissertations and, second, the subjects who abandonned the dissertation (and completed the questionnaire) were too few in number for meaningful statistical analyses to be done. As a consequence, this study does not examine the experience of students in the midst of working on the dissertation, nor is it able to determine if a history of loss and separation contributes to the decision to cease work on the dissertation. A study which included a larger sample or which found ways of tracking down those students who stopped work on the dissertation (the registrar had few valid addresses) might have been able to investigate the psychological factors which contribute to students dropping out at the dissertation phase of graduate school.

Although the statistics in this study are based on a reasonably large sample, an even larger sample would have made it possible to investigate factors associated with rates of finishing in specific fields. In this study the

number of subjects per field is so low that for statistical purposes the fields had to be combined into subject areas (hard sciences, humanities and social sciences). Finally with a larger sample there is the possibility that a certain number of findings which are only significant at the .10 level might have been statistically significant at the .05 level.

Two weakness of the methodology which have been mentioned earlier in passing should be repeated here. First, it is a distinct disadvantage that this study is retrospective rather than prospective in nature. Any time people are asked to report on events in their past, the responses are subject to distortion. Such distortion may have crept into the recollections of subject's attitudes and the memories of their behaviors in graduate school. In addition, one of the dependent variables, DISS YRS, relies upon the recollection of subjects for a calculation of the time from beginning work on the dissertation to completion. The dependent variable PHD YRS is not vulnerable to errors in memory because it relies upon data from the registrar's office.

Finally, although the results show that a history of separation and loss created issues and conflicts which made the completion of the dissertation difficult for students, this study fails to show that a broader range of separation-individuation issues are significantly responsible for slowing students down in their work on the

dissertation. This limitation is due primarily to limitations in the measures used to assess those phenomena.

Recommendations

Psychologists rarely study behaviors which are executed over a period of several years. The dissertation process provides an unsual opportunity to study the impact of psychological factors upon the execution of long term goals. Unlike almost every other educational task, the rate of finishing is significantly determined by the student; the deadlines for finishing rest mainly in his control. Such a behavior, taking place as it does over many years, is susceptible to the repetitive and persistent influence of unconscious dynamics. Given the considerable range in the rates with which students finish, it may be possible to measure subtle effects which might go relatively undetected in a behavior which spanned a much shorter segment of time. There are few behaviors which occur over the space of several years and at the same time have an identifiable beginnings and ends. However, the benefits of studying such a behavior, are diminished by the complexity of variables which cannot be controlled for.

A number of research projects come to mind which would further the work begun in this study. First, the ways in which a history of separation and loss effects students work on the dissertation is only addressed in a speculative manner. A study based on case histories of people who were

working on the dissertation or had finished could examine in more detail the ways in which a history of early loss and separation give rise to conflicts which interfere with doing the dissertation. Second, future research should explore the ways in which the student-advisor relationship affects students' work on the dissertation . The finding in this study that frequency of meeting with the advisor influences the rate of finishing needs to be followed up with a much more complete investigation of the mentoring process. Third, research which explores the stages students go through when they write a dissertation would be helpful to understanding the dissertation process. In the open ended statements at the end of the questionnaire, students again and again emphasized that coming to terms with limiting the study was an essential step in being able to finish. Presumably there is a phase of exhuberance and hope, in which a student has grandiose fantasies of what his dissertation can be. This stage may be followed by phases of disillusionment and the adoption of an attitude of practicality towards the project. An examination of the phases of dissertation work would also suggest what type of psychological difficulties interfere with a student's progress at one stage to another. Different students may have difficulty with different stages.

A fourth area of study would be an investigation of the meanings, conscious and unconscious, that the dissertation has for a student and how those meanings affect a student's

progress through the dissertation. There is probably a great range in the meaning students attribute to the dissertation all the way from its being seen as a requirement, void of any meaning other than as a way of obtaining a "union card," to being seen as a highly personal challenge, even a self-defined initiation rite in which the student sets himself the task of understanding something which he unconsciously hopes will free him from a conflict. In this last instance, the difficulty such a student would have in doing the dissertation would resemble the resistance that an analysand faces in a psychoanalysis.

An additonal area of study which would probably stimulate reform would be an investigation of the economic cost to the student of prolonged dissertations. The difference in economic cost to a student who finished the dissertation in three years compared to six years is probably enormous.

Recommendations to Graduate Schools, Students and Faculty

This study identified a number of variables which point to the influence of separation-individuation conflicts on the rates of finishing dissertations. A useful perspective for considering recommendations for educational change is Levinson's extention to adult development of Winnicott's idea of a facilitating environment. Levinson (1978) describes little of what he has in mind when he suggests the need for extending Winnicott's idea. Winnicott (1965)

describes a facilitating environment as one which changes over time in response to the developmental needs of the infant and child from absolute dependency to independence. It is an environment which includes opportunities for gradual dissillusionment, the absence of trauma, and the availability of people to support separation from the mother and the family. The translation of this in terms appropriate to a supportive environment for adult development in graduate school would be a description of an environment in which the student did not feel abandoned, but one in which the transition to greater autonomy would occur gradually and one in which periodic regressions to a state of greater dependency were tolerated by advisors and faculty. It would be an environment in which students weren't casualties of their conflicts but could own their difficulties and grow from them, where a person learned to be increasingly independent in his capacity to take care of himself and attend to his needs, where people were available who could support separation-individuation from the advisor and from the department. It would be an environment in which students could challenge authority without fear of retaliation, where students could separate out their immature, dependent needs from reasonable needs for guidance at the dissertation stage, where the real power (control of financial resources) of a faculty member over the student was kept to a minimum, and a student could separate out his transference reactions from realities of the relationship

(Loewenberg, 1969,1983). The specific recommendations that arise from this general translation of a facilitating environment are as follows.

An environment should be developed in which the supportive structures diminish gradually and a number of structures are kept in place so that the student is less likely to feel abandonned and to become immobilized by the activation of his fears of separation and loss.

Such an environment would include arrangements to provide for, or encourage, the student to begin the dissertation early. The dissertation should not be a requirement which is begun as a separate phase of graduate school after course work is completed. Beginning the dissertation early provides the student with a community of peers and faculty with which to discuss ideas. That students in the hard sciences begin dissertations early in their graduate training may go far in explaining why they finish graduate school earlier than students in the humanities. It is not clear that the nature of the humanities precludes a student beginning work on the dissertation early in graduate school. The argument is often made that in the humanities, unlike the sciences, the student needs a breadth of knowledge before he is in a position to begin the dissertation. This may be optimal from the point of view of the qualitity of the dissertation but it may not be optimal in terms of his over all development as a scholar to spend so much time in

graduate school. In any case, if the dissertation is begun early, the student may not suffer the intensity of separation anxiety and the feelings of abandonment that he suffers when he does the dissertation largely on his own after all other educational structures, such as course work, have ceased. In addition, beginning the dissertation early may allow the student to feel freer to ask for the realistic support in the conceptualization of the project than he feels at the end of his course work, when the internalized expectation may be that he should be able to do it totally on his own.

Some forum should exist for a student to remain in contact with the university. This could be done in a supportive manner, rather than through punitive letters announcing the end of the time limit allowed for completion. Such contact could be structured by encouraging a student and advisor to meet with a certain frequency each year until the project is either complete or a decision is made that the student would abandon the project. (Many students who stop work on the dissertation never come to terms with ceasing to work on it (Strasser, 1977).

In addition to the encouragement of more frequent meetings with the advisor, a person should be appointed who would meet periodically, at least three times a year, with each doctoral student. This person would benignly assess the student's progress on the dissertation and

would discuss with the student what he was doing to cope with whatever difficulties he might be having (e.g. limiting his topic, dealing with his advisor, needing additional support and help with his anxieties). The more independent this person was from the department and from serving any evaluative function, the more candid the student would feel and the more help he would get. Students who are having difficulty, often have a considerable capacity to deny the extent of their difficulty. Supportive, but firm structures that encouraged a student face his difficulties would be helpful. One student recently compared the slow or stuck dissertation writer with alcoholics: both minimize the gravity of their problems.

