

An Existential-Phenomenology of Crack Cocaine Abuse

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This paper explores the human significance of crack cocaine abuse by submitting its manifestation (logos) to existential-phenomenological analysis. The author conducted over fifty, first-hand interviews of recovering and active crack cocaine abusers toward disclosing the meaning of his to-be. What is revealed is the way the addiction reacts upon the with-structure of existence. Active crack cocaine addiction is being-high-and-free-of-craving. The singularity of this event eclipses the interhuman significance that substantially constitutes concern, as the meaning and Being of There-being, and radicalizes existence such that the "other" is unceasingly projected as a means to free transcendence. The crack abuser forsakes the existentials being-with and There-being-with-others, ways of to-be that accommodate and gear into the existence of "others," to being-with-crack, a way of Being that is exclusively for the sake of the dependent's "self."

A Story of Human Being

And they call that motherfucker, "sucking the devil's dick." Because that's what your doing, sucking the devil's dick. Because all that's connected to it is evil. All that's connected to that thing is evil. Everything you touch, everything you see, everything you do is pure evil. The glass tube, the stem, what you call a stem, every time you put a piece in there, it's a piece of your life. You put a rock in there, you're burning your life away. Because one is not enough, and a thousand, as they say in the program, is not quite enough. I hurt a lot of people. I've done things that I'm not proud of by no means. I caused a lot of destruction...

If you see a woman smoking and licking that stem you'll know why they call it a dick. Because she makes love to that stem. A man does too. It's perfection. They play with it. They take it and twirl it in their hand, you know, they put a little spit on it with their finger and clean it. They play with it real nice with a finger in it and push this with a pusher, and set your screens, and man this is a bad motherfucker. You don't want to share it. You don't share it. And that woman don't want to share a man's dick either. That shit is hers. You don't want to share your stem. The only way you give up the stem to somebody else to abuse it is because they're gonna put something in it, smoke, and leave

you some. Because they're not allowed to push yours down. They're only allowed to light it and pass it once they put something in it. So it becomes part of you man. And they call that motherfucker "the devil's dick," and to me it's the devil's advocate. It's a motherfucker man. Right now if I went to the home right around the corner, there's a \$220,000 house around the corner that I'm going to lose. It's still mine, but I'm gonna lose it. I know I'm gonna lose it. I lost about \$375,000 in the market. I lost two thousand acres in Indiana, sixty-seven in Florida, and forty-five in Georgia, because I was too fuckin' busy using. I was too busy. I lost close to \$225,000 in coins, gold coins, collected coins, \$190,000 in jewelry, Rolex, the fuckin' thing, everything. I'll take you to the pawnshop now. I'll take you there and you'll see a \$30,000 file I got in that pawnshop. We'll go there and this guy will ring it up. And you're gonna see. I'm gonna tell him to ring up my shit, and you're gonna see what I pawned all for this use. I either neglected it or sold it. I did one or the other for the use of crack. Because as long as I had those things I wasn't a junkie, I wasn't an addict. And the demon of the thing is to lose all that. Crack is a take thing. It's a take. The more you lose, the more grateful you are to the fuckin' drug. The more you lose of what you have, possessions, the more you give up for this drug, the more of a buddy you become with the fuckin' sickness and illness. Until you've totally wiped yourself out and hit rock bottom, you're not a full fledged fuckin' crack head. You've got to be down to nothing, because as long as there's one thing standing you're not with it brother. And you know that you know that. But the brain will not accept it. Your body knows it too, but your brain will not accept it. But when you sleep at night, the last thought in your mind, it comes to all of us, "what a fuckin' ass I am." And then when you wake up again and you start that stem, you know that you're gonna lose whatever you're gonna have that day. The morning you'll be, "mother-fucker, I'm gonna start this damn thing and I know whatever I've got left, I'm gonna lose it today," but yet you light that mother-fucker. You light it. (Trujillo, 1998d).

I think Buber, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty would have appreciated the ontological sense of Robert's narrative. Crack cocaine abuse distorts the World by radicalizing the drive-(power, potentiality)-to-be (*Seinkönnen*) such that the with-structure of existence is fully oriented toward liberating that potentiality. The addiction enervates the immediacy between the "I"

and the “Thou” that unveils the World as presence (Buber, 1958, p. 122), crystallizing There-being (*Dasein*), a being defined by its Being as being-with (*Mitsein*) and There-being-with-others (*Mittdasein*) (Heidegger, 1996, p. 107), into a World structured by I-It relations aimed largely at procuring the drug. The crack abuser appropriates the “with” significance of the World and enfolds it into the “phenomenal body” such that it overwhelmingly “surges towards” the manifestation of being-high and being-free-of-craving (Merleau-Ponty, 1967, p. 106). He forsakes being-with and There-being-with-others in order to free his potentiality to be who he is: the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. Robert continues:

