The American Backpacker Traveling Alone: Relationships, attachment and object relations of those who lived in transit

by

Michal Weber

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.

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Abstract

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Researchers and clinicians alike often place implicit, if not explicit, emphasis on the importance of long-term intimate relationships for mental health. This study attempts to explore this topic by focusing on a specific population that elects to spend a significant period of time without the benefit of immediately available long-term relationships. The present study examines the hypotheses that individuals who choose to spend a significant period of time without long-term relationships would differ from the normal population in object relations and attachment patterns, demonstrating difficulties in both realms.

The population used in this study is the American urban backpacker (budget traveler) traveling essentially alone for at least six months. Sixty three subjects completed a questionnaire including basic demographics, relationships history, travel history, the early memory test, Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI, Bell, 1991), and the Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire, Revisited (ECR-R; Fraley et al., 2000). Four subjects were then interviewed in depth and the data was analyzed qualitatively.

Contrary to expectations, this population did not demonstrate gross psychopathology. On the BORRTI they did not differ from the non-clinical normative population. The early memory test suggested these subjects benefit from a consolidated ego identity. Their representations of others were generally balanced, nuanced, and included minimal splitting. On the attachment measure the population scored significantly lower on relationship-related anxiety than the normative population. However there was an over-representation of the Dismissive-Avoidant attachment style. A post hoc analysis of the data suggests that individuals with lower scores on both the relationship-related avoidance and anxiety dimension may be better suited for sustained long-term solo travel.

A number of theories are raised to explain the findings of this study with particular emphasis placed on Mahler's theory of separation-individuation. The rapprochement developmental stage and its inherent focus on negotiating dependency and autonomy needs is explored in relations to the quantitative and qualitative data obtained. The role of group-membership in the backpacking community and the use of internet contact with one's social support system back home are also explored to explain the findings.

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clinical work has inspired me to explore the balance between the individual as a clinician and as a person in the psychotherapy setting.

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Chapter I
Introduction

Imagine packing some clothes in a big backpack, buying a ticket, and leaving your home, family, friends, career, and country. Some people are doing this right now. They travel the world carrying their basic essentials on their backs, and they venture alone into the unknown in the hope of discovering the world and the people in it. Backpackers experience a great deal of autonomy while traveling and many end up venturing on their trips purposefully alone.

This study is an attempt to better understand this word, "alone". In the scant literature available on backpackers, the sense of autonomy and vitality is clearly apparent. However, to accomplish this, many choose to travel alone. In this study I focus on a particular population of backpackers who chose to spend an extensive period of time without physically available long-term relationships in an ever-changing physical environment. It is my hope that this study will help shed light on the role of long-term relationships in people's lives through the closer examination of the character structures of those individuals who choose to live without them.

Close intimate relationships are implicitly, if not explicitly, valued in psychology. Humans are frequently conceptualized as shaped by the forces of evolution to be social (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). The experience of belonging is also considered essential (Maslow, 1954; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Waters & Cummings, 2000). But backpackers are not asocial. In fact, they often socialize with fellow backpackers and seek experiences and interactions

with people from the host culture. What they lack, while traveling, is available others with whom they share emotional and physical intimacy in the context of long-term relationships. In other words, while traveling, no one knows them and they do not know anyone in any deep way. There is no opportunity to develop long-term relationships where emotional intimacy can be nurtured.

The importance of close relationships has gained great popularity in the field of psychology in part with the backing of object relations theories in psychoanalysis (Storr, 1988) and the great body of literature on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980). Both object relations theory and attachment theory highlight the importance of the early caregiver-infant relationship in facilitating mental health. Object relations theorists, such as Fairbairn and Guntrip, emphasize the importance of ongoing relationships for psychological growth throughout the lifespan (Fairbairn, 1944; Fairbairn, 1946; Guntrip, 1969; Guntrip, 1971). In attachment theory, close others are deemed essential throughout the lifespan for the maintenance of an internal sense of security and safety.

Backpackers enjoy a great sense of independence, autonomy and vitality while, for a period of time, they forsake close relationships. It is this paradox which is the focus of this study. Since I could locate no literature in the field of psychology examining the population of backpackers, this study is constructed as an exploratory study into the experience of backpackers. Within this context, a focus is placed on backpackers' object relations and attachment styles. For this purpose I have chosen to focus on backpackers who travel alone for significant amount of time. This study is also restricted to American backpackers. Backpacking in other cultures such as Israel,

Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Europe has become normalized and is accepted in these cultures as a normative developmental stage. In the United States backpackers receive less support and understanding from friends and family than in those other nations (Riley, 1988). As such, the wish to backpack for Americans is more likely to be powerfully internally driven, making them suitable candidates to investigate this relationship between object relations, attachment theory, and the experience of backpacking alone.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Time Apart From Long-Term Relationships

Individuals who spend significant amounts of time alone are frequently pathologized in the psychological literature both for the choice to isolate themselves from close long-term relations (Barnett, 1978; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1954; Storr, 1988) and for their preference for solitude (Burger, 1995; Storr, 1988). When not quite pathologized, solitude has been frequently correlated with decreased happiness (Burger, 1995; Fischer & Phillips, 1982; Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1978; Larson, 1990) contributing to the common belief that solitude is aversive. From an evolutionary perspective, it has been argued that humans are social animals who were shaped by the forces of evolution to thrive in the context of a social network (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003).

Baumeister and Leary (1995) attempt to advance a strong comprehensive and uncompromising argument against the benefits and value of isolation. In their belongingness hypothesis they propose that humans are driven to establish and maintain a number of long-term positive and significant interpersonal relationships. These relationships must involve frequent and emotionally pleasant interactions in the context of long-term, stable, and mutually caring relationships. To support their hypothesis they present an extensive literature review drawing on research examining human behavior, cognition, and affective states in various experimental and naturalistic settings. They point to evidence that humans laboriously seek to form

social bonds and protect social bonds from dissolution. Within social bonds, individuals tend to demonstrate cognitive distortions and biases which are understood by the authors as strengthening the sense of belongingness (1995). Affectively, they point out, individuals in intimate personal relations demonstrate greater happiness and a decrease in anxiety[1]. Baumeister and Leary further suggest that close relationships, and romantic relationships in particular, may serve as an anxiety buffer.

Baumeister and Leary argue that human beings universally need to feel that they belong throughout the life cycle and do so in the context of long-term relationships. Furthermore, they emphasize that individuals need frequent positive interactions with these others. The authors view the need to belong as more than a need for intimate attachments or social interactions. They note that the frequent positive contact with the relationship partners serve to create the longed for feeling of belongingness. Drawing on Maslow's motivational hierarchy, they point out that Maslow ranked belongingness and love needs in the middle of his hierarchy, placing them before esteem and self-actualization needs. In his description of belongingness and love needs Maslow emphasizes both the need for intimate relationships and the need to feel embedded in a group and a place (Maslow, 1954). He comments on the difficulty of fulfilling this need in the American culture where, he feels, intimacy, interpersonal connection, and a firm sense of belongingness cannot be taken for granted. He argues that the flourishing of self-help groups and other "intentional communities" (p. 44) are motivated by

[1] See article for summary of research findings

> …unsatisfied hunger for contact, for intimacy, for belongingness and by the need to overcome the widespread feelings of alienation, aloneness, strangeness, and loneliness, which have been worsened by our mobility, by the breakdown of traditional groupings, the scattering of families, the generation gap, the steady urbanization and disappearance of village face-to-faceness and the resulting shallowness of American friendship (p. 44).

Maslow views belongingness as a central need immediately following the need for safety. He labels this need 'Belongingness and Love' though the conditions for fulfilling this need remain more vague than Baumeister and Leary's belongingness hypothesis. Maslow's views suggest a greater emphasis on a sense of belongingness to a group than on ongoing close interpersonal relationships. He writes of the individual who satisfies his safety needs, "He will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his group or family, and he will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal" (1954, p. 43). Maslow's exact wording here de-emphasizes the importance of a connection with a particular individual in favor of a more general sense of belongingness to a group and positive interactions with others in this group.

While a sense of belongingness is important, research suggests correlations between being in close relationships, intimate romantic relations in particular, and greater reported happiness and decreased anxiety (Burger, 1995; Fischer & Phillips, 1982; Florian et al., 2002). Florian, Mikulincer and Hirschberger draw on Becker's view to represent the role of romantic relationships. They write, "In Becker's view, with the breakdown of organized religion in Western cultures during the 20th century, romantic relationships emerged as one of the primary social domains through which

people may obtain a sense of security and function with relative equanimity in the face of existential concerns" (p. 529). Here, Becker's view echo's Maslow's observation of increased difficulties establishing a sense of belongingness suggesting that romantic and close relations may now replace the role of organized religion. Florian et al.'s research suggests that close relations and romantic relationships in particular, may serve as an anxiety buffer. They suggest thinking about one's close romantic relationship may free the individual from needing to activate defenses against anxiety, or at least anxiety over mortality emphasized in their research (2002).

Other researchers examining the state of solitude offer more balanced descriptions of the experience and its repercussions. Larson's research on the experience of solitude throughout the lifespan and his close examination of research on the topic offers a more nuanced position, highlighting the change in preference and response to solitude at different developmental stages of one's life (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1978; Larson, 1990). Nonetheless, Larson points out the many negative reactions to solitude. Solitude tends to be associated with feelings of loneliness and passivity. These feelings are most prominent during adolescence. Individuals who are alone also tend to be less aroused as well as more susceptible to fear. However, with age, solitude becomes more weakly associated with the painful feelings of separation suggesting that solitude tends to be a less aversive experience in the older adult population.

Larson points out that solitude and loneliness are separate concepts that are often inter-related. Loneliness is rooted in one's subjective experience, while solitude is rooted in the objective state of separation from others (Larson, 1990). Both

loneliness and privacy are concepts rooted in the subjective experience. These subjective states are often associated with the experience of social isolation and may shed light on the nature of that experience. However, isolation does not evoke the same subjective reactions in all individuals. Some individuals are more susceptible to feeling lonely when alone. Individuals who are lonelier respond more negatively to time spent alone, while those who report less loneliness view solitude as a satisfactory and benevolent state (Rubenstein & Shaver, 1982). Likewise, individuals with more private lifestyle attitudes demonstrate a preference for more isolated wilderness backpacking experiences (Twight, Smith & Wissinger, 1981). Other research points to the complexities involved in establishing a firm connection between loneliness and solitude. Fischer and Phillips (1982) found that an isolation measure was tenuously correlated with subjects' stated wish for more confidants or friends. However, regardless of the stated wish, the preference for solitude remained correlated with reported unhappiness (Fischer & Phillips, 1982) as well as to the subjective experience of loneliness (Burger, 1995). Burger suggests that these individuals who are both lonely and prefer solitude may not have the type of relationships they want (1995). A related question, alluded to in that same article, is whether these individuals may, in fact, have difficulties establishing fulfilling interpersonal relationships.

Attempting to better understand the tension between sociability and isolation, Leary, Herbst and McCrary attempted to investigate the relationship between sociability and a desire for solitude. Using a wide range of self-report measures, they conclude that the reported enjoyment of solitude is more related to a high desire for solitude rather than an avoidance or dislike of sociability (2003). In contrast,

Rubenstein and Shaver (1982) place a greater emphasis on individual differences in the experience of aloneness and susceptibility to loneliness. They tentatively suggest that individual differences may stem from early object relations and the individual's intrapsychic adaptation to his or her childhood environment.

Individuals differ in the degree to which they can be and feel their True Self in the company of others. Storr suggests that this ability may be connected to Winnicott's concept of the True Self[2] (Storr, 1988). The capacity to express and experience one's True Self in the company of others may be rooted in early relationships with the primary care-givers. Storr suggests that individuals may have greater difficulties because of either the need for placation or avoidance. Individuals who feel the need to be overly compliant to the external world and depend on others for validation and the sustenance of their self esteem, may seek isolation as a time to reconnect with their inner True Self. Individuals in the second group are described as introverted, choosing to avoid social interactions and perceived social pressures. Storr suggests that schizoid individuals represent the extreme version of this pattern.

While accepting that the pull toward social isolation may represent psychopathology, Storr is a strong opponent of the pathological view of solitude on the whole. He suggests that the link between mental health and meaningful close relationships is relatively recent, becoming particularly strong in psychoanalytic writings with the rise of object relations theories. Storr draws support for his argument from Eagle's suggestion that psychoanalytic theory has not paid sufficient attention to the role interests play in personality functioning. Instead, Eagle argues,

[2] Winnicott's theory of the development of the self is discussed in detail below.

interests are viewed as sublimated libido (Eagle, 1981). To the contrary, infant research appears to suggest that infants demonstrate great interest in the external non-relational world (Storr, 1988). Storr highlights the many influential thinkers who were known to live without close relationships with friends or family members including Descartes, Newton, Lock, Nietzsche, Kant and Schopenhauer. For Storr, the choice of solitude may represent a healthy capacity to be alone (in Winnicott's sense, see below) rather than a withdrawal due to a defensive organization. Storr suggests that the preference for solitude could represent psychic health *or* intrapsychic difficulties.

In itself, time alone has been shown to be helpful in a number of different respects. Solitude has been linked to the development of the self and integration of new self experiences as well as facilitating change in personal attitudes (Larson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1978; Larson, 1990; Storr, 1988; Westin, 1967). Larson highlights Westin's seminal work on privacy. Westin argues that solitude may provide an emotionally valuable release from social roles and pressures, providing instead the opportunity for self evaluation and integration of personal experience (Westin 1967 in Larson 1990). Storr argues that mourning the death of a loved one is one example of the experience of separation and isolation which facilitates change in beliefs. According to Storr, the mourner comes to realize that the meaning in life is not entirely embedded in personal relationships and that the life of a person in isolation is also meaningful (Storr, 1988, p. 32). Here, the loss of the relationship facilitates a particular change of attitudes.

Larson's research links solitude, at least in small quantities, with a decrease in self consciousness. Lower self consciousness may be linked to greater openness to experiences and to the exploration of different parts of the self. Time alone, at least for short periods of time, has also been associated with an increase in concentration as when young and full adults perform their work or homework alone (however, as was seen above, solitude has also been linked with decreased arousal and boredom). Finally, Larson suggests that short periods of solitude are necessary for emotional renewal. Returning to the company of others after a period of solitude, participants in his study reported feeling more alert and cheerful than at other times they were in the company of others (Larson, 1990).

Periods of solitude or relative social isolation have also been utilized for healing. Suedfeld emphasizes the benefits of Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy (REST) particularly for individual with psychological difficulties (1982). In the past, a rest cure for individuals with mental illness was recommended. It was conceptualized as helpful in providing time with less stimulation. The change in environment was viewed as allowing for change apart from old patterns reinforced in the patient's home setting. Today, isolation as a therapeutic method is rarely mentioned in psychiatry (Storr, 1988), while 'quiet rooms' where patients are placed in isolation are still commonly utilized. Suedfeld points out that experiments with solitude combined with partial sensory deprivation have yielded encouraging results in increasing general well-being (Suedfeld, 1982). Taken together, the research on solitude suggests that at least some period of isolation may encourage healing, self-regeneration and growth.

Some individuals seek solitude in search of self growth and a transcendental experience. In many cultures such as some of the Native American cultures, young men set out alone on spiritual quests. The time in solitude allows the young men to reconnect with themselves, find their spiritual guides, and return to the community as men, ready to assume their adult responsibilities (Storr, 1988; Suedfeld, 1982). Apart from the culturally normalized developmentally appropriate period of isolation in these Native American cultures, other cultures depict their spiritual leaders as spending a period of time in solitude before returning to the community with spiritual teachings. Commonly cited examples of these type of leaders include Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha, and Zoroaster (Storr, 1988; Suedfeld, 1982). While solitary journeys in the search for visions may be less common in today's United States culture, some backpackers such as wilderness backpackers and mountain climbers appear to be seeking a personal growth experience in their solitary journeys[3].

Some evidence points to a recent trend in the United States towards a greater preference for solitude. In a 1999 replication of a 1981 study on wilderness backpackers, Hammitt, Backman and Davis found an increase in the stated wish for solitude in the population studied (2001). This study may be an early indication of wider changes in the role of solitude in the United States, but the nature of these changes cannot be postulated from this one study.

Maslow suggests that at the highest level of personal development, the individual is free to enjoy solitude (Maslow, 1954; Storr, 1988). Maslow's final stage in his hierarchy of needs is self actualization. Once the lower basic physiological,

[3] See Krakauer's description of Chris McCandless' journey as well as description of other individuals who chose solitude including the author himself.

safety, belongingness and love, and esteem needs are fulfilled, the individual is ready to focus on the need for self-actualization. Once this is accomplished, the individual is free to be in solitude "…without harm to themselves and without discomfort. Furthermore, it is true for almost all that they positively *like* solitude and privacy to a definitely greater degree than the average person" (Maslow, 1954, p. 160; italics in original). Maslow envisions these individuals as motivated by self-growth which may actually be hampered by others (1954, p. 162). These individuals have developed beyond the stage of belongingness and love, and are therefore capable of mature love. They often choose to maintain relationships with a small number of individuals to whom they have particularly deep ties. Maslow postulates that their decreased need for sociability stems from a strong reliance on their own sense of identity and personal views as well as a decreased vulnerability to the opinions and value judgments of others (Maslow, 1954). In Maslow's view, a preference for solitude may be a sign of pathology or health. If it is in response to conflicts during the belongingness and love stage, it is pathological. However, if this basic need was sufficiently addressed, and the individual faces the self-actualization need, the choice of solitude may indicate relative psychological health.

Boundaries Between Self and Other- when alone and when together

Being alone or being with others affects an individual's internal sense of boundaries between him/herself and the other as well as one's sense of self definition and identity consolidation (Altman, 1975; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Kernberg, 1995; Larson, 1990; Maslow, 1954; Storr, 1988). Altman advanced the view that the

concept of privacy can be understood as dialectic between forces that push people together and apart. Privacy is utilized in order to regulate and maintain self-identity as well as to evaluate and interpret the self in relations to others (Altman, 1975; Twight, Smith & Wissinger, 1981[4]). Altman and Derlega and Chaikin place particular emphasis on viewing privacy as a dynamic process of self-other boundary regulation (Altman, 1975; Derlega & Chaikin, 1977).

Baumeister and Leary (1995), in advancing their belongingness hypothesis, draw on research examining cognition and memory which highlights the diffusion of boundaries between the self and one's relationship partner. For example, Aron et. al.'s research suggests that individuals have more difficulty making me/not me judgments about traits where they differ from their spouse than on these traits they share with their spouse (Aron et al., 1991). This evidence in cognitive processing suggests a cognitive merger with the relationship partner. Aron et. al. view cognition about a close relationship partner as a circumstance where "…[the] other is treated as self or confused with self- the underlying reason being a self/other merging…" (1991, p. 242). Interconnectedness of cognitive representation of self and the partner is seen in this increased difficulty making me/not me distinctions. This pattern in cognitive processing suggests that cognitively, closeness to another individual creates confusion between internal characteristics that are part of the self, and those that are part of the other. This factor may be linked to the findings that solitude may aid individuation and identity formation (Larson, 1990).

[4] I am indebted to this article for bringing Altman's perspective on privacy to my attention. Original source was verified.

Storr (1988), drawing on Winnicotian theory, emphasizes that some individuals have greater difficulty remaining true to their own internal experience in the context of others. These individuals may seek solitude in order to reconnect with their internal experience. These individuals may be overly compliant to the external needs of others leading to difficulties maintaining a stable level of self-esteem so that their self-esteem, and hence their experience of themselves, is vulnerable to fluctuations caused by interactions with others.

Paradoxically, Larson suggests that when individuals are alone they experience less self definition (Larson, 1990). This experience can be disturbing leading to an increase in reported negative affect. However, Larson argues that this experience also facilitates individuation and identity formation. Furthermore, in the absence of one's social network, the individual is free to experiment and experience different parts of him/herself that are not encouraged, reinforced, or may not be tolerated in the individual's interpersonal milieu hence facilitating self growth (Altman, 1975; Hammitt, Backman & Davis, 2001; Larson, 1990; Storr, 1988; Westin, 1967).

The decrease in self-definition may also facilitate transcendental experiences and the experiences of complete unity with the universe akin to Freud's description of the oceanic feeling (Freud, 1930). While Freud originally discussed the oceanic feeling in the context of group religious ecstasy, Storr (1988) points out that it is an experience often reported in solitude. In fact, Suedfeld suggests that one group of individuals who seek out solitude are searching for this transcendental experience (1982).

The sense of self definition and intrapsychic boundaries between self and others is affected by the state of solitude, by the company of others in general, and by the context of intimate relationships in particular. As was discussed above, some individuals seek the company of others to regulate their sense of selves; others seek to avoid others for the same purpose. Altman's description of the dialectical nature of the forces pushing people together and apart may be particularly useful in understanding the place of intrapsychic boundaries. Likewise, Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs suggests that at different levels on the hierarchy, others may be needed in different ways (1954). In the psychoanalytic section of this chapter I will review a number of different developmental models pertinent to the discussion of intimacy and personal isolation.

Backpackers

Not much is known about the backpacker population, and even less is known of the American backpacker traveling alone. Much of the research on backpackers is motivated by the marketing industry's attempt to improve their service to, and profit from, this population (e.g. Locker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Pearce, 1990). Much of the remaining research stems from the health community's concern over backpackers' risk-taking behaviors and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (e.g. Black, 1997; Egan, 2001; Wickens, 1997). One noticeable exception is the Israeli backpacker who has been heavily studied (Avrahami, 2001) due to the high prevalence of Israelis choosing to backpack after completing their mandatory post high school military service and before commencing employment or university

studies. This high prevalence (and consequent normalization) of backpacking during this particular developmental stage limits the applicability of the research to American backpackers. As such, research findings pertaining to the American backpacker's character structure and quality of interpersonal relationships is quite scarce.

Backpackers are budget travelers who prefer longer trip duration over basic comforts. They stay at budget accommodations and carefully budget their money allowing them to prolong their journey. An integral part of the backpacking experience is meeting people and socializing with other backpackers and locals. As part of their experience, backpackers prefer informal settings and participatory recreational activities. These preferences facilitate the experience of closer contact with the host culture. In the backpacker's view, the backpacker is open to be affected by the host culture and hence achieves a more authentic experience of that culture than other travelers. Finally, backpackers greatly emphasize independence, and stick to a flexible travel schedule. They view their experiences as challenging and hence further fostering independence (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Riley, 1988).

The modern phenomenon of the backpacker, as well as tourism travel in general, can be traced to the "Grand Tours" of the 17th and 18th centuries. These were long-term tours taken by young European aristocrat males that were deemed to enhance sophistication, worldliness and social awareness. Their counterpart for the lower classes was tramping. Artisan workers would travel from town to town searching for work and living in inns that were established by their guilds for this purpose. With the rise of the industrial age in 19th century Europe, youth movements developed in reaction to the harsh conditions of the cities. In England, the Young

Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) were established offering cheap lodging. Meanwhile, in other parts of Europe and most noticeably German-speaking Europe, treks through the countryside gained popularity among the youth and hostels were established to offer these travelers cheap accommodations. Travel continued to be associated with worldliness and sophistication while an infrastructure for youth budget travel was developing (for a more extensive history see Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995 and Riley, 1988).

The European "Grand Tours" as well as tramping were viewed as a rite of passage by most young men. It was a time for separation from home and family (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Riley, 1988). Today, many of the modern backpackers also view their travels as a rite of passage (Avrahami, 2001; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Riley, 1988). Many backpackers view their trip as a time to gain independence, feel complete freedom from social responsibilities, and as a time to reflect on their life, and often spiritual life, before assuming their adult responsibilities back home (Avrahami, 2001; Riley, 1988).

Today's backpackers, or budget travelers, represent a somewhat unified sub-cultural group, at least while traveling. In their qualitative studies, Riley (1988) and Murphy (2001) identified major personal qualities which backpackers viewed as defining the backpacking culture. These included tolerance of others, having fun and not being "uptight", willingness to speak with strangers, and readiness to learn from the trip and the experience of interacting with a foreign culture. Living cheaply and budgeting one's money is emphasized in order to prolong the duration of the trip. Living cheaply and finding the best bargains is one way status is established among

backpackers (Riley, 1988). Hardship on the road is also greatly valued and is a source of pride (Riley, 1988).

Neither Murphy nor Riley explicitly discuses solitude in the backpackers' experience. However, the statement by one interviewee speaks to the prevalence of traveling alone. This 23-year-old Canadian male stated, "you more readily talk to complete strangers than you would at home, but I guess everybody does that when you're traveling alone" (Murphy, 2001, p. 60). Riley points out that most backpackers travel alone. They prefer freedom and complete autonomy. Many do travel with others for a few days, even a couple of weeks, until their chosen routes part. While backpackers state a greater sense of security and protection when traveling with others, they often prefer greater independence to greater security (1988).

Backpackers distinguish themselves from other tourists. They view themselves as placing a greater emphasis on budgeting their money and extending the length of stay (Murphy 2001). For example, they trade privacy and comfort in hotels for cheaper, dormitory style hostels where they often have access to a communal kitchen. The quality of their trip is also perceived as different from that of other tourists. They view their travels as exposing them to a more authentic experience of the foreign culture. They place a greater emphasis on interacting with locals, avoiding commercialized packaged tours, and avoiding locations where tourists abound (Murphy 2001). As Black writes, "For them [travelers] traveling is a form of cultural identification and an important aspect of identity….Tourism is seen by travelers to be based upon shallow experiences in contrast to their own more authentic travel

experience" (Black, 1997, p. 170). Backpackers view themselves as a separate sub-culture from other tourists.

So what are the demographic characteristics of the backpacker? The majority of backpackers are from Europe, followed by Australia/ New Zealand, and then North America (Egan, 2001; Murphy, 2001[5]). American backpackers are underrepresented, at least in South and South East Asia (Riley, 1988). Backpackers tend to be highly educated, with one study showing that 76% of the sample population had a partial or full college/university degree (Egan, 2001). Most come from middle class families (Riley, 1988). Studies using different inclusion criteria report that the majority of backpackers are in their early to mid twenties (e.g. Avrahami, 2001; Pearce, 1990), or late twenties to early thirties (Riley, 1988). Some evidence suggest that there may be a greater proportion of backpackers over 30 (Ryan & Mohsin, 2001) who travel alone (Maoz in Avrahami, 2001) then has been commonly reported. According to Riley, most backpackers are at one of life's junctures. Many have just completed college, are in between jobs, or are unsure of their career path. Nearly all backpackers are single, and most were never married (1988). Interestingly, the population appeared to be more secular, with very few members attending church on a regular basis (Egan, 2001).

Many backpackers find themselves traveling for longer than they originally intended, and it is not uncommon to meet people who are away from home for 3-4 years (Riley, 1988). Most maintain regular contact with their families and indicated feeling close to both their parents and siblings. American backpackers reported

[5] In this study conducted in Australia, Australia and New Zealand nationals were few, probably due to the location of the study.

feeling less support from both family and friends than travelers from other nations. While backpacking is more accepted in other developed nations, American backpackers often reported being viewed at home as irresponsible for leaving behind traditional adult responsibilities (Riley, 1988).

As was stated above, socializing with locals and backpackers is a major component of traveling. Backpackers attempt to learn about the foreign culture through their contacts with locals. They also socialize with other backpackers with whom they can more easily identify and share their excitement and challenges. Socializing and the ability to initiate conversation emerged as a central theme with this population (Black, 1997; Murphy, 2001). Murphy's qualitative study reveals the existence of an accepted social etiquette for socializing with other backpackers (2001). The initial conversation is expected to revolve around where the backpacker is from and where he/she has been and is planning to travel. This initial conversation serves to assess compatibility as potential travel companions as well as transmit practical information pertaining to the region. While many backpackers complain of boredom with this phase of initial superficial exchange of information, they also communicated that it is a faux-pas to skip this initial stage. Many stated that it is inappropriate to discuss personal details about one's life too early in the interaction. However, Murphy's research suggests that backpackers tend to create more intimate relationships, and that these relationships are viewed as developing much faster than they do 'back home'. Riley also notes that interpersonal relationships on the road are very intense and that friendships develop rapidly (1988). An integral part of the

backpacking culture is the initiation of relationships, though it appears many remain superficial.

Sexual intercourse is one kind of relationship which appears integral to the backpacking experience of at least some portion of the backpacking population. Studying the sexual life of backpackers is interesting as it is a type of socializing which may be considered intimate. The sexual life of backpackers has received relatively more attention due to the health consequences of unprotected sex. In this present study, examining the sexual life of backpackers informs our understanding of the nature of intimacy and intimate relationships in the lives of backpackers on the road and back home.

Egan's study compared long-term backpackers (trips >30 days) with short term travelers with respect to sexual behaviors. In her study, those who engaged in casual sex while traveling were more often male, had a history of casual sex prior to the trip, reported a greater number of partners prior to the trip, expected to engage in casual sex on their travels, and were backpackers as opposed to short term travelers (2001). Here, a tentative association between casual sex, multiple partners, and a preference for backpacking is suggested. However, only twenty five percent of her sample engaged in casual sex on the trip. Of those engaging in casual sex, approximately forty percent stated they planned on having casual sex while traveling. Stated another way, the majority of those engaging in casual sex did not expect to be doing so.