The more students are supportively helped to assume responsiblity for their education the more likely the separation-individuation process will be facilitated rather than interrupted. To this end dissertation support groups could be encouraged by the university. These would differ from dissertation seminars in that they would be student run, but the functions would often overlap those of a dissertation seminar, namely students would share their work and report to one another on their progress. Such groups are occasionally organized by students and have been found by their members to be helpful. The advantage over a dissertation seminar run by a professor is that in a self support group the students are helped in the format itself

to assume increased responsibility for progress on their dissertations. In the current system, students are expected to assume that responsibility at a time in the program when they are least supported by peers and faculty and are often overwhelmed by fear of separation and being alone. Much of separation-individuation in childhood and adolesence is facilitated by the child's involvement with peers. The same is probably important for the development of graduate students.

Another feature of a facilitating environment for graduate students, suggested by the results of this study, are opportunities for students to acquire information from other students who are further along or are recent graduates. Students should be encouraged to seek out information concerning the dissertation process and opportunities should be given for students to hear reports of the research being done by students further along than themselves. A seminar which focused on evaluating recent dissertations done in their department could help students identify common errors in design. It would help them get a sense of the size of the project, stimulate ideas for topics and might encourage them to build on each others work.

Probably one of the most frequent suggestions which arises in a discussion of dissertation writing, is the imposition of a series of institutional deadlines designed to pace a student through the dissertation. For example by the beginning of the third year a student would be required

to have completed his dissertation proposal, if it were not completed he would be dropped from the program.

There are advantages and disadvantages to this recommendation. The advantage is that students are forced to come up against the pressure of a deadline which they are unable to impose on themselves. However, deadlines may defeat, to some degree, the value of the dissertation as an opportunity for students to learn to work in a self-motivated and independent fashion. There is a pull which is felt by both students and faculty to reinstate the relationship in which the student is required to complete a certain piece of work by a date imposed upon him. In this study 10% of the graduates reported that they had depended upon their advisor to set deadlines for them. One person, informally interviewed, reported that she had insisted that her advisor threaten to cease working with her if she had not finished by such and such a date. She had become convinced that only with that threat hanging over her would she complete the dissertation. A number of faculties, clinical psychology at TC and NYU, have recently imposed more stringent deadlines on their students. In the minutes of a recent meeting of the Executive Committee for Doctoral Psychology Programs at CUNY, the observation was made on the effectiveness of warning letters to students. The tendency of both faculty and students to resume the arrangement to which they were accustomed from years of education may be a regressive step and one which interferes with the an

opportunity for the student's confrontation with developmental issues. The psychological meaning of these deadlines imposed from without should be studied. The students who arrange for their advisor's to impose deadlines on them may be avoiding a separation conflict.

Some of these issues are addressed by Munz (1975) who suggests that a collusional system exists in which students and faculty silently collaborate on not sticking to deadlines, at the end of a meeting with an advisor not setting up a date for the next meeting. A facilitating environment would include aspects of a supportively confrontational, non-collusional system described by Munz.

There are many people who might criticize the idea of facilitating environments as pampering: students are adults and that there is no need to examine the university organization. Students should simply learn to cope with it. However, such a position avoids the problem. A close examination of the university environment would, I suspect, show many forces and attitudes which foster a student's regression, both in his relationship to his advisor and to the university (Loewenberg1969, 1983). Many students who come back to graduate school after having worked and been "out in the real world" report that it is "infantilizing." Ways to make educational institutions places which support the psychological development of students need to be implemented, especially in light of the prolongation of

schooling into the third and even fourth decades of a person's life.

The history of universities suggests that the current arrangement is a response by professors to the developmental struggles of students. It is not necessarily a solution which facilitates either learning or development. Haskins (1923) documents that universities arose first in Bologna in the Middle Ages and that they began as sorts of guilds through which students negociated with towns people for reasonably priced lodging and books. When the price of rooms was considered excessive by students, they would threaten to walk to a new town. A number of such migrations are recorded (p. 9). Encouraged by their success in negociating with townsmen, the students next began to negociate with their professors. For a period of time the students, by threatening a collective boycott controlled the professors, imposing on them many rules. These regulations included "that a professor might not be absent without leave, even a single day, and if he desired to leave town he had to make a deposit to ensure his return." (Haskin, p10).

We can speculate that in needing to create these rules, the students were dealing with developmental issues such as separation anxiety. They dealt with their fears of abandonment and their struggle with being dependent upon professors by trying to control the professors. This solution may have been intoxicating for the student in the short run but gave rise to the present system in which a

student's dependency is perpetuated rather than his development being fostered. Professors, understandably reluctant to be slaves of their students, organized their own guilds, requiring exams to qualify for admission. Permission to enter the guild of professors became the earliest form of an academic degree. Students wishing and eventually needing to prove their competence, regardless of whether they wanted to teach, began to sit for the exams which would qualify them to become members of the professor's guild (Haskin, p.11). Hopefully there are other solutions to this ancient, developmental struggle which are more facilitative of the separation-individuation process in students and professors alike.

APPENDIX A

TABLES 10 - 24

TABLE 10

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS
FOR FEMALE SUBJECTS
(N=44)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	F EDU	-.07	-.12	.01	-.76	41	.45
	M EDU	-.06	-.07	..00	-.48	41	.63
2	FAMST	1.44	.40**	.16**	2.87	40	.007
3	LOSS	.13	.18	.03	1.30	39	.20
4	FOS	.03	.15	.02	1.08	38	.29
5	HdS-SS	.48	.09	.00	.64	37	.52
	Hu-SS	-.36	-.05	.00	-.39	36	.70
	HdS-Hu	.83	.14	.02	.99	35	.33
6	AGE	-.06	-.16	.03	-1.17	35	.25
7	CONFL DEP	.13	.11	.01	.76	34	.45
8	PLAN	-.17	-.07	.01	-.51	33	.61
9	UNABLE	1.30	.22	.05	1.58	32	.12
10	ADV CHA	.55	.12	.01	.63	31	.53
11	CHA TOPIC	.12	.02	.00	.15	30	.88
12	STRESS	.18	.06	.00	.41	29	.68
13	FRQADV	-1.50	-.35**	.12**	-2.67	28	.01

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 11

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
FOR FEMALE SUBJECTS
(N=42)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	F EDU	-.09	-.16	.03	-1.05	39	.30
	M EDU	-.03	-.04	.00	-.29	39	.77
2	FAMST	.47	.16	.02	1.01	38	.32
3	LOSS	.03	.04	.00	.28	37	.78
4	FOS	.03	.16	.02	.99	36	.33
5	HdS-SS	-1.27	-.28#	.08#	-1.87	34	.07
	Hu-SS	.31	.07	.01	.39	34	.70
	HdS-Hu	-1.58	-.31*	.10*	-2.07	34	.04
6	AGE	-.01	-.04	.00	-.25	33	.80
7	CONFL DEP	.23	.22	.05	1.49	32	.14
8	PLAN	.30	.15	.02	1.03	31	.31
9	UNABLE	.70	.13	.02	.89	30	.38
10	ADV CHA	1.50	.29*	.08*	2.01	29	.05
11	CHA TOPIC	1.20	.24#	.06#	1.80	28	.08
12	STRESS	.36	.15	.02	1.07	27	.30
13	FRQADV	-.71	-.16	.03*	-1.20	26	.23