It’s the drug of destruction. You want to actually mutilate yourself; you want to go as dirty as you can. Crack makes you want to be dirty. This drug, it makes you want to be a dirty drug user. You see, you’re not a real, full-fledged crack head until you’re down, out, dirty, and disgusting. Until you’ve completely hit the bottom, smelt the grass, smelt the dirt, and gone underneath that, you’re going all the way to the bottom of your grave and you’re dried out and you’re stinking and you’re smelling yourself. Until you’ve pecked and mutilated your fingers, burnt your lips from that fuckin’ stem, until you do every fuckin’ little disgusting thing you’re not a crack head. The high of it is to get funky. It’s to go to an extreme with it. The high of the crack is to see how far you can go, dirty wise, physically, mentally, and any other fuckin’ way you can think of. You want to take it to the ultimate, to see how much, how long you can use it before it gives out or you give out. It’s a challenge. It challenges you. It does something to your brain that makes you crave for this kind of torment. You actually have to crave it. You’re not enjoying it unless you’re tormenting yourself. It must paralyze some part of your brain. It tells you, “this is good.” It must, now that I look at it. Because who the fuck in their right mind is gonna do that shit. And the minute you smoke that thing this is how you think. You want to crawl around the floor. You want to go in need of it. You want to be able to scrape it. It’s something in your brain that’s missing. Like this other life that you had before you started smoking didn’t exist. Like it’s a new life and you are part of it; you’re part of the design; you belong; this is you. The old life don’t matter. It’s this one. As long as you’ve got that stem in your mouth, you don’t think of nothing about the past. You only think about that next hit (Trujillo, 1998d).

Robert's narrative reveals a World void of interhuman significance; a to-be where shared meaning is consumed by There-being's projection into a being (crack cocaine) in order to bring about a two-fold mode of to-be (being-high-and-free-of-craving). The purpose of this investigation is to disclose the structure of this World by submitting the manifestation (*logos*) of crack cocaine abuse to existential-phenomenological analysis. The study examines the first-hand interviews of over fifty former and current crack cocaine abusers as a pathway to *wrest* the impact of the active addiction on concern (*Sorge*) as the Being of There-being.¹

The Drive-To-Be

Crack cocaine abuse is ontically interpreted as a neurophysiological crisis. The dependent abuses the drug in response to the disequilibrium it causes in monoamine, particularly dopamine (DA), "neurotransmitter synthesis and release" and the long-term changes that that disequilibrium produces in the central nervous system (CNS), particularly the mid-end brain network. Three primary consequences are said to result from this imbalance: the high, craving, and incentive-sensitization (Carey & Gui, 1998; Dunwiddie, 1988; Kalivas, Pierce, Cornish, & Sorg, 1998; Koob & Nestler, 1997; Lader, 1980; Volkow et al., 1997; White, 1998; Withers, Pulvirenti, Koob, & Gillin, 1995). The "high" is an intense, though fleeting, sense of euphoria; "craving" is the "persistent and protracted" need for cocaine (Gold, Washton, & Dackis, 1985, p. 133; Prakash & Das, 1993, pp. 577-578); and "incentive-sensitization" refers to the dependent's spontaneous motivation to use crack when he encounters people, events, and objects historical to his drug use (Carey & Gui, 1998, p. 67; Claye, Akunne, Davis, DeMatos, & Soliman, 1995; Hammer, Egilmez, & Emmett-Oglesby, 1997, p. 225; Kalivas et al., 1998, pp. 50-51; Robinson, 1998, p. 347; Robinson & Badiani, 1998, p. 988; Robinson & Berridge, 1993, p. 249; Withers et al., 1995, p. 70). The power and tenacity of these consequences is contingent on the drug's pharmacokinetics and economics. The drug's bioavailability to the CNS is faster (although shorter) than powder-cocaine and comparable (although less efficient) to intravenous injection. This sets the dynamics for an intensely addictive experience. Compounding this is the drug's price. Crack is inexpensive relative to other forms of cocaine, and you do not need much money to become dependent on it (Bednarczyk & Trujillo, 1997, p. 10; Bourne, Triggs, & Eadie, 1986, p. 3; *Crack Cocaine*, 2003; Ellenhorn & Barceloux, 1988, p. 648).

Crack cocaine abuse is ontologically interpreted as an existential crisis. Being-high-and-free-of-craving radicalizes concern such that it overwhelmingly comes to pass as the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. That power-to-be enervates the interhuman synergy that structures everyday concern and unceasingly projects the “other” as a means to free its potentiality. The crack abuser forsakes the everyday mode of being-with and There-being-with-others, a way of Being that gears into the existence of “others,” to being-with-crack, a way of Being that is exclusively for the sake of the dependent’s “self.” His existence is univocal. The ontic cause and ontological consequence of the addiction are inseparably woven into a moment of singular existential importance that overwhelmingly transposes World meaning to the phenomenal body and overpoweringly projects transcendence toward smoking crack cocaine.

The drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving is “synonymous” with the dependent’s existence. It is who he is. The “drive-to-“ connotes the compulsion and power of that “is.” The “be-“ connotes the potentiality toward which that compulsion and power propels. “Being-high-and-free-of-craving” is the event toward which the existence of the crack abuser is impelled, or, in Phänder’s words, its *phenomenal cause*, while the “drive-to-“ is the primal indigence that propels it toward seizing that potentiality, or its *phenomenal source* (Phänder, 1967, p. 18; Richardson, 1967, p. 38). Understanding the crack abuser as the unity of these phenomena requires us to first distill the high- and craving-events. Seven crack dependents tell us what being-high is like.

☞ It’s not like the personal joy of climbing a mountain where it takes four or five days, it’s freezing, you got frost bite, you lose your finger, you haven’t eaten, and you finally make it to the top of that mountain and feel like a million dollars. That power, you get goose bumps. You’re like crying, “I made it.” It’s not like that. It’s not like that great feeling you get from running and finishing a twenty-six mile marathon. You made your goal whether you wanted to be first or whatever your goal was, you got that super high, that rush or whatever. The high from crack is higher, more intense than those feelings, but that’s the closest I can get to describing it. That’s the closest (Trujillo, 1998q).

☞ It’s like the whole world, life is beautiful. I feel great. I have a lot of ideas. My mind just opens tremendously. My mind is like really fast and I think better. I feel good. I feel life is wonderful. I can do anything (Trujillo, 1998m).

☞ I felt like Superman. I got to move mountains, literally. I mean, I stood up and felt like, “hhhhhhhhuuuhhhh, man! Damn, that shit is all right!” Had an erection man for about three hours man. Me and this chick were going for about three hours. And I couldn’t get tired. My nature was up and I was just, man I felt good, like a champ (Trujillo, 1998i).

☞ It’s like being in another state or world, something like that (Trujillo, 1998k).

☞ The best way I could describe the high is that it’s like having sex without having sex. It makes you horny, but it also makes your body all tingly and just feel good and just real hyper. When I would take a hit, I would just kind of “yeah, yeah.” It was very euphoric. It was very sexual, like an orgasm. That’s how good it felt. I don’t know if the feeling could be experienced without using the drug. It would have to be a real heavy-duty spiritual consciousness. Maybe not, basically something close. I wouldn’t say exactly. I mean, anything is possible. But I think it’d be pretty hard. But maybe it’s possible, maybe if you’re having a spiritual experience or something like that, but it’s very physical. It would be hard (Trujillo, 1998l).

☞ Crack gave me the ultimate high. Nothing compared to it. It made my heart beat fast. It’s just a feeling that it gave you. For me to explain and put it in words, I can’t really explain it. It makes you feel like you’re out of this world, but it didn’t last very long, maybe like a minute at most and then you were down (Trujillo, 1998b).

☞ You feel pleasant. There’s pleasantness in it. And it kind of like makes you think about your self. That’s basically what you do. You think about yourself. You think about all the good things and the right things that you’re supposed to do. But these things you just procrastinate, you don’t do ‘em. But each time you get high, these are the kind of things you think and talk about, you know. Then you talk about change. You might talk about religion. You might talk about God (Trujillo, 1998h).

☞ See, the crack head is like a dick. The crack-head doesn’t think. He goes by emotion, by feelings, by thrills. Just like a dick. The dick is part of your body. It has no brains. It can’t think by itself, but yet it has this feeling. And you feel it when you feel it. When you grab it in

your hand, you stroke that motherfucker; it feels good. It goes up your hand and through your body and up your leg and “vamp!” And you have this release. Same thing when you grab that stem. You grabbing that stem is like grabbing your dick. When you put that rock in there and you light it, it’s like coming man. You light that motherfucker and you get that rush. When you get that rush and you get that first hit, it’s just like you’ve had a climax man. In your mind you know that you’re not supposed to fuck with that shit. But your dick don’t know, and the stem don’t know. See, it’s more of a physical thing. The rush is physical and the mind is in denial. The mind is in fuckin’ denial. It doesn’t know a fuckin’ thing. It shuts down on you. It shuts down on you completely. But you get that fuckin’ rush, that stem, and you “fffaagh,” you let go. That release is what you look for. And when you start over it’s like getting your dick hard again (Trujillo, 1998d).