Backpacking has been conceptualized as a time away from daily responsibilities and social conventions (Wickens, 1997). However, Egan found that the experience of being far from home and the chance for anonymity was not rated

very high as a reason for engaging in casual sex (2001). Instead, the use of alcohol and drugs emerged as a far stronger cause for casual sex (Egan, 2001; Wickens, 1997).

Unprotected causal sex touches on both quality of intimate relationships as well as risk-taking behavior. Research suggests that risk factors for contracting sexually transmitted infections and/or HIV while traveling include being female, young, a long-term traveler, a solo traveler, and having a sexual history of limited condom use (Egan, 2001). Another strong risk-factor for engaging in unprotected sex is being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol (Wickens, 1997). This research may suggest that both being a backpacker and traveling alone may serve as risk factors for engaging in casual sex with more partners and/or engaging in unprotected sex. Egan further points out that women were more likely than men to report using condoms during casual sex at home, but less likely to have used a condom during their last sexual intercourse on the trip. This statistic may be related to Egan's findings that while men reported more sexual partners during the trip, women were more likely to have had sexual intercourse with a local man.

In summary, Egan's study suggests that at least one quarter of backpackers engage in casual sex during their travels. These individuals tend to also have a history of casual sex back home and to choose long-term travel. These findings suggest a link between individuals who choose long-term travel and those who engage in casual sex, sexual relations without an intimate interpersonal relationship. Her research also highlights a potential link between solitude, or solo travelers, and risk-taking behaviors such as unprotected sex, in the context of an attempt to create a (sexual) relationship with a partner.

Traveling Alone

I was unable to locate any literature focusing on the solo-backpacker though the literature already mentioned does allude to this group. Many backpackers in Murphy's study (2001) alluded to the need to socialize in order to find travel companions, hence suggesting many may be traveling alone, and Riley (1988) explicitly suggests that most backpackers travel predominantly alone. Black (1997) suggests that backpackers traveling alone are more susceptible to engaging in casual sex and in succumbing to external pressures. She suggests that peers may act as a buffer to external pressures. Her comments suggest that backpackers are frequently alone, and that this leaves them in a more vulnerable position. She states that loneliness, the pressure to socialize, and sexual advances from others lead to a greater prevalence in sexual encounters. As mentioned above, Egan's study suggests that both traveling alone and traveling for longer durations are risk factors for engaging in unprotected sex. As was noted above, time spent in solitude is associated with a decrease in self-esteem and a decrease in the sense of self definition. These factors may be associated with the greater prevalence of casual sex and risk-taking engagement in unprotected sex while traveling for long time-periods and while traveling alone.

Examining the research on the effects of solitude in concert with the culture of backpacking suggests that backpackers have a complex relationship to intimacy and close relationships, at least while they are on the road. Backpackers on the road forfeit the possibility to nurture long-term intimate relationships. Instead, many state the wish to focus on self-actualization, personal growth, independence, and cultural

awareness. However, the period of isolation from close intimate relations can have aversive consequences including a decrease in self-esteem and an increase in risk taking behaviors. In the next section I will take a closer look at how psychoanalytic theory helps inform our understanding of who chooses to do without close relationships.

Understanding the Solo Backpacker Through the Lenses of Psychoanalysis and Attachment Theory

How can the choice to travel alone be understood from a psychoanalytic perspective? It may be viewed as a proactive strategy for avoiding intimacy, casting this choice in a pathological light. Alternatively, it may suggest healthy psychic development allowing the individual to suspend, at least temporarily, the need for intimacy and freeing the individual to pursue personal growth through solitude, self exploration, and identity consolidation. It is likely that traveling alone, in itself, could not be meaningfully used as a litmus test for psychic pathology (or health). Instead, it is the traveler's internal object relations and ego development which color the *motivation* for traveling alone and is most pertinent for answering these central questions.

Examining the nature of solo travel and the culture of backpacking, I selected a number of psychoanalytic developmental models which are particularly relevant to enriching our understanding of the relationship between solo backpackers and intimacy. I will introduce these psychoanalytic concepts briefly before delving into a more through review of the models proposed. Guntrip and Fairbairn emphasize the

schizoid position. Guntrip's description of the individual struggling with the schizoid problem has many similarities with the lifestyle of the solo backpacker. In contrast, Winnicott discusses the capacity to be alone and how this capacity rests on the internalization of a soothing object which allows for the growth and development of a True Self. In Winnicott's model, it will be seen, the solo traveler may embody a capacity to be alone, or the struggle of a False Self (a hidden True Self) to circumvent intimacy. Pathological narcissism will be discussed briefly, emphasizing the narcissist's need to deny his dependency needs and the threat intimacy poses for his or her cohesive sense of self. Finally, attachment theory will be reviewed. In attachment theory what will be emphasized is the contrast between individuals enjoying a secure base from which they can safely explore and travel, and individuals who, lacking both a secure base and the early childhood experience of a secure base, choose to deny dependency needs, avoid closeness, and exult independence. Solo travel may indicate secure attachment which frees the adult to explore the world, or insecure attachment and an avoidance of closeness.

All of these models assume the infant's early dependence on his mother[6] for his physical and psychic needs. These models offer different interpretations of how the inadequate fulfillment of these needs will lead to difficulties with intimacy and a proclivity for solo travel. Conversely, some of these theories suggest that a 'good enough' (to use Winnicott's term) navigation through this early dependency phase

[6] In this paper I will often refer to the infant/patient/backpacker in the male gender and the primary caregivers as the mother for clarity in gender use. However, unless specifically stated, I have made this choice for convenience in writing, and do not assume that primary caregiver should necessarily refer to the mother or that the scope of my psychoanalytic discussion differentiates between males and females.

may free the individual to travel and develop, at least temporarily, without 'running away' from intimacy.

Psychoanalytic Theories

Guntrip and Fairbairn - The Schizoid Problem

Central to the schizoid problem is the experience of danger in close relationships. According to Guntrip's clinical observations, individuals struggling with schizoid concerns "…find their lives slipping away changing houses, clothes, jobs, hobbies, friends, engagements, and marriages, and unable to commit themselves to any one relationship in a stable and permanent way- always needing love yet always dreading being tied" (Guntrip, 1969, p. 37). Guntrip adds that these individuals tend to value self sufficiency as a means of reducing their anxiety over needing others, and tend to hold self sufficiency as an ideal. It should be apparent how this description is consistent with the lifestyle and values of the backpacker culture where independence is vital and change is constant.

From Fairbairn and Guntrip's perspective, libido is, from the beginning, object seeking (Fairbairn, 1944; Guntrip, 1969). The major developmental task of the individual is to navigate through the stage of infantile dependence, and towards achieving mature dependence. The capacity to embrace and tolerate one's dependency needs throughout the lifecycle is essential for psychic health. From their perspective, object relations are essential for both the development of the ego and for living a meaningful life. Guntrip describes Fairbairn's position, "…*man's need of a love-relationship is the fundamental thing in his life, and that the love-hunger and*

anger set up by frustration of this basic need must constitute the two primary problems of personality on the emotional level" (Guntrip, 1969, p. 45, italics in original). Fairbairn points out that the final stage is 'mature dependence' and not 'independence' since close relationships necessarily involves some dependency (Fairbairn, 1946). However, unlike infantile dependence, mature dependence is two-sided and is not limited by a weak ego's ability to express dependency needs through emotional identification and incorporation only.

Fairbairn chose to name the earliest developmental stage 'the schizoid position' because the immature ego is split. In brief, Fairbairn argues that good experiences with the primary caregiver are encoded as memories. Bad experiences with the primary caregiver cannot be tolerated by the young ego, and are internalized instead. As such, the internalized object relations are composed of originally frustrating external experiences with others. The internalized bad object is split into a (tantalizing) Needed Object and a (frustrating) Rejecting Object. The frustrating external experience embodied both of these qualities. The infant's young ego is unable to tolerate ambivalent feelings towards the same object, and the object is split. In Fairbairn's model, an object does not exist outside of an object relation. The Needed Object is attached to the Libidinal Ego, and the Rejecting Object is attached to the Antilibidinal Ego (or Internal Saboteur). The Libidinal and Antilibidinal Egos are split from the Central Ego and are repressed. Since no infant is free of frustrating experiences, this process is universal. However, individual differences exist in the capacity to navigate past this position.

Between Fairbairn's infantile dependency stage and mature dependency stage there is a transitional period generally filled with conflict and defenses. In this period, the individual establishes relationships with external objects while coping with his internalized (bad) objects. Fairbairn argues that the basis for different pathological symptoms are rooted in the individual's techniques and defenses for dealing with his internalized objects as well as his attempt to get rid of the frustrating objects without losing them (Fairbairn, 1946). The schizoid process may manifest itself with a variety of defenses, but when the anxiety leads to a massive repression of affect, a full schizoid state is present and a sense of futility descends (Fairbairn, 1944).

The dilemma for an individual struggling with schizoid concerns is that loving has become dangerous. The fear is that one's needs and dependency will devour and destroy the loved object. Guntrip suggests that dating from early infancy, these individuals felt that their needs, their infancy love, was unbearable to their mothers. Their neediness and hunger left them feeling rejected and even more needy. As this is the predominant type of object relations that the young ego experienced, the individual comes to expect the same from others, that the other's neediness would devour him. The individual feels suffocated and smothered in close relationships and feels that he must break free to protect his autonomy (Guntrip, 1969). Unlike the individual whose main struggle is in the depressive position and who fears that his hate will destroy, the individual whose main challenge is the schizoid position fears that his love will lead him to devour or be devoured. For the individual struggling with the depressive position, feeling hate towards a relationship partner is dangerous because his hate may lead him to destroy the relationship partner, an external other whose closeness and

love is desired. In contrast, for an individual struggling with schizoid concerns, love, itself, is experienced as dangerous. Love threatens to lead to annihilation through a dangerous destruction of self-other boundaries. Love threatens to lead one of the relationship partners to devour the other partner. In the act of devouring boundaries between the self and other are erased, and the self or relationship partner is consumed and annihilated. Since love is dangerous, closeness is dangerous, and since object relations are central to the experience of being human, in Guntrip and Fairbairn's view, this individual would feel alienated from others as well as himself (Guntrip, 1971).

The fundamental cause of the schizoid condition is the infant's experience of isolation from his primary caregivers. Guntrip describes this sense of isolation as the loss of rapport with the mother at the time of infantile dependency, a time where the mother is the only environment and the entire world for the infant. The young ego does not have any alternative defenses to navigate the troublesome relationship. He resorts to massive withdrawal from the external world, and from the struggle to maintain external genuine relationships. The loss of maternal rapport and the experience of absence of this basic relationship hamper the infant's ability to form a solid sense of his own selfhood (Guntrip, 1969).

In relationships, the individual struggling with the schizoid problem both craves closeness and fears it. Closeness remains threatening because the individual, now an adult, has not outgrown the stage of infantile dependence. When he is alone, he feels insecure and alienated from himself. When reunited with others, he feels smothered, as though his individuality is absorbed and he is merged with the other.

The adult continues to find closeness through infantile strategies of incorporation and identification so that closeness does indeed pose the threat of merger where the other is either incorporating or being incorporated, and, in a sense, annihilated. As Fairbairn and Guntrip maintain, the ego requires object relations in order to grow and develop. The schizoid solution is withdrawal from external objects and hence "…a flight from life..." motivated by fear and a hope for safety (Guntrip, 1969, p. 53).

Internalization of the early frustrating objects and an inability to negotiate infantile dependence leads to inadequate separation and individuation so that loving and dependency needs become threatening. The adult now unconsciously fears destroying the object with his neediness or being smothered to death. One's neediness itself is experienced as dangerous and to be repressed. The solution adopted is keeping distance from intimacy and withdrawing from external objects.

Winnicott- The True Self and the Capacity to be Alone

Winnicott's developmental model describes the infant's progression from infantile dependence towards mature independence. Unlike Fairbairn and Guntrip who emphasize mature dependence, Winnicott highlights how mature *independence* is an indication of mental health and, as he states, "…this capacity is one of the most important signs of maturity in emotional development" (Winnicott, 1958, p. 29). In mature independence, the individual attains the capacity to enjoy solitude.

Achieving mature independence is rooted in the infant's earliest experiences and is intertwined with Winnicott's concepts of the True Self and False Self. If the infant's earliest environment is insensitive to the infant's needs and experiences, the

infant's True Self will go into hiding leaving a False Self to interact with the external world. The infant's earliest experiences affect the relative dominance of the infant's True and False selves. Under the most unfavorable conditions, the True Self is completely in hiding and the False self is established as the 'external person'. The True self remains inaccessible to both the external world and the developing infant/person's inner world. Under the most favorable conditions, the False Self is superficial, drawn upon during such circumstances where social politeness or social etiquette is required. Here, the True Self dominates and voluntarily calls upon the services of the False Self when needed (Winnicott, 1960).

Without the experience of the True Self there can be no capacity to be alone because the self is not there to begin with. A mature capacity to be alone depends on the strength and security of a True Self. When a False Self dominates the individual's existence, it brings with it a sense of non-reality, futility, and fragmentation. The dominance of a False Self also makes it impossible for the individual, child or adult, to develop genuine relationships with others (Winnicott, 1960; Winnicott, 1962).

The starting point for Winnicott is the infant in a state of absolute dependence and contending with a weak developing ego. The infant's immature ego leaves the infant in a predominate state of unintegration. In this state id-impulses arise and are spontaneously expressed by the infant in some form. The external expression of the id-impulse is the earliest expressions of the True Self. From this point, favorable conditions facilitate the development of a True Self and the capacity to enjoy solitude. As the infant's ego matures and strengthens, id-demands will come to be experienced as originating from one's own internal self. However, for the immature ego, these id-

impulses can be quite disorganizing and overwhelming (Winnicott, 1960). While the infant is in a state of absolute dependence, the mother needs to be in a state of 'primary maternal pre-occupation'. In this state, she is very identified with the infant and is therefore able to adequately respond to the infant's id-demands so that the infant's experience of disorganization is minimized. Here, the good-enough mother (to use Winnicott's phrase) is able to sufficiently meet the needs of the infant so that the infant experiences a sense of omnipotence. While he is in a state of infantile dependence, he is essentially unaware of his dependence and fragility. As the ego develops and is strengthened, the infant is able to gradually relinquish his infantile omnipotence and gradually become aware of his dependence (Winnicott, 1963).

Because the infant's awareness of his dependence emerges and unfolds at a rate tolerable to the infant and strengthening ego, the True Self does not need to go into deep hiding. The ego is able to gradually integrate different parts of the self, different 'me-experiences', which creates the sense of a continuity of being. These 'me-experiences' are genuine, accurately reflecting the experiences of the True Self. As the ego develops, the ego can allow for breaks in the continuity of being when the False Self is called upon. In other words, the healthy young infant quickly and naturally learns to comply with external demands without threatening the vitality of his True Self (Winnicott, 1960; Winnicott, 1963).

In normal development the ability to enjoy solitude begins in early infancy, before the immature ego is capable of maintaining self integration. During the earliest phases of being alone the infant needs to feel his maternal figure's ego support. The paradox is that the infant must experience solitude in the presence of his mother. For

Winnicott, the earliest form of being alone is the state where the infant attends to his internal experiences and is free to respond to them without attending to the external world. It is also a time for the infant to relax and allow himself to become less integrated. The mother's role is to create a safe, positive, and non impinging environment. As the infant develops, he comes to introject the ego-supportive mother. This ego-supporting mother is not an internalized object of the mother, but more like the internalization of mother-as-environment, the internal sense of security, confidence and relative freedom from persecutory anxieties. As the ego develops and matures, the individual is able to rely more and more on this internalized mother-as-environment rather than the presence of an external mother (Winnicott, 1958).

If the infant does not enjoy good-enough mothering, the development of the True Self as well as the capacity to be alone is hampered. When id-impulses arise, the mother is unable to accurately respond to the infant's spontaneously generated gestures. She instead responds with her own reactions. She is unable to suspend her own subjectivity and sustain attunement with the infant's needs and wishes. Her tolerance for the infant's expression of his infantile omnipotence is not 'good-enough'. The mother's reaction startles the infant out of the experience of omnipotence and forces him to attend and adjust himself to his external environment. In this fashion, the development of a False Self is encouraged while the True Self hides for safety. The infant learns to imitate and comply to an external world while his own spontaneity ceases (Winnicott, 1960). At the same time, the inability of the mother to adequately provide ego-support to the infant's immature ego and the infant's needs leaves the infant vulnerable to highly disorganizing states of anxiety and discomfort. These

states of intolerable anxieties resemble the experience of falling to pieces, loosing one's sense of orientation as well as disrupting the connection to one's body (Winnicott, 1962). The infant looses his experience of self integration. These experiences of disintegration hinder the infant's ability to create the feeling of an integrated solid sense of self. The infant suffers from unbridgeable breaks in the sense of going-on-being, and the self then remains fragmented.

With the not good-enough mother, the infant, and later adult, depends on a False Self to navigate the external world. The infant's True Self is hidden, unintegrated, and is haunted by disruptive persecutory anxieties stemming form the infant's early disruptive experiences of intolerable anxieties. The False Self dominates and is not linked to the person's internal experience. Because responses to internal experiences are generated and tied to the True Self, the individual-as-False-Self remains feeling unreal and is plagued by a sense of futility (Winnicott, 1960). Furthermore, the individual does not have the capacity to be alone in Winnicott's terms. He has lost contact with his True Self and he does not enjoy an introjected mother-as-environment. While the individual has the ability to be alone, it remains unsafe to allow for a state of relaxed unintegration (Winnicott, 1960).

The solo backpacker may be viewed as spending his journey essentially alone, as any relationships that he forms must necessarily remain superficial and transient. The backpacker's contacts with more meaningful others from 'back home' are relative brief and sporadic. Some solo backpackers may embody the mature capacity to be alone and enjoy a good internalized mother-as-environment. These individuals should feel free to explore and enjoy their solitude, taking the time to further consolidate their

identity, open themselves to immersion in other cultures, enjoyment of nature, archeology, or whatever their particular interests and goals are for the trip. However, solo-backpacking may also function as a good compromise solution for the False Self. Relationships remain superficial and the presence of a full person connected to his affective inner life in the relationship is not required. The trip itself may be used as confirmation of being real. The individual who is dominated by a False Self does not feel real. He has a great need to have intense experiences so that his life is occupied by the need to react to these experiences. The self gains confirmation of being alive and real through continuously *reacting* to the external world rather than depending on internally generated actions (Winnicott, 1960). Backpacking provides an almost continuous sense of intense living and the ongoing need to adapt and respond to a foreign environment. This experience may serve to occupy the False Self and reinforce the individual's fragile sense of being real and alive.

Narcissism

Narcissistic states make it impossible to know another and be known by them, 'warts and all'. Closeness with others and the acknowledgment of one's own and others' dependency needs is experienced as extremely dangerous to the narcissistic individual's self esteem and sense of self (Barnett, 1978). Intimacy is rendered dangerous at the least, impossible at the worst. Relationships are maintained on a superficial level or else no true relationship is present at all. Many individuals are vulnerable to narcissistic states as a response to injuries inflicted on their sense of self or self esteem. However, narcissism is also an integral and more stable aspect of

many character types and psychopathologies as well as the defining characteristic of the narcissistic personality (Barnett, 1978; Freud, 1914; Guntrip, 1969).

Freud utilized libido theory to explain narcissism. He states that loving involves awareness of one's needs and dependency, thereby lowering "self-regard" while the experience of being loved is the experience of possessing the loved object, and self-regard is raised once more. When the ego is in a depleted state it is weakened, and may need to withdraw its object libido in order to replenish itself. The return of object-libido to the ego strengthens the ego but sacrifices the possibility of forming relationships with external others or acknowledging threatening dependency needs. (Freud, 1914, p. 94). In post-Freudian and non-libido theories, narcissism may be conceptualized as self absorption arising from damage to self esteem and sense of self (Barnett, 1978).

Narcissism may be viewed as a regression or fixation at the state of primary narcissism. Primary narcissism is a normative developmental stage often described as the infant's experience of symbiotic unity with his caregiver and omnipotent control over his environment. From Mahler's developmental perspective, the infant experiences a psychic fusion where the infants' early memory of beginning self representation and representation of the mother are fused and are colored by omnipotence (White, 1986). The infant will spend the remainder of his life separating from this symbiotic mother while longing for this state of fusion with an all good, omnipotent mother. From Mahler's theory's perspective, the infant will develop his sense of identity in the context of his object relations with his mother and through the process of separating and individuating from her. The narcissistic individual is unable

to mourn the loss of the early symbiotic relationship attempting instead to relive this state of omnipotence through fusion with a self-object (White, 1986). At the same time, the narcissistic individual defensively avoids intimacy with others in order to protect his sense of separateness. His early attempts to experience a symbiotic unity with his mother were spoiled by the intrusiveness of the mother as her own subject rather than allowing for the infant's subjectivity to dominate (Modell, 1986).

From Kohut's perspective, under favorable conditions the infant is born into an empathic and warm human environment. The infant's self is weak and depends on others to provide the experience of cohesion, resilience, and self-constancy. The infant is left at the mercy of his caregivers to provide this for him, and they are experienced by him as selfobjects. Two types of relationships develop with the selfobjects, both expressing the infants' basic narcissistic needs. The mirroring selfobjects mirror back to the child his omnipotence and grandiosity. This is done through facilitating the child's experience of agency as well as the pride and joy the caregivers take in the child and his activities. The child becomes exhibitionistic and grandiose. Somewhat later the second selfobject relation emerges. Here the child experiences merger with an idealized selfobject. The child must be able to idealize at least one of his primary caregivers and experience merger with this selfobject (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Kohut, 1986).

In normal development, the child's primary caregivers are experienced as frustrating. They fail to live up to the idealization, and fail to mirror back pride in all of the child's activities. If these frustrations are gradual and tolerable, the child comes

to internalize his selfobject relations and their function is replaced by the self (Kohut & Wolf, 1986). The child is then free to form object relations proper.

Kohut argues that failure to sufficiently enjoy and internalize at least one of these selfobject relations lead to the inability to maintain adequate and stable levels of self esteem and an adequate sense of self (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). When the developing child is confronted with disapproval and rejection rather than interest, encouragement, and approval unadulterated by the parents' own narcissistic needs, he may become developmentally fixated and repress a grandiose self-representation (White, 1986). The child may be viewed as left with damage to the internal psychic structures needed to maintain stable self esteem and self-cohesiveness. The individual develops enslaved to his repressed grandiose self-representation and continuously searching for relationships that will mirror to him his grandiosity. As Stolorow states, "narcissistic object relationships are to be understood as regressive efforts at identity maintenance though mirroring in the object" (Stolorow, 1986, p. 200). The individual withdraws from forming relationships with others since his first priority is stabilizing and maintaining a sense of cohesiveness and a stable positive view of himself (Stolorow, 1986).

The narcissistic individual's shaky sense of self is tentatively maintained by grandiose and omnipotent fantasies. These fantasies allow the individual to maintain the illusion of self sufficiency and deny his dependency needs (Mitchell, 1988; Modell, 1986). The narcissistic illusion protects the individual from the painful acknowledgment that, as a child, his dependency needs left him feeling frustrated and enraged. Now, as Kernberg writes, the individual is left in a "vicious circle of self-

admiration, depreciation of others, and elimination of all actual dependency. The greatest fear of these patients is to be dependent on anybody else, because to depend means to hate, envy, and expose themselves to the danger of being exploited, mistreated and frustrated" (Kernberg, 1975, p. 235[7]). Early experiences left these individuals fearing closeness as intrusive and threatening to their sense of self and positive self regard. Instead, they are trapped by their early need to prove their grandiosity. For them, relationships are needed in order to gain approval and recognition, not intimacy and closeness. Their relationships remain superficial and others are viewed more as an audience than partners in the relationship. As Barnett writes, "intimacy requires mutual knowledge and exposure, and the essence of idealization is that fantasy obscures reality and blurs knowledge" (1978, p. 68). For the narcissistic individual, knowing and being known by the other is both dangerous as well as potentially damaging to the needed grandiose self-representation.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory originated with John Bowlby's observations that disturbed teens tended to carry with them a history of extensive separations from their parents (Bowlby, 1944). Bowlby was originally trained as a psychoanalyst under the supervision of Melanie Klein. He differed from her in his conviction that the child is strongly influenced by external experiences with his mother. He therefore reasoned that focusing exclusively on the child's internal fantasies is insufficient for child treatment or for the understanding of child development (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby

[7] I am indebted to Mitchell (1988) for pointing out this reference

supplemented his study of psychoanalysis with extensive study of biology, evolution, and ethology. He noted that human infants are born helpless, and remain so for a relatively long period of time. In order to enhance chances for survival, evolutionary forces armed the infant with instincts geared to insure proximity to the caregiver and secure care-giving behaviors from them. Sucking, clinging and following are instincts developed to insure proximity, while crying and smiling activate the care-giving behaviors of the caregiver (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1958; Bowlby, 1988).

Bowlby's attachment theory (Bowlby 1969, 1973, 1980) and Ainsworth's detailed observations of mother-infants interactions and relationships (Ainsworth, 1963) suggest that infants are, from the beginning, wired with instincts to maintain proximity to their caregivers and to experience grave distress when separated from them. By the end of his first year, the infant should become attached to specific individuals who become his attachment figures, his sources of security.

Bowlby's theory markedly diverged from the then dominant psychoanalytic theories in its emphasis on the importance of the mother, from the beginning, not for her physical gratification of the infant's needs, but as a separate person providing a sense of security (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983). The mother, who is often the primary caregiver, provides a sense of safety. She becomes, in the now popular attachment lingo, the child's 'haven of safety' at times of distress and 'a secure base from which to explore' the world around him. As such, attachment theory focuses on the child's relationship with his primary caregivers and his dependence on them for an internal sense of security. Bowlby as well as contemporary attachment researchers argue that the attachment system is active throughout the lifecycle (e.g. Bowlby, 1973; Crowell

et al., 2002; Feeney & Collins, 2001; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Adults, like infants, depend on their relationship with their attachment figures to maintain an internal sense of safety. They use their attachment figures both as a haven of safety at times of distress and as a secure base from which they explore and engage the world around them.

The quality of the attachment relationship is internalized in childhood in what Bowlby terms Internal Working Models (IWM) of the self and of others. These IWM are similar to the object relations use of the term mental representations. As Levy, Blatt, and Shaver comment, "A basic postulate of both attachment theory and object relations theory… is that mental representations of self and others emerge from early relationships with caregivers and then act as heuristic guides for subsequent close relationships. (1998, p. 407). The child develops his confidence, or lack of confidence, in attachment figures' responsiveness and accessibility during "all the years of immaturity" based on his experiences with his caregivers. Once developed, these expectations tend to persist throughout his life (Bowlby, 1973, p. 359).

The Internal Working Models are used to predict future behavior and the likely response one can expect from others. The working model of the world/others includes the attachment figures, how to access them, how available they are likely to be, and how they would respond to one's attachment needs. The working model of the self includes how acceptable (or unacceptable) the individual is to his attachment figures (Bowlby, 1973). Children who experience their attachment figures as dependable, emotionally available, and easily accessible come to implicitly trust the availability of their attachment figures as well as view themselves as likable and accepted. In

contrast, children who experience their attachment figures as unavailable, conditionally available, or available in an intrusive manner, cannot take for granted the availability of their caregivers and must learn to shape their behaviors or emotional responses in order to accommodate their attachment figures. These children do not take for granted that they are likable, and that their needs will be adequately met.

The individual, child or adult, tends to have multiple representations of attachment reflecting differences in his experiences with different attachment relationships. However, the representation of the attachment relationship experienced with the primary caregiver is likely to predominate and be most accessible and influential during stressful situations. As Mikulincer and Shaver suggest, different experienced varieties in representations of attachment will differ in dominance and accessibility based on the individual's most influential early attachment experience as well as present contextual cues which provide associations to past attachment experiences (2003).

Attachment in Childhood

Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues developed a procedure named the Strange Situation to assess infants' IWMs (Ainsworth et al., 1971; Ainsworth et al., 1978). In the Strange Situation, the infant is introduced to a new play room with a stranger and his mother. Ainsworth and her colleagues observed the infant's behavior in this room with respect to the mother, the stranger, and the toys. The Strange Situation involves a number of brief separations from the mother. Ainsworth and her colleagues were able to discern three patterns of attachment which were particularly apparent during the

infant's response to the reunions following the separations. The first was termed 'Secure' attachment. These infants expressed distress during the separation. Upon reunion they directly approached the mother, sought comfort and were easily soothed. They then resumed exploring the playroom or engaging the stranger. In other words, they were able to utilize their mothers as a safe haven (finding security and peace in the mother's presence) and a secure base from which to explore (in the mother's presence, they happily returned to their games). In contrast to the Secure group, Ainsworth identified two types of insecure attachments. The Anxious/Resistant or Anxious/Ambivalent infant expressed marked distress upon separation. During the reunion, these infants could not be easily comforted. They expressed such ambivalent behaviors as approaching the mother but then angrily pushing her away or were passively unable to initiate proximity or utilize the mother as a secure base from which they could explore the room. The third group was termed 'Avoidant'. These infants did not seek proximity with their mothers. They did not cling to her if picked up. They appeared, instead, to ignore her as she returned by actively looking away or moving past her. Throughout the separation and reunion, they tended to continue in their play. They did not utilize their mother's as a safe haven or a secure base.