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 12

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS
FOR MALE SUBJECTS
(N=39)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	F EDU	-.02	-.02	.00	-.14	37	.89
	M EDU	.06	.05	.00	.33	37	.75
2	FAMST	-.16	-.05	.00	-.29	36	.78
3	LOSS	.21	.35*	.12*	2.18	35	.04
4	FOS	.05	.19	.03	1.19	34	.24
5	HdS-SS	-.88	-.17	.03	-1.06	32	.30
	Hu-SS	-.51	-.08	.01	-.47	32	.64
	HdS-Hu	-.36	-.05	.00	-.34	32	.74
6	AGE	-.13	-.27	.07	-1.77	31	.09
7	CONFL DEP	.15	.12	.01	.77	30	.45
8	PLAN	-1.06	-.44**	.14**	-2.67	29	.01
9	UNABLE	1.71	.26#	.07#	1.92	28	.07
10	ADV CHA	2.26	.27*	.07*	2.12	27	.04
11	CHA TOPIC	-.44	-.05	.00	-.36	26	.73
12	STRESS	.87	.30*	.09*	2.50	25	.02
13	FRQADV	-.64	-.14	.02	-1.22	24	.23

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 13

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
FOR MALE SUBJECTS
(N=39)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	F EDU	.06	.06	.00	.38	36	.71
	M EDU	-.08	-.07	.00	-.40	36	.70
2	FAMST	-.60	-.16	.03	-.97	35	.34
3	LOSS	.19	.28#	.08#	1.71	34	.10
4	FOS	.05	.15	.02	.94	33	.35
5	HdS-SS	-2.58	-.44**	.19**	-3.26	31	.003
	Hu-SS	1.07	.14	.02	1.05	31	.30
	HdS-Hu	-3.65	-.48***	.23***	-3.58	31	.001
6	AGE	-.11	-.13	.02	-.99	30	.33
7	CONFL DEP	-.16	-.10	.01	-.76	29	.45
8	PLAN	-.85	-.26*	.07*	-2.01	28	.05
9	UNABLE	1.67	.23#	.05#	1.85	27	.07
10	ADV CHA	1.11	.12	.01	.96	26	.34
11	CHA TOPIC	.21	.02	.00	.16	25	.87
12	STRESS	1.03	.31**	.09**	2.73	24	.01
13	FRQADV	-.06	-.01	.00	-.10	23	.92

#p <.10
*p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 14

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS
[LOSS PLACED AT THE END]
(N=84)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	SEX	-.65	-.14	.02	-1.31	82	.19
2	F EDU	-.05	-.07	.00	-.61	80	.54
	M EDU	-.00	-.00	.00	-.04	80	.97
3	F EDU×SEX	.05	.03	.00	.31	78	.76
	M EDU×SEX	.12	.06	.00	.55	78	.58
4	FAMST	.58	.17	.03	1.52	77	.13
5	FAMST×SEX	-1.60	-.23*	.05*	2.15	76	.03
6	LOSS	.17	.27**	.07**	2.57	75	.01
7	FOS	.041	.19#	.03#	1.70	74	.09
6	FOS	.036	.15	.02	1.44	75	.15
8	HdS-SS	-.21	-.04	.00	-.38	72	.70
	Hu-SS	-.51	-.08	.01	-.76	72	.45
	HdS-Hu	.31	.05	.00	.47	72	.64
7	HdS-SS	-.21	-.04	.00	-.36	73	.72
	Hu-SS	-.48	-.07	.00	-.68	73	.50
	HdS-Hu	.44	.07	.00	.68	73	.50
9	AGE	-.08	-.19#	.04#	-1.87	71	.07
8	AGE	-.08	-.18#	.03#	-1.72	72	.09

# $p < .10$
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Table continued on next page.

TABLE 14 CONTINUED
SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DISS YRS
[LOSS PLACED AT THE END]

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
10	CONFL DEP	.17	.16	.02	1.34	70	.18
9	CONFL DEP	.26	.23	.05	2.18	71	.03
11	PLAN	-.55	-.22*	.05*	-2.19	69	.03
10	PLAN	-.44	-.17#	.03#	-1.70	70	.09
12	PLAN×SEX	-.88	-.18#	.03#	-1.87	68	.07
11	PLAN×SEX	-.83	-.17#	.03#	-1.68	68	.10
13	UNABLE	1.31	.22*	.05*	2.33	67	.02
12	UNABLE	1.58	.27**	.07**	2.79	68	.01
14	UNABLE SEX	.58	.05	.00	.52	66	.60
13	UNABLE SEX	1.25	.11	.01	1.16	65	.25
15	ADV CHA	1.26	.18*	.03*	1.96	65	.05
14	ADV CHA	1.30	.19*	.03*	1.98	64	.05
16	CHA TOPIC	.07	.01	.00	.12	64	.90
15	CHA TOPIC	.20	.03	.00	.36	63	.72
17	STRESS	.55	.19*	.04*	2.15	63	.04
16	STRESS	.57	.20*	.04*	2.19	62	.03
18	FRQADV	-.77	-.19*	.04*	-2.22	62	.03
17	FRQADV	-.67	-.17#	.04#	-1.90	61	.06
6	LOSS	.17	.27**	.07**	2.57	75	.01
18	LOSS	.15	.19*	.04*	2.17	74	.03

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

Underlined version represents findings of Table 7 with LOSS appearing in the 6th step. Plain text refers to an analysis with LOSS at the very end. The results of both are included to facilitate comparison.

TABLE 15

SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
[LOSS PLACED AT THE END]
(N=81)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	SEX	-.11	-.02	.00	-.21	79	.83
2	F EDU	-.03	-.05	.00	-.40	77	.68
	M EDU	-.04	-.04	.00	-.36	77	.72
3	F EDU*SEX	.15	.10	.01	.86	75	.39
	M EDU*SEX	-.05	-.03	.00	-.23	75	.82
4	FAMST	-.11	-.03	.00	-.28	74	.78
5	FAMST*SEX	-1.07	-.16	.02	1.37	73	.17
7	FOS	.04	.17	.03	1.56	71	.12
6	FOS	.04	.17	.03	1.47	72	.15
8	HdS-SS	-1.96	-.38***	.14***	3.78	69	.000
	Hu-SS	.43	.07	.00	.68	69	.50
	HdS-Hu	-2.39	-.38***	.14***	3.87	69	.000
7	HdS-SS	-1.96	-.38***	.14***	3.78	70	.000
	Hu-SS	.45	.07	.00	.71	70	.50
	HdS-Hu	-2.37	-.40***	.16***	3.97	70	.000
9	AGE	-.02	-.05	.00	-.55	68	.58
8	AGE	-.02	-.05	.00	-.45	69	.66

# $p < .10$
* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$
*** $p < .001$

Table continued on next page.

TABLE 15 CONTINUED
SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
[LOSS PLACED AT THE END]

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
10	CONFL DEP	.08	.07	.00	.67	67	.50
9	CONFL DEP	.15	.12	.02	1.22	68	.23
11	PLAN	-.19	-.07	.01	-.73	66	.47
10	PLAN	-.12	-.05	.00	-.46	67	.65
12	PLAN×SEX	-1.03	-.21*	.05*	-2.17	65	.03
11	PLAN×SEX	-.99	-.20*	.04*	-2.06	66	.04
13	UNABLE	1.19	.20*	.04*	2.10	64	.04
12	UNABLE	1.35	.23*	.05*	2.42	65	.02
14	UNABLE×SEX	1.17	.10	.01	1.03	63	.31
13	UNABLE×SEX	1.49	.13	.02	1.38	64	.17
15	ADV CHA	1.56	.23*	.05*	2.48	62	.02
14	ADV CHA	1.58	.23*	.05*	2.52	63	.01
16	CHA TOPIC	.87	.14	.02	1.57	61	.12
15	CHA TOPIC	.92	.15#	.02#	1.68	62	.10
17	STRESS	.59	.21*	.04*	2.38	60	.02
16	STRESS	.60	.21*	.04*	2.41	61	.02
18	FRQADV	-.46	-.11	.01	-1.21	59	.23
17	FRQADV	-.41	-.10	.01	-1.10	60	.27
6	LOSS	.12	.19#	.03#	1.66	72	.10
18	LOSS	.05	.07	.00	0.75	59	.46

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

Underlined version represents findings of Table 8 with LOSS appearing in the 6th step. Plain text refers to an analysis with LOSS at the very end. The results of both are included to facilitate comparison.