Physical, sexual, orgasmic, pleasant, beautiful, expansive, powerful and spiritual are some of the key adjectives used by the crack dependents to describe the high induced by smoking the drug. The descriptions they afford evidence a range of dispositions (moments) spread out as a single event along spatial and temporal horizons. Spatially, being-high originates in the phenomenal body, the “There” where the event burns brightest, and expands outward to the World as presence resounding with power and spirit. Temporally, it comes to pass as almost boundless immediacy. It is a happening where World significance is expanded and heightened. Spatially and temporally, being-high renders free There-being’s power-to-be; it explosively unleashes the power of There-being to be its own potentiality. Tracey’s description of the first time she smoked crack testifies to this assertion. “Oh my God, I had found what I had been looking for,” she begins. “I remember consciously having that thought the very first time. So I believed inside my heart that like the first time I used I was addicted. Like, you know, it was the feeling that I had been searching for” (Trujillo, 1998a).

The spatial and temporal horizons of being-craving are laid out diametrically to being-high. The phenomenal body is the exclusive “where” and “when” of the craving-event. It is the origin, interval and destination of being-craving. Craving crack manifests in the phenomenal body as bounded immediacy, or the failure to be free to be one’s potentiality. It disenfranchises the freedom to be that power. The range of possibilities that There-being is contracts into the single, inescapable moment of being-the-need-for-crack.

Existence self-depredates spatially and temporally when There-being enters this mode. There-being approximates the impossibility of its existence when it craves crack cocaine. The ontological implication of this assertion is striking. Being-craving suggests itself as the liberation of the potentiality of death (the possibility of There-being's impossibility), and, inversely, the drive-to-be-free-of-craving as the surge toward liberating There-being's potentiality-to-be by distancing transcendence from the possibility of its impossibility. Dependents typically describe the event as "if I don't get it, I'll die" (Trujillo, 1998c), "it just was this, inescapable feeling that you wanted more, that's all. You know, it was just, you know, not that I wanted more, it was more or less like I needed more" (Trujillo, 1998n), and "it's like claustrophobic . . . like the walls are coming in on me. That's what the craving feels like. If I don't get it, if I don't get it, I'm gonna die" (Trujillo, 1998s). The statements of other dependents relay much of the same significance.

☞ Insanity. That's what it feels like, insanity (Trujillo, 1998b).

☞ I mean, when you talk about thirsty. Well, "I'm thirsty man." Well, do you know what it's like to be hungry, really hungry? Those are extreme different sensations so it's not really the same, but it's the same. Do you know what it's like to have to use the bathroom, really have to use the bathroom? Well, if you could understand those fundamental things then you'll understand that it's the same thing. To be hungry, to want a hit, to crave, you know, CRAVE. Just even the word, "craving" means, "I want it now, immediately, pending." This is what that means. "I am thirsty now. I want it now." That's what that means. "I want it now. And that's what I want. I want it now." And it's instantaneous. It goes when you're using. It's instantaneous (Trujillo, 1998f).

☞ To me it was like a beast that takes over inside and just pushes you to get more. And to not get more, just to sit there and say, "well, I'm just going to sit this out and let this feeling inside pass," is like impossible for me (Trujillo, 1998a).

☞ Oh, God, frustrating, it's miserable. It makes you miserable. You just want it. You want it (Trujillo, 1998x).

☞ It's like a tremendous desire to use, to smoke that. I mean, it just becomes very important. It becomes the most important thing in my life (Trujillo, 1998v).

☞ Basically it's just, it's not a big desire in the beginning. It's an emptiness in the beginning . . . Then there's the tension of the need. You

see what I'm saying? Then there's the tension of the need, but there's no tension before that. It's an idea. "What should I do? What's in my life? What's happening?" You know, "what do I have? Emptiness. Okay, let me fill it with my addiction, then maybe I'll feel better" (Trujillo, 1998h).

☞ Because there's no limit; there's no mound; there's no ending man. It's the never-ending dream. There is none. It just keeps going, and going, and going, and going. And every step is worse than this. Worse than when you're shooting heroin. Whenever you do heroin, there's a limit to it. Because you know your best bet. You get a certain high, your body can take it, and that's it. You're not gonna go no more. You're gonna die. You're gonna go through convulsions. With crack there isn't. I mean, you can go, go, go, go, go, go, go. Some people have died, that I've known have died, in convulsions, weak heart, this, this, and that. But for the most part, the more you take, the more filthier, the more pig you become, the more you need, the more you want. It's an obsession. Very fucked up, it's frustrating (Trujillo, 1998d).

The phenomenal evidence reveals that the repeated manifestation of being-high and being-craving alters the structure of concern such that it overwhelmingly comes to pass as the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. The drive-to-be-high and the drive-to-be-free-of-craving happen as one event. They are opposing (and not exclusive) dimensions of the abuser's potentiality-to-be. Dependents tell us that "there is no difference" between the two (Trujillo, 1998f), that "they're . . . part of the same thing" (Trujillo, 1998g). Crack abusers are "satisfying the need to get high" (Trujillo, 1998n) or "getting high to satisfy the craving" (Trujillo, 1998f).