Ainsworth and her colleagues' observations of the mother-infant dyad at home revealed that these three attachment styles are associated with different patterns of maternal behavior. The mothers of Secure infants were sensitive to their infants' signals, accessible, co-operative and accepting. The mothers of infants classified as Avoidant demonstrated high levels of rejection towards their infants. The

Anxious/Ambivalent group was not consistently rejected by the mother, but the relationship appeared stressed.

Ainsworth conceptualized the different attachment patterns as variations in attachment styles. However, substantial research has linked Secure infants with more adaptive development (Sroufe et al., 2000). Secure infants were observed as preschoolers to be more self-reliant and they demonstrated greater flexibility in managing their impulses and feelings. Furthermore they were friendly when engaging other children and were better able to negotiate interpersonal conflicts. In contrast, preschoolers who demonstrated anxious/ambivalent attachment at infancy hovered near teachers, were easily frustrated, and had difficulties maintaining contact with peers. Preschoolers who were Avoidant in infancy tended to be more disconnected from other children and were often over-controlled and/or aggressive. They failed to seek help from the teachers when distressed. The infant's attachment style as measured in the Strange Situation appears to be related to the development of the self and the self in relations to others (e.g. Cassidy & Kobak, 1988; Sroufe et al., 1999; Sroufe et al. 2000; Wartner et al. 1994).

Adult Attachment

Bowlby noted the importance of the attachment system throughout the life cycle (1973). As with infants, the attachment system becomes more acutely activated during periods of elevated stress. In adulthood, attachment figures may include parents, friends and romantic partners. Adults may also derive some sense of security from less intense interpersonal sources such as groups, institutions, personal values,

abstract and symbolic figures (e.g. God), supervisors as well as personal success and status. Each reduces the level of uncertainty about the risks involved in exploration (Waters & Cummings, 2000) and each may serve as a haven of safety during periods of distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). However, the regulation of proximity to attachment figures continues to be central to relationships in adulthood (Edelstein & Shaver, 2004).

Research on adult attachment took as its starting point Ainsworth's three infant attachment classifications[8]. The topic was approached from two different perspectives. The first focused on the adult's quality of care-giving. These researchers remained close to Bowlby and Ainsworth's training in clinical and developmental psychology (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). They emphasize the importance of early parent-child relationships to intrapsychic development. They created a semi-structured interview which allowed them to predict how the adult's infant would behave in the Strange Situation (AAI; George, Kaplan & Main, 1985). The second group of researchers examined attachment in close relationships focusing primarily on the attachment system in the context of romantic relationships. This research emerged from social and personality psychologists. Following their discipline's traditions, they utilized self report measures to examine personality traits and social interactions in adult social relationships. The distinction between the two groups is important because they differ in perspective and orientation while utilizing very similar terminology for attachment styles. While both classification systems are

[8] For thorough review of the development of adult attachment measures see Bartholomew & Shaver (1998), Fraley & Shaver (2000), and Crowell & Treboux (1995).

useful in predicting intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics, the two are not highly correlated with each other. Bartholomew and Shaver (1998) conclude

> When we step back from the details of specific measures and measure-specific findings, the results produced by attachment researchers are all compatible with the possibility that various forms of adult attachment arise from a continuous but branching tree of attachment experiences, beginning in infancy and developing throughout the life course (p. 42)

Both approaches emphasize the continued importance of attachment in adulthood.

The 'parenting' group developed the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan & Main, 1985). This semi-structured interview activates the attachment system by asking the subject to describe his early relationship with his primary caregivers focusing on the quality of the early relationship in general as well as specifically during periods of separation and illness. The interview is not interested in the details of the early experiences, but rather the state of mind of the subject while discussing these attachment relationships. The interview attempts to "surprise the unconscious" (Hesse, 1999, p. 397). The subject is implicitly asked to reflect on early attachment experiences and create a believable, internally consistent and coherent representation of his childhood experiences. At the same time, the subject is expected to cooperate and collaborate with the interviewer.

Using a variety of scales, Main and her colleagues were able to differentiate three organized states of mind with respect to attachment which corresponded and predicted infant attachment styles. Secure/Autonomous individuals are collaborative and consistent. They openly value attachment and are able to discuss and reflect on their attachment experiences objectively. Their children tended to be classified as

Secure. The dismissing group shy away from discussing attachment and producing attachment related memories. They produce scripted general descriptions and idealize their parents while being unable to support their beliefs or while producing memories that contradict their general description. They may also actively derogate attachment figures and attachment feelings. Their children are often classified as Avoidant in the Strange Situation. The third group, corresponding to the Anxious/Ambivalent infant group, was termed Enmeshed. These subjects appear psychologically and emotionally enmeshed with their early experiences and attachment figures. They continue to struggle against their attachment figures either passively or angrily. While they express valuing of attachment, they are unable to assert their independent identity. They often use excessively passive language, confuse recent and past experiences, and are unable to distance themselves from their experiences in order to provide a coherent and relevant protocol. In essence, both insecure groups (Dismissing and Enmeshed) are unable to present a fair representation of their early experiences. The Dismissing group is internally driven to shy away from recognizing the importance of attachment experiences and people by either creating a benevolent 'glossed-over' depiction of their childhood (communicated through idealization) or actively devaluing attachment. The Enmeshed group is unable to sufficiently distance themselves from their experiences in order to collaborate with the interviewer (George, Kaplan & Main, 1985; Main, 2000).

The 'parenting group' originally examined states of mind with respect to attachment as affecting the adult's ability to provide a safe haven and a secure base for her infant. In contrast, the 'romantic relationships group' examined close relationships

in adulthood. In close relationships, the couple must be able to use each other as secure bases and havens of safety. Bowlby (1973) notes that the healthy and self reliant adult has a secure base behind him and is able to provide a secure base for his companions. Adults, like children, depend on the availability of a secure base from which they explore the world and a safe haven to which they retreat when distressed.

Researchers examining attachment in romantic relationships utilized self report measures inspired by Ainsworth's three infant attachment styles and modified to reflect adult behaviors. The self report measures of adult attachment yield two dimensions termed model of self and model of others (e.g. Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998) or Anxiety and Avoidance (e.g. Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Here, Anxiety refers to sensitivity to attachment threats. Avoidance attempts to capture the individual's attempt to increase closeness in relationships or avoid it. Four adult attachment styles emerged and were labeled Secure, Preoccupied, Fearful-Avoidant and Dismissing-Avoidant[9]. Secure adults exhibit a positive model of self and others, low Anxiety and low Avoidance. The Preoccupied adults exhibit a negative model of self and a positive model of others. They score high on relationship-related Anxiety and low on Avoidance. The Fearful-Avoidant group demonstrates a negative model of self and a negative model of others. They had high Anxiety and high Avoidance. Finally, the Dismissing-Avoidant group demonstrates a positive model of self and a negative model of others. They rate themselves low in Anxiety and high in Avoidance.

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[9] Early in adult attachment research, one type of Avoidant classification was noted by the 'parental' group and by the 'romantic relationships' group. Later careful analysis suggested that the 'parental' 'Avoidant' did not correspond well with the 'romantic' Avoidant, and a new Avoidant style was added by the 'romantic' group. For this reason, research on adult Avoidant attachment style is sometimes confusing. For a more complete discussion of this development see Levy, Blatt and Shaver (1998) and Mikulincer and Shaver (2003).

The solo backpacker appears to contradict the central tenets of attachment theory. He leaves his attachment figures behind as well as his previous identity, status, and group affiliations. Furthermore, he is likely to encounter numerous continuous challenges in foreign lands. Even accessing a phone or an internet café in order to make contact with his attachment figures is not always possible. Traveling alone into the wilderness or into other cultures is an extreme version of exploration, far away from any secure base(s). While thoughts about attachment and attachment figures may substitute for the physical presence of the attachment figures (Mikulincer et al., 2002), a better understanding of the different attachment styles is needed in order to make sense of this paradox.

Bowlby (1973) suggests that the self reliant man would be classified as Secure. He writes, "…there [is] a strong case for believing that an unthinking confidence in the unfailing accessibility and support of attachment figures is the bedrock on which stable and self reliant personality is build" (p. 322). He observed that the self reliant individual enjoyed a childhood history of dependable parental support when needed as well as steady and tolerable encouragement towards increasing autonomy. Similar to the premises of the AAI, he notes that the parents of self reliant individuals communicated with their children directly and openly, and were not rigid in their beliefs or expectations from their children. Interestingly, he refers to astronauts as depicting an extreme version of self reliance, independence, and tolerance of stress. Research on this population revealed that they emerged from families with high levels of solidarity and a childhood which left them with many warm memories of

recreational activities with their fathers[10]. While this research was conducted prior to the development of attachment theory, the astronauts' histories suggest that they would be classified as Secure/Autonomous. This is consistent with Bowlby's reflection (1973) that the individual confident in the availability of attachment figure will be less prone to intense or chronic fear, hence, perhaps, enabling him to venture away from his attachment figures.

Levy et al. (1998) focused on the mental representations of parental figures. They observed that individuals classified as Secure were able to provide parental representations that were benevolent and non-punitive. Furthermore, the parental representations were noted for their high levels of differentiation and elaboration. Secure individuals represented their parents more benevolently, and were able to demonstrate both greater differentiation from their parents as well as more awareness of different aspects in their parents. Their research suggests that Secure attachment is linked with greater intrapsychic independence from parents.

Mikulincer and Shaver (2003) suggest that attachment security is the prerequisite for both healthy love and self actualization. In close romantic relationships, Secure individuals demonstrate a greater capacity to communicate distress to their partners and to be soothed by their partners (Crowell et al., 2002; Mikulincer et al., 2002; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Secure individuals were differentiated from the insecure attachment groups by their ability to approach their partners directly and communicate their needs in a clear and consistent fashion. Once support was received, Secure individuals were able to reestablish emotional

[10] Bowlby refers to research by Korchin and Ruff, 1964 and Ruff and Korchin, 1967.

equilibrium and return to their activities (Crowell et al., 2002). Examining the research on support seeking on the whole, Mikulincer and Shaver (2003) conclude that Secure individuals seek both instrumental and emotional support at times of need from various attachment figures including parents, close friends and romantic partners. Individuals Secure with respect to attachment are able to express their distress directly and to be soothed through contact with their attachment figures.

In contrast to the Secure group who may venture out, knowing that their secure base is available, the Avoidant group ventures away from their secure base. Individuals who scored high on the Avoidance dimension were less likely to seek support from their partners when stressed. When they did seek support, they often did so using indirect strategies (Collins & Feeney, 2000). With respect to care-giving as well, as their partners' distress level increased, Avoidant individuals offered less support. The support they did offer was interpreted by the researchers as attempting to control their partners (Feeney & Collins, 2001).

Avoidant individuals appear defensive concerning their attachment needs and the attachment needs of their partners. Edelstein and Shaver (2004) explain that the Avoidant infant learned to defensively de-activate his attachment system in order to prevent further distress. Evidence for the defensiveness hypothesis stems from Avoidant children's attempt to maintain proximity to their caregivers when they are not acutely distressed. In a similar fashion, adults classified as Avoidant appear to defensively regulate their proximity to close others when they are distressed. This is particularly true when the source of distress is attachment related such as the threat of separation (Mikulincer et al., 2002). For Avoidant adults, much like Avoidant infants,

proximity to others does not help them regulate negative affects and distress. Drawing on the naturalistic observations of Avoidant infants, Avoidant adults expect that their attachment figures would reject them (Edelstein & Shaver, 2004). The narratives of dismissing adults on the AAI supports this hypothesis. Despite their attempt to present a positive description of their childhood, they often describe much parental rejection. Therefore, they choose to distance themselves from their attachment figures when highly distressed.

While individuals classified as Avoidant are in romantic relationships, they continue to attempt to distance themselves from their partners. Avoidant adults appear less emotionally close to their romantic partners than non Avoidant individuals. They disclose less to their partners, grieve less after break-ups, and find physical and emotional intimacy more aversive. At the same time, they are more likely to be promiscuous. Edelstein and Shaver (2004) conclude that Avoidant individuals are avoiding emotional and psychological intimacy, not sexuality per se. They report lower satisfaction, intimacy and interdependence in their romantic relationships and their relationships tend to be shorter than non Avoidant individuals. Their defensive attempt to maintain distance from their attachment figures has also been noted in their greater tendency to devalue their romantic partners (Edelstain & Shaver, 2004), and to behave defensively when writing about problems in their romantic relationships (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000).

Levy and Blatt (1999) note that members of the Dismissing-Avoidant attachment style report more interest in achievement than relationships. On self-report measures they come across as having high self esteem, being socially self-confident,

and independent. They also appear unemotional, defensive, cynical as well as distant and critical of others. In contrast to their own self perception, their peers rated them as hostile and less ego resilient. Levy and Blatt set out to examine personality characteristics associated with attachment styles in a normative college population. They discovered a significant association between Dismissing-Avoidant attachment style and narcissistic, antisocial and paranoid personality disorders characteristics. Examining their parental representations, Levy and his colleagues (1998, 1999) note that Dismissing-Avoidant individuals produced less differentiated and less elaborated descriptions of their parents than individuals with other attachment styles. Furthermore, their descriptions were notable for their diminished expression of ambivalent feelings towards the parents and parental descriptions that were more punitive and malevolent than those of Secure subjects.

Perhaps because of disappointment and rejection in their early life, Mikulincar and Shaver (2003) suggest that Avoidant individuals attempt to deactivate their attachment system. They do so by pursuing distance, control and self reliance. They further attempt to avoid negative emotions that may activate the attachment system. They avoid symbolic or direct confrontation with relational conflicts, and suppress thoughts and emotions associated with rejection or separation.

In contrast to the Dismissing-Avoidant individuals, Fearful-Avoidant individuals do not parade their independence and self-sufficiency. They tend to report low self esteem, loneliness, vulnerability, dependency, and fear of rejection (Levy & Blatt, 1999). This group does not appear to devalue the importance of attachment. However, they are unable to utilize others as secure bases or havens of

safety. They avoid closeness not because they believe themselves to be self-reliant, but because closeness may be associated with increased anxiety and distress. Levy and Blatt (1999) note that Fearful-Avoidant individuals endorsed more avoidant and schizoid personality disorder traits.

In their parental representations, Levy and his colleagues (1998, 1999) note that Fearful-Avoidant individuals described their parents as relatively punitive and malevolent, much as the Dismissing-Avoidant individuals had. However, unlike the Dismissing-Avoidant group, they were able to express ambivalent feelings towards their parents. In addition, their descriptions suggested a high degree of differentiation, scoring even higher than the Secure subjects on this scale. Levy et al. (1998) suggest that Fearful-Avoidant individuals may be more similar to some of the individuals classified as Secure on the Adult Attachment Interview.

Like individuals classified as Fearful-Avoidant, the Preoccupied attachment group score high on the relationship- related Anxiety dimension. For individuals who score high on Anxiety, mental representations of their attachment figures are never far from consciousness. Mikulincer et al. (2002) found that in the laboratory setting, increasing the subjects' anxiety led to more readily accessible representations of their attachment figures. For subjects who scored high on the relationship-related Anxiety dimension, attachment figures were readily available even under neutral conditions. The attachment system is activated based on the individual's subjective appraisal of threat. The appraisal process may be unconscious or subconscious. The Preoccupied group demonstrates a chronic hyper-activation of the system. For this reason, they maintain hyper-vigilance for attachment related threats (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003).

This hyper-vigilance hampers their development of autonomy and self confidence. In Levy and Blatt's previously noted study (1999), the Preoccupied attachment style was associated with borderline, dependant and passive-aggressive personality disorder traits. Preoccupied individuals seek relationships and intimacy, but their high levels of relationship-related Anxiety thwarts their efforts (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Feeney & Collins, 2001). The hyper-activation of the attachment system would suggest that the Preoccupied group (low in Avoidance, high in Anxiety) would not elect to engage in solo-backpacking for extended period of time. This question is, however, more murky for the Secure and Avoidant groups.

As was noted earlier, backpackers value self reliance and autonomy. The solo backpacker does not give himself the opportunity to form lasting relationships. Are these backpackers drawing strength from their earlier, and now internalized, positive experiences with a secure base and a haven of safety? Bowlby (1973) suggests that a history of Secure attachment is what ultimately allows humans to become self reliant. Edelstein and Shaver (2004) suggest that adolescents and adults require psychological availability rather than physical proximity. However, Mikulincer and Shaver (2003) suggest that no one is completely free of dependence. Perhaps the Secure individual's internalized belief that he is likable and that others around him are benevolent is sufficient to sustain him until he is able to phone or otherwise contact his attachment figures back home.

On the other hand, the solo backpacker's long term existence in the midst of superficial and non-committed transitory relationships on the road is consistent with the expected behavior of individuals scoring high on Avoidance (perhaps including

both Fearful-Avoidant as well as Dismissing-Avoidant attachment styles). Commitment is an essential quality for the ability to provide a secure base for another (Duemmler & Koback, 2001). The backpacker culture discourages commitment while on the road. Are the majority of solo-backpackers Avoidant individuals who have found (or founded) a culture that legitimizes and encourages their natural proclivities? Or does the backpacking culture, itself, form a coherent and consolidated subculture able to provide, in itself, a secure base and a haven of safety?

Formal Hypotheses and Questions Posed

This study is an exploratory psychological study of long-term backpackers who travel alone designed to investigate how object relations theories and attachment theory operate within this unique population. To this end, I am interested in exploring the meaning attached to backpacking for this population and the nature of their relationships both at home and on the road. I examined their early relationships with primary caregivers, their relationship to potential attachment figures while traveling, and the nature of their relationships while traveling and back home. The nature of backpackers' romantic relationships is investigated as one type of intimate relationship. Romantic relationships are an interesting type of intimate relationships since they may be short term or long term. They may also be physically intimate, emotionally intimate, or both.

The object relations of backpackers will also be explored drawing on the literature here reviewed. The literature on narcissism, as well as the writings of Fairbairn, Guntrip and Winnicott, focus on the role of dependence in childhood and adulthood for both developing the capacity for closeness and love, as well as self actualization. The data from this population is analyzed with respect to this aspect of development. In particular, drawing on the theorists' models, evidence demonstrating positive or negative resolution of schizoid conflicts and the strength and vitality of Winnicott's True Self are examined. Drawing on the literature on pathological narcissism, the data is evaluated for evidence that excessive self reliance, grandeur,

and avoidance of intimacy, are integral parts of the character structure in this population.

With respect to backpackers' subjective experience, I am interested in their own views on the role their travels had on their self actualization and identity formation. In what ways, if any, did the travels play a role in their internal sense of self differentiation and self growth? The backpackers' views on intimacy and dependency are explored, looking, in particular, on how intimacy needs are fulfilled on their trip and at home. Finally, backpackers' experience of solitude is explored. In particular, how did they wrestle with the experience of solitude on their trip and to what extent do they view solitude as an integral part of their experience on the trip and in their daily life?

Using quantitative measures, backpackers' attachment style and object relations are formally assessed and compared to normative samples. Within the attachment theory construct, I expect that backpackers will score higher on relationship-related Avoidance, avoiding emotional intimacy, closeness and their dependency needs. Comparing backpackers' object relations to the normal population as a whole, I hypothesize that this group of backpackers will find attaining emotional closeness more difficult. I expect that they will avoid closeness, and instead focus on self reliance. I suggest that this pattern of object relations is most suited for the lifestyle of backpackers, at least while they are backpacking. The backpacker on the road does not have immediate access to long term relationship partners or time to develop emotionally intimate and committed relationships in the present. The

backpacker cannot depend on relationships while he or she is traveling, and must be self reliant in the face of the challenges he or she encounters. However, since backpackers also emphasize the importance of socialization and social etiquette, I suggest that they will not demonstrate a relative weakness on this dimension.

Based on the theories and research reviewed above, eight quantitative hypotheses are investigated objectively. Four hypotheses focus on attachment theory and are derived from the Experience in Close Relationships questionnaire (ECR-R, described in the methods section). Four hypotheses focus on object relations theory and are derived from Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI, described in the methods section).

Attachment-theory hypotheses

1) The population will score higher on the relationship-related Avoidance dimension of the Experience in Close Relationships (ECR-R) attachment scale (described in the methods section) than the normative population.

2) Within the sample, I hypothesize that Avoidance will be negatively correlated with frequency of contact with potential attachment figures. I expect that while traveling, individuals who score higher on the Avoidance dimension of attachment will contact individuals back home less frequently than individuals scoring lower on the Avoidance dimension.

3) Consistent with the attachment literature description of the deactivating strategies of individuals scoring high on the Avoidance scale where attachment figures

are less prevalent in their lives while more superficial intimacies are more present, the following three hypotheses are proposed.

a) Relationship-related Avoidance will be positively correlated with number of sexual partners while traveling.

b) Relationship-related Avoidance will be negatively correlated with enduring romantic relationships back home.

c) Regression analysis would be able to estimate relationship-related Avoidance from subjects' frequency of sexual contact on the road and duration of the backpacking trip.

4) It is hypothesized that the Preoccupied attachment style will be under-represented in this population.

Object-Relations Hypotheses

1) The population will score higher on the Alienation subscale of the BORRTI than the normative population. The Alienation subscale taps into the individual's difficulty establishing close relationships.

2) The population will score lower on the Insecure Attachment subscale of the BORRTI than the normative population. This subscale is associated with a strong need for relationships in order to achieve a sense of security. I hypothesize that the backpackers I am studying, those traveling alone for long periods of time, will not depend on relationships for a sense of security.

3) The population will score higher on the Egocentricity subscale of the BORRTI than the normative population. I expect elevated scores on this scale because of the importance of self-reliance and autonomy within the backpackers' culture.

4) The population will not differ significantly from the normative population on the Social Incompetence subscale of the BORRTI. As was noted earlier, backpackers value socialization and view it as an integral aspect of backpacking. I therefore expect backpackers to show no significant deficits in this realm.

Chapter III

Research Design and Method

This is an exploratory study of the nature of attachment style and object relations in the population of long-term backpackers traveling alone. Subjects completed self-report questionnaires including general demographics, travel history, and relationship history. Subjects were also administered the Experiences in Close Relationships Revised (ECR-R) to assess attachment style, Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI) to assess object relations, and a short written version of the early memory test to be used as a projective measure of object relations. Four of these subjects were interviewed in depth. These subjects were given a semi-structured qualitative interview focusing on their experiences traveling alone and their adjustment back into domestic life.

Subjects

The criteria for becoming a subject in this study were as follows. Subjects must have traveled alone for at least 6 months. The criteria for traveling alone is that the subject did not travel with the same travel companion for more than three weeks, and that the subject did indeed travel (and not halt their travels as in settling in a town to earn money or learn the language) for six months during the entire duration of the trip. The exact dates (3 weeks with companions or 6 months of actual travel) were selected somewhat arbitrarily in order to insure a more unified backpacking population

who did, in fact, lack stable companions or a stable 'home' for a significant period of time.

Since attachment and object relations are both constructs conceptualized as relatively stable throughout adulthood, all backpackers who met the travel time requirement and traveled in their adulthood were eligible to participate.

Subjects were recruited by various means. Postings for the study were placed at various backpacking-related internet sites with an internet link available for filling the questionnaire online or requesting a paper-copy to be sent by the researcher. Postings for the research were also placed at various locations likely to be frequented by backpackers such as hostels and travel-related stores. Finally, backpackers known to the researcher were approached for their help disseminating information about the study.

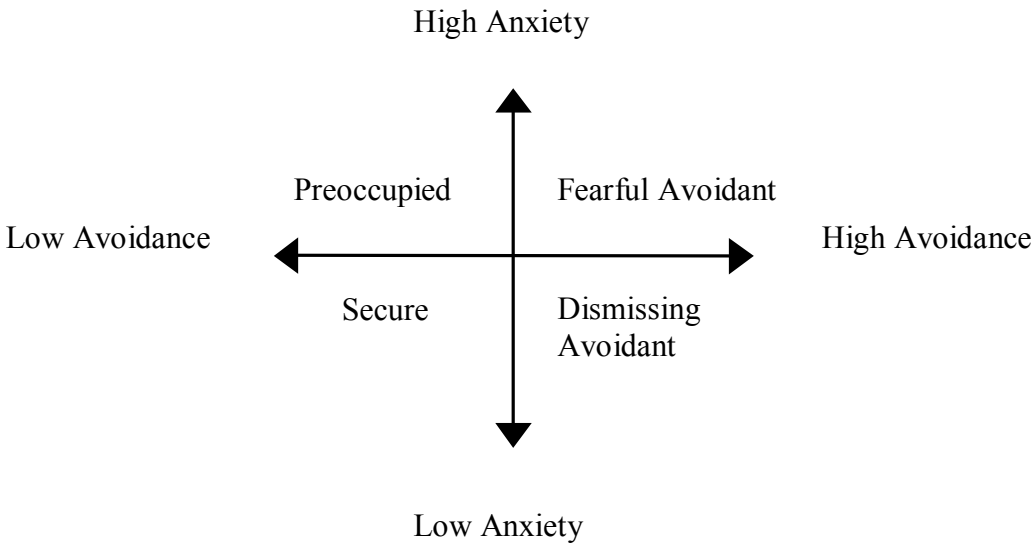
Measures

Demographics

Subjects were initially presented with a demographics questionnaire. Variables include the participant's age, sex, race, and education level. Participants were asked about their parents' relationship status and family composition during childhood. In addition, the participants were asked about their own relationship history as well as travel history.

Attachment Measure

The Experience in Close Relationship Questionnaire-Revised (ECR-R). The Experience in Close Relationship Questionnaire (Fraley et al., 2000) is a self report measure which assesses romantic attachment patterns on two dimensions, relationship-related avoidance (Avoidance) and relationship-related anxiety (Anxiety). The measure was created after an extensive analysis of self-report measures of adult romantic attachment. The researchers found that an Anxiety and Avoidance dimension were present in nearly all of these measures (Brennan et al., 1998). Individuals who fall into the Secure category demonstrate a wish for closeness with no undo anxiety about their partners' commitment or the stability of the relationship. In contrast, the Preoccupied group demonstrates high scores on Anxiety and low scores on Avoidance. They are anxious about the stability and security of their relationships and seek greater closeness with their partners. The Dismissing-Avoidant group seek to avoid their partners or in other ways gain distance from their partners. They also demonstrate very low levels of anxiety about the vitality of their relationships. The Fearful-Avoidant group demonstrates high levels of anxiety about the security of their relationships as well as a wish to gain distance from their partners. The four adult attachment styles, Secure, Dismissing-Avoidant, Fearful-Avoidant and Preoccupied can be conceptualized as follows.



This model is based on Bartholomew's (1990) theoretical model of adult attachment styles (Fraley, Davis & Shaver, 1998). However, unlike a categorical approach, the dimensional approach utilized by the ECR has the advantage of providing continuous scores on the two dimensions thereby providing more information than a categorical classification system would. Furthermore, Fraley and Waller (1998) argue that their analysis reveals that adult attachment can be better explained dimensionally than categorically. Essentially they argue that a Dismissive-Avoidant person who scores low on the Anxiety dimension, but only slightly high on the Avoidant dimension would be meaningfully different from a Dismissive-Avoidant who scores low on the Anxiety dimension and very high on the Avoidance dimension. After further statistical analysis, the original Experience in Close Relationship questionnaire was revised by Fraley and his colleagues (2000) yielding the ECR-R.

The Revised ECR is a 36-item self-report measure (alpha =0.90) which asks subjects to rate how they generally feel in emotionally intimate relationships. They rate each item on a seven point likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree. Eighteen of the items measure the Avoidant dimension, and eighteen items measure the relationship Anxiety dimension. An example of an item measuring Avoidance is "I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down". An example of an item measuring Anxiety is "I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me". The Experience in Close Relationship questionnaire has been used in a wide variety of attachment studies including the examination of care-giving in adult intimate relationships (Feeney & Collins, 2001), individuals with borderline personality disorder (Levy et al., 2005), and accessibility of attachment representations under stress (Mikulincer et al., 2002).

Object Relations Measures

Object relations is a broad and complex concept which many psychodynamic theorists understand as focusing on the individual's representations of himself and others as well as the affect associated with these representations (Huprich & Greenberg, 2003). These representations stem from the early caregiver-child relationship. Object relations were traditionally measured with the use of projective tests such as the Rorschach, TAT, early memories and dreams. However, some researchers studied object relations by examining how the individual creates and maintains relationships and how the individual experiences him or herself in relations

to others (Bell, 1991; Bellak et al., 1973). Comparisons of different object relations measures as well as different means of measuring object relations yield some correlation while at other times no correlation is found (Bell, 1991; Spear & Lapidus, 1981). These findings suggest that object relations is a broad concept and that different measures of object relations may be tapping into different dimensions of this construct. For this study, subjects were presented with Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI; Bell, 1991/1995). This measure is a self report measure which examines how individuals feel about, behave in, and form relationships. The subjects were also given the early memory test as a projective measure of object relations.

The Bell Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI). Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI: Bell et al., 1986; Bell 1991) is a 90 item true-false questionnaire that provides a broad assessment of object relations and reality testing. Bell suggests that the object relations instrument measures deficits in object relations ego functioning (Bell, 2003). Bell and his colleagues reason that object relations can be discerned "…from the way an individual conducts his relationships and how he experiences himself in relations to others" (Bell et al., 1986, p. 734). The subject is asked to rate each statement based on his or her "most recent experience". Forty-five items measure object relations and forty five items measure reality testing.