TABLE 17
SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS,
[FRQADV APPEARING IN THE 6TH STEP]
(N=81)

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
1	SEX	-.11	-.02	.00	-.21	79	.83
2	F EDU	-.03	-.05	.00	-.40	77	.68
	M EDU	-.04	-.04	.00	-.36	77	.72
3	F EDU SEX	.15	.10	.01	.86	75	.39
	M EDU SEX	-.05	-.03	.00	-.23	75	.82
4	FAMST	-.11	-.03	.00	-.28	74	.78
5	FAMST SEX	-1.07	-.16	.02	1.37	73	.17
6	FRQADV	-1.31	-.52	.27	5.33	72	.000
12	FRQADV	-.46	-.11	.01	-1.21	59	.23
7	LOSS	.09	.14	.02#	1.44	71	.15
6	LOSS	.12	.19#	.03#	1.66	72	.10
8	FOS	.03	.13	.02	1.37	70	.18
7	FOS	.04	.17	.03	1.56	71	.12
9	HdS-SS	-1.14	-.19*	.04*	-1.96	68	.05
	Hu-SS	-.08	-.01	.00	-.13	68	.90
	HdS-Hu	-2.37	.39***	.15***	3.97	68	.000
8	HdS-SS	-1.96	-.38***	.14***	3.78	69	.000
	Hu-SS	.43	.07	.00	.68	69	.50
	HdS-Hu	-2.39	.38***	.14***	3.87	69	.00
10	AGE	-.05	-.11	.01	-1.14	67	.26
9	AGE	-.02	-.05	.00	-0.55	68	.58
11	CONFL DEP	.03	.03	.00	.28	66	.78
10	CONFL DEP	.08	.07	.00	.67	67	.50

Table continued on next page

TABLE 17 CONTINUED
SECOND MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS,
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PHD YRS
[FRQADV APPEARING IN 6TH STEP]

Step	Variable	B	Semi-Partial Correlation	Variance Explained	t	df	p
12	PLAN	-.06	-.02	.00	-.24	65	.81
11	PLAN	-.19	-.07	.01	-.73	66	.47
13	PLAN SEX	-0.97	-.20*	.04*	-2.14	64	.04
12	PLAN SEX	-1.03	-.21*	.05*	-2.17	65	.03
14	UNABLE	.85	.14	.02	1.49	63	.14
13	UNABLE	1.19	.20*	.04*	2.10	64	.04
15	UNABLE SEX	-0.05	-.00	.00	-.04	62	.97
14	UNABLE SEX	1.17	.10	.01	1.03	63	.31
14	ADV CHA	1.35	.19*	.04*	2.13	61	.04
15	ADV CHA	1.56	.23*	.05*	2.48	62	.02
15	CHA TOPIC	.84	.14	.02	1.53	60	.13
16	CHA TOPIC	.87	.14	.02	1.57	61	.12
18	STRESS	.55	.19*	.04*	2.19	59	.03
17	STRESS	.59	.21*	.04*	2.38	60	.02

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

Underlined version represents findings in Table 8 with FRQA appearing in the 6th step. Plain text refers to an analysis with FRQADV at the very end. The results of both are included to facilitate comparison.

TABLE 18

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS
FROM THE LOSS MEASURE
WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

LOSS MEASURE:

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
LOSS ITEM 1	.25*	91	.21*	86
ITEM 2	.13	91	.14	86
ITEM 3	.18#	91	.13	86
ITEM 4	.14	91	-.09	86
ITEM 5	--			
ITEM 6	.08	91	.01	86
ITEM 7	.12	91	.17	86
ITEM 8	.18#	91	.07	86
ITEM 9	.12	91	.03	86
ITEM 10	-.03	91	.17	86
ITEM 11	.11	91	.12	86
ITEM 12	.26**	91	.21*	86
ITEM 13	-.11	91	.05	86
ITEM 14	.00	91	-.02	86
ITEM 15	.10	91	.09	86
ITEM 16	-.15	91	-.02	86
ITEM 17	-.03	91	.08	86
ITEM 18	-.02	91	-.16	86
ITEM 19	-.12	91	.02	86

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

See pages 59-61 for content of each item.

TABLE 19

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF DIFFERENT GROUPINGS OF ITEMS FROM THE LOSS MEASURE WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

GROUPINGS OF DIFFERENT ITEMS FROM LOSS MEASURE

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
LOSS HOSPITAL (items 1-5)	.24*	91	.20#	86
LOSS PARENTS (items 7,8)	.23*	91	.15	86
LOSS FAMILY (items 7,8,9,10)	.26*	91	.20#	86
LOSS FRIEND (item 12)	.24*	91	.21*	86

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 20

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS FROM THE PERCEPTION OF PARENTS MEASURE WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

ITEMS FROM PERCEPTION OF PARENTS MEASURE (POP)

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
M WANT KID NEAR HOME (item 1)	-.02	83	-.10	78
F WANT KID NEAR HOME (item 2)	.05	74	.05	70
M SUPPORT DECISION (item 3)	-.11	81	-.08	76
F SUPPORT DECISION (item 4)	-.16	72	-.14	68
M HARD TO DISS AGREE (item 5)	.03	88	.05	83
F HARD TO DISS AGREE (item 6)	-.03	79	.02	75

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

Continued on next page.

TABLE 20 CONTINUED

ITEMS FROM PERCEPTION OF PARENTS MEASURE (POP)

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
M OVERLY CONCERNED (item 7)	-.16	87	.00	83
F OVERLY CONCERNED (item 8)	-.11	79	-.01	75
M DEFINITE IDEAS (item 9)	.03	88	.13	83
F DEFINITE IDEAS (item 10)	.00	80	.08	76
M EXCESSIVE PRAISE (item 11)	.30**	89	.20#	84
F EXCESSIVE PRAISE (item 12)	.11	81	.10	77
PARENTS AFFECTIONATE REL (item 13)	-.18#	87	-.06	82
PARENTS NOT CLOSE	-.23*	86	-.08	82

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.00i

TABLE 21

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS FROM THE DIFF-SEP MEASURE WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

ITEMS FROM DIFFICULTY SEPARATING MEASURE

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
CLOSE TO HOME (item 1)	-.12	91	.05	86
DROP IN GRADES- (item 2)	.08	91	-.12	86
FEW SUMMER JOBS- (item 3)	.03	91	-.02	86
EXTRA-CURRIC ACTIV (item4)	.18#	91	.13	86
WITH PARENTS (item 5)	.10	91	.02	86
UNHAPPY AT CAMP (item 6)	--			
UNHAPPY LEAVING (item 7)	.22*	91	.16	86

#p <.10
*p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 22

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS FROM THE INDIRECTION MEASURE WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

ITEMS FROM INDIRECTION MEASURE (INDIR)

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
UNCLEAR ABOUT WHICH COLLEGE (item 1)	.09	91	.01	86
TRANSFERRED COLLEGES (item 2)	.07	91	-.01	86
LEAVE OF ABSENSE (item 3)	-.02	91	-.21*	86
LATE GRADUATION FROM COLLEGE (item 4)	-.07	91	.04	86
COLLEGE MAJOR DIFF FROM PHD (item 5)	.00	91	.08	86
CLARITY OF OCCUPATIONAL GOALS (item 6)	.03	91	.00	86

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 23

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS FROM THE STRESS MEASURE WITH DISS YRS AND PHD YRS

ITEMS FROM STRESS MEASURE

	DISS YRS	DF	PHD YRS	DF
HAD CHILDREN (item 1)	-.08	91	.05	86
GOT DIVORCED (item 2)	.15	91	.14	86
DEATH OR ILLNESS OF CLOSE PERSON (item 3)	-.02	91	-.10	86
GOT MARRIED OR BEGAN LONG-TERM RELAT (item 4)	.26**	91	.29*	86
FULL TIME JOB (item 5)	.13	91	.39***	86
HALF TIME JOB (item 6)	.-.03	91	.10	86
OTHER INTERFERING CIRCUMSTANCES (item 7)	.20*	91	.15	86