☞ That first hit then would satisfy the craving, but then . . . I wanted to get the high and then it's like "oh, shit" (Trujillo, 1997b).

☞ Sometimes it's just to satisfy the hunger, the craving. Sometimes I just wanted to get high. So for me it was both (Trujillo, 1998p).

☞ I guess the getting high would satisfy the craving (Trujillo, 1998q).

☞ Well, I would wanna get high, but I would wanna get high to satisfy the craving (Trujillo, 1998r).

☞ Isn't that the same thing? Satisfying the craving was getting high (Trujillo, 1998t).

Concern

Concern is the “meaning of There-being.” It is the “structural unity” of existence, the given drive-to-be among beings, and the “ultimate ‘whereunto’ of all references” (Kovacs, 1990, pp. 63, 93). Concern is the interpreting-understanding by which the references that comprise the World (as a matrix of meanings) are ordered. The totality of those ordered references constitute the substance of being-with (with-being, *Mitsein*). With-being is coextensive with being-in-the-World and shares the same horizons with There-being's fallenness (its preoccupation and dependence on beings to be). Its structure, as such, is correlative with concern. The power of concern to accomplish itself is contingent on its with-structure at the same time the structure of being-with is contingent on the way concern unfolds. There-being brings near the Being of beings that frees its concern and draws away from the Being of beings that suppresses its drive-to-be (Heidegger, 1996, p. 97).

The with-structure of the crack abuser reflects his concern as the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. It maximizes the power of that drive-to-be to accomplish itself. His concern forsakes being-with in the everyday mode, a to-be that builds meaningfulness in complex and multidimensional ways, to solely being-with-crack. He is the project to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. The way he is-with corresponds to that project. Anything outside of being-with-crack is rifled of its relevance. There is no value in the World, no meaningfulness, no direct and indirect significance outside of being-with-crack-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving.

☞ Everything you plan and do is around crack. Everything is around crack. It's like, “let's see, I'll trade this for crack. I'll give you my bike if you give me a hit. You can use my book if you give me a hit. I got a hit, can you give me a ride.” Everything is around crack. Everything is. “I got a pipe, do you wanna trade for this.” Everything is crack (Trujillo, 1998w).

☞ It's amazing how you forget about everything. Anything you care about, you love, it's just, I mean, it comes and it goes here and there, but then you're caught on a mission. We're on a mission, on a mission just to get more (Trujillo, 1998l).

☞ When I was high nothing else in life really mattered to me. All that mattered to me was just getting high. It was a constant. I was like in a merry-go round. I'd go on and get it and I'd smoke it and . . . I just didn't have any feelings to anything real. My mind set was drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs, drugs. I had an inner void (Trujillo, 1997a).

☞ I used to tell my girlfriend, "I wanna stop, but I don't see how I can. I don't see no way to stop." She'd say, "why do you do it?" I'd say, "I don't know. But I just got to have it." And she would go get me money, go borrow money from relatives sometimes because she said she thought I was going to kill us. You just get so edgy and so wound up, so angry when you ain't had it (Trujillo, 1998i).

☞ My fuckin' brain, it just tells me I automatically need it, not that I want to. I couldn't stop my head the way it thought. It just seemed that fix, only how I wanted that fix. I could see the rock sizzle. I could feel the smoke, damn, and I couldn't stop thinking about it . . . But yet man, that fuckin' feeling, I don't know what it is (Trujillo, 1998q).

☞ It's all encompassing. Everything in your whole life revolves around crack. You got blinders on. It's like you can't see anything else but what you're doing to get or smoke your drug or anywhere else but where you're at. You go on automatic pilot and you can justify anything. You can get the money any way you want to and you do anything. There's no line. There is no line. You can never say "never" anymore because you don't know what you're gonna do to get that next hit. You can't never say, "no, I'll never do this or I'll never do that," because you'll end up doing whatever it takes just to get that money for that drug (Trujillo, 1998e).

☞ See, the thing is that you're always thinking about how much more you're gonna have for your drug. You don't think about brushing your teeth. You don't think about wiping your ass. You don't think about eating. You're thinking about how much drugs you're gonna buy now . . . I could always eat. I could always wipe my ass, brush my teeth. I'll clean my ass some other time, or go without it. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter (Trujillo, 1998d).

The way There-being is-with "others" is different than the way it is-with things or instruments and calls for expanded consideration in the analysis of the crack abuser as concern. The World that There-being lives is shared.