Bell argues that object relations may be assessed directly by examining how the individual creates and maintains relationships as well as how he experiences

himself in relationships with others (Bell, 1991). The BORRTI is founded on this second approach. To develop the questionnaire, Bell drew on the work of Bellak et al. (1973). Bellak and his colleagues developed an interview to assess ego functioning along with a comprehensive scoring system. Bell and his colleagues drew on the object relations and reality testing dimensions of Bellak et al.'s work to develop appropriate and clear self-report questions. Items were selected to represent a broad range of object relations and reality testing functioning reflecting the object relations of both normal and clinical populations. The items selected were factor analyzed. Four object relations factors were identified, and each of the items used on the BORRTI loaded 0.28 or higher on one of the four factors. The test includes an Inconsistent Responding Scale and validity indexes (Bell, 1995). Bell reports that intercorrelations between factors differ with different populations. More homogenous groups, such as individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder, may have high intercorrelations between subscales. In the normal population, intercorrelation is much lower, ranging from 0.21 to 0.50.

The object relations items yield scores on four subscales: Alienation, Insecure Attachment, Egocentricity, and Social Incompetence. A high score on Alienation suggests lack of basic trust in relationships, inability to attain closeness, and hopelessness about maintaining stable and satisfying levels of intimacy. A high scorer on this subscale may be suspicious of others, guarded, and may expect relationships to be ungratifying. He or she may demonstrate a limited capacity for empathy. An

example of an item is 'It is hard for me to get close to anyone"[11]. The Insecure Attachment subscale measures the painfulness of interpersonal relations. An individual scoring high on this dimension may be very sensitive to rejection and overly concerned about being liked and accepted. This individual values relationships, but relationships are sought out for security, not for the enjoyment of intimacy and closeness with others. The Insecure Attachment subscale is unique in its bidirectional relationship to pathology. Very low scores indicate extreme insensitivity and disregard for relationships, as is seen in Antisocial Personality Disorder. High scores indicate vulnerability in close relationships and tendency to feel rejected (Bell, 2003). It should be noted that this subscale is not related to attachment theory or the attachment theory's definition of insecure attachment. An example of an item is "I feel I have to please everyone or else they may reject me". The third subscale is Egocentricity. A high scorer on this subscale does not trust the motivation of others, views others as existing only in relations to the self, and feels justified in manipulating others for his or her own needs. The self is viewed as either omnipotent or powerless since no mutuality can exist. An example item is "Manipulating others is the best way to get what I want". Finally, an individual scoring high on the Social Incompetence subscale would be shy, nervous, and uncertain about how to interact with members of the opposite sex. This individual demonstrates social insecurity and would often report an absence of close relationships. An example of an item is "I often feel nervous when I am around members of the opposite sex".

[11] Sample items taken from Hall et al., 1998.

While the BORRTI includes measures of both object relations and reality testing, Bell suggests that researchers may use only the object relations portion of his measure. He suggests that researchers and clinicians use their own judgment as to when the use of only the object relations portion of the questionnaire is appropriate (Bell, 1995). In this study, only the object relations portion of the inventory will be utilized for its relevance to the topic under investigation. This practice has been used by other researchers who have only used Bell's object relations measure (e.g. Bell et al., 1986; Hall et al., 1998; Heesacker & Neimeyer, 1990; Tramantano et al., 2003; Tucker & McNamara, 1995).

The BORRTI is scored by computer or hand. Bell provides normative data for both non-clinical and clinical samples converted to t-scores. The coefficient alpha of the BORRTI ranges from 0.78- 0.90. The Spearman Brown split-half coefficient is the same (Huprich & Greenberg, 2003). Individuals who score above the 85th percentile on a particular subscale are classified as pathological on the subscale. The Insecure Attachment subscale is the only scale demonstrating that sub-normal scores may demonstrate pathology (Bell, 2003). Studies utilizing this measure demonstrated no significant correlation between each of the subscales and age, gender, or social desirability (Bell et al., 1986). This scale was selected for this study because of the extensive literature demonstrating its utility in non-clinical populations (Burns & Viglione, 1996; Gussoni-Leone, 2002; Hall et al., 1998; Heesacker & Neimeyer, 1990; Huprich & Greenberg, 2003; Tucker & McNamara, 1995) as well as various clinical populations such as differentiating Borderline patients from other character disorders

as well as differentiating different types of borderline patients (Bell et al., 1986; Tramantano et al., 2003), examining methadone patients (Rutherford, Alterman, Cacciola, McKay & Cook, 1996; Rutherford, Cacciola, Alterman, & McKay, 1996), psychopathic patients (Rutherford, Alterman, Cacciola, McKay & Cook, 1996), as well as patients with PTSD, multiple personality disorder, general anxiety disorder, dysthymia, and schizophrenia (see Bell, 2003 for review of findings).

Early Memories and the KORS. The significance of early memories was first noted by Freud (1899). Freud views early memories as "screen" memories intended to conceal the individual's deeper id wishes that are in some way unacceptable to the individual. By distorting the memory, the individual can to some degree express the deeper id wishes while maintaining the actual wish or conflict unconscious. Freud, therefore, was not interested in the manifest content of the memory, only its latent one.

With the emergence of Ego Psychology and projective tests, the "screen" itself became significant. Martin Mayman was first to highlight the importance of early memories as projective tools used for diagnostic purposes. Mayman views the manifest content of these early memories as capturing traces of the unconscious while revealing more directly the defensive styles and character structure of the individual (Mayman, 1968; Mayman & Faris, 1960). Mayman argues that early memories are not an accurate reflection of past events. Instead, they are retrospectively created to capture psychological truths about the self (Mayman, 1968). He argues that the early memories were unconsciously selected by the individual to reflect his experience of himself and his experience of others. He writes, "…I propose that a person's adult

character structure is organized around object-relational themes which intrude projectively into the structure and content of his early memories, just as they occur repetitively in his relations with significant persons in his life" (Mayman, 1968, p. 304). In this fashion, early memories are a reflection of the adult's self-representation and representation of others.

Mayman's work contributed to the proliferation of the use of early memories for clinical purposes as well as research. Bruhn (1992a, 1992b) for example, approaches early memories from a cognitive-perceptual perspective. He concludes that early memories are best treated as fantasies that reveal present concern. He notes that the particular early memories produced reflect the individual's current state and often reveal developmentally appropriate concerns. In contrast, Westen's work attempts to integrate social cognition with object relations theories (Huprich & Greenberg, 2003). Each of these theorists and others developed their own scales to assess early memories and researchers use a large variety of early memory protocols. For example, Bruhn asks subjects to report the first 5 earliest memories, followed by approximately 16 directed early memories. Other researchers use shorter protocols. For example, for the assessment of mental health, only 5 memories were used, the first two earliest childhood memories followed by earliest memory of mother, father, and a 'high point' or 'low point' in the subject's life (Karliner et al., 1996; Shedler et al., 2003). Westen's scale uses narrative data from interviews, early memories, or TAT protocols for his assessment.

In this study Krohn and Mayman's scale was used for the assessment of object relations. Krohn and Mayman (1974) developed the Krohn Object Representation Scale for Dreams (KORS). The scale has been used to assess developmental level of object relations using dreams as well as early memories. It was originally developed to assess overall level of maturity of object representations by examining written dream reports and the fashion with which humans are depicted. Krohn and Mayman argue that central to the capacity for differentiation and elaboration of mental representations is the quality of internalization which took place during development (Davis, 1997). The KORS scale rates object representations on an eight-point ordinal scale ranging from primary narcissism to empathic object relatedness (Levine & Tuber, 1991).

On the lowest end of the scale, the individual experiences others as vacant and alien. The individual has essentially failed at the task of internalization and his inner world is desolate (Gluckman & Tuber, 1996; Levine & Tuber, 1993). An individual on the second level of the scale experience "people" as not quite human. Others are experienced as malevolent, cold and mechanical. The inner relational world remains undifferentiated and is ruled by primitive affects and developmentally early introjects. At the third level, the inadequate degree of separation is apparent. The individual experiences others as fluid and interchangeable. Representations remain fragmentary and are not integrated into a more balanced comprehensive and nuanced understanding of people. At the fourth point on the scale, representation of others is more consistent and stable, but is focused on the need-gratifying role of others. It is as though humans

only exist as gratifiers of one's needs or as the self gratifying their needs. The fifth level on the scale captures early levels of identification. The ego splitting is prominently reduced so that representations humans are markedly more balanced and nuanced. However, others are experienced as stereotyped and interchangeable, as though they exist only in the context of a constricted role (Gluckman & Tuber, 1996; Levine & Tuber, 1993).

Krohn and Mayman emphasize that on their scale, a score of six or above reflects an advanced level of internalization and a significantly greater capacity for empathy and object-relatedness. Krohn argues that these higher levels correspond to Kernberg's description of consolidated ego identity. Object representations are now sufficiently differentiated to allow for fuller empathy and the recognition of others' inner motives and feelings (Gluckman & Tuber, 1996). At the sixth level, an individual has a differentiated and stable experience of others, but closeness is still avoided by a tendency to avoid understanding others' inner thoughts and feelings. At the seventh level there is growing attempt to understand others' inner thoughts and feelings, but the individual is hampered by his own neurotic conflicts and distortions. At the eighth level, the highest rating on the KORS, the individual has a strong understanding of his and others' thoughts and feelings. His experience of himself and others is not rigid, and remains open to be modified and influenced by new experiences (Levine & Tuber, 1993). The KORS was intended to be used by skilled clinicians. Scorers are encouraged to use full inferential capacities to evaluate the

subject's level of self awareness as well as interpersonal relatedness (Hatcher & Krohn, 1980 from Davis, 1997).

Krohn and Mayman (1974) report that exact interrater reliability for the scale was 58%, with an 83% interrater agreement within 1 scale point. They used their scale to assess patients' dreams, early memories, and Rorschach responses. Significant correlations were found between the three projective tests. A correlation was also apparent between patients' KORS scores and the therapist's assessment of the patients' health and level of object representations. Spear and Lapidus (1981) examined the level of object representations of a diverse inpatient population using the Krohn and Mayman scale on dreams and Blatt et al. (1976) rating scale for human figures on the Rorscach. The authors found that using the Krohn and Mayman scale significantly differentiated among their defined diagnostic categories. Spear and Lapidus also examined the relationship between the two scales. Interestingly, they found that while both scales were useful, there was no significant correlation between them when the Blatt et al. (1976) scale was applied to Rorscach responses and the Krohn and Mayman scale was applied to dreams. They suggest that different object representation measures are able to capture different dimensions of object representations.

Levine and Tuber (1991, 1993) examined the relationship between mothers' internal representations and attachment theory. They compared mothers' classifications on the Adult Attachment Interview with the score they would receive using the Krohn and Mayman scale. In their study, they applied the scale to AAI

transcripts. They found a high correlation between mothers' AAI classification and rating on the KORS scale.

In this study, a short written version of an early memory test was administered. Subjects were asked to provide five early memories: 1. earliest memory, 2. next earliest memory, 3. earliest memory of mother, 4. earliest memory of father and 5. earliest memory of a time they were alone[12]. The early memories were scored on the KORS scale by clinical psychology doctorate students trained in the use of the KORS.

Interview

Four subjects completed both the questionnaire and were then administered a semi-structured interview designed by the author for this study. Interviewed subjects were selected from the pool of subjects who provided their contact information and stated their willingness to be interviewed on the questionnaire. Two individuals with a Secure attachment style and two individuals with a Dismissive-Avoidant attachment style were selected. The selection criterion was further limited to individuals who were geographically accessible to the author. Of the subjects who met these selection criteria, it was attempted to recruit the subjects with attachment scores most representative of their attachment style (i.e. substantially low Avoidance and Anxiety scores for the Secure subjects and substantially high Avoidance and low Anxiety for the Dismissive-Avoidant subjects). The interview was designed to elicit the subjects' personal reflections on their travels, their experience traveling alone, the transition

[12] Earliest memory of a time alone is less commonly used in the literature, see Urist (2000) for a discussion of this early memory question.

back home, and their quality of relationships on the road and back home. The interview data was analyzed qualitatively.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

Descriptive statistics were generated for the purpose of inspecting the raw data. Outliers were eliminated and some variables were recoded to enhance meaningfulness and interpretability. The descriptive data was than compared to normative data for attachment and object relations.

Each subject's dimensional score for relationship-related Anxiety and relationship-related Avoidance was compared to normative data. Subjects' scores on the ECR-R were then recoded to yield an attachment style classification. Each subject's Anxiety and Avoidance score was subtracted from the normative means. Individuals who scored below the normative means on both the Avoidance and Anxiety dimensions were classified as Secure. Subjects with scores that were above the norms for Avoidance, and below the norms for Anxiety were classified as Dismissing-Avoidant. Those scoring above the norms for both Avoidance and Anxiety were classified as Fearfully-Avoidant. Finally, those scoring above the norms on Anxiety, but below the norms on Avoidance were classified as Preoccupied. This methodology follows from Fraley's research and conceptualization of the ECR-R discussed above (Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000). The percent distribution of attachment styles in this sample was compared to a normative population using a chi-

square test. Because of the small sample size, the sample was then collapsed into a 'Secure' and 'insecure' groups and was again compared to the same normative population using the chi-square goodness of fit test. This procedure was repeated for each classification style creating a style vs. 'other' and compared to the normative sample.

Attachment-related hypotheses utilizing a dimensional conceptualization of attachment were tested in the following manner. The backpackers' degree of Avoidance and Anxiety were compared to that of a normative population utilizing a t-test analysis to see if mean differences were significant. To test the Avoidance-specific hypotheses, I found the pearson's correlation between Avoidance and 1. frequency of contact back home, 2. frequency of sexual relations while traveling and 3. current relationship status. To further understand this last relationship (#3) I also conducted a regression analysis. I examined if Avoidance can be predicted from duration of the last trip and number of sexual partners. This analysis was utilized to better understand if the duration of the trip or the number of sexual partners (measured in frequency to account for different trip durations) is a better predictor of attachment Avoidance, of if both are strong meaningful contributors to attachment Avoidance. In addition, I conducted a regression analysis to see if trip duration predicts current relationship status once age and time since last trip are included into the equation. Finally, to better understand the relationship between sexual intimacy and attachment, I compared the means for Avoidance and Anxiety of individuals who had sexual

experiences while traveling and those who did not conducting a chi-square test of independence.

To examine object relations, I used a t-test to compare backpackers' mean scores on the four BORRTI object relations sub-scales with the t-scores provided for the normative population. I conducted a t-test for this analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

The transcribed interviews of the smaller sub-sample was analyzed to examine possible themes related to the schizoid problem, vitality of Winnicott's True Self, and narcissism-related themes. More specifically, I was looking for themes such as fears that closeness/love is destructive to the self or other, that one's needs are intolerable/unacceptable or that the needs of others are threatening. (schizoid related), that spontaneity in emotional expression is inhibited with others (True/False Self) and for defenses such as idealization or denigration, using others as selfobjects, emphasis on minimizing dependency needs and exalting self-reliance, and difficulty describing interactions involving two subjects rather than a subject and an object (narcissism related). With these themes in mind, the interviews were summarized and are presented in the qualitative results section.

Chapter IV

Quantitative Results

Subjects were recruited over a three and a half month period. One hundred and fifty subjects responded to the online version of the study. A large percentage (58%) of the respondents did not meet criteria for the study and were excluded from any further analysis. Subjects were excluded if they did not complete at least the demographics portion of the study, did not indicate that they were citizens of the United States, or indicated that they did not travel alone for at least six months. The remaining 63 subjects were used in the study. Many of these subjects did not complete all questions on the survey. For this reason, the number of subjects used in each analysis is indicated.

Demographics:

Of the sixty three subjects included, 57% (n = 36) are male. As Table 1 demonstrates, a large majority of the subjects are Caucasian (n = 51) and a significant minority are Asian-American (n = 7). The subjects were all U.S.A. citizens, but eight subjects indicated that they were also nationals of one or more other countries. Subjects' age ranged from 20 to 53, with a mean age of 31.16 years (sd = 7.49, N = 61). As seen in Table 2, most of subjects were well educated, and completed at least a college degree. Subjects were asked to provide their occupation. The data were then recoded into "employed", "student" and "unemployed" status. As can be seen in

Table 3, at the time of the survey, the majority of the subjects indicated that they were employed (72.1%, n = 44).

Table 1.
Ethnicities and Nationalities of Backpackers

	Frequency	*Percentage*
Caucasian	51	81.0%
Asian-American	7	11.1%
African-American	1	1.6%
Hispanic-American	1	1.6%
Native-American	1	1.6%
Mix	2	3.2%
Total (N)	**63**	**100%**
U.S.A. only	55	87.3%
U.S.A plus other	8	12.7%
Total (N)	**63**	**100%**

Table 2.
Reported Level of Education

Education	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Some High School	1	1.6%
High School Graduates	2	3.2%
Some College	10	15.9%
College Graduates	29	46.0%
Masters	17	27.0%
Doctorate	4	6.2%
Total	63	100%

* Valid Percentages are based on the total number of respondents.

Table 3.
Occupation at Time of Survey

Occupation Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
Employed	44	72.1%
Student	10	16.4%
Unemployed	7	11.5%
Total	61	100%

Subjects were also asked about their parents. The majority of the subjects reported that both of their parents are still living (83.9%, n = 52), with one subject refusing the respond. As seen in Table 4, the majority of the subjects also reported being raised in an intact family (69.8%, n = 44).

Table 4.
Who Raised You?

Raised by:	Frequency	Valid Percent
Mother & Father, Married	44	69.8%
Mother & Father Separated/Divorced	3	4.8%
Primarily Mother	12	19.0%
Primarily Father	1	1.6%
Other	3	4.8%
Total	63	100%

Travel History:

As seen in Table 5, on average, subjects reported that their first travel experience occurred at the age of 21 though the age ranged from 5 to 53. The average age for the first trip taken predominantly alone and lasting at least six months was 24.75 years but, again, the backpackers surveyed reported a large range from age 16 to 53.

Table 5.
Age

	Mean Age (years)	SD	Minimum	Maximum	N
Current Age	**31.16**	7.49	20	53	61
Age at First Trip	**21.14**	6.25	5	53	63
Age at First Solo Trip	**24.75**	6.69	16	53	63

Table 6 displays the number of backpacking trips taken by the subjects, the total duration of backpacking done by the subjects, and time since their last backpacking trip where they traveled predominantly alone for at least 6 months. The subjects reported an average of nearly 6 backpacking trips, thought the median was smaller, at 3 trips. Likewise, total duration of backpacking also showed a wide range in travel experience, with a mean of 19.11 months (Median = 12.50) ranging from the required minimum of 6 months to 77 months.

The subjects reported that their last backpacking trip done alone lasted an average of 11 months and reported completing their last solo backpacking trip an

average of more than 2 years prior to completing the survey (Median = 18 months). Subjects completing the survey ranged from still backpacking (n = 8, 12.7%) to those who completed their last long-term solo backpacking trip eleven years prior to completing the survey.

Table 6.
Amount of Backpacking (in months)

	Mean	SD	Median	Min	Max	N
Total Number Of Trips	**5.74**	13.03	3.00	1	100	61
Total Duration Of Backpacking	**19.11**	16.38	12.50	6	77	62
Duration of Last Solo Trip Lasting At Least 6 Months	**11.07**	11.13	7.00	5[1]	72	52
Time Since Last Solo 6-Month Trip	**29.14**	31.41	18	0	132	61

[1] One subject clearly indicated that she traveled for at least 6 months alone, but indicated that her 'last 6-month' trip alone lasted 5 months. She was included in the analysis.

Subjects were asked to report on their pattern of contacting people back home while traveling. They reported contacting people back home approximately once per week with a mean contact of 5.15 times per month (Median = 4.00/month, sd = 4.78) but ranged from contacting people back home once per six months period, to every day. As seen in Table 7, a large majority of the subjects contacted people back home by email, while half of the subjects phoned home. Since phone calls are the most

direct and personal form of long-distance contact, the subjects were asked who they telephoned back home. Of the twenty seven subjects who responded to this inquiry, the majority contacted family back home, and a large number of subjects reported phoning their friends and/or significant others as well.

Table 7.
Backpackers' Contact with Individuals Back Home

	By Phone % (n)	By Internet % (n)	By Airmail %(n)	Phoned No One % (n)	Phoned Family Only %(n)	Phoned Family and Friends %(n)	Phoned Friends Only % (n)
Endorsed (n)	50.8% (32)	88.9% (56)	14.3% (9)	18.5% (5)	33.3% (9)	44.4% (12)	3.7% (1)
Total subjects responding (N)	63	63	63	27	27	27	27

Subjects were asked whether they used the telephone, internet and airmail to contact their loved-ones back home. They were then asked who they telephoned while traveling.

Relationship History:

As seen in Table 8, at the time of the study, a large majority of subjects reported being single (n = 44, 75.9%). Nearly half of the subjects reported not dating at all (n = 26, 44.8%), while 9 subjects described themselves as married or in a marriage-like relationship (15.5%). Of the subjects currently in a relationship, the average relationship length reported was 29.76 months (sd = 35.80 months, N=31).

The large standard deviation reflects the range in relationship durations, spanning from just over a month to 13 years. A better estimate of the sample may be their median relationship length of 16 months.

Table 8a.
Relationship Status

	Single	Married	Separated	Divorced	Widowed
Frequency (n)	44	6	1	5	2
Valid Percent	75.9%	10.3%	1.7%	8.6%	3.4%
N	58	58	58	58	58

Table 8b.
Relationship Status

	Not Seeing Anyone	Dating Casual	Dating Serious	Married/ Marriage-Like
Frequency (n)	26	8	15	9
Valid Percent	44.8%	13.8%	25.9%	15.5%
N	58	58	58	58

A very large percentage of the subjects reported engaging in some sort of consensual sexual contact while traveling alone including kissing, 'making out' and sexual intercourse (n = 51, 87.9%, N = 58). Asked about the type of sexual partners generally selected for sexual activity, the majority of sexually/romantically active respondents reported sexual activity with other backpackers (54.17%, N =48), followed by locals (37.50%) and the remaining four subjects endorsed 'other' (8.33%). Just under half of subjects involved in sexual behavior reported doing so in the context of drugs or alcohol (46.81%, N = 47).

Focusing specifically on the last solo backpacking trip lasting at least 6 months, 45 out of the 51 (88.23%) respondents reported that they engaged in sexual contact, while 38 (74.5%) reported engaging in sexual intercourse on the trip. The subjects who engaged in sexual contact did so at an average rate of 00.64 partners per month (Median= 0.34, sd = 0.69, N = 42). The subjects engaging in sexual intercourse averaged 0.48 partners per month (Median = 0.33, sd = 0.59, N = 37). Subjects rated their sexual experience on a scale from 1 to 5 where '1' is "I regret my sexual experiences" and '5' is "I have no regrets. It was a very positive experience/s". Subjects rated their over all sexual experience while on the road as 4.35, between "mostly positive" and "I have no regrets…" with a median score of '5' (sd = 0.903, N = 49).

Object Relations and Attachment:

Table 9 summarizes the results of the BORRTI, ECR-R and Early Memory Test. Forty nine subjects completed Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI) object relations measure. The measure includes three internal scales, Inconsistency, Frequency and Infrequency, designed to ensure that the data scored is valid and that subjects' responses do not "…reflect random responding or systematically distorted responding…" (Bell, 1995, p. 9). Ten subjects yielded scores that did not pass the validity tests, and were excluded from the analysis. Scores on the BORRTI are given in T-score format where T = 50 is the mean score for a non-clinical population (Bell, 1995).

Table 9.
Object Relations Measures and Attachment

	Mean	SD	N	Published non-clinical means (SD)	*t*-values	*p* value (when compared to non-clinical means)
BORRTI[1] ALN	49.44	10.08	39	50 (5)	-0.35	0.729
BORRTI IA	49.23	9.27	39	50 (5)	-0.52	0.607
BORRTI EGC	47.69	8.17	39	50 (5)	-1.76	0.086
BORRTI SI	49.00	8.71	39	50 (5)	-0.72	0.478
ECR-R[2] Anxiety	2.90	1.08	48	3.64 (1.33)	-4.72	<0.0001*
ECR-R Avoidance	3.08	1.04	46	2.93 (1.18)	0.97	0.339
EMT-1 [3]	5.65	1.23	43	X[4]	X	X
EMT- 2	5.69	1.17	36	X[4]	X	X
EMT-3	5.59	0.78	34	X[4]	X	X
EMT-4	5.82	0.83	34	X[4]	X	X
EMT-5	5.81	1.13	32	X[4]	X	X

* reached significance

[1] the subjects' scores on the four BORRTI Object Relations Scales: Alienation (ALN), Insecure Attachment (IA), Egocentricity (EGC) and Social Incompetence. Scores are then compared with the published norms for the BORRTI.

[2]ECR-R measures attachment with the use of the relationship related Avoidance and relationship related Anxiety dimensions. Here, the subjects' scores are compared to published norms.

[3]EMT- Subjects' mean scores on the 5 early memories. No published means were available for comparison.
EMT1: Earliest Memory
EMT2: Next Earliest Memory
EMT3: Earliest Memory with Mother
EMT4: Earliest Memory with Father
EMT5: Earliest Memory of a time Alone.

[4] Norms not available for KORS scale

As seen in Table 9, the subjects in this study scored slightly below the mean on the four dimensions of the BORRTI. Backpackers' mean scores on the Alienation, Insecure Attachment and Social Incompetence did not significantly differ from the normal population, but there was a trend towards a significantly lower score on the Egocentricity scale ($t(38) = -1.764$, $p = 0.086$).

The Experiences in Close Relationships- Revised (ECR-R) scale is an attachment measure which yields two dimensional scores, one for relationship-related Anxiety, and the other for relationship-related Avoidance. The backpackers' mean scores were compared to the normal population's Anxiety and Avoidance scores as reported by Fraley[13]. There was a significant difference between the backpackers and normal adults on the dimension of Anxiety, $t(47) = -4.721$, $p<0.001$, with backpackers scoring lower (M = 2.90, sd = 1.08) than normal adults (M = 3.64, sd = 1.33). There was no significant difference between the backpackers and normal adults on the dimension of Avoidance, $t(45) = -0.966$, $p = 0.34$, with backpackers scoring slightly, but not significantly above (M = 3.08, sd = 1.08) the national mean for adults (M = 2.93, sd = 1.18).

The dimensional scores were converted into the four attachment styles of Secure, Dismissive-Avoidant, Fearful-Avoidant, and Anxiously-Preoccupied. The national means as reported by Fraley were subtracted from each subject's dimensional scores. Individuals scoring below the reported means for both Avoidance and Anxiety were placed in the 'Secure' category. Individuals who scored above the means for

[13] Data is based on a sample of over 22,000 individuals (78% female) who volunteered to take the survey anonymously. Average age was 24 (SD = 10). Reported online http://www.psych.uiuc.edu/~rcfraley/measures/ecrr.htm

Avoidance, but below the means for Anxiety were placed in the "Dismissive-Avoidant" category. Those scoring above the means for Avoidance and Anxiety were placed in the "Fearfully –Avoidant" category. Finally, individuals who scored above the mean for Anxiety, but below the mean for Avoidance were placed in the "Anxiously-Preoccupied" category. As seen in Table 10, 19 individuals were labeled as Secure" (41.3%), 16 subjects were Dismissive-Avoidant (34.8%), 8 subjects were Fearfully-Avoidant (17.4%) and 3 subjects were Anxiously-Preoccupied (6.5%).

Table 10.
Attachment Styles

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Secure	19	41.3%
Dismissive-Avoidant	16	34.8%
Fearfully-Avoidant	8	17.4%
Anxiously-Preoccupied	3	6.5%
Total	*46*	*100%*

The Early Memories were scored according to the KORS criteria as discussed in the Methodology section of this paper. Two trained graduate students scored the early memories. Thirty three memories were utilized to established inter-rater reliability. The two scorers achieved 54.5% exact score match and 90% match within one scoring point. Each scorer then provided a score for half of the remaining memories. For memories that were found difficult to score, the two raters consulted

with each other to reach an agreement. The subjects in this population had a mean of 5.65 for Earliest Memory (sd = 1.23), 5.69 for Next Earliest Memory (sd = 1.17), 5.59 for Earliest Memory with Mother (sd = 0.78), 5.82 for Earliest Memory with Father (sd = 0.83), and 5.81 for Earliest memory of a time Alone (sd = 1.13). The average rating on the early memories was 5.62 (sd = 0.77). A score of five suggests an early level of identification where ego splitting is significantly reduced so that the human representations offered in the memories are fairly balanced and nuanced, though the representations of others appears stereotyped and role-constricted. A score of six is given to memories suggesting the subject's consolidated ego identity. Representations of others are differentiated and stable, though closeness is still avoided through an reluctance to attempt to understand others' inner thoughts and feelings. On average, the subjects in this study scored between the fifth and sixth level on the KORS scale.

Inter-correlations of Measures:

Correlation between the BORRTI subscales and the ECR-R subscales are presented in Table 11. The four BORRTI scales (ALN, IA, EGC, SI) were highly correlated with each other, as were the two dimensions of the ECR-R (Anxiety and Avoidance). Each of the BORRTI scales was also highly correlated with each of the ECR-R dimensions.

Table 11.