#p <.10
* p <.05
**p <.01
***p <.001

TABLE 24

PEARSON CORRELATIONS OF LOSS AND FRQADV
WITH OTHER INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

	LOSS	DF	FRQADV	DF
SEX	.01	91	.07	90
M EDU	.00	90	.04	89
F EDU	-.04	90	-.12	89
FAMST	-.02	91	-.19#	90
LOSS			.01	90
FOS	-.07	89	-.07	88
PREVDEG	-.08	91	-.05	90
POP	-.09	84	-.18#	83
DIFF-SEP	-.18#	91	.00	98
INDIR	-.19#	91	-.03	90
AGE	.04	87	-.27**	86
STRESS	.07	91	-.18#	90
ADV-CHA	.14	91	-.13	90
CHA-TOPIC	.15	90	.04	89
CONF-DEP	.23*	91	-.03	90
PLAN	.09	91	.28**	90
UNABLE	.18 #	91	-.25*	90

#p <.10
* p <.05
** p <.01
***p <.001

APPENDIX B

LETTERS TO SUBJECTS

The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Ph.D. Program in Psychology · Box 400
Graduate Center 33 West 42 Street New York, N.Y. 10036-8099
212 790 4231

June 1984

Dear Former Graduate Student,

I am writing to ask you to consider participating in my research. I am doing a doctoral dissertation on the experience graduate students have had working on their dissertations. I have found that remarkably little research has been done in this area even though it is one which strongly affects the life and work of many people. I am looking at such questions as why it is difficult or impossible for some students to do the dissertation, yet relatively easy for others.

The study focuses on students admitted to one of seven Ph.D. programs at The City University between 1969 and 1980. I am, myself, a doctoral candidate in the clinical psychology program working with Professor Herbert Nechin.

The study consists of a questionnaire which will be sent to you only if you decide to participate. It takes about an hour to fill out. If you agree to participate, please sign and return the enclosed consent form.

Whether or not you choose to participate in the study, I would very much appreciate your answering the enclosed page of demographic questions so that I will be able to assess whether the people who took part in the study were representative of CUNY dissertation writers.

All the information that you submit will be held in strictest confidence and anonymity. The Registrar, with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, has handled the organization of the mailing. I do not have access to your names and addresses, except as you may now provide them. The coordination of the data and mailings will be done by code numbers. After the mailing the linkage of the names and the code numbers will be destroyed. Data will be analyzed and reported for group trends only.

If you wish to receive a summary of the findings of the study, please check the appropriate box on the consent form.

I very much hope that you will decide to participate. Your help is essential. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at work (201) 567-0500 or at home (212) 243-0321.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Fred Stern

Fred Stern
65 Bank Street - Apt.25
New York, N.Y. 10014

The Graduate School and University Center
of the City University of New York

Ph.D. Program in Psychology : Box 400
Graduate Center 33 West 42 Street New York, N.Y. 10036 8099
212 790-4231

July 1984

Dear Current or Former Graduate Student,

It has been a few weeks since I sent you the questionnaire on dissertation writing. From time to time perhaps you consider filling it out, but wonder whether it would be too late for me to use the data. Let me assure you that it is not too late and that I would welcome your taking the time to complete it and return it to me. In fact, the more questionnaires I receive back the more conclusions I will be able to draw from the data.

If you have misplaced the questionnaire or decided that you no longer wish to participate, please let me know.

If you do still fill it out, I hope that doing so will not interfere with your work or your leisure and that you are having a good summer.

Sincerely,

Fred Stern

Fred Stern
65 Bank St. -Apt 25
New York, N.Y. 10014

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC FORM, QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONSENT FORM

CODE _____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Date of birth: _____ Sex: ___ male ___female

Citizenship: ___U.S. Native ___U.S. Naturalized ___Non U.S.
(Check one)

Date of receiving high school diploma: _____month/year

Date of receiving bachelor's degree: _____month/year

Date you began doctoral work at CUNY: _____month/year; Major field: _____

Did you acquire graduate degree(s) before beginning doctoral work at CUNY? ___yes ___no

If "yes," What degree? _____ Field? _____ Date conferred? _____
What degree? _____ Field? _____ Date conferred? _____

Please check all the stages of graduate work you have completed and give the dates of completion.

Completed:	Date completed
___all required coursework	_____month/year
___second doctoral exam	_____month/year
___dissertation proposal approved by committee	_____month/year
___dissertation defense	_____month/year
___Ph.D. conferred	_____month/year

Approximate date that you began to look for a dissertation topic? _____month/year

Are you currently matriculated at City University? ___yes ___no

If you have not yet completed the Ph.D., do you plan to continue work towards the degree?
___yes
___no

If "yes," when do you expect to receive the Ph.D.? _____month/year

Present profession: _____

When you entered graduate school, what was your primary reason for getting the degree?
___to teach
___to be a researcher/scholar
___to teach and be a researcher/scholar
___other (specify) _____

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire. Please check to be sure that the dates can be easily read and that you put both month and year.

PART I

QUESTIONS RELATING TO BACKGROUND AND PAST EXPERIENCES

1. Racial or ethnic group (check all that apply):
___White ___Black ___American Indian
___Spanish-American/Mexican-American/Chicano
___Puerto Rican-American
___Oriental
___Other, specify _____

2. Family of origin's socioeconomic status (check one):
___lower ___middle-upper
___lower-middle ___upper
___middle

3. Indicate position of yourself and siblings in your family. Beside each sibling position, circle self, brother, or sister depending upon which of you held that position.

1st born: self brother sister
2nd born: self brother sister
3rd born: self brother sister
4th born: self brother sister

If you have more than three siblings please indicate total number of siblings ____ and your position in the family ____.

4. Please indicate the education of your parents by circling the highest grade attained for each.

Your Father: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | 9 10 11 12 | 1 2 3 4 | MA MD PHD | Postdoctoral
Elementary Sch. High Sch. College Graduate
Your Mother: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | 9 10 11 12 | 1 2 3 4 | MA MD PHD | Postdoctoral

5. Father's Primary Occupation: _____

6. Mother's Primary Occupation: _____

7. Circle the average grade you received during each of the periods below:

7th - 9th grades	D-C	C	C-B	B	B-A	A
10th - 11th grades	D-C	C	C-B	B	B-A	A
12th grade	D-C	C	C-B	B	B-A	A
Freshman College	D-C	C	C-B	B	B-A	A
Sophomore - Junior College	D-C	C	C-B	B	B-A	A
Senior Year College	D-C	C	C-B	B	B-A	A

8a. Please indicate how much time elapsed between receiving the BA and beginning graduate course work (e.g., MA program in same field as eventual doctoral program) which officially counted towards the fulfillment of the Ph.D. requirements at City.
_____years to the nearest 1/2.

8b. What did you do during the elapsed time that you recorded in 8a? Please list major activities and jobs (teaching, MA Program in other field, travelling, etc.) held during that period. Circle number of years doing each.

Activity or Job	Circle Years Spent on Each					
_____	1/2	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1/2	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1/2	1	2	3	4	5

9. How much time, if any, elapsed between completion of the MA (in the same field as doctoral work) and continuation of doctoral studies at City?
_____years to the nearest 1/2.
_____did not get M.A. in same field.

10. How much did you participate in extra-curricular activities during each of the periods below?

	Very little						A lot
7th - 9 th grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10th - 11th grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12th grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
College years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. When you were growing up, how often did you get into physical fights?

Circle One: Never 1 2 3 4 5 6 Often 7

12. If you fought, who usually won?

___yourself
___the other person

13. Circle all the ages you were when you held a part-time or full-time summer job.

Your Age: 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

14. Circle your ages at the times when you lived with your parent(s) for more than one month.

	Your Age									
During the academic year:	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
During the summer:	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27

15. Did you attend summer camp away from home? ___yes ___no

If "yes," check all the ages you were when you attended camp and then evaluate how you felt about sleep-away camp.