It is a with-World (*Witwelt*). Being-in-the-World is being-with (*Mitsein*) and There-being-with-others (*Mitdasein*). The “other” is “already *there with*” There-being “in being-in-the-world,” equal in Being to There-being, spontaneously determining transcendence by his presence. (Heidegger, 1996, pp. 109-112). The “other” is a drive-to-be. He is the moments of disposition (*Befindlichkeit*), comprehension (*Verstehen*) and manifestation (*Rede*). He is thrown into the World as a task to-be, accomplishes that task through his access to beings, and renders that accomplishment interpretable to the understanding that he is. There-being pre-thematically comprehends all this; it is delivered over to the World as that comprehension such that “equiprimordial” to being-in-the-World is There-being-with-others. This understanding is not merely a meaning “There” to be attended to at one’s choosing but a facticity to be embraced to discharge the drive-to-be. There-being-with-others is an existential; it determines in a fundamental way that which There-being, as the concern for Being and beings, is given to-be.

The ability of There-being to accomplish its concern is contingent on its ontological and ontic encounter with “others.” There-being renders itself free to genuinely respond to its existentiality when it lets beings, particularly human beings, be as they are just as they are; *viz.*, when it lives (enters into) transparent disclosure, or truth. But how does There-being live in the truth of a being who is his own fallen existentiality (who is his own task to be the truth that he is and typically forgoes that prerogative to a concern with beings)? By being-with him in such a way that he can be the potentiality that he genuinely is within the existentiell constraints that shape his Being. To accomplish itself as concern There-being must help the “other” be transparent to his to-be and free to live his existentiality. There-being must purposely engage (“leap ahead of”) the “other,” not to take concern away from him, but to give it back to him “for and in his true concern” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 115; Kovacs, 1990, p. 74). It is in this sense that There-being *is* essentially for the sake of “others” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 116).

Adding to this challenge is the human constituted facticity of the World in which There-being is thrown. There-being is delivered over to a World of secondary (thematic) meanings that are reciprocally oriented, symmetrically and asymmetrically structured, and habitually lived, and comes to be as these meanings through the course of its “ontogenetic” development (Berger & Luckman, 1966, pp. 48-55). That World that is given to-be is structured by a field of secondary meanings (made possible by There-being-with-others) that There-being must attend to (and be) if it is to carry out its existentiality.

These secondary meanings are closely tied to the order of beings among which There-being is thrown. The Being of the beings toward which There-being draws near (enters into) in order to discharge its concern invariably pertain to the Being of “others.” They are concretely relevant to “others” as part of their “*existentiell dynamism*.” Because of this shared relevance, the ability of There-being to be the power that it “is” is itself contingent on the degree to which the projection of that power gears into the *existentiell dynamism* of “others.” Concern is carried out in dynamic equilibrium (*synergy*) with the *existentiell dynamism* of “others.”

The with-World of the crack abuser negates all this. He disregards the existentiality of the “other” and encounters him as a “what” (*Was*). He dominates, manipulates, and controls (“leaps in for”) the “other” to realize his drive-to-be. The crack abuser is not inauthentic solicitude. He is the absence of solicitude. He simply does not care. For him, human beings are “There” merely to liberate who he fundamentally is: the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. “Others” have no value except as things in relation to this power; they are emptied of their significance and encountered solely for the sake of the abuser’s “self.” This includes the “they” (*das Man*): the “who” of everyday existence that is nobody and everybody and to whom every There-being “has always already surrendered itself” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 120; Kovacs, 1990, p. 75). The “they” is equally disparaged by the concern of the crack abuser. The structure of his concern unseats the dictatorship of the nobody-everybody over existence; emasculating it of its referential bearing. The with-being of the crack abuser leaves little room for the relevance of the “they” as an existential.

The crack abuser lives at a distance from the primary and secondary meanings that constitute the everyday with-World. Those meanings remain “There” but have been largely enervated of their meaning. The crack abuser is no longer bound by the common truths and habits that structure the everyday World. He is only with “others” to the extent that they can free his drive-to-be. His concern is not with-World but with-crack; rather, being-with-crack is his World. Living at a distance from the everyday with-World puts him at a unique advantage vis-à-vis the everyday There-being. No longer spontaneously participating with “others” in World-building, he steps out of the often overlooked *averageness* of the “day-in-day-out” immediacy that brings human beings in a shared way into the unity of presence (Richardson, 1967, p. 48). Driven by the uninterrupted projection of “where could I get five dollars so I can get a hit of crack” (Trujillo, 1998p), the abuser enters

into an intersubjective *epoché*.

☞ It's as if people have no idea. They have no idea what's going on. It took my parents like two years to become aware that I was smoking crack. I would get away with everything in front of them (Trujillo, 1998e).

☞ I think the non-user doesn't really see. Yes, I think first that sometimes it's convenient; most of the time it's convenient that they won't see (Trujillo, 1998m).

☞ People are easy to manipulate because you're manipulating for what you want (Trujillo, 1998s).