Correlation Between BORRTI Subscales and ECR-R Subscales

	ALN	IA	EGC	SI	Anxiety	Avoidance
ALN	1	0.682**	0.783**	0.661**	0.635**	0.698**
IA	0.682**	1	0.595**	0.633**	0.633**	0.555**
EGC	0.783**	0.595**	1	0.551**	0.641**	0.660**
SI	0.661**	0.633**	0.551**	1	0.461**	0.613**
Anxiety	0.635**	0.633**	0.641**	0.461**	1	0.664**
Avoidance	0.698**	0.555**	0.660**	0.613**	0.664**	1

** correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations among the 5 early memories are presented in table 12. There is a correlation between the mean scores on each of the five early memories provided, though not necessarily reaching significance in all cases. It is interesting to note that the earliest memory of a time alone (EM5), has the lowest correlation to the other memories, only reaching significance for correlation with earliest memory (EM1).

None of the Early Memories was significantly correlated with the ECR-R dimensions of relationship related Anxiety and Avoidance, or with any of the BORRTI subscales.

Table 12.
Correlations Among the Early Memories Scores

	EM1	EM2	EM3	EM4	EM5	Mean
EM1	1.000	.354*	.544**	.317	.421*	.812**
EM2	.354*	1.000	.431*	.466*	.246	.655**
EM3	.544**	.432*	1.000	.604**	.296	.764**
EM 4	.317	.466*	.604**	1.000	.202	.674**
EM5	.421*	.246	.296	.202	1.000	.685**
Mean	.812**	.655**	.764**	.674**	.685**	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

EM1: Earliest Memory
EM2: Next Earliest Memory
EM3: Earliest Memory with Mother
EM4: Earliest Memory with Father
EM5: Earliest Memory of a time Alone
Mean: Subjects' mean score for early memories provided.

Formal Hypotheses:

The formal hypotheses are divided into those derived from attachment theory and those derived from the BORRTI Object Relations measure.

Attachment-Related Hypotheses

The first series of hypotheses are derived from the dimensional conceptualization of attachment. It was hypothesized that long-term solo backpackers would demonstrate a greater relationship-related Avoidance than the normal

population. As seen in Table 9, while the subjects in this study did score higher on Avoidance (M = 3.08) than the normal population (M = 2.93) this difference did not reach significance, t(45) = -0.97, p = .34. While no specific hypothesis was offered for the Anxiety dimension, a comparison revealed that the subjects in this study scored significantly lower on relationship-related Anxiety (M = 2.90) than the normal population (M = 3.63), t(47) = -4.72, p< .001.

It was further hypothesized that relationship-related Avoidance will be negatively correlated with subjects' frequency of contact with attachment figures back home. While significance only reached trends levels, the data did reveal a negative correlation between the frequency of contact with significant others back home and Avoidance scores, r(45) = -0.266 p = .078.

It was further hypothesized that relationship-related Avoidance will be positively correlated with number of sexual partners while traveling. This hypothesis was rejected as no correlation was found between Avoidance score and number of sexual/romantic partners. Subjects were asked about both sexual/romantic partners and, more specifically, sexual-intercourse partners. Neither type of romantic involvement was significantly correlated with Avoidance scores (sexual/romantic partners, Pearson's correlation r(40) = -0.079 p = .630; sexual-intercourse partners, Pearson's correlation r(41) = -0.103 p = .520).

The relationship between sexual partners on the road and attachment was further examined using a chi-square test of independence. Individuals who scored high on the Avoidance dimension did not differ from low Avoidance subjects on

number of sexual/romantic partners ($\chi^2(1) = 0.440$, $p = .507$)[14], however, they did demonstrated a trend towards engaging in sexual intercourse with fewer partners (χ^2 (1) = 3.121, $p = .077$) . In contrast, subjects ranking high in relationship-related Anxiety did not differ from low Anxiety subjects either in number of sexual/romantic partners, χ^2 (1) = 2.153, $p = .142$, or sexual intercourse partners, χ^2 (1) = .008, $p = .928$.

It was also hypothesized that relationship-related Avoidance will be predicted from the frequency of romantic/sexual contact and the duration of the trip. A linear regression was performed to test this hypothesis. The model was not significant, R = .08, F(2,37) = 0.12, $p = .89$. However, examining the relationship between Avoidance and trip duration revealed that Avoidance was negatively correlated with total backpacking time at the trends level, r(46) = -.255, $p = .087$. In other words, individuals who scored higher on the Avoidance dimension tended to report a shorter trip duration than individuals who scored low on the Avoidance dimension. A similar trend was observed with respect to relationship-related Anxiety where total backpacking time was negatively correlated with Anxiety, r(48) = -.250, $p = .086$. In addition, total number of trips taken was significantly negatively correlated with relationship-related Anxiety, r(47) = -.337, $p = .020$, but not with relationship-related Avoidance, r(45) = -0.171 $p = .260$. In other words, there was no relationship between number of trip taken and rating on the Avoidance scale, but individuals who scored higher on the Anxiety scale tended to report engaging in less backpacking trips.

[14] On the chi-square test of independence too many of the cells had an expected count smaller than 5 leaving these statistical results suspect.

Finally, it was hypothesized that relationship-related Avoidance would be positively correlated with shorter romantic relationships back home. Analysis of the data revealed that there was no significant correlation between Avoidance and relationship status (not dating anyone, dating casually, dating seriously, etc.) $r(46) = 0.018$, $p = .904$, and no significant correlation between Avoidance and current relationship duration $r(24) = -0.010$, $p = .963$.

To address the remaining hypotheses concerning attachment status, the dimensional data for relationship-related Avoidance and Anxiety was used to derive attachment style classifications as previously described. The obtained distribution of attachment styles was than compared to a normative sample as seen in Table 13[15].

Table 13.
Attachment Style Comparison to a Normative Population

	Backpackers	Normative College Population
Secure	41.3%	46.8%
Dismissing-Avoidant	34.8%	18.2%
Fearful-Avoidant	17.4%	20.8%
Preoccupied	6.5%	14.3%

[15] Chris Fraley emphasizes that there is no evidence for understanding people from an attachment classification perspective, and that a dimensional approach is far more useful and meaningful (personal communication, March 28th, 2006). I was unable to find a study of a normative population for comparison using the ECR-R. Because of the large sample of different attachment measures discussed in the literature review section of this dissertation and the ensuing difficulties in communicating results, I believe the results I am presenting here should be interpreted cautiously. The attachment classification distribution here used for comparison is derived from The Relationship Questionnaire. This measure consists of four short paragraphs describing the four different attachment styles, Secure, Dismissing, Preoccupied and Fearful. Conceptually, the RQ is similar to the ECR-R as it conceptualizes attachment on two dimensions here viewed as a model of self (positive and negative) and model of other (positive and negative). For more information on this sample, see Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991).

Although no statistical difference was expected due to the small sample size, a Chi-Square goodness of fit test revealed a significant difference in the distribution of attachment styles, χ^2 (3) = 9.46, Asymp Sig. p = .024. In other words, the distribution of attachment styles differed from the comparison sample. The planned comparison between the two samples once each was collapsed into a "Secure" vs. an "insecure" attachment styles revealed no significant differences, χ^2 (1) = 0.55, Asymp Sig p = .459 indicating that the difference between the percentage of subjects labeled as displaying a Secure attachment style did not statistically differ from the percentage of subjects labeled as 'Secure' in the comparison sample.

It was hypothesized that a sample of backpackers would have significantly less Preoccupied individuals than a normative sample. The backpacker population had 6.5% Preoccupied individuals while the comparison sample had 14.3% however, this difference did not prove statistically significant, χ^2 (1) = 2.27, Asymp Sig p = .132. Comparing the other attachment styles revealed a significant greater proportion of dismissive individuals in the backpackers population, χ^2 (1) = 8.52, Asymp Sig p = .004. There was no significant difference for the fearful group, χ^2 (1) = 0.32 Asymp Sig p = .571.

Object-Relations Hypotheses

As was seen in Table 9, the object-relations scores derived from the BORRTI were compared to the normative population. The hypothesis that backpackers will score higher on Alienation (ALN) than the normative population was not confirmed.

Backpackers actually scored lower on Alienation, though this difference did not reach significance, t(38) = -0.349, *p* = .729. It was also expected that backpackers would score lower on Insecure Attachment. While they did score lower, this difference did not reach significance, t(38) = -0.518, *p* = .607. With respect to Egocentricity, it was hypothesized that backpackers would score higher than the normal population. Instead, they scored lower on Egocentricity reaching trend level of significance, t(38) = -1.764, *p* = .086. Finally, no difference was expected on the Social Incompetence scale. While backpackers scored lower on this scale, the difference did not reach significance, t(38) = -0.717, *p* = .478.

Post-Hoc Analysis of Ethnic and Gender Differences:

Subjects were divided into White/ non-White to examine if the sample differed by ethnicity. Some differences emerged on the Attachment and Object Relations measures. The non-White population showed a trend towards higher scores (M = 3.49, sd = 0.98) on relationship-related Anxiety than the White population (M = 2.75, sd = 1.31), t(46) = 2.005, *p* = .051. The difference on the relationship-related Avoidance was not significant, t(44) = 1.358, *p* = .206.

On the object relations measures, the non-White population scored significantly higher (M = 57.40, sd = 8.88) on Egocentricity than the White population (M = 46.26, sd = 7.14), t(32) = 2.33, *p* = .026. The non-White population also showed a trend towards higher rankings on the Social Incompetence scale (M = 55.60, sd = 14.14) than the White subjects (M = 48.03, sd = 7.14), t(37) = 1.87, *p* = .069.

On the Early Memory Test, racial differences were only observed on the Earliest Memory of Father with non-White subjects scoring significantly higher (M = 6.50, sd = 0.837) than the White subjects (M = 5.68, sd = 0.772), t(32) = 2.33, p = .026. The White and non-White subjects did not differ statistically on the trip or relationship variables.

No gender differences were observed on the ECR-R Attachment rating or on the BORRTI object relations scales. On the Early Memory Test, women scored significantly higher on the Earliest Memory (M = 6.05, sd = 0.705) than men (M = 5.33, sd = 1.465), t(34.6) = -2.116, p = .042. Women also scored higher on the Earliest Memory with Mother (M = 5.88, sd = 0.719) than men (M = 5.33, sd = 0.767) reaching significance, t(32) = -2.117, p = .042.

Women and men also differed on some of the backpacking trip variables. Men spent more time backpacking (M = 22.167 months, sd = 17.65) than women (M = 14.89 months, sd = 13.67) reaching trend levels of significance, t(60) = 1.76, p = .084. In addition, men's last six-month solo trip was longer (M = 13.11 months, sd = 13.98) than women's (M = 8.28 months, sd = 4.11), t(35.56) = 1.79, p = .082, reaching trend levels of significance. Finally, women contacted people back home more frequently (M = 6.722/month, sd = 5.63) than men did (M = 3.91/month, sd = 3.62), a difference that reaches significance, t(59) = -2.367, p = .021.

Chapter V

Qualitative Results

Four subjects were interviewed in greater depth in order to gain further insight into both their object relations and the experience and culture of backpacking. Since the majority of subjects expressed an attachment style of Secure or Dismissive-Avoidant, an effort was made to select two Secure and two Dismissive-Avoidant representatives of the sample. In this section I describe each interviewed subject through both their questionnaire and interview data. The subjects' names and other identifying information have been omitted or changed to preserve anonymity.

Debra- A Secure Woman

You connect with the person in the moment. You stay in the moment. - Debra

Debra is a 41 year-old White woman who is both American and Canadian, though she has lived in the United States all of her life. She earned a Master's degree and works as a journalist, teacher and writer. Debra is currently single while in a two and a half year relationship. However, she was in a 10 year relationship with her husband before he died. She described her relationship with her husband as very positive, saying, "[It] was the best relationship of my life… he gave me complete freedom, I loved him unconditionally and if he hadn't died, I'd still be with him.…" As a child, Debra was raised in an intact family and describes her parents as "hippies"

who encouraged her to do well in school and attend distinguished high school and university. Her father passed away in her adult years.

Debra scored very low on the relationship-related Anxiety (1.33, z = -1.74)[16] and relationship-related Avoidance (1.56, z = -1.16) scales of the ECR-R. Examining her response pattern more closely reveals that to achieve such low scores she generally endorsed the extreme values of the scales, either "Strongly Disagree" or "Strongly Agree" depending on the wording of the item. She reported little difficulties in relationships, trust and closeness, but appeared more hesitant on questions targeting dependency and vulnerability with a romantic partner. On the BORRTI object relations scales, elevated scores are associated with psychopathology. Debra also scored low on all four scales. On Alienation she had a T-score of 46 (33rd percentile), on Insecure Attachment she earned a T-score of 45 (29th percentile), on Egocentricity a T-score of 43 (23rd percentile) and on Social Incompetence a 41 (17th percentile). Her strong wish to feel close to others is apparent in the items she endorsed. For example, she endorses that "no matter how bad a relationship may get, I will hold on to it", "I yearn to be completely 'at one' with someone" and "If I become close with someone and he or she proves untrustworthy, I may hate myself for the way things turned out".

On her Early Memory protocol, Debra provided memories which earned her scores in the 6 and 7 range of the KORS scale. These scores suggest an advanced level of internalization as well as differentiated and stable representations of others.

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[16] The z-score is derived from Fraley's online ECR-R non-clinical population norms, also used in the quantitative results section or this paper.

All of the memories reported are positive although, interestingly, in three of the memories she explicitly states and perhaps over-emphasizes that she did not feel scared, was not shamed, and realized she was not alone in circumstances where these feelings would have been natural.

Debra scheduled her interview for mid morning, before her work-day began, and she arrived a few minutes late. She arrived in a long flowing skirt and a smile. Quickly, before the interview began, she stated, "I am assuming your dissertation is about whether people are able to connect if they are travelers" and, indeed, spent much of the interview discussing the relationships and connections in her life on the road. Although Debra was eager to participate in the study, the interview proved somewhat challenging. Debra often digressed from the formal questions posed and referred to experiences from various backpacking trips, her every-day life, and her perspective as a middle-age woman on her life and on youth

Debra spent much time traveling. She reported 30 backpacking trips and approximately six years living on the road. While traveling she reported contacting her family and friends approximately twice a week. She began traveling at the age of 14 during the summer between her 10^{th} and 11^{th} grade in high-school. Debra reported that her parents, worried about her shyness, told her she needs to "experience the world". They gave her a Greyhound schedule, a list of relatives in the United States and Canada, a budget of $2000 and told her she must travel on her own for the entire duration of the summer break. Debra reported feeling that her parents sent her out with "unconditional love" but she was left feeling confused, scared, overwhelmed and

abandoned by her parents. She was worried about whether she had the skills necessary to survive such a mission. As she began making arrangements she found a new sense of confidence in her abilities. Debra described this first trip as life changing, as the experience that taught her to trust her instincts and as the "transitional experience that changed my life".

During this formative summer break, Debra had many new experiences. She met individuals who have been to other parts of the world, she experienced her first kiss with a young man one year her senior, and distanced herself form a fellow bus rider whom she, in retrospect, labels as a pedophile. On this trip she also learned flexibility in travel. As she says, "…nothing ever goes as you planned… you don't realize when you travel is that you fall in love with a particular place or a particular person along the way…". Both the places she had encountered and the people she met along the way shaped the progression of her trip.

Debra's first long-term solo trip occurred at the age of 18. A few weeks after commencing college at a prestigious school, Debra decided to set out to Europe. She reported looking forward to beginning college and being part of "upper class society". However, she quickly felt she did not, and did not want to, fit in. As she states, "…I think what I experienced at 14 when I went across the country was a chance of really understanding what the world was and really understanding what America was and not being told what life was about…". Debra continued, emphasizing that learning to trust her instincts on her first trip at age 14 and her parents' openness contributed to her conviction that there was "more in the world that [she] needed to see and that [she]

needed to experience". She bought a one-way ticket to Europe and left alone with her pack. Debra did not notify her parents of her plans until she arrived in Europe and was then surprised at their shock and disappointment.

It was difficult for Debra to identify the particular goals or hopes she had for this first long-term solo backpacking trip. Initially she said the goal was "just to have fun", quickly adding that there was no specific goal. She then added that the trip may have been a "spiritual quest", as she declared it, an age appropriate way to search for a connection to the world. A little later in the interview and after continued probing she added that perhaps she was looking for a sense of direction, in her words, "what I thought I would be was not what I had ended up being. A sense of direction.".

Debra's first trip lasted nearly eleven months. It came to an abrupt end when she realized that she ran out of money. She did not have enough money for the next day's breakfast, let alone a return ticket home. She quickly bought a ticket home relying on money lent to her by the people with whom she was traveling at the time. As she says, "they loved me unconditionally and they knew I would pay them back". As she planned her return trip, Debra was very worried about what awaited her back home. She recounted her thoughts from Europe, "Oh God, I have to go to college, oh my God how am I going to earn a living, oh my God, my parents hate me because I've taken this risk. What the hell am I going to do? Oh my God, I don't identify with anybody back home, I've completely changed as a human being, how am I going to fit in? " When she returned home, her mother was indeed upset, not speaking to her daughter for two days. Her father, on the other hand, was described as loving, proud,

and trusting that it was indeed a good experience for her. Debra did not have any clear recollections of how her friends responded to this trip.

Although Debra set out alone on many long-term backpacking trips, she stated, "I was never by myself, I always hooked up with other people". Regardless of how I attempted to phrase the question, Debra made it clear that she did not experience herself on her travels as 'alone'. For her, not setting out with a friend or a lover is associated with the idea of openness to connect to the world around her. Traveling alone meant taking a risk and being willing to change herself and her perspective of the world. For Debra, traveling alone meant that it is easier for her to meet and engage other people. Again and again she emphasized that setting out alone is associated, at least for her, with greater opportunities to connect to others on the road. However, she also reported having periods of time in her travels where she was completely alone and enjoying the "complete absolute freedom" that it afforded her. On the negative side of solo-travel, Debra emphasized the greater sense of safety one feels with a travel companion, particularly when traveling or trekking in nature. It should be clear that by a travel companion, Debra was referring to travelers she met on the road. Upon probing, Debra also discussed the experience of "reach[ing] a critical mass point where you are lonely, you want to connect with another human being… we want companionship, we want friendship, we want love". I asked Debra how she coped with loneliness on the road and she responded, "You connect with the person in the moment. You stay in the moment".

While Debra sometimes connected to a fellow traveler because she reached this 'critical mass' point, other times these connections were based on a spiritual bond she felt with the other traveler. As she states, traveling with someone does not imply long-lasting friendship, it only suggests that at "that particular moment and that particular location, we are compatible".

Debra emphasized the importance of creating connections while on the road. At one point, discussing a recent connection she made at an airport, she stated, "There's a spark that you don't get when I'm walking the street corner in New York. There is an awareness that we're taking a risk and we're seeing the world in a similar way. These are friendships, they may not last a lifetime, I may never hear from them again, but I recognize how precious and how special that connection is".

This type of connection is also seen in the concept she labels as "road karma". Much as her travel companions generously paid for her ticket home from Europe, she extends generosity and trust to other travelers, particularly those she identifies with. As she phrased it, it is an "unconditional acceptance of these joyful human beings who take risks the same way I do".

While these types of transitory relationships, both romantic and platonic, are common in Debra's travels, she also emphasized in the interview the significant long-term relationships she formed while traveling. In particular, she reported two close female friendships dating back to her first trip to Europe. In fact, Debra emphasized that the connections she made while traveling taught her about the type of intimacy she wanted in her relationships at home. As she stated, "being on the road teaches me

what the potential of intimacy can be. What real sharing and what real love and what real emotional connection is, beyond just a moment in time". She attributes her ability to appreciate and enjoy her relationship with her husband, now deceased, to these on-the-road relationships.

Although it was clear that Debra wanted to emphasize the importance of taking emotional risks and being open to the world, it was also clear that Debra experienced much loneliness and disappointment in her travels that were difficult for her to discuss. She emphasized the importance of taking emotional risks, but added, "…I hope I still have a little bit of that…", and later stated that in her youth she had a greater capacity to take emotional risks. When I asked her to describe a romantic encounter from a recent trip, she preferred to tell me about a "missed opportunity" and stated that as she gets older, these missed opportunities become more common.

Debra left the impression that it was difficult for her when many of the connections she formed, romantic or platonic, did not last, but she was unable to discuss it directly. She instead focused on the few relationships that lasted and beseeched me not to reveal to the youth that many connections will quickly be extinguished. She told me how in youth there is an expectation that relationships would last forever, but, as she grows older, she comes to realize that those that do last are "precious and rare".

Debra also alluded to loneliness she feels at home. In her view, her travels in her twenties and early thirties were at least partially motivated by a wish to avoid the loneliness she felt back home as well as "…what I need[ed] to do to make my life

more worthwhile…". At that time, she explained, she believed that in order to form deep connections it was necessary for her to leave New York and her every-day life. It is only in her later years that she realized she could form these deep connections with people she met in her every-day life. She further noted, "I've learned over time that it's not about the loneliness on the trip; It's about the loneliness in my life. That just because I'm traveling doesn't mean that I avoid those feelings anymore".

In addition to finding connection easier on the road, Debra also found greater ease overcoming disappointment with others or relationships while traveling. Reflecting on the roles of relationships on the road and at home, Debra added that she now spends more time contemplating the motivation behind a planned trip to make sure it is in the service of connection and not avoidance. She ended the interview alluding to the difference between long-term relationships at home, and relationships formed on the road. Debra struggled for many years to realize that the short-term transitory relationships in the backpacking world do not compensate for the loneliness at home and cannot replace long-term relationships. As she states at the end of the interview, "… I learned at a very young age that I didn't necessarily, if I got the kindness of strangers all the time, I didn't need to work on my life-long friendships. And I now know that that is false, if that makes any sense. You have to have both, you need both.".

Tim- A Secure Man

OK, I made it, I made it to the most isolated place I could ever go, what do I do now? I guess I could go home. -Tim

Tim is a 26-year-old, White, newly-wed American man with a bachelor degree. He was married after completing the quantitative portion of the study and a month before he was interviewed. He was raised in an intact family and both of his parents are still living. Tim began backpacking at the age of 20 after electing to study abroad during his undergraduate education. He commenced his one and only long-term solo backpacking trip at the age of 25 and returned one year later. In total, Tim reported three backpacking trips and a total backpacking time of 14 months. Tim was interviewed a year and a half after returning from his trip.

During his long-term trip, Tim reported using the internet to contact his family and friends three to four times each week, while he phoned home less than once per month. While on the road, Tim had four sexual partners. These relations were with fellow backpackers and often occurred in the context of drugs or alcohol. He rated this experience as "Mostly Positive".

On the quantitative measurement of attachment (ECR-R), Tim scored low on relationship-related Anxiety (2.39, z = -0.94) and slightly below average on relationship-related Avoidance (2.61, z = -0.27). His relatively low score on relationship-related Anxiety is seen in his disagreement with such statements as "I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them" and

"I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like". His low Avoidance score is seen in his endorsements of such statements as "it's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner" and "I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners".

Tim's T-scores on the BORRTI were also quite low, with a T-score of 37 on Alienation (9th percentile), 47 on Insecure Attachment (37th percentile), 40 on Egocentricity (15th percentile), and 41 on Social Incompetence (17th percentile). These scores are misleading as Tim endorsed no items on the Alienation, Egocentricity and Social Incompetence scales, and his scores therefore represent the floor effect of the scales. Examining the items on the BORRTI, Tim endorsed such statements as "If someone dislikes me, I will always try harder to be nice to that person" and "I tend to be what others expect me to be" while also denying that "No matter how bad a relationship may get, I will hold on to it". Tim acknowledged wanting to be "at one" with someone else and being "extremely sensitive to criticism". Interestingly, he also endorsed "Exercising power over other people is a secret pleasure of mine" and "At times I will do almost anything to get my way". These latter statements contributed to his somewhat higher Insecure Attachment score.

On the Early Memory Test, Tim's KORS score was a '5' for all but the last memory which could not be scored. This score suggests that for Tim, ego splitting is prominently reduced so that representations of humans are markedly more balanced and nuanced. Nonetheless, others are experienced as stereotyped and interchangeable, as though they exist only in the context of a constricted role. In content, his earliest

memories appear quite neutral in affect. He recalled a joint activity with his sister, his mother feeding him, watching his father interact with other adults and playing in his room with some toys. The only exception is his earliest memory where he recalled with some bitterness a girl cheating on a joint game by receiving help from her older brother.

Tim found it difficult to schedule our interview while he was planning his wedding, and after returning from his honeymoon, was able to schedule the interview for his lunch break hour at work. The interview itself often focused on his relationship with his wife, whom I will call Alice. Tim and Alice were acquaintances prior to his departure on his long-term trip. Tim revealed his long-standing romantic interest in Alice, but that their relationship became more intimate on his long-term solo trip.

During the interview Tim discussed a love for travel dating to his youth. As a young child he was encouraged by his mother to attend an international summer camp in Europe. As an older soccer player, he often participated in games abroad. These early travels and his mother's ongoing support inspired his love for taking pictures, trying different types of food, meeting people from different cultures and participating in different lifestyles.

Tim's backpacking history dates back to his semester studying abroad in Europe. Week-end trips culminated in a month-long backpacking trip at the completion of his coursework. On this month-long journey he met a fellow backpacker who has traveled to Asia, sparking Tim's interest in saving money for his next trip which began after his college graduation and lasted for six weeks. As Tim

recalls, this fellow backpacker made him realize “I guess you can go to China”. In China, Tim realized he could travel even further if he had the money, and decided to save money so that he could travel and “see as much as possible”. He chose to backpack because the backpacking lifestyle allows the traveler to travel longer and farther on a limited budget.

Tim recalled arbitrarily choosing to complete an Around-the-World trip for exactly one year, leaving home at the age of 25. This plan left him nearly three years to finance the trip. He decided that he would accomplish this trip regardless of what he will need to leave behind him three years later. I asked Tim why he elected to leave at a particular age, and he responded, “There is no rule to any of this… [it is] a decision I made, I wrote it down, so it happened”. As he recalled, he strongly felt that he had a “closing window of opportunity” to leave on an extended trip. In particular, he wanted to complete the trip while young and strong and before he had familial responsibilities or extensive financial obligations. As the time for his departure approached Tim had an unsatisfying job, he had a girlfriend for three months who was aware of his travel plans, and, as he recalls “I wasn’t 100% happy with myself”. He hoped his trip would give him time “to get my head together“, and would aid him to develop what he called “different qualities in myself”. In particular, Tim was searching for serenity, peace of mind, and to be “happy with myself”.

It was clear to Tim that he needed to travel alone on this journey. Towards the end of the interview, Tim reflected on how he needed the time on the trip to “decide what I wanted to do, to be in absolute control of my life” and hence he did not want to

coordinate travel plans with any travel companions. Instead he wanted the "experience of really living in the moment". Before departing, Tim thought of the trip as "a big old adventure" and he created a tentative itinerary that included what he later called "Earth's Greatest Hits". Tim also revealed that, secretly, he was hoping such an ambitious trip would impress Alice.

Both of Tim's parents were supportive of his decision to travel, particularly his mother. In contrast, he received mixed responses from his friends. He recalled that most of his friends were encouraging, but that a lot of people "thought it was weird". One friend in particular made him feel like he was "some crazy person" and many of his friends worried he may decide not to return or that he would not last long on the trip. Tim felt that the trip he was planning was something that many people wanted to do, but did not or could not do.

Tim elected to travel alone. As he was planning his trip, his roommate was also saving money for an Around-the-World trip. Both felt it would be better to travel alone. Tim emphasized that it is difficult to coordinate an itinerary with another person without compromising. Furthermore, Tim wanted to form his own impressions and make his own choices. He described the sense of liberation he felt at having a period in his life where he was not living "on other people's schedule". He explained how in the non-backpacking world it is not possible to live without deadlines or schedules. This freedom was highlighted as the most important benefit of traveling alone.

Tim also acknowledged that traveling alone includes periods of loneliness. He added, "I mean everyone is human and needs some sort of contact and… I had some artificial fake contact via the internet with all my friends at home". Throughout the trip, Tim placed greater emphasis on his friends back home and on his contact with them than on his relationships on the road. However, contact by internet was not sufficient and Tim experienced moments where he felt like he was "done with it" or once, after spending time in an isolated indigenous village with no other travelers, he recalled thinking "OK, I made it, I made it to the most isolated place I could ever go, what do I do now? I guess I could go home". He recalled surviving these moments of "utter loneliness" by knowing that he will "survive" his trip and return to this friends at home. After these experiences Tim would move on to the next place and inevitably find interesting people. He described conversing with them much as he does with his friends back home. These contacts soothed his loneliness.

Tim maintained very close contact with his friends and loved ones back home. He created a website where he reported on his experiences. His family, friends, and others responded to his entries. This website allowed Tim to feel connected to that world he left behind him and many people both responded to his entries as well as continued to share with him their own experiences. His wife, Alice, was particularly engaged by the website and they emailed "all the time". Tim suggested that impressing his friends back home is what allowed him to engage in this long-term travel. In contrast, he felt that the girlfriend he left behind was uninterested in his entries and they formally ended their relationship three weeks after his trip began.

Tim felt that the decision was mutual, but said, “you can’t expect someone traveling around the world for a year to be like committed to someone at home, you know, especially when you don’t seem to really care about what I’m doing”.