	Hated Camp						Loved Camp
___ 5-7 years old	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
___ 8-10 years old	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
___ 11-13 years old	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
___ 14-17 years old	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Indicate how you felt during the years of school listed below:

	Unhappy						Very Happy
11th grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12th grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Freshman year of college	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sophomore, Junior years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Senior year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The year after college	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. Did you ever attend boarding school? ___yes ___no

If "yes," circle the grades during which you attended boarding school.

Grade: 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

18. Have you ever been hospitalized overnight? ___yes ___no

If "yes," indicate your age at the time of each hospitalization and length of each stay.

Your age at first hospitalization: ____years old/Length of stay ____days
Your age at second hospitalization: ____years old/Length of stay ____days
Your age at third hospitalization: ____years old/Length of stay ____days
Your age at fourth hospitalization: ____years old/Length of stay ____days

19. Are your parents separated or divorced? ___yes ___no

If "yes," how old were you at the time that they were first separated?
____years old

20. Did anyone close to you die before you were 20 years old? ___yes ___no

If "yes," indicate with a check mark(s) those who died and then include your age at the time of each person's death.

___mother: Your age at the time: ____years old
___father: Your age at the time: ____years old
___brother: Your age at the time: ____years old
___sister: Your age at the time: ____years old
___close relative: Your age at the time: ____years old
___close friend: Your age at the time: ____years old
___close friend: Your age at the time: ____years old

21. Were you separated from both your parents for more than 2 days before you were 8 years old? (exclude hospitalizations) ___yes ___no

If "yes," indicate your age at the time and the length of your stay apart from your parents.
Your age the first time: ____years old/Length of stay ____days
Your age the second time: ____years old/Length of stay ____days

22. How frequently did your parents take vacations without you?

___very rarely
___approximately once a year
___several times a year

23. When you were young, did your mother work? ___yes ___no

If "yes," what age were you when she began to work? _____years old

24. What distance was the college you attended from home?

___less than 40 miles ___101 to 700 miles
___40 to 100 miles ___more than 700 miles

25. When you were growing up, how often was each of your parents away on business trips? Circle one.

	Rarely						Often
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

26. When you were growing up, how often did each of your parents work on weekends?

	Rarely						Often
Father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

27. Before you were 14 years old, were you ever left with only one parent while the other was away for more than three months? ___yes ___no

    If "yes," Who was away? _____ _____
    For how long? _____ _____
    How old were you? _____ _____

28. When you were applying to colleges, did you know definitely which one you wanted to attend?
    ___yes
    ___no

29. Did you transfer from one college to another?
    ___yes
    ___no

30. Did you take a leave of absence from college?
    ___yes
    ___no

31. Was your college major in the same field as your eventual field of doctoral study at CUNY? ___yes ___no

32. At the time of graduation from college, how clear were your occupational goals for the next four years?

Circle One:	Not Clear					Very Clear	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

33. How did you graduate from college?

    ___on schedule, after four years
    ___late--graduation was delayed
    ___barely on schedule--finished requirements at last minute.

34. During college, how many incompletes did you take in order to finish papers?

    ___none
    ___one or two
    ___three or four
    ___more than four

35. During graduate school, how many incompletes did you take in order to finish papers?

    ___none
    ___one or two
    ___three or four
    ___more than four

36. Would you say that you wrote most of your papers close to the time they were due, under the pressure of the deadline?

    In high school: ___yes ___no
    In college: ___yes ___no
    In graduate school: ___yes ___no

37. Do you work well under pressure? ___yes ___no

38. Do you like to write? ___yes ___no

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling the appropriate number.
(1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree)

	AGREE				DISAGREE
39. My mother wanted me to go to a college near home.	1	2	3	4	5
40. My father wanted me to go to a college near home.	1	2	3	4	5
41. My mother clearly supported my making an informed decision about which college to attend.	1	2	3	4	5
42. My father clearly supported my making an informed decision about which college to attend.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I often found it hard to disagree with my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I often found it hard to disagree with my father.	1	2	3	4	5
45. When I was growing up, my mother was overly concerned that I might make the wrong decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
46. When I was growing up, my father was overly concerned that I might make the wrong decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
47. My mother had definite ideas about what I should become.	1	2	3	4	5
48. My father had definite ideas about what I should become.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Often my mother confided in me.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Often my father confided in me.	1	2	3	4	5
51. When I was growing up, I received excessive praise from my mother.	1	2	3	4	5
52. When I was growing up, I received excessive praise from my father.	1	2	3	4	5
53. My parents had an openly affectionate relationship with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
54. My parents weren't emotionally very close to one another.	1	2	3	4	5

PART II
QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DISSERTATION AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

1. Assess the degree of support for your doing the dissertation that was available (whether or not you tapped it) from the following people. Write N/A next to those not applicable.

	Unsupportive						Very Supportive
Spouse or equivalent:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Best friend:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friends in general:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mother:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Father:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Siblings:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dissertation Adviser:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boss (if you held a job):	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. Indicate your sources of income during the first two years following your completion of course requirements. Check all sources of income listed below that provided at least 20% of your income.

___Fellowship requiring no duties
___Teaching assistantship
___Research assistantship
___Spouse or equivalent
___Parents
___Job
___Savings
___Loans
___Other (specify: _____)

3. Overall, how would you rate your graduate program in terms of the preparation it gave you for doing a dissertation?

Circle One: Inadequate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Excellent

4. Overall, how would you rate the faculty members of your program on their ability to work collaboratively with one another in running the department?

Circle One: Poor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Excellent

5. How many years elapsed between beginning work on the dissertation requirement (including false starts) and receiving the Ph.D.? _____years

6. Using the categories below, account for the years you spent between starting on the dissertation requirement and receiving the degree. (Indicate number of years to nearest 1/2 year).

YEARS SPENT WORKING ON THE DISSERTATION:	NUMBER OF YEARS
Full-time	_____ years
Half-time (rest of the time spent at part-time job, and other duties including courses and family)	_____ years
Only weekends and vacations while having full-time job, or other responsibilities	_____ years
YEARS NOT WORKING ON THE DISSERTATION:	
Years not working on the dissertation because you had no time available to do so.	_____ years
Years not working on the dissertation although you had substantial time to do so.	_____ years

[The total should add up to the total elapsed time from beginning work on the dissertation requirement to finishing.]

7. How many of the elapsed years were spent:

At or near the university: _____ years

More than 30 miles from the university _____ years

8. Obligations and stressful experiences (other than dissertation) that occurred in the two years that followed your completion of course requirements. Check all that apply.

___had one or more children to care for and/or support
___got separated or divorced from a spouse or equivalent
___had death or illness of someone very close to you
___got married or began long-term relationship
___had full-time job
___had part-time job
___other obligation or circumstance that took away from energy or time to work on dissertation (specify): _____

_____

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling either YES or NO in the column to the right:

		AGREE	DISAGREE
9.	On the whole faculty members made it easy to talk with them outside of class.	YES	NO
10.	On the whole faculty members were indifferent and casual towards the students.	YES	NO
11.	I became very close friends with some fellow graduate students.	YES	NO
12.	I often got caught up in complaining about what was wrong about the university.	YES	NO
13.	On the whole faculty members prepared their classes and seminars diligently.	YES	NO
14.	Before I even began graduate school, I talked to people who had gone through the program to see if it was something that I really wanted to do.	YES	NO
15.	In the initial stages of the dissertation, I sought out a lot of information from recent graduates of the program as to how best to go about the dissertation.	YES	NO
16.	Before I began looking for a topic, I read several dissertations.	YES	NO
17.	Before selecting a dissertation adviser, I found out from other students how they had experienced working with that professor.	YES	NO
18.	For the most part, I worked steadily and consistently on the dissertation. I regularly scheduled hours to work on it each week.	YES	NO
19.	Often before I began to work on the dissertation, I would sharpen my pencil, clean up my desk, or do something like that.	YES	NO
20.	I gave myself some treat or reward when I finished different parts of the dissertation.	YES	NO
21.	I went through periods of several days when I literally lived and breathed nothing but the dissertation.	YES	NO

		AGREE	DISAGREE
22.	In order to get things done on the dissertation I had to establish some deadline that I believed in.	YES	NO
23.	I went through long periods (over one month) when I had the time to work on the dissertation but was unable to bring myself to do so.	YES	NO

24. Compare yourself with your classmates on the following items:

	MORE THAN MOST STUDENTS	AVERAGE	LESS THAN MOST
Talked with faculty outside of class	____	____	____
Spent time talking with students from other disciplines	____	____	____
Talked with departmental secretaries	____	____	____
Expressed admiration for faculty	____	____	____
Participated in committees and other departmental functions	____	____	____
Met with dissertation adviser	____	____	____
Had financial concerns	____	____	____
Was generally anxious	____	____	____
Was generally depressed	____	____	____
Enjoyed arguing a point	____	____	____
Focused on getting through the program	____	____	____

25. Roughly how many months, if any, did you spend working on the dissertation requirement before selecting a dissertation adviser?