☞ When I'm hustling people for money for my crack I would be participating with them physically, but not mentally. Because when I was with people that didn't use, I was trying to figure out how to get my next hit. All I thought about was what I could get out of them at that time, so that when they get the hell on about their business I'd be getting high again (Trujillo, 1998c).

☞ Somewhere in the back of your mind you've got a consciousness of, not very much, but you got a little consciousness knowing that you are gonna go out there and probably hit somebody over the head and steal their pocket book. Or you're gonna rob somebody and knowing the consequences but it doesn't matter at that time. What matters is getting high, getting high again, recapturing that feeling (Trujillo, 1998b).

☞ If I knew you I wouldn't stay around you. Once I get high, however, and you come around, then I begin to hustle you. To get money for my crack I'll tell you, "I'm hungry," "I have these clothes in layaway that I need to get," there'd be shoes put over here that "I need to pick up." I'd come at you with some kind of excuse, and usually I have good insight as to the type of person I'm dealing with. If you said, "no, you're gonna get high with the money," I'd brush it off, start walking away, and then say something that I felt would touch you. And then I'd listen for your response until I hear, "all right, come on." I got what I want (Trujillo, 1998p).

☞ Something that isolates you from the existing things around you. Because addicts are not stupid. They know they've got to manufacture fuckin' ways, conjure up and think of fuckin' ways and means and

hows to get their drug. They come up with ideas to resolve to use. They'll come out with brilliant ways to get crack. Forget it, ways that are unbelievable (Trujillo, 1998d).

The existence of the crack abuser is commonly evidenced in such moments as “how much money do I have? How much money does my girlfriend have? How much can I get away from her without her noticing?” (Trujillo, 1998i), “who can I borrow some money from’ or ‘where can I get some money” (Trujillo, 1998u), “who can I go out and con and get some money to get some” (Trujillo, 1998o), and “who I’m gonna call and what I’m gonna do to get me some money to get me some crack” (Trujillo, 1998r)? Living as the desire and need for crack cocaine, transcendence unfolds singularly directed, disposed and determined toward smoking the drug. The “other” comes to pass as a solution to the abuser’s existence, a means to re-solve his freedom to be who he is just as he is. There-being-with-others is de-essentialized; the relevance of the “other” dissipates from the World and all meaning, all motivation, all purpose is enfolded into the phenomenal body for the sake of freeing the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. There-being forgoes its concern-with-others to the concern-with-crack.

☞ You have tunnel vision. The only thing you can think about, the only thing that you worry about is getting another hit. The only debates you have is, “I wonder if I could get it from them? I wonder if they’ll give it to me?” But, along the lines of it being wrong and feeling bad about stealing from them, no, that never entered my mind (Trujillo, 1998j).

☞ When I’m on a run, when I’m using crack, the drug has the power to take away all my feelings. So I feel nothing. I don’t feel shame. I don’t feel embarrassment. And I definitely don’t feel bad for you, at all. I don’t have almost any feelings. So I can do a lot of things without my conscience interfering with my actions (Trujillo, 1998m).

☞ When you’re a crack-head the word remorse loses its meanings. You sell remorse of life itself. You’re so fuckin’ sorry you live. Remorse don’t matter. It’s out of the window. The word doesn’t exist. The only fuckin’ remorse you have is that you’re alive and able to do this shit again (Trujillo, 1998d).

☞ I wouldn’t want to [hustle people]. It’s just that they got in my

way to get to the dope. If they had money, if they anything, an addict that smokes crack, all you think about, all you do is think about dope, all twenty-four hours and seven days a week. It's twenty-four-seven. It doesn't stop. You wake up, if you go to sleep, constantly thinking, perpetually thinking "who you're gonna get some more money from to get that next dime? How are you gonna get some more money to get that next nickel?" You're trying always to get the dope. It's a twenty-four hour, seven day a week process. It's all the time (Trujillo, 1997b).

☞ I just didn't care. I had no regrets, because, hey, this is about me getting high now. It's about me maintaining my high. You've got enough money to maintain whatever you wanna maintain, I have no regrets for getting into your pocket (Trujillo, 1998p).

☞ Because it was the means of getting what the hell I wanted. Whatever it took for me to get what I wanted. It doesn't matter to me who I hurt or what I had to do. I wanted what I want, so fuck you (Trujillo, 1998t).

☞ Even knowing that I had all those mouths to feed, I would still skimp on groceries and stuff. Even when I had money in my pocket, I'd round the kids up and we'd go down to Camillus House so they can eat and get clothes and toys. It didn't bother me at all. If my wife would buy clothes for the kids and bring them home from work ... she would have to hide the receipts because I'd get the clothes and the receipts and I'm back in the store returning them. Other nights she would come home and say, "well tonight we're going to have family night. We're gonna sit down and watch some movies. I got some movies for the kids. We'll put them in their room. They can watch movies and me and you will just have a little candle night dinner." I don't wanna hear it. "What! You spent what! You spent fifty dollars on that shit! Man, give me those bags. Where are the receipts?" I'll hop on the train, I'll catch the train down to the supermarket and I'd take that shit back. Get some Vienna sausage or a couple cans of tuna fish, a dozen eggs, a loaf of bread (Trujillo, 1998i).