At times Tim missed his life back home and poignantly felt that it is not possible to accomplish a year-long trip without sacrificing a year back home. He coped with his loneliness by envisioning his reunion with his friends and viewing the trip as a temporary and long vacation, “the vacation of my life”. In contrast, Tim felt ambivalent about his family. He reported moments of anger and resentment towards his family for being “unworldly” and “small minded”. Tim expressed his mixed feelings about his anger, “I realize that that’s a ridiculous thing to do, cause I was doing something that was really pushing it for me, you know, they didn’t want to do that so why should I fault them for not wanting to do that?”.

Tim reported feeling very independent on his trip and described himself as a very private person. Nonetheless, he spent much time with other travelers and frequently spent a couple of weeks traveling with a particular companion. Tim generally chose to travel with couples. He described this arrangement as mirroring his relationship back home with his two best friends. He viewed his role in the group as the “entertaining third wheel”. Living with traveling couples, Tim envied their happiness together, their security in their relationship, and how they were able to work together during frustrating travel experiences. For Tim, these relationships served as a model for the relationship he hoped to create with his partner.

Tim reported being very selective in the backpackers he befriended. He reported that it was easier for him to form closer connections when he was traveling in more isolated places, away from the backpacking circuit. He described himself as one of many snobby backpackers who offers greater respect for those choosing to travel in places that are more difficult or harder to reach. However, the backpackers he generally befriended were described as similar to those individuals he would befriend back home. Since his return, Tim maintained contact with some of his male travel companions.

Tim reported engaging in a number of sexual relationships while traveling. The relationships generally lasted for one or two nights and involved women Tim would approach back home. One brief relationship involved an American woman whom he met through his website. The woman began her shorter trip and they coordinated a meeting in Asia. Tim recalled sensing that the woman hoped she could travel with him and was upset that he preferred his independence. In fact, he recalled that this woman then arranged for a family member to fly to Asia and join her. Tim recalled thinking of these sexual experiences as his opportunity to gain greater experience with sex before, as he hoped, marrying Alice.

Tim's trip lasted for 11½ months, and Tim decided to return home for Christmas. As he recalled, "I was done with it, I was like going crazy… so I came home". Tim described contemplating coming home for three months prior to his return. He recalled feeling burned out, tired of traveling and spending his last month "going through the motions". He described feeling numb as he walked in foreign

cities and was “pestered by locals” offering services and merchandise to the travelers. More importantly, he described falling in love with Alice over the internet. Three months before he ended his trip, Alice asked him to mail her a love letter and was in the process of ending her prior romantic relationship. During the last weeks of his trip, Tim contacted Alice daily and called her often.

Tim returned home two weeks before Christmas and spent the first month living with his friends before securing an apartment and a job. Tim recalled feeling confused, like “I was a man out of time”. He reported that many people forgot about him and he felt anonymous. His return allowed him to recreate his social life. He did not formally announce his return, but chose instead to reconnect individually with particular friends, and to allow other relationships to dwindle. Tim and Alice began formally dating on the first week of his return.

Tim traveled to visit his parents who live in another state for Christmas, two weeks after returning to the United States. He recalled somewhat bitterly driving from the airport with his father who did not inquire about the trip. Tim recalled how Christmas felt identical to the previous Christmas. While some wanted to see pictures and some read his entries on the web, Tim adopted the attitude, “I had done this thing and you could choose to be interested in it or not, I was never going to shove it down anyone’s throat or make someone acknowledge that I had traveled for a year, you know, it was just fun, or whatever, I did it for myself, you know”. It was unclear whether this attitude was directed at his family only, or his wider circle of family friends and acquaintances.

Tim was asked during the interview to reflect on his own personal characteristics which allowed him to accomplish his trip. Tim emphasized his reliance on being "fiercely, almost violently independent". Some of the other qualities he relied on were flexibility, durability, and an ability to tolerate traveling fourth class. Finally, Tim emphasized his ability to focus on a goal throughout the trip. For Tim, this goal was sustaining the travels for one year.

Finally, Tim elaborated on the many positive consequences of his long-term solo trip. Travel has allowed him greater awareness of the world and international politics. On a more personal level, Tim reported that before he left on the trip he had a "go-getter" mentality, and focused on a materialistic and status-dominated version of success. The trip allowed him to realize that he could be happy without focusing or depending on consumerism. At the same time, Tim also learned that life is "just mundane", and it does not matter if the location is exotic or everyday. Tim reported that his friends believe that he is now a better person, projecting greater calm self-confidence rather than arrogance and aggression. Tim reported that he has become more patient, relaxed, and at peace. Some of this change may be due both to Tim's decision to change his standards for success from the "American Dream" to a "Human Dream" and his pride in successfully accomplishing his goal of extended travel. For Tim, the most important aspect of his backpacking experience was "having the experience of having done it. I have this sort of trump card in my back pocket that I can pull out at any time 'oh, I've traveled around the world for a year'…. I just did

something that is a hard thing to do, or you know, I accomplished a goal of mine, I guess, to me that's the most important thing, looking back".

Keith- An Avoidant-Dismissive Man

All the people in my rear-view mirror -Keith

Keith is a 34-year-old White, homosexual American man. He completed a Masters degree and currently works as a travel writer and editor. Both of his parents are still living and while he was raised in an intact family, his parents are currently divorced. Keith described himself as single and involved in a serious romantic relationship for the past 22 months. During the interview, Keith discussed how his first serious relationship began a year and a half after he returned from his long-term solo backpacking trip.

Keith reported that he set out on his first backpacking trip alone at the age of 24. His first long-term solo backpacking trip was at the age of 27. In total, Keith reported three backpacking trips, with the chief one, his long-term solo backpacking trip, lasting nearly two years. Keith was interviewed nearly six years after his long-term solo trip. On this backpacking trip Keith reported contacting his mother and friends by internet and telephone. He would phone approximately once per month, and maintained contact by email at least once per week. Keith maintained an early form of a 'blog' by sending group emails of his experiences on the trip. Keith also

reported being sexually and romantically involved during this long-term backpacking trip. He reported 1-2 romantic short-term relationships and approximately 20 sex partners, all with locals, not fellow travelers. On the questionnaire, Keith described having "Some Second Thoughts" about these sexual experiences, while on the interview he described them as "mostly positive".

On the quantitative attachment measure of the ECR-R, Keith scored low on relationship-related Anxiety (2.56, z = -0.81), and high on relationship-related Avoidance (4.11, z = 1.00). Keith's responses on the ECR-R suggest difficulty being close and depending on a romantic partner, consistent with the attachment category of Dismissive-Avoidant. For example, Keith endorsed as "Somewhat Agree" items such as "I prefer not to be too close to my partner", "…worry when my partner is too close" and as "Somewhat Disagree" to "…comfortable depending on romantic partner".

On the BORRTI, Keith's Alienation, Insecure Attachment, Egocentricity and especially Social Incompetence scores were elevated (Aln 56, 73rd percentile; IA 51, 55th percentile; Ego 54, 67th percentile; SI 62, 88th percentile). Keith endorsed feeling worried that he would be left out and having difficulty getting close to others. Keith also endorsed "It is my fate to lead a lonely life", "Exercising power over other people is a secret pleasure of mine" and "I feel that I have to please everyone or else they might reject me".

On his Early Memories KORS scale, Keith earned three scores of two, a four and a five. A score of 'two' depicts others as malevolent, cold and mechanical. The inner relational world remains undifferentiated and is ruled by primitive affects and

developmentally early introjects. With a score of 4, the representation of others is more consistent and stable, but is focused on the need-gratifying role of others, and a score of 5 on the scale reveals representations of humans that are markedly more balanced and nuanced. However, others are experienced as stereotyped and interchangeable, as though they exist only in the context of a constricted role. These descriptions of Keith's internal world may be more useful than the description of his average score. The themes of all but his memory of his father involved being in physical discomfort and/or rejected by his primary caregivers. His best score was derived from his memory with his father where his father enjoyed a type of food and let young Keith try it, though Keith did not enjoy it as much as his father. The five memories all highlight the experience of lack of attunement and tenderness in his early life.

Keith was excited to be interviewed for this project, emphasizing that backpackers are not sufficiently examined. He arrived to the interview at the end of his workday, professionally dressed. He reported that he took his first backpacking trip at the age of twenty-four. After working for a number of years as a writer for a magazine, a job that earned him some recognition, he was forced to take a 3-4 month break so that his supervisors could "trick the labor department so they didn't have to pay me benefits". Keith decided to spend one month of this break traveling alone through Europe. While he could not remember why he decided to travel at that point in his life, he recalled at some point in his life a memory of watching Mother

Theresa's funeral on the news and feeling frustrated that, in his words, "I had no idea what world that was".

Keith's first long-term solo trip took place three years later. Keith reported feeling disillusioned by his high-profile job. He wanted time to concentrate on his writing and toyed with the idea of taking a vacation for a few months where he could spend some time in a foreign country and write. Since such a leave of absence would mean quitting his job, he continued to reason, "well, if I have to take this time off, I have to quit my job and leave, than I might as well make use of this time and see as much as I can". As he recalled, he was further 'encouraged' to leave after suffering significant water damage to his belongings and collecting a substantial amount of money from his insurance company. These internal and external events persuaded him to travel.

Keith planned to travel for over a year. He bought a one-way ticket from New York to Delhi, and a health insurance plan to cover him for at least one year. While planning the trip, Keith recalled hoping "…to see the world that exists outside", and toying with the idea of being hired to work in Australia. Keith was hoping to spend some time seeing the world, and spend some time writing in South Africa, where he spent a previous vacation. As part of his preparation for the trip, Keith used the internet to make some contacts with people in South Africa.

Keith discussed the reaction of his friends, family and colleagues to his long-term travel plans. In Keith's own words, "Some of them were jealous, but in a supportive way, or in an outwardly supportive way". Keith described most of his

friends as supportive but worried that he will settle down elsewhere. Some of his professional colleagues raised concerns about his future career and his need to explain the gap in his resume. Keith described his family as supportive of his plans. As he described, "I got no pushback, no resistance from anyone in my life about this, just jealousy or envy or support". Before setting out on his trip, Keith had a party with his friends. Looking back on photos from this party, Keith viewed himself as "fat and unhappy" and continued, "I was ready to go".

Keith reported remaining in close contact with his loved-ones back home while traveling. In fact, he felt that he had more contact with his mother, brother and grandparents than when he was at home so that they will know that he was safe. During the trip he would also post long emails every week or two addressed to his friends and loved-ones reporting on his activities so that he could, in his words, "…put everybody at ease…". When asked about the experience of being separated from his friends, Keith reported that while he knew he would miss them, he believed that when he returned "…I'll pick up where I left off, not much is going to change between now and then".

Keith stated that he preferred traveling alone because he felt he could see more, write more, and be more stimulated if "…I don't have someone with me all the time". Keith also wanted to be able to set his own schedule and itinerary. He did not, however, view himself as traveling alone. From his past travel history he knew that meeting people as a backpacker is quite easy. In fact, he reported that it took effort to be 'alone' and he was never 'alone' for longer than one or two days. He described his

experience of the backpackers' social network, "I pictured myself as, there will always be, you know, like a train, I'm a car in a train and I'll couple with a few other carriages and we'll go on and then we'll uncouple and a new train will be formed and we'll go on. So I never entered it thinking 'oh, I'm going to be alone'". Interestingly, Keith described his best experiences on the trip as times he was alone. He described taking mid-day naps in various places such as in front of the Taj Mahal, Athens or in an abandoned house in Jordan. Keith described that these occasional naps made him feel more connected to the place he was visiting.

Keith reported that he would, at times, miss having someone around with a shared history, someone who knew him, someone who watched his back. However, he reported that the experience of being alone and loneliness was "completely controllable" and he never felt "trapped" by it since the option of meeting and befriending other backpackers was always available. When I asked him more directly about times he felt lonely, Keith initially stated that, in the beginning, he did not feel lonely at all. As he described, "I was lonely for my home…I knew I was going to be traveling, I knew that long-term intimate relationships weren't going to be possible, and so therefore I was not prepared to miss them… I had the mindset from the very beginning". He did, however, report two periods on the trip where loneliness was more palpable. The first one was in Cape Town, South Africa, where he lived for a few months with a South African friend he met on his previous visit and where he planned to write. Keith initially reported feeling intensely lonely during the days, when his friend was away at work. Upon reflection, Keith decided he may have been

feeling more bored than lonely. The second period of loneliness occurred towards the end of his trip when, as he says, home was "on the horizon". At that time he reported withdrawing from social contact and focusing on his reading.

Overall, Keith enjoyed the brief relationships he formed while traveling. He described making friends with backpackers as easier than making friends in other contexts. He felt a bond with the other travelers as they already shared something in common. He described these brief relationships as "very intense" and "very intimate" because these friendships are formed so quickly. As he described it, "you sort of dive into another person" and share with each other your whole life story within a couple of days. These relationships lasted no longer than two weeks.

As the trip wore on, Keith described these brief and intense relationships as painful. In his journal he repeatedly referred to "all the people in my rear view mirror". Recalling the more intense loneliness he felt towards the end of his trip, Keith suggested that perhaps the frequent parting from people he really enjoyed contributed to his loneliness. While these relationships often ended with an exchange of emails, Keith noted that most of these email connections ended within a couple of years of returning from the trip.

Some relationships, however, were maintained, and Keith recalled fondly his continuing friendship with a South African friend, Tom. Tom was particularly helpful as Keith struggled with his worst experience on the trip. When Keith was in Cape Town, he was driving a car alone when the brakes failed resulting in a serious accident. While no other cars were involved and Keith was not physically hurt, he

described feeling particularly alone and vulnerable after the incident. As Keith reported, "…[Tom] gave me a lot of friendship I would have gotten from friends back home". Likewise, this friendship stood out in that Tom confided in him his personal struggles and introduced him to his family.

Keith reported a number of romantic and sexual relationships during his trip, all taking place with locals. He emphasized the distinction between "sexual" and "romantic". According to the questionnaire, he was sexually active with approximately twenty partners during his trip. In the interview he discussed how these relationships were one-night-stand encounters which he viewed as "recreational". Keith reported that he did not engage in many of these sexual encounters before or after his trip. He found these sexual experiences "liberating". Keith reported feeling attractive and empowered in a way that he had not felt before. He described feeling more confident and secure in himself while traveling and hence was both more attractive to other men and less vulnerable to rejection. Keith also reported being in a couple of romantic relationships. One relationship, in Cape Town, lasted three weeks. Keith described his reluctance to open up because of his impending departure. The relationship ended when the date of his flight out of South Africa arrived. Keith described feeling bad because his partner "really liked me," though it was unclear in the interview to what extent the feelings were mutual.

Fourteen months into the trip, Keith was in Australia and New Zealand, and home was "on the horizon". Here the briefness of backpacker relationships became particularly difficult and Keith described withdrawing from others. He described

coming to the realization that "…you really do need to put down roots to truly grow". At that point he decided to backpack cross-country in the United States from California to New York. Keith could not recall how the date was set for his return, only that he spent some time planning his finances so that he will return to New York with enough money to rent an apartment and settle in.

Keith described feeling quite alienated from the U.S. culture when he first arrived in Los Angeles. He was particularly affected by all the magazines, air conditioners and cell phones he found. He described the experience as "fine" because, in his words, "I didn't want to be part of the culture". Keith could not identify the point where he felt "back home". Although he was nervous about resuming his life in New York, he quickly found both an apartment and a job. While Keith described difficulties connecting with people during his first few months back home, he also viewed the trip as bringing him closer to those friends who were regularly reading his reports online.

Keith identified a number of long-term effects of his extended journey. He first noted that his experience helped him secure employment as a travel writer. He then emphasized how the trip helped him feel more confident in his personal abilities. He felt that while he was always independent, he now found a use for his independence that is healthy, productive and stimulating rather than isolating. Keith also discussed how his social experiences on the trip helped him feel socially capable. In middle school and high school, Keith did not feel that he had any "deep friendships" and he felt like an "outsider". He attended a very small Christian school

and did not feel he could connect to the mainstream boys or girls around him. The backpacking trip increased his confidence in his ability to be social, befriend others, and attract potential partners. He also felt that on this trip he "proved" to himself that he is "ok" and that his lack of close friends in his youth was due to the dearth of individuals who shared his interests, not his own shortcomings.

Keith also described being affected by the cultures he came across. He felt that during his travels he came to understand "…what is not necessary in my own life and what I need more of in my own life". Keith was impressed by the "simplicity" of life in other regions of the world. He also described being impressed by the closeness of families in other parts of the world and wanting to incorporate more closeness into his own family life. He described with pleasure how his family was proud of his experience seeing the world, more so because he was the first person in the family to attend college as well as the first to travel extensively.

I asked Keith to reflect back on his trip and share with me his personal characteristics that made such a journey possible. Keith identified independence as a vital characteristic. He also emphasized the need for stubbornness while backpacking because, as he described, much work and perseverance is needed to coordinate travel plans, find hostels, obtain train schedules and food, and budget one's money. He also identified what he called his "empathic" nature, his wish to know places and people. I will end this description of Keith's experiences with his own words, given in response to the query "what is the thing that stands out for you the most about these two years".

He responded, “For me it was the best time I’ve ever had in my life. It was the most fun, it was the most open, the most freeing, I’d never been happier….”

Andrew- An Avoidant-Dismissive Man

... you realize when you’re out there that your only tie to the world is through your family… *-Andrew*

Andrew is a 27-year-old, White, single, American man. He earned a Masters degree in engineering and currently works for a land development company. Andrew was raised by his parents until his mother died when he was six. Two years later his father remarried. His father and step-mother are still alive and married. Andrew described himself as single and not currently in a relationship, but stated on another question that he has been in a relationship for the past 16 months.

Andrew reported that his first backpacking trip was a solo trip at the age of 18. Andrew spent a total of 25 months “on the road” on three separate trips. The interview focused on his last long-term solo backpacking trip which he began at the age of 21 and ended nearly a year and a half later. On the trip Andrew would contact his parents by internet or phone approximately once per week. During the interview Andrew revealed that there were periods of months where he did not telephone his family. Andrew reported being romantically involved during his long-term backpacking trip. He reported two sexual partners of the local population and

described the experience as "mostly positive". On the interview he reported engaging in one romantic relationship which will be discussed later in this section.

On the quantitative attachment measure of the ECR-R, Andrew scored low on relationship-related Anxiety (1.72, z = -1.44), and high on relationship-related Avoidance (4.28, z = 1.14). On relationship-related Anxiety, Andrew disagreed with items such as "I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me", "My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away", "When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me", and "I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am". On the relationship-related Avoidance, Andrew disagreed with statements such as "My partner really understands me and my needs", "It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner", and "it helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need". On the other hand, he also disagreed with the statements "I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down" and agreed with the statement "I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner". These responses suggest some difficulty and ambivalence on this dimension.

On the BORRTI, Andrew's scores for Alienation, Egocentricity, and Social Incompetence were within the normal range (Aln = 49, 45th percentile; Egc = 52, 60th percentile; SI = 48, 40th percentile). In contrast, his score on Insecure Attachment was significantly elevated (IA = 60, 83rd percentile). His responses suggest that it is difficult for Andrew to feel close to others and that he may have ambivalent feelings about closeness. He endorsed yearning to be "completely at one" with someone else,

worrying about being left out, and denied having someone with whom he can share his innermost feelings. He expressed feeling that he ends up hurting those close to him, that he, himself, has been hurt a lot in life, and that the same difficulties emerge in his "most important" relationships. At the same time, he also endorsed withdrawing for weeks at a time and denied that he may miss a person whom he knew well and who left.

On the Early Memory Test, all of Andrews' early memories save the last one, "a time you were alone" captured positive experiences with members of his family, and each received a score of seven on the KORS scale. His memory of a time alone earned the slightly lower score of six. These scores suggest an advanced level of internalization and a differentiated and stable representations of others. His memories suggest an early representation of a playful curious adventurous child who benefited from engaging and available parents.

Andrew commuted a long distance after his workday in order to be interviewed. During the interview he volunteered details about his history. Andrew was raised in a rural, somewhat poor environment. He is the second of three boys by his biological parents. His mother died when he was six. His father remarried when Andrew was eight, and this union yielded a daughter. Andrew described his relationship with his stepmother as difficult and of "respectful disagreement". Both of his parents are described as promoting independence and having difficulties expressing affection or providing emotional support. His parents emphasized the importance of good performance in school; since Andrew was a good student, he was

left largely alone. Looking back at his family, Andrew volunteered that everyone in his family struggles with difficulties being open in relationships and nurturing romantic relationships.

An interest in traveling emerged in adolescence as Andrew rode his bike and thought about the people he encountered around him. As he says, "…a lot of people weren't doing the things that made sense to me, but it made sense in the culture". He received a four year college scholarship which forced him to finish his education in four years and select a major early. He elected engineering, although his primary interest lay in philosophy. Andrew's interest in long-term travel was sparked by his study-abroad experience in Denmark. Andrew decided he needed to take a break to explore other perspectives on life. To avoid losing his scholarship he decided to study-abroad. As he describes it, he elected to study in Denmark because it was the first flyer he saw. While in Denmark, Andrew traveled briefly. He described feeling emaciated because of insufficient money for food, and he found himself twice literarily hanging off of cliffs while hiking alone. As he reflected back on the experience he explained, "I wanted the blood to boil, I wanted to feel a sense of passion and a sense of living and to push yourself on that physical level". After this semester Andrew promised himself, "before I committed to any other lifestyle after college, I would take some time, travel, and get a different perspective on my life so perhaps I could have a broader sense of what I wanted to do".

As he neared his graduation his class received many job-offers and Andrew described feeling disillusioned with the "American Dream" of job, home, security and

family. Andrew decided to return to Europe, and found a short internship in Europe that would provide him some work-experience, some money, and a place from which to start his trip. Andrew purchased two open-ended tickets, one to Europe and one back. He did not spend much time packing and stated that the trip, "sort of just came upon me, I wasn't looking forward to it". Andrew did not have any specific expectations for the trip since he felt that expectations would lead to disappointment. As he states, the trip was "just to get a sense of my life", and "get a deeper sense of things", to understand his own culture better from a different perspective. As he left he felt scared and curious about the experiences to come.

Andrew reported mixed responses from those around him. His parents have never traveled, and while he described his father as "very supportive", his stepmother was critical and urged him to get a "real job". His friends and teachers were "quite surprised" by his decision not to settle down, but Andrew reported that the teachers he felt more respect for were supportive of his plans. Andrew was unclear if many around him thought he was "crazy" or that he was simply doing something they wished they had done themselves.

Reflecting back on his travels, Andrew viewed the experience as a "personal journey". As he states, he was looking for "what was worth while in life… what was worth living for and dying for". He viewed 'settling down' as too easy, stagnant and predictable and, as he stated, "I wanted to struggle more, I wanted to live with some passion". It was unclear to me, speaking with him for nearly two hours, what, specifically, he was searching for on his trip. Instead, a sense of loneliness and

illusive despair emerged. In his words, "…I was always searching for that beautiful moment when I was traveling, but the cost of that was being alone as well. But it was still worth searching for that golden feeling moment and being in these points of revelation of one's self, so it was worth the sacrifices of loneliness".

Andrew traveled alone and often hitchhiked. He did not associate much with other travelers, though he spent nearly a third of the time in people's houses. He had a general direction of travel, but the specific destinations were vague. Nearly a year into the trip he decided to travel in Morocco. He reported being interested in traditional cultures and wanting to see how people lived for most of human history. He stated, "I wanted to be humbled by it… and I felt that there was more truth in that somewhere". He was searching for the right place where he could settle down for a while.

One significant experience on the trip was his search for the perfect place to put down roots. He described looking for the perfect village. After a while, he grew tired of searching, and he came across a village on the edge of the Sahara where he saw a lone tree called the Magic Tree. The place felt unique and he decided to stay. For Andrew there was an important lesson in this experience. As he states, "…why I stopped there, I think I got so tired of looking. Which was a lesson for me in life, you know, for example, you can always think that you could find a better woman or something but maybe you're going to make the decision when you get tired, not because you choose".

Andrew spent a half a year in this village. He rented a mud-house for $20 a month and spent the first few weeks alone, "getting back to myself a little bit". Much

of his time in Morocco was spent alone. Andrew would write in his journal, read, and let his mind wonder. Andrew revealed, "I was just pondering my own existence in some way" he felt no need to go anywhere and no pressure to do anything. He reported being happy to sit in his corner.

He began associating with the locals in the village. He met a group with whom he would exchange language lessons, him learning their language and teaching them some English. He described sitting together, laughing, singing local songs, playing together with local instruments, and walking in the evenings through the river valley. To his disappointment, many of his relationships failed. Andrew reported that in the small village, the locals did not trust outsiders. Communication and cultural differences bred suspicions. He felt that the locals viewed him as a wealthy outsider, and expected generous financial rewards for favors, disrespected him, and finally even accused him of working for the CIA as they searched his home. As suspicions escalated and the government was involved, Andrew elected to leave the village.

During his stay in the village, Andrew reported frequently contemplating leaving, and even going home. However, he only wanted to return home for a short rest and than resume his travels. Asked to elaborate on the "home" he was longing for, Andrew said, "I was thinking of the corner of my room in my bedroom, cuddled under a blanket… this furry blanket I still have…and it was just hiding from the world in another little room, like I did when I first got into the village. The world was pressing on me, I allowed it to press on me for so long it's just… let me hide behind my culture…"

After leaving the village, Andrew headed to a town on the border with Algeria where he heard about the terrorist attack of September 11th a few hours after the incident. Andrew described the deep sense of isolation he felt as he experienced the shock of the attack alone, surrounded by locals who viewed the attack as a victory "for Palestine". Although Andrew wanted to return to France after the events of September 11th, his parents' strong pleas for him to return home was the deciding factor in his decision to end his trip, and he returned home from Spain two weeks later.

Andrew frequently contemplated returning home even while in the village in Morocco. As he states, "[after the long journey]…you start losing a sense of your identity, your dreams are all about your childhood, you're trying to grasp something… at the end where I was really so far from anything I had grown up around, or any way of thinking or orientation for that matter… it was enough, I needed some security and consistency". Andrew felt he was losing his sense of himself.

It was a relief for Andrew to arrive home where loneliness and despair evaporated. Andrew described with joy the relief of not worrying about money and enjoying the comforts of cereal, cold milk, refrigeration and electricity. However, after a week at his parents' house he moved to his friend's house. Andrew described ongoing arguments with his parents surrounding the attacks of September 11th. He felt that the attacks were expected given the level of international dislike of the United States. At another point in the interview Andrew shared how he felt that he "missed out" on being an American when he was so far away on that day. He came home to

people who felt personally attacked whereas he did not feel personally attacked. He could not relate to the increase in patriotism and xenophobia that followed in his community after September 11th. He lived in his friend's house, secured a job in a bookstore, and copied his 600-page journal.

Andrew preferred to travel alone so that he could avoid compromising, meet more people, and be more open to a spontaneous change in plans. He also noted the need for solitude on this personal journey. However, Andrew recognized that there were negative aspects to this choice. He described the "deep sense of despair and loneliness" as "a huge drawback, but it wasn't incapacitating". He viewed his despair and loneliness as "existential absurdity", and an acknowledgment of universal and existential aloneness in the world. Andrew repeatedly returned to the idea that it is impossible to truly hide from the fact that we humans are alone.

When I asked Andrew about the relationships he formed while traveling, Andrew discussed his passionate three month romantic relationship with a musician he met while on his internship. He described her as "…very extreme in her passion, and I loved it". During his first few months of travel, Andrew often thought of her. He eventually returned to her only to be turned away. As he states, they did not trust each other, she did not trust him because her music career was more important, and he did not trust her because he knew he was going to travel. He described being very hurt by the break-up.

With this exception, Andrew described meeting acquaintances, not friends, and he kept in contact with some of these acquaintances after his departure. One

relationship that particularly stood out for Andrew was a Brazilian fellow traveler. He felt a deep "spiritual" connection with this traveler, but after a half a day of joint travel, Andrew continued his travels while the Brazilian was stopped at a national border. Asked about traveling with others, Andrew volunteered that he met an American woman with a car in France with whom he traveled for a couple of weeks to Morocco. The relationship was not sexual and, as Andrew states, "I simply had a lot to talk about cause I haven't talked to anyone in a long time, and we went, she basically paid for everything because I had no place to stay".

For Andrew, brief connections with other locals were particularly meaningful. These connections were not always verbal, and he often observed how they acted in their homes, how they treated each other, and how families lived. For Andrew, these experiences were a glimpse of how things could be different from his own nuclear family life, relationships and culture. Andrew also described being "very sensitive" on the trip, and that this sensitivity to others and the world left him wanting to limit his interpersonal connections to others.

Asked about his sexual life, Andrew discussed a few sexual encounters which, in his mind, "…didn't mean much… I was looking for meaning in it, and it had no meaning… [there was] no depth in it… it was just sort of a dead bliss… it didn't move me". He described seeing women but shying away from the "desperate act of really reaching out". These relationships and encounters paled in comparison to the impact of his brief relationship with the musician.

While traveling, Andrew generally contacted his parents by email. He called his parents once every week or two, but had periods of months without calling. Andrew described relief knowing that he had his family in his life. However, his contact with his parents was superficial. He did not expect his parents to understand his experiences, and chose not to reveal them to his parents. He would occasionally share his thoughts with friends. Andrew described the purpose of his connection to people back home, "I don't think I was searching for comforts… I was searching for a connection, that was the extent of it".