_____months

26. Did you change dissertation advisers in the course of working on the dissertation? ___yes ___no

    If "yes," how long had you worked on the dissertation requirement before the change in adviser's took place? _____months

    And why did the change occur?

A NOTE FOR THOSE WHO CHANGED DISSERTATION ADVISERS: IN ALL THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW THAT CONCERN DISSERTATION ADVISERS, PLEASE REFER TO THE FIRST ADVISER WITH WHOM YOU WORKED FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR.

27. Your adviser was:

    ___younger than you
    ___the same age as you
    ___about _____years older than you

28. Your adviser was: ___male ___female

29. How closely did your topic tie in with your adviser's research? Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Much Tied In

30. To what extent was your adviser interested in your dissertation topic? Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Interested

31. Overall, how helpful was your relationship with your adviser to getting the dissertation done? Unhelpful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Helpful

32. Was a dissertation seminar offered in the curriculum? ___yes ___no

    If "yes," did you participate? ___yes ___no
    did you find it helpful? ___yes ___no

Estimate how frequently you met with each of the following persons to discuss your dissertation during the bulk of your work on it [Place a check mark in the appropriate column]:

		Once a Week	Once a Month	Once in 4 months	Rarely or Never
33.	Dissertation adviser	___	___	___	___
34.	Other faculty	___	___	___	___
35.	Peer support group designed to help with dissertation	___	___	___	___
36.	Fellow graduate students	___	___	___	___
37.	Therapist	___	___	___	___
38.	Mother and/or Father	___	___	___	___
39.	Other (specify:)_____	___	___	___	___

40. How many seminar presentations, lectures, or classes did you give related to the dissertation, while working on it?

    Total number: _____

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling YES or NO in the column to the right:

		AGREE	DISAGREE
41.	Sometimes I felt my adviser was giving me a difficult time for no good reason.	YES	NO
42.	Often I became anxious before meeting with my adviser.	YES	NO
43.	Sometimes I felt that I had not done enough work to warrant meeting.	YES	NO
44.	When we met we usually got right down to work on the dissertation.	YES	NO

		AGREE	DISAGREE
45.	Sometimes misunderstandings or things my adviser said kept me awake at night.	YES	NO
46.	I depended on my adviser to set deadlines for me.	YES	NO
47.	I depended on my adviser for support and encouragement.	YES	NO
48.	I had trouble accepting advice from my adviser; I wanted to do the dissertation my way.	YES	NO
49.	I often felt that my adviser didn't give me enough direction and guidance.	YES	NO
50.	Sometimes I felt anxious that I would reveal my ignorance to my adviser.	YES	NO
51.	My dissertation adviser was often too involved in his/her own work to fully meet his/her responsibilities to me.	YES	NO
52.	Sometimes I dreaded what my adviser would think of what I had written.	YES	NO
53.	At the end of the appointment we usually set a date for the next meeting.	YES	NO
54.	It was usually left that I would contact my adviser when I was ready to meet again.	YES	NO
55.	When I was stuck, I was rarely able to ask my adviser for help.	YES	NO
56.	I did the dissertation essentially on my own with very little input from my adviser.	YES	NO
57.	I doubt that I could have written the dissertation without my adviser's input.	YES	NO
58.	Sometimes I felt my adviser was over-involved in my dissertation.	YES	NO
59.	There were a number of topics of interest to me and I could just as easily have chosen a different topic from the one I did choose.	YES	NO
60.	I chose my topic essentially so it would fit in with my adviser's research.	YES	NO
61.	The topic I chose was very personal.	YES	NO

		AGREE	DISAGREE
62.	The topic I chose was one that I had thought about, in one way or another, before I ever entered graduate school.	YES	NO
63.	It was important to me to select a topic which dealt with questions which were considered important in the field at the time.	YES	NO
64.	I selected a topic which in many ways was off the beaten track.	YES	NO
65.	I and my dissertation adviser chose the topic.	YES	NO
66.	Essentially my adviser chose the topic.	YES	NO
67.	Essentially I chose the topic.	YES	NO
68.	The aim of my dissertation was to lend support to a current theory or school of thought.	YES	NO
69.	The aim of my dissertation was to challenge a current theory or school of thought.	YES	NO
70.	To an extent, my dissertation challenged my parents' values.	YES	NO
71.	To an extent, my dissertation challenged my adviser's work.	YES	NO
72.	To an extent, my dissertation challenged current views or attitudes held in the department.	YES	NO
73.	I chose my topic for largely practical reasons.	YES	NO
74.	I did not feel particularly invested in my topic.	YES	NO

75. When you were working on the dissertation and feeling good about your work, who did you hope would read your dissertation when it was done? (Check all that apply)

___the dissertation committee
___a few friends or colleagues
___graduate students interested in the same area
___professors interested in the same area
___many people
___father
___mother
___spouse
___sibling
___other (specify) _____

76. When you were working on the dissertation did you sometimes expect or hope: (check all that apply)

___to turn it into an article
___to turn it into a book
___to do further research in the same area
___that others would build upon your work
___that it would have an impact on the field

77. Did you go through periods when you seriously considered abandoning the dissertation? ___yes ___no

If "yes," what did you consider doing instead?

_____

78. Did you publish an article related directly to the dissertation in the course of working on it? ___yes ___no

79. Have you published some aspect of the dissertation since completing it?
___yes
___no

If "yes," indicate in what form.

___an article
___a chapter in a book
___a book

80. Was there anyone whom you acknowledged in the dissertation as having helped you above all others or to whom you dedicated the dissertation? ___yes ___ no

If "yes," indicate with a check mark whom.

___dissertation advisor
___parent
___spouse
___sibling
___friend
___other: specify:_____

81. Do you have a copy of your dissertation easily accessible to you? [A copy that you could find in a few minutes?]

___yes ___no

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling YES or NO in the column to the right:

		AGREE	DISAGREE
82.	There were times while I was working on the dissertation that I felt suicidal.	YES	NO
83.	Sometimes I was so excited about my dissertation that I found it difficult to concentrate on it.	YES	NO
84.	Once I missed an appointment with my dissertation adviser because the time had simply slipped my mind.	YES	NO
85.	Often I was afraid I might lose a significant portion of my dissertation or notes of which I had no copy.	YES	NO

86. Did you ever actually lose a significant portion of your dissertation or notes of which you had no copy? ___yes ___no

If "yes," please describe the circumstances.

87. Evaluate yourself in comparison with your classmates with regard to each of the qualities listed below, as you saw yourself around the third year of graduate school.

	Top third of class	Middle third of class	Lower third of class
Capacity to read quickly	___	___	___
Capacity to write well	___	___	___
Knowledge of your field	___	___	___
Knowledge of other fields	___	___	___
Ability to do research	___	___	___
Ability to teach	___	___	___
Ability to establish professional contacts	___	___	___
Grasp of where the field was heading	___	___	___

88. Now that it is done, how do you feel about your dissertation itself as a piece of work (not as a requirement for the degree)--as you think of the return on your investment of time and energy?