☞ Crack helps you forget everything, even your children. I mean, I love my son to death, but let me tell you something, and I thought about him in between here and there, off an on, but I pretty much totally forgot about him when I was using. It's ridiculous. It's unbelievable. And it happens, it happens. You forget important things like

your family. It's like you put them on the back burner. You have tunnel vision. All you want is crack. And all you think about is the means and ways to get it (Trujillo, 1998l).

Human Being as a Story

The ability of language to manifest Being is to be marveled. This holds true for the Being of the crack cocaine abuser. His "words" provide us with phenomenological access to who he is. What we find when we listen to the voice of his Being is a way of to-be marginal but not foreign to everyday existence. There-being can only be itself, concern. There is no other situation for There-being except the human situation, no world except the World brought to be by finite transcendence, no way of Being except the drive-to-be. The coming-to-be of the crack cocaine abuser should not be viewed as a total metamorphosis of There-being into an entirely new way of Being, but as a distortion of human existence. The spatial and temporal horizons of the drive-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving are a radicalization (and not a transformation) of transcendence. There-being comes to pass as a range of possibilities already inherent to its power-to-be. Being-high and being-free-of-craving are simply opposing sides of that power.

To manifest the truth of his Being, the crack abuser must depart from the truth of the World as being-with and There-being-with-others. The crack abuser's truth comes to be principally in the living body; World-significance is appropriated by who he *physically* is. Being-high frees him to-be. Being-craving annuls that freedom. Crack abuse alters the structure of concern by exclusively and overwhelmingly directing There-being toward freeing its potentiality-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. The spontaneous sacrifice of being-with and There-being-with-others is a direct consequence of his concern, of his way of Being. The crack abuser diverges from the shared immediacy of the World in order that he may come to pass with crack and unleash his power-to-be. He is overwhelmingly with-crack-to-be-high-and-free-of-craving. Robert closes.

We have this illusion, this grand illusion that it's not me. "Oh, I'm just a casual user." Just like you're an alcoholic. You know, your weekend user, your weekend smoker, your weekend addict. Wall Street guys working Wall Street, they go once a week and, you know, have their cocktail parties. Before you know it you're a full blown alcoholic, a full

blown pill popper. Same with the crack user. He has the same illusion, until he starts missing work. He starts lying. He starts taking money out of the bank. He starts taking from home. He starts pawning. Then he stops working. And he stops making calls home telling his wife he won't be home. And as these things come to date, all along he says to himself, "I'll stop when I wanna. I'll stop when I wanna. I'll stop when I wanna." But you see, it doesn't get better. As he goes along from losing his job, his wife, and losing his car, that's nothing. You know he's not going up. He didn't gain another wife. He didn't gain two more cars. He didn't get the president's job at the company, that better job, the CEO position. He's lost all these things, but yet he's got to go use. He's lost the chairman of the board position. He's lost his home. He lost his wife. He lost his kids. Now he loses his car. Okay, he lost these five fuckin' things. Where is he gonna go from there? Loses his mistress, okay. Loses his friends. And each step takes him down, down, down. He's not going up. The mother-fucker didn't get a palace. He didn't get two more oil wells. He didn't get a thousand shares in Microsoft. Every time he picks up the stem, he's going down. Every step by step he's going down. So, what is he thinking? The brain has no room for that. No clear thinking for that. The disease does not let him see that. He sees it, but he doesn't feel it, okay. He doesn't feel it. Somehow he doesn't feel it. There's another key word. He doesn't "feel" it. He doesn't give a fuck, or value. He no longer values. That occurs with the hit. The hit's value is more important than his shares in Microsoft or his car. The hit's value becomes greater than anything else material he might hold. That rush becomes greater, more of an obsession than anything else in his life. And the more that he knows that he shouldn't, the more he wants to. If he takes this fuckin' hit, he curses himself, "I'm fucked. I hate this mother-fucker." You see, because it's a challenge. It fuckin' becomes a struggle. Why is he gonna do it, his mind or his physical? Somehow the physical part of it wins all the time. His body shakes. He breaks wind. His nose sneezes. His eyes water. He starts farting. He starts salivating. He starts getting cold bumps. All this shit happens at one fuckin' time when the physical takes over. The mind tells him "you shouldn't," but it becomes physical man, he has to. And he'll light

that mother-fucker, “fuck the company, fuck the CEO position, fuck everything else. I’m gonna do this here, now” (Trujillo, 1998d).

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¹ The names of the respondents have been changed to protect their identities.

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