Reflecting back on the trip, Andrew commented that he got "burned out" by it. He traveled to push his comfort zone, but was left in a state of "melancholy" and loneliness. Andrew emphasized, "you can't hide behind anything, you are left with yourself". Andrew described being utterly disconnected from a social support system, leaving him feeling very disoriented. However, this time alone also allowed him to openly explore what he wanted for his future, and the values he wanted to incorporate into his identity, particularly integrity and humility. Andrew described feeling that these values, and a greater appreciation for the comforts of living in American (and familiar) culture, contributed to his present professional success.

Andrew was grateful for what he gained by the journey and he felt that the trip helped him to both make sense of his childhood and develop better relationships in his life. Andrew described feeling more emotionally open with others, both friends, romantic partners, and his family. Andrew particularly emphasized his growing appreciation for the value of family. As he stated, "…you realize when you're out

there that your only tie to the world is through your family… and in the end, no one is going to care but them… everyone else can leave, but they're still there". His experiences living in people's homes, seeing their families, and learning the importance of family in Morocco, also contributed to his newfound appreciation. When he returned home, he wrote out his journal and invited his parents to read it in order to help them understand him. He described some success in growing closer to his father, but continues to struggle with his relationship to his stepmother and siblings

Finally, I asked Andrew about his personal characteristics that made it possible for him to undertake his journey. Andrew responded that his background in his large family encouraged him to be more individualistic. Furthermore, spending extensive amount of time biking alone taught him to have endurance and made him realize that if he was going to do something, he was going to do it on his own. Andrew also described being driven by a conscious fear of how quickly life could pass in a mundane fashion. He further highlighted his individuality, stubbornness and passion as important personal qualities. Andrew concluded his reflections by re-emphasizing the driving push to travel he experienced at that point in his life, "…there was something troubling in my soul and there was no way I could have a job at that time, I had to search for it. There was no compromise that could be made. Yeah, it was a lot of, a lot of selfishness, not not in a negative term, it was all about myself". For Andrew, this was a trip he needed to do alone at that point in his life.

Backpacking Culture and the American Backpacker

As part of the exploratory nature of this study, some information was gathered about the backpacking culture. This section is a summary of the subjects' impression of the backpacking culture, backpackers, and the American backpacker. Interestingly, the term "backpacker" was confusing at first. When asked about the label 'backpacker,' Andrew, Keith and Debra made a distinction between the hiking backpacker and the budget traveling backpacker. Once the focus was placed on the traveling backpacker, what Keith termed "the urban backpacker", a coherent culture emerged.

Each of the subjects described in their narrative their own introduction to the culture. Each began with brief trips or excursions before initiating their long-term solo trip. Debra discussed being sent by her parents on a cross-country Greyhound trip while in her teens. On this trip she met individuals who have traveled abroad and she began entertaining the idea of travel and discovery. Keith began with a month-long backpacking trip to Europe which sparked his curiosity to broaden his horizon. Andrew and Tim were both introduced to backpacking and backpacking culture on their short excursions away from where they chose to study abroad. The four subjects emphasized the confidence and sense of agency they found in accomplishing their initial trips.

The backpacking culture emerges out of the hope to "see as much as possible", a sentiment emphasized by all of the subjects. To this end, traveling on a budget is essential since money, and not time, is a greater limiting factor. Each of the subjects

boasted during the interview about how little they paid for various aspects of their trip though Tim, Keith and Andrew also discussed the experience of traveling fourth class or living without basic necessities. In addition to frugality, the backpacking culture encourages independence. Each subject emphasized the joy of living free from compromise where plans can be made and changed in accordance with one's immediate wishes. Independence fosters flexibility, another backpacking quality treasured by the subjects. As Tim emphasized, backpacking is a time where one avoids living "on other people's schedule". All four subjects explicitly emphasized that they would strongly encourage others to backpack. Debra and Keith both observed that long-term backpacking is a "rite of passage" in many cultures, and Tim likened it to a modern-day spirit quest. Andrew discussed how the great prophets like Mohammad and Jesus both traveled. In his words, "…I think these prophets; they were speaking of something deeper about things, about the value of traveling". All four subjects viewed their backpacking experience as promoting personal growth and development.

Within the backpacking community, a social hierarchy emerged. Debra valued backpackers who took "risks" often referring directly to "emotional risks" connecting with others. Keith and Tim discussed more openly the competition for status within the backpacking community. Both emphasized how frugality and "time out" on the trip earns status. Tim went as far as to describe himself as one of the "snob" backpackers in bestowing respect to those who have proved themselves by traveling to more obscure and difficult destinations. Keith described the whole culture as very

"macho", a culture emphasizing who saves more, drinks more, has more sexual conquests, traveled more etc.

When Keith, Debra and Tim set out on their long-term "solo" backpacking trip, they did not expect to spend much time alone. Their previous short-term excursions and trips prepared them to expect a very social scene on the "[backpackers'] circuit" as Keith and Tim labeled it. Both emphasized the ease of meeting people in hostels. Keith and Debra emphasized the friendliness and openness of backpackers, while Tim emphasized how the backpackers' "scene" is similar to the "bar scene" and the people are still "catty".

Keith, Debra, Tim, and to a lesser extent Andrew, all spent at least two weeks traveling with a particular travel companion/s. Debra spoke at length about the benefits of a travel companion including a greater sense of physical safety, as well as emotional support through difficult or disappointing experiences. She also emphasized what she called "road karma", helping less fortunate backpackers, and receiving very generous help from other backpackers. However, both Debra and Tim acknowledged that travel companions in the backpacking world respect the backpacker's code of independence, and often split rather than compromise on destination or activity. Likewise, travel-buddies often emerge out of the wish to save money by traveling and lodging together. Implicit in all the interviews and made explicit by Keith, there is an unspoken understanding that all of the relationships on the road will be short lived. All four subjects discussed trying to maintain some long-term relationships by correspondence and finding only limited success. Debra and

Keith both discussed the pain of having many of their relationships expire soon after they returned from their backpacking trips.

The relationship of the backpacker to the host community was harder to discern from the interviews. Keith argued that backpackers tend to be "a little more open" to spending time with the locals than other types of travelers, though much of the contact occurs with locals in the tourist industry. Indeed, both Keith and Andrew spent a substantial amount of time living in one place and interacting with the local population beyond the tourist industry, and both were romantically involved with individuals from the local population. However, both Tim and Andrew also discussed trying to avoid locals in the poorer countries they visited where they were often harassed or manipulated into spending (or losing) money.

Interestingly, the four subjects discussed the long term backpacker, the type of traveler who spends much of their life traveling or who has adopted the identity of a backpacker indefinitely. For all four subjects this type of a backpacker served as a warning. Debra suggested that this lifestyle is linked with an inability to form long-term commitments. Tim, Andrew and Keith had a more negative impression of these travelers. Tim described them as alone, "living in the world of their stories". Keith described them as "something not quite right about them", "not connected…going through the social motions", becoming a "social ghost" and using travel as an "emotional escape" while Andrew observed that they are an "odd breed", "hopping" around too quickly between places as though avoiding something. Tim reflected that

while he was tempted by a life of travel and having "the best stories,…I knew I didn't want to become like them".

Finally, all four subjects discussed their experience of American culture and the American backpacker. According to Keith and Debra, American backpackers are under-represented in the backpacking culture. Keith and Andrew did not want to be associated with the American backpackers, at least in Europe, and Keith went as far as to call himself Canadian. Americans, at home and as backpackers in Europe, were variously described as ignorant, insular, consumerist, loud, and rude by Andrew, Keith and Debra.

In these interviews, the backpacking culture emerged as a cohesive, coherent culture embracing its own social norms, values, and etiquette. More important in the context of this paper, the backpacking culture is very socially active. Keith, Tim, and Debra were immersed in the culture, while Andrew attempted to avoid it. One interesting aspect of this culture is that it is sustained by ever-changing members and long-term members are, in fact, estranged from the main-stream culture. Furthermore, with the more recent availability of internet and website use even in remote corners of the earth, backpackers can choose in what form and to what extent they will maintain contact with the various people left behind at home or along the backpackers' circuit. Some of these ideas will be further elaborated in the discussion section of this paper.

Chapter VI

Discussion

This study focused on individuals who have elected to spend a significant amount of time living in transit without the benefit of friends or family in the immediate vicinity. This population was used in order to advance the dialogue about the role and significance of relationships for an adult's growth, development, and general well being. The hypotheses for this study immerged from research on the experience of being alone and in relationships, attachment theory, and psychoanalytic object relations theories. Since little has been written about a population who self-selected to suspend their long-term relationships for an extended period of time, and since this study was consequently designed for exploratory purposes, in this section I offer a post-hoc discussion of the data in addition to reviewing the hypotheses presented. I will begin by discussing attachment theory and object relations theories as they pertain to the backpacking population and the hypotheses posed for this study. I will then discuss in more depth this population's experience of relationships and time alone, and the unique population utilized for this study, the long-term American solo backpacker.

Attachment Theory

Relationship-related Avoidance

The Avoidance dimension attempts to capture the degree to which the individual attempts to increase closeness in relationships or avoid it. In contrast to expectations, this population failed to demonstrate statistically significant elevation in relationship-related Avoidance. While the population's Avoidance scores were above the national means, the difference failed to reach significance. In this sample, the subjects did not appear to significantly attempt to limit their closeness with others. One possible explanation may be that many adults may derive a sufficient sense of security from their attachment to their subculture, as was discussed by Waters and Cummings (2000) and Mikulincer and Shaver (2003). In their everyday domestic life, individuals who score high on the Avoidance dimension may be able to sustain a lifestyle devoid of closeness, but including more distant stable relationships such as with co-workers, or the neighborhood store owners. In the backpacking world, the only cohesive stable infrastructure is that of the backpacking culture, a culture based on sociability en route, in hostels and through joint adventures. While a group or a more abstract subculture may serve as a secure base and haven of safety to satisfy, at least temporarily, attachment and security needs, it may be that a culture which includes in its etiquette sociability serves as a temporary secure base to those who are able to easily grow close to other members of the culture. Hence, with a significantly high Avoidance rating, the individual would not be able to sufficiently feel connected

to his secure base (the group or subculture), and hence have difficulties exploring (traveling).

The specific hypotheses presented concerning the Avoidance dimension failed to be supported by this study. However, a careful examination of the results in concert with the post-hoc analysis suggest that individuals who score high on relationship-related Avoidance have greater difficulties sustaining long-term exploration and engagement with their surroundings. For example, a post-hoc analysis of the data revealed a negative correlation at trend levels between Avoidance and trip duration. Individuals who scored high on the Avoidance dimension chose, or were only able, to engage in shorter trips than individuals who scored lower on the Avoidance dimension. Although these results only reached trend levels of significance, they provide preliminary evidence suggesting that individuals scoring high on Avoidance distance themselves from closeness and intimacy, but are unable to sustain the same degree of exploration as individuals scoring lower on this dimension. Similarly, individuals scoring high on the Avoidance dimension tended to report having less frequent sexual intercourse partners during their trip than individuals who were low on the Avoidance dimension, at trend levels. These results further suggest that individuals scoring high on the Avoidance dimension tend to engage others, even in the more impersonal context of brief sexual affairs, less frequently than individuals who scored low on this dimension. These results were inconsistent with previous research (Edelstain & Shaver, 2004) demonstrating that individuals who score high on the Avoidance dimension are more likely to be promiscuous. It may be that the

intense brief relationships formed within the backpacking population are more intimate and therefore threatening or aversive to individuals scoring high on the Avoidance dimension. Conversely it may be that the stress of sustained travel and lack of stability is more difficult for individuals who do not benefit from Internal Working Models (IWM) of Secure attachments. They are unable to feel supported and nurtured by brief social interactions. Hence, without an internalized Secure attachment, it becomes more difficult to engage and explore both the world and others.

It was further hypothesized that the Avoidance dimension would be negatively correlated with the subjects' report of enduring romantic relationships back home. Interestingly, in this study no correlation was found between relationship-related Avoidance and relationship status or duration back home. On average, the subjects in this study returned from their long-term solo trip 18 months prior to completing the survey. An overwhelming majority of the sample reported being single and nearly half reported not dating at all. One possible way of understanding the absence of a significant correlation is to note that a very large portion of this population was not in a serious relationship. There may be factors unrelated to the Avoidance dimension contributing to the decision not to engage in romantic relationships.

Finally, one hypothesis that was partially supported was the negative correlation between relationship-related Avoidance and frequency of contact back home. As expected, individuals who scored high on the Avoidance dimension demonstrated, at trend levels, contacting potential attachment figures back home less frequently than individuals who scored low on this dimension. Individuals scoring

high on relationship-related Avoidance tended to limit their contact with their potential attachment figures and hence, consistent with their general strategies of avoiding their attachment figures at times of need, tended to rely on their support system back home to a lesser extent than individuals scoring lower on this dimension. These findings are consistent with the subjective experience of individuals scoring high on the Avoidance dimension that attachment figures jeopardize one's sense of security and safety.

Relationship-related Anxiety

While no specific hypotheses were formulated concerning relationship-related Anxiety, a post-hoc analysis revealed a number of interesting relationships. Relationship-related Anxiety addresses the degree to which the individual is anxious about the stability of his relationships. Interestingly, this population scored significantly lower on the Anxiety dimension than the normative population. The Anxiety dimension was also negatively correlated with total number of backpacking trips, and, at trend levels, negatively correlated with total backpacking time. This pattern suggests that individuals who score high on relationship-related Anxiety have more aversion to the backpacking lifestyle and culture. Living in transit, far from stable relationships and with the constant expectation of engaging and disengaging from others may be more stressful for individuals who are insecure about the stability of their relationships. It may also be that the sense of security that an individual may derive from an attachment to the culture of backpacking is insufficient to sustain individuals who both feel insecure in relationships and repeatedly face separations.

Perhaps for these reasons, the population in this study scored significantly lower on the Anxiety dimension than a normative sample.

The individuals interviewed in this study discussed the intensity and brevity of the relationships formed on the road. For an individual who is insecure about the stability of their relationships it may be difficult to disengage from these relationships, form relationships that are founded on the expectation of brevity, and be separated from their attachment figures back home. Furthermore, two of the individuals interviewed in this study explicitly discussed their ongoing internet contact with their friends and family back home. These individuals expressed their expectation that their relationships will be revived and strengthened when they returned home. This expressed sense of security in the sustainability of the relationships despite the long distance and elapsed time would be quite challenging for an individual already predisposed to feel insecure about his relationships.

When examined together, it appears that both elevated relationship-related Avoidance and elevated relationship-related Anxiety were contraindicated for the backpacking lifestyle. As a group, the subjects in this study expressed little difficulty growing close to others, and little anxiety about the termination or dissolution of important relationships in their lives. It may be that the sense of security that backpackers derive from their attachment to the group or backpacking subculture coupled with the backpackers' security in the viability of their relationships back home enables them to sustain long-term travel.

Another factor important to consider is the role of the Internal Working Models of attachment (IWM) in contrast to the dependence on the availability of an external attachment person or group. Bowlby (1973) discussed self-reliance as emerging from an early childhood experience of attachment security. It may be that subjects who scored low on both the Avoidance and Anxiety dimension have a greater internal sense of security, allowing them to be more resilient and self-reliant. This perspective may serve to explain why both elevation on the Anxiety and the Avoidance dimension were associated with shorter trip durations.

Categorical model of attachment

The categorical model of attachment used in this study combined the relationship-related Avoidance dimension and the relationship-related Anxiety dimension to create the four categories of attachment described in the literature (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998; Brennan et al., 1998; Fraley, Davis, & Shaver, 2000; Fraley & Shaver, 2000). It was hypothesized that the Preoccupied group will be under-represented in this sample. The Preoccupied group represents those individuals who score high on the Anxiety dimension and low on the Avoidance dimension. Consistent with expectations, this sample included less Preoccupied individuals than in a comparison normative sample, though the difference did not reach significance. Despite the lack of statistical significant, the lower representation of Preoccupied subjects in this population is consistent with the findings that this population scored low on the Anxiety dimension.

In this study I suggested some reasons why the backpacker lifestyle may be more attractive to individuals who utilize either a Secure or Dismissive-Avoidant attachment style. In both attachment styles individuals score low on the relationship-related Anxiety dimension. Consistent with this line of reasoning, the sample in this study scored lower on the Anxiety dimension than the normative sample. A post-hoc analysis revealed that while the Secure group was not over-represented in the sample, the Dismissing-Avoidant group was. Individuals who are Dismissive-Avoidant defensively avoid their attachment figures at times of stress (Edelstein & Shaver, 2004; Mikulincer et al., 2002; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). For Dismissing-Avoidant individuals, the proximity to their attachment figures is associated with distress rather than security. In the backpacking lifestyle, the Dismissive-Avoidant individual can expect to struggle with stressors while being away from his attachment figures. The Dismissive-Avoidant individual may also be attracted to the autonomy he encounters with respect to his contact with his attachment figures. In contrast, since the Secure group was neither over-represented nor under-represented in this sample, it may be reasoned that a Secure attachment style neither hinders nor encourages the individual to pursue a lifestyle of living in transit.

Object Relations

Inconsistent with the hypotheses raised in this study, the object-relations measures used in this study failed to suggest any psychopathology in this population. On the Bell's Object Relations Inventory (BORRTI), this population did not

demonstrate any statistical difference from the normative sample on any of the object relations scales, Alienation, Insecure Attachment, Social Incompetence, or Egocentricity. They scored lower on the Egocentricity scale at trend levels. A high score on this scale would represent individuals who do not trust others, view others as existing only in relations to the self, and who are unable to accept mutuality in their relationships. This group's performance on the BORRTI's four dimensions suggests that this population has basic trust in relationships. While they seek them out, they do not do so out of fear. Furthermore they can tolerate mutuality in relationships, and are not unduly shy or nervous when interacting with others. Interestingly, this population differed from the normative population in having high correlations between the different object relations scales suggesting that this is not a random finding, but a somewhat unified group sharing similar characteristics (Bell, 1995).

These results, coupled with this population's performance on the projective measure of object relations (KORS), suggest no evidence for pronounced pathological narcissism or schizoid concerns. From a developmental perspective, this population's object relations appeared more mature than that found in individuals struggling with these concerns. As a group, this population's object relations allow them to experience others with minimal splitting so that their representations of others can be balanced and nuanced. They are able to demonstrate empathy towards others and experience others as separate, with their own inner motivations and feelings. However, their performance on the KORS scale also suggests some lingering challenges including the tendency to frequently avoid deep mutual closeness with

others that would entail viewing others as separate and independent individuals with their own thoughts and feelings.

The object relations developmental theories discussed in this paper describe a point of origin for the infant akin to infantile dependence. With adequate development the infantile dependence matures into independence (Winnicott, 1958), or mature dependence embracing mutuality (Fairbairn, 1946). Mahler's separation-individuation theory also represents the infant's starting point as one of utter dependence leading to a symbiotic merger with primary caregivers. Her developmental model focuses on the early stages of separation and individuation from this early symbiotic merger. One essential stage that is particularly interesting in the context of this population is rapprochement. In this phase, the child's growing sense of autonomy and independence from the parent leads him to greater awareness of his continued dependence and need for his parent as well as his anxiety that the parent, whom the infant also begins to view as an independent agent, may not be unconditionally available to him. In such manner, Mahler conceptualizes the ambivalence the child feels towards his parent, wanting to both display his independence, while also acutely aware of his dependency needs and loss of the omnipotent symbiotic union (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975). Later theorists focused on developmental stages in adolescence and adulthood where separation-individuation conflicts re-emerge and the individual now has the opportunity to re-engage these conflicts to achieve greater maturity in his separation, individuation, and integration of self and object representations. (Bloss, 1967; Colarusso, 1997; Gottesfeld & Mirsky, 1991).

Gottesfeld and Mirsky (1991) suggest that emigration in young adulthood may represent a tangible and concrete attempt at separation, defensively motivated to rebel against the individual's own regressive dependency needs and persistent conflicts surrounding individuation. Emigration, much like backpacking, allows for the assertion of independence and denial of dependency needs by creating an unambiguous physical separation from others. However, unlike emigration, backpackers do not assert an unconditional separation, but view their time away as transitory. Backpacking creates the opportunity to assert independence and to renegotiate conflicts surrounding dependency needs. The wish to assert autonomy, wrestle with dependency needs, and the attempt to renegotiate relationships was evident in the narrative of the four subjects interviewed. As such, the backpacking experience emerges as an opportunity for self growth as well as the assertion of autonomy and self actualization. It also emerges as a setting within which the individual may struggle with his dependency needs in an attempt to achieve a new way of experiencing the self and others in relationships.

For the four subjects interviewed, the backpacking experience was intimately entwined with the expression of agency, independence and the sense of mastery. Debra was sent out by her parents at an early age, and derived great pride in her successful planning and completion of this early tour in the U.S. and Canada. Her first long-term trip was partially motivated by her wish to rebel against the elite college culture in which she found herself and what she perceived as its demand to passively accept the ideas of others. Tim discussed completing his planned one year trip to

prove that he could, earning him what he viewed as a trump card. Tim also discussed his decision to create time where he could set his own schedule, highlighting his wish for independence and autonomy. Both Tim and Keith identified independence as a vital characteristic of the backpacker. However, for Keith the trip also allowed the experience of social competency and success. Keith, who viewed himself as struggling in platonic and romantic relationships, gained self confidence in his social abilities in both domains. Finally, Andrew pursued the experience in search of passion and was able to literally conquer mountains and cliffs to this end. Andrew also described his journey towards self discovery, greater differentiation from the values he observed in those around him, and his attempt to create his own path. Both Tim and Keith discussed not being happy with themselves as they prepared for their long-term trips, conveying the sense that they were expecting a change while on the road; Debra and Andrew discussed the trip in terms of a spiritual quest. The initiation and successful completion of these long-term journeys in itself highlights these individuals' exercise of self agency.

The interviews with Tim and Keith suggest that their need to declare independence was also coupled with elements that were antithetical to connection, mutuality, intimacy, and vulnerability. Both experienced others as envious of the trip they accomplished and both highlighted themes of competition and status in their interviews. For example, they both emphasized the competitive and status-oriented elements of the backpacking culture as well as their place in this hierarchy. Both appeared to frequently think of relationships in terms of power differentials and both

endorsed the BORRTI item "exercising power over others is a secret pleasure of mine". Interestingly, both also communicated with their friends back home with impersonal internet 'blogs' where they sent long emails reporting their experiences to a long list of subscribers.

While the backpacking trips may have emerged out of the need to exercise or even declare autonomy, the experience of backpacking and the trip's imprint on the four subjects also highlights their wish and fear of closeness, connection and a sense of belonging. Debra, Tim and Andrew were able to express symbiotic fantasies concretely when they endorsed the BORRTI item wishing to be "completely at one" with close others. Keith expressed the wish for closeness when he endorsed items stating that it is difficult for him to get close to others and that he is destined to feel lonely for the rest of his life. Debra expressed her wish for closeness as she endorsed items stating that she will hold on to relationships "no matter what" and that she hates herself when a relationship partner proves untrustworthy.

However, the four subjects also described behaving in ways that limited closeness in their lives. Tim described attaching himself to couples on his trip and in his life prior to the trip. Viewing himself as the "entertaining third wheel", Tim sought out a relational configuration where he was necessarily an outsider, limiting the depth and intensity of his relationship with his partners. Keith reported many one-night sexual relationships with locals. The brevity of these relationships left little time for emotional closeness. Also limiting closeness, Keith often avoided disclosing his American nationality to his travel companions and never revealed his homosexual

orientation. The avoidance of self disclosure highlights the barriers to closeness he chose to erect. In contrast, Andrew demonstrated his avoidance of closeness on the trip when he avoided the entire backpacking community, choosing instead to spend time with locals with whom he generally struggled to communicate. Andrew would at times spend days separated from all others, what he called "hiding from the world", and when the trip's stressors were overwhelming, Andrew longed to hide out in his room in his parents' house. Debra was the most articulate concerning her barriers to closeness as she discussed spending her youth trying to substitute the intense intimacy found on the road, "connecting in the moment" for long-term relationships at home which she struggled to create.

Difficulty in forming close relationships was also apparent in Debra, Keith and Andrew's struggle with accepting their dependency needs. All three endorsed items on the ECR-R attachment measure suggesting that dependency needs are uncomfortable for them. Andrew needed to explicitly describe his emails with individuals back home as merely serving as a "connection" but not as a source of "comfort". This may be interpreted as his need to avoid acknowledging relationships as being a source of comfort and security. As such, although the backpacking subjects in this study demonstrated advanced levels of object-relation development and self-other differentiation, the small sample of subjects interviewed also highlights continuing struggles with dependency and closeness.

For the four subjects, the backpacking trip led them towards greater valuing and appreciation of closeness and relationships. Each revealed their experience of the

life-time backpacker and their fear of his lack of relatedness and attachments. For each, these individuals highlighted their own wish for relationships, or at least fear of detachment. Debra discussed her own growing awareness that traveling in her youth was used to hide and avoid the loneliness in her life. On the other hand, the Debra in her 20s and 30s, feeling loneliness at home, was able to find a niche where she felt comfortable in the relationships and culture of the backpacking world. Debra also described adopting aspects of the relationships she associated with the relationships formed on the road into her model of relationships back home. She expressed her wish for relationships incorporating unconditional acceptance and freedom which she was able to create with her now deceased husband. For Debra, backpacking itself is associated with connection and relatedness both to the world and to the individuals she met along the way.

Tim, "the entertaining third wheel", also described using his experience with couples on the road as a model for the relationship he wanted to create with his partner. He was impressed by the trust, stability, and closeness he observed. Furthermore, Tim used much of his time and energy on his year-long travels to court the woman he subsequently married, suggesting that, at least intrapsychically, Tim spent little time focusing exclusively on separation and individuation themes. For Andrew, who described his family home as devoid of closeness and emotional support, it was important to observe the relationships around him. He spent much of his time on the road living in other people's homes and was impressed with the closeness he saw there. He returned home committed to embrace some of these

relationship models and create more closeness in his family relationships. Keith, as well, was impressed with the emotional closeness he observed in other cultures, and expressed his wish to incorporate it into his own relationships. When the subjects were asked directly about relationships and relatedness, they each expressed in their own way how time traveling alone, away from their families and friends, impressed them to value and appreciate relationships and closeness.

Returning to the concept of rapprochement, it may be postulated that the four subjects continued to struggle between needing to prove their autonomy and independence and the need for closeness and security from significant others. Each of the four subjects' behaviors may be conceptualized with this lens, and each used their travels to renegotiate this conflict in some manner. Debra's life is a poignant example of this process. Her parents initially sent her away as an adolescent, alone and scared. On this initial trip she felt both empowered as well as the pride of her parents. Her subsequent trips coupled with her own acknowledgement of the difficulty she feels to commit to a life 'at home' may suggest a continuing struggle to negate the initial rejection she felt as well as a continuing unconscious struggle to earn the pride of her parents. Likewise, Tim repeatedly stated during the interview that his travels represent a trump card that others may choose or not choose to acknowledge. However, he also spoke bitterly about his father's failure to acknowledge his accomplishment. Tim's concern with others' acknowledgement may reflect his continuing struggle to experience his father as supporting and embracing his independence. At the same time, he was able to use the trip to help him create a stable

and long-term relationship with his wife. For Keith, on the other hand, the trip earned him the respect and pride of his family. Interestingly, he chose a career involving travel, limiting his stability and expressing his continuing wish for independence and autonomy. At the same time, Keith reported that since his travels, he has been more self confident, and has been able to engage in a long-term relationship for the first time. Finally, Andrew utilized the trip to reaffirm his conviction in the importance of closeness. He reported investing more time in developing his relationships with family members although he may continue to privately struggle with this topic.

In addition to the conflict between autonomy and symbiotic needs, the backpacking experience described by the four subjects may also be conceptualized as their journey towards greater expression of their True Selves (Winnocott, 1960). Keith, Andrew and Tim clearly described an improvement in the self-esteem and confidence following their trips, both aspects of the expression of a True Self. Tim found that he is kinder to others and himself, and feels more tolerance and less competitiveness with others. Andrew spoke of the sense of fulfillment he finds in his job and his interactions with others. Keith described improved self-esteem allowing him to engage in more fulfilling romantic relationships. Debra emphasized the importance of 'connecting in the moment' and the need to take emotional risks in connecting to others. It may be that for her, the connection in the moment without the stress of history or future, allows her True Self greater expression. A study design allowing for more in-depth history and interviews with the subjects would be needed in order to offer more concrete hypotheses about these subjects' True Selves.

However, it may be tentatively hypothesized that the conditions of the trips allowed the hidden portions of these subjects' True Selves some greater range in expression leading the subjects to feel more at peace and more connected to their own inner selves.

Relationships and Traveling 'Alone'

Were the solo-backpackers in this study 'alone'? The subjects in this study were thousands of miles away from their families and long standing social network, but in many significant ways they were never alone. First, it is significant to note that the majority of the subjects interviewed did not view themselves as 'traveling alone', since they expected to be integrated into the backpacking community. In a sense, they believed that a group was waiting to welcome them, a group to which they could belong. As was noted by previous writers, the experience of belonging is important for psychological well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1954; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Waters & Cummings, 2000).

In addition to their new, and perhaps transient, group membership, the subjects in this study experienced themselves as continuing, or at least maintaining, their relationships back home. They maintained frequent contact with back home, and subjects who were interviewed highlighted the support and connection they felt from the people back home. Even Andrew, who was largely disconnected from his family, friends and the backpacking community, discussed the significance of the connection he felt to the people back home.