___very satisfied with it
___fairly satisfied with it
___rather dissatisfied

89. Roughly, what was your committee's evaluation of your dissertation?

___excellent--should be published
___good, solid--may be publishable
___fair
___poor

90. How was your dissertation accepted at the defense?

___as it was, no revisions
___with minor revisions
___with major revisions
___other (specify) _____

91. What was the approximate span of time that elapsed between the defense and your depositing the dissertation in the library? _____months

92. To what extent was the amount of time it took you to do the dissertation affected by each of the following factors? If factor not present, or not applicable, circle "N/A."

	Did Not Lengthen Time				Lengthened Time A Lot			Not Applicable
Insufficient preparation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Insufficient financial support	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Changes in dissertation topic after some work already completed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Writing dissertation while employed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Nature of the dissertation subject per se	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Your high expectations for the quality of your work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Lack of available jobs awaiting you when you finish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A

	Did Not Lengthen Time				Lengthened Time A Lot			Not Applicable
Ambivalence about the degree, or type of life it might lead to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Family obligations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Physical health problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Difficulty getting access to the material	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Difficulty collecting the data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
Other (specify) _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A

93. What were the major factors that contributed to your getting the dissertation done?

94. Describe how your attitude towards the dissertation changed in the course of working on it.

95. Describe what changes occurred in you as a result of doing the dissertation.

PART III

Below are a series of statements. Please read each one and then write either T (true) or F (false) on the line following each statement. If you feel a statement is true or mostly true about you, write a T on the line. If you feel it is not true or mostly not true about you, write an F on the line. Please answer each item, even if you have to guess, and mark only one answer for each item.

1. When I think I've made a particularly "strong" statement to someone I get a bit worried that I might have made the person feel bad. _____
2. I generally feel guilty about my own happiness if a friend tells me that (s)he's depressed. _____
3. I sometimes get uncomfortable because I've pretended to be more committed to a cause than I really feel. _____
4. It makes me feel self-conscious to perform a stunt at a party, even if other people are doing the same sort of thing. _____
5. As a child, I sometimes played sick to get out of something. _____
6. I must admit that I'm quite nice looking. _____
7. I've sometimes gone without something rather than have to ask others for it. _____
8. I dread the idea of walking into a party by myself when most of the others have been there for some time. _____
9. Often, when I sit down to solve a problem, my thoughts drift off to a bunch of other things. _____
10. It's pretty difficult to turn down a gesture of friendship without hurting the other person's feelings. _____
11. I feel uneasy being the center of attention in a group. _____
12. I frequently find myself not telling others about my good luck so they won't have to feel envious. _____
13. I often have trouble saying no to people. _____
14. I frequently find myself making a date or appointment and then dread having to go through with it. _____
15. I'm very rarely worried that I'll look clumsy or awkward at a social gathering. _____

16. I'm reluctant to make a large purchase without consulting someone else first. _____
17. Before getting down to work on a project, I suddenly find a whole bunch of other things to take care of first. _____
18. I sometimes find myself apologizing for my behavior even though an apology isn't really called for. _____
19. I must say that I'm pretty confident when it comes to my sexual ability. _____
20. I hate having a fuss made over me. _____
21. I'm quite comfortable in the role of group spokesperson. _____
22. Most people are secretly pleased when someone else gets into trouble. _____
23. I often brood about something I've said which may have been taken in the wrong way by another person. _____
24. I tend to believe that people who look out for themselves first are selfish. _____
25. As a child, when I was called on by a teacher, I often felt my stomach sink, even when I knew the right answer. _____
26. I sometimes cross the street to avoid meeting someone I know. _____
27. When someone I know well succeeds at something, I usually feel that I've lost out in comparison. _____
28. I rarely have trouble concentrating on something for a long period of time. _____
29. It makes me feel uneasy to have to ask other people for things. _____
30. When I notice that things have been going particularly well for me, I get the feeling it just can't last. _____
31. I feel uneasy about breaking a date or an appointment. _____
32. I'm pretty competent at most things that I try. _____
33. Often, before I act, I consider how others would regard my action. _____
34. I'd rather give in on most issues than get into heavy debates with people. _____
35. I'm not one for organizing group activities, though I usually enjoy them once they're under way. _____

36. I generally feel uptight about telling a boss or professor that I think I'm entitled to a better deal. _____

37. When I have to ask others for their help, I often feel that I'm being bothersome. _____

38. I often compromise in situations in order to avoid conflict. _____

39. On the whole, I'm quite satisfied with the way I look. _____

40. I have often "woken up" during a lecture or meeting and realized that I haven't heard a word of what was said. _____

41. I sometimes "play down" my competence in front of others so they won't think I'm bragging. _____

42. Before I make a final decision about something, I like to check with others about their views and ideas. _____

43. I sometimes have trouble acting like myself when I'm with people I don't know well. _____

44. I've often felt a little ashamed of the way my house (apartment) looks. _____

45. When I've made a decision, I usually stick to it. _____

46. Before going to some type of social gathering, I'm often uptight that I just won't look good enough. _____

47. Although I usually begin projects with lots of get up and go, I tend to get bored after a while. _____

48. Secretly, I think I'm pretty special, but I try not to "let on" to others about that. _____

49. I often feel self-conscious when someone who "counts" compliments me. _____

50. I used to fantasize about doing something that no one else had ever done before. _____

51. When I'm involved in a competitive activity (sports, a game, work), I'm often so concerned with how well I'm doing that I don't enjoy the activity as much as I could. _____

52. When people are watching me while I'm doing something, I have difficulty not being aware that they're watching. _____

53. If it's easy for me to learn to do something, I have trouble imagining anyone else having difficulty with it. _____

54. If someone calls attention to me when I'm doing well, I feel awkward or embarrassed. _____

55. Even though I feel I have a lot of potential, I sometimes feel like a phony or a fraud. _____

56. It pays to check out your ideas with other people before making a final decision. _____

57. It's important not to get too excited about things one really desires. _____

58. A sure-fire way to end up disappointed is to want something too much. _____

59. Instead of celebrating, I often feel let down after completing an important task or project. _____

60. Mostly, I find that I measure up to the standards that I set for myself. _____

61. When I'm praised for something, I sometimes wonder if I will be able to do as well the next time. _____

62. When things seem to be going really well for me, I get uneasy that I'll do something to ruin it. _____

63. In the lower grades in school, if I got a good grade on a work assignment, I often felt that I had fooled the teacher. _____

64. When I have to meet an important deadline, I get so nervous that it's hard to keep my mind on the work I'm doing. _____

Please complete the following sentences. Try to write the first thought that comes to mind.

When she saw her dissertation adviser, she _____

_____

Years later when she came across a copy of her dissertation, she _____

_____

When she read her friend's dissertation, she _____

_____

After her defense, she told _____

_____

When she saw her father coming, she _____

_____

Her father _____

_____

She would have done anything to forget the time she _____

_____

She looked away because she _____

_____

She deeply regretted _____

_____

She became really angry _____

_____

If anyone stood in her way, she would _____

_____

When she saw her mother coming, she _____

_____

Her mother _____

_____

Please use the space below to include anything you think is relevant about your dissertation experience that I did not address in the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Code:_____

Standard Consent Form

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING

I agree to participate in this study on dissertation writing being done by Fred Stern, graduate student at City University, and hereby give my consent to be a subject. I understand that my responses will be kept in strictest confidence and that all data collected will remain anonymous. I have the option to withdraw at any time and have the right to request that my responses not be used.

Signature _____

Date _____

Are you interested in receiving a summary of the results of this study?
Yes__ No__

I am planning to interview some people about their experience working on the dissertation. Would you be willing to be interviewed?
Yes__ No__

Please give your current address if different from the one used in this mailing.

_____

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