The findings in this study are inconsistent with the conclusions drawn by Baumeister and Leary (1995) who argue that a physically available support group is essential for psychological well being. The subjects in this study achieved scores on self-report object relations and attachment measures comparable or less pathological then normal adults, and their object relations, as measured by a projective measure, also failed to highlight gross pathology. They appeared to have an *internalized* sense of security in themselves and in their relationships and were thus less dependant on the immediate physical presence of their relationship partners (i.e. family and friends). Two of the subjects interviewed discussed starting internet 'blogs' where they communicated back home by emails addressed to a large group of people. These two individuals also discussed awareness that their relationships were in some sense superficial, or "on pause", but they nonetheless had sufficient faith in the relationships to believe, internally, that the relationships will be sustained, and will continue once they returned.

Meanwhile, until they returned, the subjects in this study enjoyed a period of time relatively removed from traditional social expectations and their social support group. Consistent with previous research (Larson & Csikeszentmihalyi, 1978; Larson, 1990), the interviewed subjects discussed how their time away from home facilitated change. On the trips they confronted and challenged parts of themselves that they did not like, found a sense of agency and self-competence, and they reviewed, evaluated, and sometimes modified their attitudes and values. One area of change already discussed was the subjects' greater appreciation for closeness and relationships. On

the trip they came in contact with individuals who were described as choosing to live as vagabonds, adopting the backpacking culture as their permanent lifestyle. These individuals were described as unable to connect to others. The subjects discussed fearing becoming like these individuals and growing weary of separating themselves from long-term relationships. Debra, who was older than the other subjects and traveled extensively in her life, may have come closest to this image of the vagabond. In her interview she came across as defensive and had difficulties separating her different experiences. She revealed how, with time and after spending a significant portion of her life in the backpacking community, she slowly came to realize that she may have been searching for connection in transient relationships and avoiding intimacy and long-term relationships back home. After many years of travel, she had come to realize that these short-term relationships cannot substitute for long-term intimate relationships.

Each of the four subjects interviewed discussed finding an appealing model for relationships while traveling. Andrew and Keith, both belonging to the Dismissive-Avoidant attachment group, described the joy they found in seeing families in other parts of the world that were close and warm, most likely different then their childhood experience of their families. Andrew in particular discussed his continuing efforts since his return to achieve greater closeness with his family. Debra and Tim discussed how their hopes for romantic relationships were modified. They described observing or experiencing a new sense of trust, security and stability in romantic relationships. Debra felt liberated in the type of relationships she had on the road, and she both

hoped for and reported success in creating a relationship of that nature back home. Tim lived closely with romantic partners traveling together. He was in awe of the stability and security he observed in the couples and planned to participate in such a relationship himself. Finally, Keith reported a long standing sense of inadequacy in social relationships. He described the trip as liberating, helping him gain a greater sense of confidence in his social abilities both in romantic and non-romantic relationships. For the four subjects interviewed, the time away from their lives back home allowed them to be more interested in their relationships back home, and more motivated to improve these relationships. Their time away created an opportunity for these subjects to develop, evaluate and further differentiate their personal identities and goals, as well as increase their valuing of long-term relationships and intimacy.

The Backpacking Community

The data obtained concerning the backpacking community and backpackers was generally consistent with previous research on this population. As with previous research (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; Riley, 1988), the subjects interviewed for this study discussed the importance of budgeting their money in order to extend trip duration, and willingly forgoing basic comforts to achieve this end. While the importance of traveling alone in order to maximize independence and flexibility was fiercely emphasized, the backpackers' social scene also emerged as an integral component of the backpacking experience and culture. As expected, this population both valued their independence and autonomy, but also chose to engage in

a community that is socially vibrant. The backpackers' culture emerged as an internally coherent culture with its own values, ethics and norms. Consistent with Riley's research (1988), backpackers also emerged as competitive and status-oriented, where status is achieved by trip length, budgeting skills, and travel history. Further evidence for the coherence of this community comes from the inter-correlation of the BORRTI dimensions. Bell suggests that a high correlation between the measures is not expected in a random sample, but may be found in a unified group (1995).

The hierarchy in the community allows its members to know their place, and consequently to experience a sense of belonging, that they have a place, in the community. It is a rare quality of the backpacker lifestyle to be able to belong to a relatively coherent community, without having any long-term relationships to any of its members. For many, this lifestyle is better conceptualized as a self-initiated rite-of-passage, a spiritual quest, or a less defined "personal journey." As previous research suggests, many backpackers conceptualize their trip in this fashion (Avrahami, 2001; Locker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Riley, 1988). The majority of the subjects in this study had a limited number of long-term solo trips, and the majority of subjects who were interviewed discussed the experience as a personal journey and a unique experience rather than an ongoing lifestyle. In fact, those individuals who have made backpacking their permanent lifestyle were viewed as outsiders in the community. These individuals were viewed as unable to participate in relationships and needing to escape interpersonal connection and intimacy. The interviewed subjects discussed how this personal journey, their time away from their normal every-day life, allowed

them to gain self confidence, find their life's path, develop a greater sense of agency and self confidence and, paradoxically, increased their commitment and desire for long-term close relationships in their lives.

Some of the demographic characteristics of the subjects in this study are interesting to highlight. A very large percentage of the population reported being raised in intact families. In itself, intact families do not imply a warm and nurturing home environment or good parenting, but it does suggest the likelihood of greater stability and, perhaps, a more benevolent home environment. Furthermore, the subjects in this study were highly educated. In this study approximately 95% of the subjects reported some college education, somewhat higher than in previous studies (Egan, 2001). This populations' level of academic achievement suggests that these subjects are relatively high functioning. One possible explanation may be that individuals who are higher functioning and better educated are more likely to be introduced and have the resources to engage the backpacking culture. The interviewed subjects discussed a progression in their travel experience often culminating in a long-term solo backpacking trip. The opportunity to travel abroad multiple times and the introduction to the culture through brief excursions while studying and working abroad may be more accessible to those with greater education.

In the realm of romantic relationships, this population was overwhelmingly not engaged in long-term relationships despite ending their travels a year and a half before completing the survey. Three quarters of the subjects reported they were single, and nearly half reported not dating at all. In contrast to romantic relationships, a very high

percentage of the sample engaged in sexual relationships while traveling, and with many different partners. This sample was far more sexually active than previous research on backpackers suggests (Egan, 2001). One reason may be that in Egan's study the long-term backpacker traveled for more than a month, while in this sample, the long-term backpacker has been on the road much longer. While this sample appears high functioning, and with no gross psychological difficulties, the data also suggests that this population as a whole may choose to avoid long-term romantic relationships. However, this question must be investigated in more depth before more comprehensive conclusions can be drawn.

Study Limitations

A number of limitations of the present study should be noted. First, the sample was not random. Subjects who responded to this study may be significantly different than the backpacking population as a whole. The method of advertising this study made it more accessibly to backpackers who maintain contact with backpacking-related internet sites and the backpacking community. This sample may be significantly different from the backpacking community at large. Furthermore, many respondents did not complete the survey and their choice not to invest the time or reveal their experiences may be significant. Perhaps more significant, the backpacking community was selected in order to investigate object relations and attachment in those who chose to live in transit. As was seen in this study, the backpacking community may be viewed as a cultural group and the results of this

study may not be generalized to the larger population that chooses not to maintain physically-available long-term relationships for a period of their lives. This is particularly significant with respect to ethnic, educational and possibly socio-economic factors as the majority of the subjects in this study were white and of high academic achievement.

Another significant limitation to this study is the wide range of ages represented in this study. The exploratory nature of this study precluded the use of an age restriction for the subjects, neither for the point in their lives that they chose to travel nor for their age at the time of completing the survey. From an adult developmental perspective, this limitation may be quite significant. Choosing to spend a year traveling immediately after college may be significantly different in meaning and implications than choosing to do so later in life.

As was noted, this study attempted to explore the object relations and attachment characteristics of those who lived in transit. However, many subjects did not complete these measures or provided protocols that were suspect or unscorable (see Table 9). In the context of an anonymous internet survey, the reason for this missing data could not be investigated.

Another limitation that should be noted concerns the statistical method used to convert the dimensional measure of attachment to a categorical classification style. While the methodology used is theoretically valid, it is not commonly utilized. In the literature, attachment studies generally use dimensional measures, categorical measures, or both. In addition, this study compared the representation of different

attachment style classification derived from a dimensional measure to the representation of attachment styles in a normative population derived from a categorical measure. As such, the data and interpretations offered regarding attachment style classification should be interpreted with caution.

Further Questions for Investigation

One significant assumption of this study is that object relations and attachment variables remain relatively stable in adulthood. The subjects interviewed for this study emphasized feeling changed in some ways through their experience of backpacking. It remains to be seen if this change would be reflected in attachment and object relations measures. The subjects in this study ranged from backpackers currently on their trips to individuals who completed the study years after returning from their last solo backpacking trip. Future studies are necessary to better understand if attachment and object relations change in response to the experience and/or while on the backpacking trip.

Another factor to be considered is the difference between subjects who view their backpacking trip as a unique 'rite of passage' experience, and those who chose to re-engage the culture and lifestyle throughout their lives. Three of the four subjects interviewed reported only one backpacking trip that met criteria for the study, and spoke of the experience as a "once in a lifetime" adventure. However, some chose to incorporate this lifestyle into their ongoing lives. The meaning of living in transit to those two different groups may be different in important and revealing ways.

Furthermore, much of this present study utilized self-report measures. To better understand object relations, object representations, and intrapsychic processes, it would be important to explore findings from more depth clinical interviews, projective measures, and attachment measures grounded in internal states of mind such as the Adult Attachment Interview. This type of investigation may shed further light on the relationship between choosing to live in transit and the experience of long-term intimate relationships as well as the experience of dependency and autonomy needs discussed above. As was already noted, nearly half of the subjects in this study reported they were not dating at all despite having a median time of 18 months since their last trip. It is difficult to understand the meaning of these findings in the context of this study. However, the overwhelming absence of current serious relationships in this population should be further investigated.

Finally, many subjects reported contacting people back home by internet, and half of the subjects interviewed discussed using internet blogs. Internet blogs allow for immediate mass connection in an impersonal fashion. The role and impact of mass communication of personal information on interpersonal relationships, intimacy, and intrapsychic characteristics such as object relations and attachment styles should be further explored.

Summary and Conclusions

This study sought to examine the object relations, attachment patterns, and relationships of individuals choosing to spend an extended period of time without the benefit of immediately available long-term relationships. To this end, the specific population of American backpackers was investigated using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The findings of this exploratory study suggest that individuals choosing to engage in a lifestyle embracing transitory and brief relationships may be better suited for individuals who demonstrate mature object relations and demonstrate little aversion to closeness and low anxiety about the stability and security of their relationships. The latter quality appeared particularly significant.

The subjects reported that their temporary lifestyle of living in transit afforded them pride in their experience of autonomy and fostered personal growth as well as greater valuing of closeness in relationships. They reported that their journeys, both external and internal, facilitated their ability to connect to their inner selves and nurture personal qualities that they sought and treasured.

However, the findings of this study also suggest that this population may continue to struggle with dependency needs hampering their ability to engage in long-term serious romantic relationships. Mahler's theory of separation-individuation was used to conceptualize their struggles, with particular attention given to rapprochement conflicts renegotiated in adulthood.

The findings of this study challenge our understanding of the role and importance of external, immediately available long-term relationships for the individual's normal development and growth. The findings suggest that a better understanding of the relationship between the external object, external relationships, and the internal object relations is necessary. This study enriches our understanding of the complex relationship between both object relations and attachment as quantified by objective measures, and the individual's struggle with dependency and autonomy needs in the context of long-term relationships.

Appendix A: Consent Form for Internet Questionnaire

Consent Form for Participation in a Research Project

My name is Michal Weber and I am a student in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and the Principal Investigator of this project on American backpackers traveling alone. For the purpose of this study, I am interested in American backpackers who have traveled for at least six months alone. Backpackers who have traveled with a particular companion or companions for no longer then three weeks can also participate. Some backpackers stop in one place for a while. To participate in this study, I am looking for backpackers who spent at least six months traveling, even if the duration of the whole trip was longer than six month and involved some period of time in one place. To participate, you must have had this kind of trip in the past 10 years. If you meet these criteria, please take a moment to learn about the nature of this study, and what I will be asking you to do, so that you can make an informed decision as to whether you want to participate. If you have questions concerning your eligibility, please email me at AmericanBackpackers@hotmail.com before filling out this questionnaire.

I am particularly interested in understanding what backpackers gained from their experience traveling alone. I am also interested in the nature of their relationships with others. The study is expected to help psychologists better understand a unique group of people, backpackers, who have rarely been studied in psychology. It will also further our understanding on the impact of backpacking on

people. For this purpose, I would like you to fill out a number of questionnaires. You will first be asked about your background (age, sex, ethnicity, etc), then you will be asked some questions about the nature of your experience traveling and the nature of your relationships both on the road and at home. You will then be given two questionnaires about your experience in relationships. Finally, I will also ask you to think back to your early childhood and type some of your early memories. You are free to refuse to answer any question or stop your participation in the study at any time. At the end of the questionnaires I will ask you if you are interested in being interviewed about your experiences. If you wish to be interviewed, you will be asked to provide contact information. I may then contact you with further information about the interview.

This study should take you about 50 minutes to complete. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Some of the questions may elicit unhappy memories or may be embarrassing to answer. If you do fill out the survey, you are free to leave any question blank, but it would be most helpful to me if you could try to answer every question. There are no direct benefits to you in participation, but you may find the chance to reflect on your past experiences interesting. There will be approximately 25 participants in this study.

All information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I, and my advisors, will have access. Identifying information, such as any contact information you will provide, will be kept separately from the rest of your information. Code numbers will be used in the questionnaire

instead on names, and you have the option of filling out this questionnaire completely anonymously. The web page providers, PsychData, provide confidential websites to which only my advisors and I will possess a password. Once downloaded, information will be kept in a password protected computer directory or in a locked file cabinet.

If you have any questions or any concerns about this study, please don't hesitate to contact me at AmericanBackpackers@hotmail.com. If you are interested in learning about the results of this study, please let me know and I would be happy to provide you with a summary of the findings once the research is completed. You may also contact my Research Advisor, Professor Steven B. Tuber, Ph.D. (CUNY) at (212) 650-5672. You are free not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, please indicate so below before continuing. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for your participation in the study. You may print this agreement for your records.

If you read and understood the description of the study, and wish to participate, click on the "Continue" button below.

Appendix B: Consent Form for Interview

Consent for Participation in Interview

My name is Michal Weber and this is the second part of the study on American backpackers traveling alone. I am a student in the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY), and the Principal Investigator for this project. I would like permission to interview you about your experiences.

This interview would take from one to two hours. I will pay you $50 for taking the time to be interviewed. With your permission, I would like to audio-tape this interview so I can record the details accurately. The tapes will only be heard by me and my advisors. The tapes will be transcribed, and any names you may use during the interview will be blacked out or changed to increase confidentiality. All the information gathered will be kept strictly confidential, and will be stored in a locked file cabinet, to which only I and my advisor will have access. I may publish results of the study, but names of people, or any identifying characteristics, will not be used in any of the publications. At any time you may refuse to answer any question or end this interview without penalty, and you will still be compensated with $50. At the end of the interview you will be given the chance to review the tape/s and approve its use in the study. Four volunteers will be interviewed.

The interview will focus on your experience backpacking and any effects it may have had on who you are today. It will also focus on your relationships both

while traveling and at home. The questions covered in this interview may cause some anxiety or be embarrassing to answer. Again, you are free to refuse to answer any question or end the interview at any time. There are no direct benefits to you by participating in this study (other than the monetary compensation). However, this study will help the psychology community learn about the effects and nature of the unique experience of long-term backpacking. Your participation would help enrich our understanding of this experience.

If you are interested in learning more about the results of the study, please let me know and I will be happy to provide you with a summary of the results upon completion of the study. If you have any questions about this research or the interview, please feel free to contact me at (917) 940-2166 or email me at AmericanBackpackers@hotmail.com. You may also contact my research advisor, Dr. Steven B. Tuber, Ph.D. (CUNY) at (212) 650-5672. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you can contact Kay Powell, IRB Administrator, The Graduate Center/City University of New York, (212) 817-7525, kpowell@gc.cuny.edu.

Thank you for participation in the study. I will give you a copy of this form to take with you.

I agree to have this interview audio-taped (please circle one):

YES NO

_____ _____ _____ _____

Participant's signature Date Investigator's signature Date

Appendix C: Questionnaire Statement of Feedback

Statement of Feedback

Thank you for taking the time to fill out these questionnaires. Your help is most appreciated. If you know of any other American backpackers who have traveled alone, please let them know about this study. They may fill out a questionnaire online at https://www.psychdata.com/surveys.asp?SID=10696 or they may contact me at AmericanBackpackers@hotmail.com and I will provide them with a paper version of this questionnaire or answer any questions they may have.

If you are interested in learning about the results of the study, please email me at the email above and I will provide you with a summary of the results when the study is complete.

If you feel distressed by the material discussed in the study please don't hesitate to contact me. I will make every effort to connect you with a mental health professional in your area where you will be able to discuss your experiences further.

Thank you again for your time and participation. If you have ANY questions or concerns, or if you would like to contact me, please don't hesitate to contact me at the email above.

Sincerely,

Michal Weber, M.A.

Appendix D: Interview Statement of Feedback

Statement of Feedback

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed. Your help is most appreciated.

This form is also your receipt for receiving your $50 compensation.

If you know of any other American backpackers who have traveled for at least six months mostly alone, please let them know about this study. They may fill out a questionnaire online at www.AmericanBackpackers.PsychData.com or they may contact me at AmericanBackpackers@hotmail.com and I will provide them with a paper version of this questionnaire or answer any questions they may have.

If you are interested in learning about the results of the study, please email me at the email above and I will provide you with a summary of the results when the study is complete.

If you feel distressed by the material discussed in the study or any related experiences that were covered by the study, please don't hesitate to discuss this matter with me. I will make every effort to connect you with a mental health professional in your area where you will be able to discuss your experiences further.

Thank you again for your time and participation. If you have ANY questions or concerns, or if you would like to contact me, please don't hesitate to contact me at the email above.

Sincerely,

_____

Michal Weber, M.A.

I have received $50 for participation in the interview section of the study

_____ _____

Participant's name Date

Appendix E: Demographic Information

Demographics

Personal Information

1. Age:_____ Date of Birth _____

2. Sex: Male Female (circle one)

3. Ethnicity: _____

4. Nationality/s _____

5. Highest level of education achieved (circle one answer)

    1. Some High School

    2. High School graduate

    3. Some college

    4. College Graduate

    5. Masters Level

    6. Doctoral Level (PH.D., MD, JD)

6. What is your occupation? _____

Parental Information

7. Are both your parents still alive? 1.Yes ____

2. No ____ Please Explain

_____

8. Who raised you? (please circle one answer that best describes your childhood)

(1) Mother and Father, married

(2) Mother and Father, separated/divorced

(3) Primarily my mother

(4) Primarily my father

(5) Other: _____

Personal Travel History

9. Please provide a general list of backpacking destinations in your travel history:

_____

_____

_____

10. Age at first backpacking trip: _____

11. Age at first backpacking trip taken alone or where you spent the predominant time not traveling with a stable set of travel companions and you traveled for at least six months: _____

12. How many backpacking trips did you make in total? _____ Total time duration of backpacking: _____

13. Please briefly describe what, in your opinion, is the best thing about traveling alone.

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. Please briefly describe what, in your opinion, is the worst thing about traveling alone.

_____

_____

_____

_____

15. Are you currently on a backpacking trip? Yes _____ No _____

if yes, please indicate who you are traveling with (or if you are traveling alone) and where you are.

_____

16. Time since last backpacking trip. Here I am referring to a trip where you spent at least 6 months traveling (not staying in one place) and where you did not travel with any individual for more than 3 weeks.

Days _____ Months _____ Years _____

In this section I'd like to get a sense of how you kept in touch with close ones back home and who you kept in touch with.

17. Please circle all that apply.

On the trip, I frequently contacted those I am close to by:

1. telephone

2. internet

3. airmail

4. Other : _____

18. Who did you TELEPHONE back home (e.g. mother, father, girlfriend, best friend etc.)? _____

19. How often would you contact people back home (for example, 3 times per week, or 1 time per month). _____

Relationship History

20. Marital status (circle one)

Single Married Separated Divorced Widowed

21. What is your current relationship status (check one)

____ (1) Not seeing anyone

____ (2) Dating casually

____ (3) Dating someone seriously

____ (4) Married/ marriage like relationship (common-law marriage, homosexual couple "married" even if marriage is not legally recognized, etc.)

22. If you are in a relationship, how long have you been involved with this partner?

_____years _____ months, _____ days

23. If you are not in a serious relationship, have you ever been in a serious relationship?

Yes _____ No _____

24. Have you had consensual romantic and/or sexual experiences while traveling alone? Here I would like to include a broad range of sexual intimacies including kissing, 'making out' foreplay, sexual intercourse, sexual touching, etc.

Yes _____ No _____

For these questions, think back to your last backpacking trip where you traveled (did not stay in one place) for at least 6 months and where you did not travel with any individual for more than 3 weeks:

25. For how long did you travel? Days _____ Months _____ years _____

26. With how many partners did you have sexual experiences (as defined above)?

_____

27. Your partners were predominantly (circle one)

1. Locals 2. Backpackers 3. Not Applicable 4.Other (please explain)

_____

28. Did the intimate contact occur under the influence of alcohol or drugs? (please circle one)

Yes No Not Applicable

29. With how many partners did you have sexual intercourse? _____

30. Looking back on your sexual experiences while backpacking how would you rate your overall experience/s? Please circle the rating the most corresponds to your overall experience

1 I regret my sexual experiences

2. I have some second thoughts about the experience

3. Neutral

4. Mostly positive

5. I have no regrets. It was a very positive experience/s

6. Not Applicable

Appendix F: Experience in Close Relationship- Revised (ECR-R)

Instructions: The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. I am interested in how you *generally* experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by selecting the number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree		Strongly Agree

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love. _____
2. My partner really understands me and my needs. _____
3. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me. _____
4. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner. _____
5. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me. _____
6. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners. _____
7. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them. _____
8. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners. _____
9. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as

strong as my feelings for him or her. _____

10. I am nervous when partners get too close to me. _____

11. I worry a lot about my relationships. _____

12. I talk things over with my partner. _____

13. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else. _____

14. I tell my partner just about everything. _____

15. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me. _____

16. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need. _____

17. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me. _____

18. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner. _____

19. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself. _____

20. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner. _____

21. I do not often worry about being abandoned. _____

22. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner. _____

23. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like. _____

24. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close._____

25. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason. _____

26. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners. _____

27. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away. _____

28. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners. _____

29. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am. _____

30. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. _____

31. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner. _____

32. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners. _____

33. I worry that I won't measure up to other people. _____

34. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner. _____

35. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry. _____

36. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down. _____

Appendix G: Bell's Object Relations and Reality Testing Inventory (BORRTI)-Object Relations

Directions: Read each item with care, and then choose your answer. Respond according to your most recent experience. If a statement tends to be true for you, select "T". If a statement tends to be false for you, select "F". Choose only one answer for each question. Please try to respond to all the statements.

T F 1. I have at least one stable and satisfying relationship.

T F 2. If someone dislikes me, I will always try harder to be nice to that person.

T F 3. I would like to be a hermit forever.

T F 4. I may withdraw and not speak to anyone for weeks at a time.

T F 5. I usually end up hurting those closest to me.

T F 6. My people treat me more like a child than an adult.

T F 7. If someone whom I have known well goes away, I may miss that person.

T F 8. I can deal with disagreements at home without disturbing family relationships.

T F 9. I am extremely sensitive to criticism.

T F 10. Exercising power over other people is a secret pleasure of mine.

T F 11. At times I will do almost anything to get my way.

T F 12. When a person close to me is not giving me his or her full attention, I often feel hurt and rejected.

T F 13. If I become close with someone and he or she proves untrustworthy, I may hate myself for the way things turned out.

T F 14. It is hard for me to get close to anyone.

T F 15. My sex life is satisfactory.

T F 16. I tend to be what others expect me to be.

T F 17. No matter how bad a relationship may get, I will hold on to it.

T F 18. I have no influence on anyone around me.

T F 19. People do not exist when I do not see them.

T F 20. I've been hurt a lot in life.

T F 21. I have someone with whom I can share my innermost feelings and who shares such feelings with me.

T F 22. No matter how hard I try to avoid them, the same difficulties crop up in my most important relationships.

T F 23. I yearn to be completely "at one" with someone.

T F 24. In relationships, I am not satisfied unless I am with the other person all the time.

T F 25. I am a very good judge of other people.

T F 26. Relationships with people of the opposite sex always turn out the same way with me.

T F 27. Others frequently try to humiliate me.

T F 28. I generally rely on others to make my decisions for me.

T F 29. I am usually sorry that I trusted someone.

T F 30. When I am angry with someone close to me, I am able to talk it through.

T F 31. Manipulating others is the best way to get what I want.

T F 32. I often feel nervous when I am around members of the opposite sex.

T F 33. I often worry that I will be left out of things.

T F 34. I feel that I have to please everyone or else thy might reject me.

T F 35. I shut myself up and don't see anyone for months at a time.

T F 36. I am sensitive to possible rejection by important people in my life.

T F 37. Making friends is not a problem for me.

T F 38. I do not know how to meet or talk with members of the opposite sex.

T F 39. When I cannot make someone close to me do what I want, I feel hurt or angry.

T F 40. It is my fate to lead a lonely life.

T F 41. People are never honest with each other.

T F 42. I put a lot into relationships and get a lot back.

T F 43. I feel shy about meeting or talking with members of the opposite sex.

T F 44. The most important things to me in a relationship is to exercise power over the other person.

T F 45. I believe that a good mother should always please her children.

Appendix H: Early Memory Test (EMT)

1. I'd like you to clear your mind and think back to your childhood. Please describe in detail your earliest memory. Here I am looking for your earliest full memory and not a fragment of a memory.

2. Please describe your next earliest memory. Be as detailed and complete as possible.

3. Please describe your earliest memory of your mother. If it is a memory already described, please select the next earliest memory of your mother. Be as detailed and complete as possible.

4. Please describe your earliest memory of your father. If it is a memory already described, please select the next earliest memory of your father. Be as detailed and complete as possible.

5. Please describe your earliest memory of a time you were alone. If it is a memory already described, please select the next earliest memory of a time you were alone not already described. Be as detailed and complete as possible.

Appendix I: Interview Questions

Backpacking History

1. Tell me about your first backpacking trip
    - Tell me about the first backpacking trip when you traveled alone
    - What does the term "backpacker" mean to you?
    - In what way, if any, did it affect who you are today?
2. How did this idea of going backpacking like this come up? Can you tell me about the first time you thought of it? What came up? And then what happened?
    - What do you remember of your parents' response?

Long-Term Solo Backpacking Trip

1. Tell me about the time you were thinking about doing this trip? What was going on in your life right before the trip? What made you decide to go?
2. Why alone? What circumstances or thinking surrounded this decision? Did you start off alone?
    - Was it by choice or necessity?
    - What do you remember of your hopes, dreams or expectations for this trip?
        (and of traveling alone in particular?)

3. What did you imagine the experience would be like?

    - What did you imagine would happen?

    - How did you imagine it would feel?

    - How did you imagine you would feel traveling alone?

    - How did you imagine other people/family/peers would view it?

4. Tell me about the relationships you formed while traveling

    - On the trip did you have any periods of traveling with others?

    - Did you have any periods of staying in one place? What was that like?

5. Tell me about your experience traveling alone (good aspects, difficult aspects)

6. Were there times when you thought about traveling with others?

    - What was going on during that time?

    - What did you do about it?

7. What are your thoughts about your personal characteristics that led you to do this?

8. Tell me about the greatest experience on this trip (Relationship to being alone?)

9. Tell me about the worst experience on this trip (Relationship to being alone?]

10. How did you feel about 'back home'?

    - What do you remember about your relationship while on the trip to people back home?

11. I'd like to get a sense of the impact that other people and relationships had on you on the road. Any experiences stand out?

    - With backpackers? With locals? With others?

12. Most people report getting lonely at different times in their lives, what was that like for you on the trip? How did you cope with it?

13. Did you feel particularly close to anyone on the trip, even if for a short duration?

- Can you tell me about it?

- What made you feel close to them? (attributes about them? circumstantial attributes?).

14. I've been asking questions about being alone and relationships, what is the most important thing to you about this trip?

15. How did the trip come to an end? Circumstances?

- Was it planned trip duration, was it unexpected?

- What happened on trip right before it came to an end?

16. Tell me about the experience of coming back home? What was that like?

- Transition? culture shock? response of loved ones- family and friends?

17. How did this trip compare to other backpacking trips?

- How was it affected by the duration of the trip?

18. How did this trip affect who you are today?

Relationships and Solitude

1. Tell me about your close relationships back home.

- Any difference before and after the trip?

2. What about romantic relationships in particular?

3. In what way do you think it matters that you traveled alone?

    - Is it significant?

    - What unique experiences good and bad did that give you the opportunity to experience?

    - Would you say that you spent a lot of time alone? Did you feel like you are traveled alone or is does this not capture your experience?

4. What else is important for me to know?

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